

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

This document has been archived as it is no longer current.

This handbook provides instructions and guidance for inspectors conducting standard inspections of non-association independent schools under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It indicates the main activities that are undertaken from the time the school is notified that it is to be inspected until the publication of the report. It sets out what inspectors must do and what schools can expect, and provides guidance for inspectors on making their judgements. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and may find it helpful when carrying out their self-evaluation.

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Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities undertaken by inspectors conducting inspections of schools in England under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008¹. It should be used in conjunction with *The framework for inspecting non-association independent schools*.² It also sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and on which they will report. This handbook now forms the single key resource for the inspection of independent schools, except for the guidance *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*³ and the additional detailed guidance on safeguarding provided in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies*.⁴
2. The handbook has two parts.
 - Part A: How schools will be inspected
this contains instructions and guidance for inspectors on the preparation for and conduct of school inspections.
 - Part B: The evaluation schedule
this contains guidance for inspectors on judging the quality of education provided by the schools they inspect, and provides an indication of the main types of evidence they collect and analyse.
3. Please note that all references to 'leaders' in this document include proprietors and those in governance roles.

¹ The Education and Skills Act 2008;

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents

² *The framework for inspecting non-association independent schools* (140052), Ofsted, 2015;

www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-inspecting-non-association-independent-schools.

³ *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools* (090060), Ofsted, 2015;

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090060.

⁴ *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* (140143), Ofsted, 2015;

www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections. For the purpose of independent school inspections, all references to the *School inspection handbook* contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* should be considered to refer instead to the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook*. Any references to meeting relevant regulations and duties contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* are considered to include the requirement for independent schools to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014..

Part A: How schools will be inspected

Before the inspection

Tariff for the inspection

4. The inspection tariff for a standard inspection of a non-association independent school under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 is variable. The size and composition of the inspection team is determined by Ofsted and takes account of the size and circumstances of the school. The precise use of the inspection days is at the discretion of the lead inspector who will organise inspection activities in the most appropriate way to fit the circumstances of the school. Inspections do not normally last longer than three days. Please refer to Annex B for an illustration and further detail about deploying the tariff and an example of a timeline.

Inspectors' planning and preparation

5. The lead inspector, and in the case of integrated inspections the lead social care inspector, must prepare for the inspection by carrying out the following pre-inspection activity before they arrive at the school on the first day of the inspection. The outcomes of this preparation must be summarised on evidence forms (EFs).
6. 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 inspectors. Contact between the lead education and social care inspectors should take place on the preparation day. Guidance on pre-inspection activity and notification arrangements for integrated inspections is set out in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*.⁵
7. Inspectors must use all available evidence to develop an initial picture of the school's academic performance. Planning for the inspection must be informed by analysis of:
 - the previous inspection report(s), which may include boarding and early years inspection reports
 - any reports or advice notes resulting from additional inspections carried out since the last standard inspections, in particular emergency inspections⁶
 - the findings of any recent Ofsted survey and/or monitoring reports

⁵ *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180.

⁶ Information on additional inspections is contained in the document *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools* (090060), Ofsted, 2015; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090060.

- any linked early years provision inspection reports and compliance and complaints history
 - information from the provider information portal⁷
 - responses from Parent View⁸, Ofsted’s online survey available for parents and carers
 - pupils’, and if relevant placing authorities’, replies to Ofsted’s point-in-time surveys (see paragraph 21)
 - any complaints from parents or members of the public that the Department for Education (DfE), the registration authority for independent schools has asked Ofsted to consider as part of the inspection
 - where the DfE has requested that an additional inspection takes place as part of the standard inspection, the information provided by the DfE in the inspection commissioning form⁹
 - the school’s census returns
 - the school’s website and consideration of the school policies and procedures if they are held there and any other relevant material provided electronically by the school.
8. There may also 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 change of governance - that may need to be followed up during inspection. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school’s safeguarding procedures, inspectors should also ask whether there have been any safeguarding incidents since the last inspection of the school. Inspectors should record the school’s response.
9. The lead inspector should prepare and distribute brief joining instructions for the inspection team. These should include:
- essential information about the school and the timings for the inspection
 - a brief analysis of the pre-inspection information, including important areas to be followed up

⁷ The provider information portal (PIP) displays a high level view for Ofsted inspectors of information about providers we inspect and regulate.

⁸ <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results>.

⁹ The Department for Education may commission Ofsted to consider, for example, a school’s application to make a material change to its registration, a school’s progress in implementing an action plan and in meeting unmet standards, or a complaint as part of the standard inspection. This is instead of commissioning a separate additional inspection to the same school in a short timescale.

- an outline of inspection activity for the second day – for example planned lesson observations and any meetings with pupils or staff; this will be finalised once on site.
- 10. Lead inspectors should deploy their inspection team members as they see fit. All members of the inspection team must contribute to the evaluation of each of the four key judgements and any early years and/or sixth form provision and come to a collective view about the quality of the education provided by the school.
- 11. The lead inspector should plan sufficient time for holding team meetings and providing feedback to the school to ensure that the inspection is concluded on time.

Safeguarding

- 12. It is **essential** that inspectors are familiar with the content of the following key documents:
 - the Department for Education’s statutory guidance for schools and colleges, *Keeping children safe in education*, 2014¹⁰
 - *Keeping children safe in education: information for all school and college staff*, 2014¹¹
 - *Working together to safeguard children*, 2013.¹²
- 13. The statutory guidance for schools and colleges, *Keeping children safe in education*, came into force on 3 April 2014. The guidance sets out the responsibilities placed on schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It replaces *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*.
- 14. In the event of concerns or queries the following telephone number is available to inspectors:
 - Ofsted helpline (0300 123 4234).
- 15. In the event of an ongoing incident coming to light during the inspection, reference should be made to *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and*

¹⁰ *Keeping children safe in education* (DFE-00341-2014), DfE, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education.

¹¹ *Keeping children safe in education: information for all school and college staff*, DfE, 2014: www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education.

¹² *Working together to safeguard children* (DFE-00030-2013), DfE, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children.

academies, which contains guidance on what to include in the inspection report.¹³

Separately registered childcare provision

16. Early years or childcare provision of more than two hours that is **not managed by the governing body** must normally be registered with Ofsted. Where provision managed directly by a **school governing body** includes care for children under three years old, or where no child attending is a pupil of the school, it must be registered by Ofsted and is not inspected as part of the inspection of school provision. Where schools offer before and after school care for their own pupils on roll, this provision should be considered as part of the school inspection.

The views of parents

17. When the ISP sends confirmation of the inspection to the school by email, this will include a letter which gives formal notification of the inspection for parents. It will also explain Parent View and how to contact inspectors. The school must make every effort and take such steps as are reasonably practicable to notify all parents of registered pupils, using this letter. Schools may place a link to the Parent View website on their website: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>. In addition, the school should also be encouraged to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as SMS messages) where available.
18. Where the response rate for Parent View is low, inspectors must take steps during the inspection to gather further evidence of the views of parents. In addition, the school should be encouraged to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as SMS messages), where available.
19. Where the inspection is conducted without notice (see below) the same process will apply.
20. The principal source of information that inspectors will use to access the views of parents is Parent View. Inspectors will also take account of the results of any surveys carried out by the school or commissioned by the school.

¹³ *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* (140143), Ofsted, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections. For the purpose of independent school inspections, all references to the *School inspection handbook* contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* should be considered to refer instead to the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook*. Any references to meeting relevant regulations and duties contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* are considered to include the requirement for independent schools to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The views of pupils, staff and placing authorities

21. The views of pupils, local authorities that place and fund pupils in independent schools, boarders and boarding staff are gathered on a yearly basis, through Ofsted's online point-in-time surveys. The surveys are normally open for a period of six weeks in the academic year. The analyses of responses to the surveys are used by inspectors as part of preparation for inspection. Further information about the point-in-time surveys is available in Annex E.
22. Some schools do not use the online pupils' survey and instead circulate a culturally adapted version of the survey in hard copy, the responses to which will be available to the inspectors on arrival at the school.
23. The views of the staff at independent schools are gathered through a questionnaire, which the ISP 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 an online point-in-time survey.
24. 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.

Duties of the inspection service provider

25. The ISP will provide the appropriate inspection forms in advance of the inspection, via their secure inspection portal. These will include evidence forms, a pre-populated *Independent school standards compliance record* and the *Report template for standard inspections of independent schools*.
26. The ISP will also make the following documents available through their inspection portal: the annual school census return data; and the previous inspection report(s), including the most recent welfare report in schools with residential provision, the most recent childcare report for schools with registered childcare, and any other reports such as a progress monitoring or emergency inspection report on the school, if relevant. The last welfare report must be uploaded even when the education provision of a boarding or residential special school will be inspected as a single event. Where the education provision of a school with dual registration as a children's home will be inspected, either as a single event or at the same time as the care provision, the ISP must ensure that the previous inspection on the care provision is uploaded to the portal.
27. The analysis of responses to Ofsted's point-in-time surveys for pupils and, where applicable, boarders/residential pupils, boarding staff and placing authorities must also be made available on the inspection portal; the analyses will have been provided to the ISP by Ofsted's inspection management and support team. The previously completed *Pre-registration regulatory check sheet*

and advice note must be provided for the first inspection of all newly registered independent schools.

28. In the case of integrated inspections, the ISP must provide the social care inspector/s as well as the education inspector/s with access to the inspection portal. The social care inspector will access additional information about the school through the regulatory support application (RSA).

Notification and introduction

29. The inspection service provider's (ISP) administrator will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection around lunchtime on the day before the inspection is due to start. The inspection will normally start in the early afternoon of the following day.
30. Where it transpires that a school is no longer operating, the ISP should contact the relevant regional senior HMI for independent schools, who will check whether the DfE requires an inspection to be carried out to ascertain whether or not the school is still operating. If the inspection will go ahead to check whether or not the school is still operating, the inspection event will need to be changed to an emergency inspection. The guidance in *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools* should be followed.¹⁴
31. Ofsted may conduct standard inspections without notice. Where the inspection is conducted without notice, the lead inspector will normally telephone the school about 15 minutes before arriving on site. In this situation, the inspector will use this initial call to inform the school that the inspection is about to commence and will leave all other arrangements until arrival at the school.
32. If the headteacher is unavailable when the call is made to the school, the administrator should ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. The administrator should check that the school is open and that there are no special circumstances that would prevent the inspection from taking place (see paragraph 37). During the telephone call, the administrator should cover the points listed in Annex C.
33. The ISP will send a formal notification of inspection letter to the school (as an attachment to an email) on that same day.¹⁵ It will confirm the team details, dates and sets out the school documents that the inspectors will need to see during the inspection. Also attached to the email will be a copy of Ofsted's inspection questionnaire for the school's staff and a letter for the school to send

¹⁴ Please refer to the guidance in *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools* (090060), Ofsted, 2015; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090060.

¹⁵ The inspection service providers have been supplied with standard text to use in the covering email to schools, to ensure that schools receive a consistent message.

to the parents of all pupils inviting them to fill in Parent View. 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 online point-in-time survey. The ISP must copy the confirmation email to the lead inspector and to the lead boarding inspector in the case of an integrated inspection.

If a school cannot be contacted by the inspection service provider

34. In exceptional circumstances, it may prove difficult for the ISP to make contact with the school. In cases where the school has a telephone answering machine, the ISP should leave a message and state the time at which this message was left, keeping a note that they have done so. Where the telephone remains unanswered, the ISP should persevere, keeping a note of the times at which they tried to make contact with the school.
35. If the ISP has not managed to make contact by **2pm** on the day before the inspection, they will contact the relevant regional Senior HMI responsible for independent schools via the regional helpdesk. Normally, the Senior HMI will advise that the inspection will continue and that the ISP should continue to try and make contact with the school by telephone. If there continues to be no answer, the inspection will be undertaken as an unannounced inspection.
36. If a secure email address for the school is available from the last inspection report or the school's website, the ISP will email the formal notification of inspection letter and accompanying documents to it (see paragraph 33) whether or not they are able to make telephone contact with the school. Where one is not available, the lead inspector will seek confirmation of the school's email address on arrival at the school, and provide it to the ISP so that the documents can be supplied as soon as possible. The lead inspector will also give a paper copy of the inspection questionnaire for school staff and the letter for parents and carers to the school on arrival.

Requests for deferral

37. If a school requests a deferral of its inspection the inspection service provider must make Ofsted aware by contacting the Ofsted helpline number provided above at paragraph 14. Ofsted will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with its policy on the deferral of inspections.¹⁶ The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.

¹⁶ *Deferral policy for inspections of independent day, boarding and residential special schools* (090037), Ofsted, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferral-policy-for-inspections-of-independent-day-boarding-and-residential-special-schools.

The lead inspector's telephone call

38. The lead inspector should telephone the school on the morning of the inspection and ask to speak to the headteacher or, in the absence of the headteacher, the most senior member of staff available. This telephone call is the first opportunity to initiate a professional relationship between the lead inspector and the headteacher. It should be short and focused on practical issues, referring to Annex C of this document. Inspectors should not use this as an opportunity to probe or investigate the school's self-evaluation.

Liaising with the social care inspector

39. In the case of integrated inspections, once the lead inspector has spoken to the headteacher, they must briefly telephone the lead boarding inspector to confirm that the inspection is taking place and convey the estimated time of arrival.

During the inspection

The start of the on-site inspection

40. The lead inspector will start the on-site inspection during the afternoon of the first day and will use the time as they consider appropriate. This time can include regulatory checks, scrutiny of policies, records and pupils' work, meetings and some direct observations of teaching.
41. Inspectors must show their identity badges on arrival (these should be worn at all times during inspection) and ensure that the headteacher (or other senior member of staff) has been informed of their arrival.
42. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the proprietor, 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 proprietor, headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation 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 after lesson observations (see paragraphs 56–57)
 - request information about staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any lessons should not be observed, for example if a teacher is subject to capability procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in

capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

- ascertain how to access the policy documents and records required for the regulatory part of the inspection.

43. Where there are other education inspectors on the team, not present during the afternoon of day 1, they must arrive at the start of the second day. A short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities, the initial areas to be explored and individual roles and responsibilities.

Gathering and recording evidence

44. Inspectors must spend as much time as possible gathering evidence on teaching and learning, observing in lessons, scrutinising work (including in pupils' books and folders), talking to pupils about their work, gauging both their understanding and their engagement in learning, and obtaining pupils' perceptions of typical teaching.
45. Inspectors must also allocate sufficient time to check whether the school meets all of the The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.¹⁷ Compliance with each of the independent school standards and other regulatory requirements must be recorded in the *Independent school standards compliance record (ISS record)* by inserting a 'tick' in the relevant box for each standard, together with sufficient text to provide the detailed evidence of any non-compliance.¹⁸ Inspectors must be diligent in recording their evidence of non-compliance in the *ISS record*, ensuring that the record is clear and legible and that all relevant sections of the form are completed. The *ISS record* forms part of the evidence base which is scrutinised by the quality assurance reader.
46. With the exception of regulatory compliance, all other evidence must be recorded on evidence forms (EFs). Inspectors must record their evidence clearly and legibly on EFs, ensuring that all relevant sections of the form are completed for all evidence-gathering activities. This includes records of analyses of data and the evidence that underpins key judgements. EFs should also be used to summarise the main points of discussion when feeding back to leaders and governors.
47. EFs may be scrutinised for the purposes of retrieval and quality assurance monitoring and in the event of a complaint. It is important that inspectors record accurately the time spent gathering the evidence recorded on the EF.

¹⁷ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made.

¹⁸ Inspectors should refer to the internal training document *Inspecting against the independent school standards*, which is available on the Ofsted intranet site.

Inspectors should highlight or identify any information that was provided 'in confidence'.

48. All evidence forms must be passed to the lead inspector for inclusion in the inspection evidence base.

Lesson observations

49. The key objectives of lesson observations are to evaluate the quality of teaching over time and its contribution to learning and achievement, and to assess the behaviour and safety of pupils and the impact of leadership and management in the classroom. When inspectors carry out observations in lessons, **they should not grade the quality of teaching for that individual session** or indeed the overall quality of the lesson. Where there is sufficient evidence, inspectors will grade the other key judgements: achievement; behaviour and safety; and leadership and management. For short observations, inspectors might not award grades.
50. Inspectors must not advocate a particular method of planning, teaching or assessment. They will not look for a preferred methodology but must record aspects of teaching that are effective and identify ways in which teaching and learning can be improved.
51. Through lesson observations and subsequent discussions with senior staff and teachers, inspectors should ensure that they:
 - judge the accuracy of teachers' and leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning
 - gather evidence about how well individual pupils and particular groups of pupils are learning, gaining knowledge and understanding, and making progress, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, and the most able
 - collect sufficient evidence to support detailed and specific recommendations about any improvements needed to teaching and learning, behaviour and safety, and leadership and management.
52. Inspectors will not expect teachers to prepare lesson plans for the inspection. However, they will use the evidence gathered from lesson observations to help judge the overall quality of the school's curriculum planning.
53. Lead inspectors should use their professional judgement to plan appropriate lesson observations. For example, inspectors may engage in:
 - short visits to a number of lessons, spending a few minutes in each
 - short observations of small group teaching, for example of phonics
 - lesson observations of more than 25 minutes, during which they may observe activities and talk with pupils about their work

- tracking a class or specific group of pupils to assess their experience of a school day or part of a school day – inspectors may identify a class or classes that contain one or more pupils from the specific groups identified in the pre-inspection analysis. In this way, the experience, progress and learning of these pupils can be judged within the context of other pupils' experience.
- 54. Joint observations carried out with the headteacher and/or senior staff may be part of lesson observation within any of these approaches. Not all teachers will necessarily be observed. This will be the case in most inspections of large schools.
- 55. The lead inspector should share the lesson observation strategy with the inspection team and ensure that the school clearly understands the rationale for it. Lesson observations should cover a range of subjects, key stages and ability groups. The school should not normally be informed in advance about the lessons to be observed.

Feedback and discussion with teachers and other staff

- 56. With the exception of joint observations, where feedback is given by the headteacher or senior member of staff, inspectors must offer feedback to teachers. In many cases, it may be more effective for inspectors to provide an evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement to teachers at programmed times. Therefore, feedback may, at the discretion of inspectors, take a variety of forms, such as one to one, with groups of observed teachers, or to whole staff groups.
- 57. When giving feedback to teachers following lesson observations, inspectors should **not** provide an overall grade for the lesson or for the quality of teaching (numerically or in words). If asked, inspectors should provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of what they have observed. Inspectors must ensure that this feedback does not constitute a view about whether the teacher is a 'good' teacher or otherwise, or indeed whether the quality of teaching itself was 'good' or otherwise, as neither of these will be graded. The feedback given is provided in confidence and staff should be clearly advised that it may not be used by the school for performance management purposes.

Participation of the headteacher or senior staff in joint lesson observations

- 58. The lead inspector should invite the proprietor, headteacher or a senior member of staff to take part in joint lesson observations. After a joint observation, the inspector and headteacher or senior member of staff must discuss their views about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning they have observed. This might include observing the headteacher or other senior member of staff feeding back to the observed teacher. The inspector should observe the feedback, as this may provide evidence about the standard of discussion about teacher practice in the school and the

effectiveness of the school's arrangements for professional development and performance management. If the headteacher or senior member of staff offers a written record, the inspector should consider this. Any differences in the analysis of the lesson and the judgements should be explored. The joint observation and subsequent discussion will allow the inspector to engage in a professional dialogue with the headteacher or senior member of staff. It will also enable the inspector to:

- assess the accuracy and quality of the school's evaluation of teaching
- collect evidence in order to make specific recommendations about further improvements to teaching and learning
- discuss the effectiveness of the school's performance management arrangements and professional development programme for teaching staff
- help the headteacher to understand the evaluations inspectors are making on the of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and how it might be improved.

59. The lead inspector should be mindful not to overload the headteacher and/or senior member of staff and should also be aware of the potential impact on pupils' behaviour of the presence of an additional member of staff in a classroom. The number of joint observations will be at the discretion of the lead inspector.
60. The inspector should complete an EF on the lesson observed and the feedback provided by the headteacher or senior member of staff. Any notes taken by the headteacher or senior member of staff should remain in the school; they are not included within the evidence base for the inspection.

Inspecting the impact of the teaching of literacy including reading¹⁹

61. Literacy includes the key skills of reading, writing and oral communication that enable pupils to access different areas of the curriculum.
62. Inspectors will consider the impact of the teaching of literacy and the outcomes across the range of the school's provision. They will use the evidence they gather to inform the overall evaluation of pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the impact of leadership and management on raising standards. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the school intervenes to provide support for improving pupils' literacy, especially those pupils at risk of underachieving.

¹⁹ Please refer to the guidance for inspectors: *Getting them reading early* (110122), Ofsted 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/getting-them-reading-early.

63. During the inspections of schools with primary-aged pupils, inspectors must listen to children reading; among others, they should listen to lower-attaining pupils reading and should discuss their reading with them. Inspectors will hear the weakest readers in Key Stage 1 and later years. There may be occasions when inspectors need to hear lower-attaining pupils read in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools. This is to find out how effectively the school is teaching reading to its weakest readers and to assess whether the pupils are equipped with the phonic strategies needed to tackle unfamiliar words.
64. Inspectors should decide which pupils they will listen to, taking into account the school's progress 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.
65. Wherever possible, inspectors should listen to children reading within a classroom or in an open area with which pupils are familiar.

Inspecting the teaching of mathematics²⁰

66. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school's work in mathematics through the analysis of performance 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. The national curriculum for mathematics²¹ specifies the aims and then states, 'The

²⁰ Please refer to *Mathematics: made to measure* (110159), Ofsted 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110159.

²¹ The national curriculum for mathematics.

expectation is that the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at the same pace.'

- develops depth of understanding and readiness for the next stage. The national curriculum 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.
- how well pupils apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects in the curriculum, where appropriate.

Other observations

67. Inspectors must ensure that they observe pupils in a range of situations outside normal lessons to evaluate other aspects of behaviour and safety, 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.

The use of data on inspection

68. Inspectors should use a range of data to judge a school's performance, including that found in examination or key stage results where available. No single measure or indicator determines judgements, particularly since much data are historical and relate to pupils that have left the school. Inspectors should use a range of data to judge a school's performance, including examination or key stage results where available, and internal assessments. No single measure or indicator determines judgements, particularly since much of the data may be historical and relate to pupils that have left the school. Inspectors should note that the introduction of an early entry policy and changes in GCSE examination structure have had an impact on the 2014 Key Stage 4 results. The changes should be taken into account when considering results alongside those of previous years, as neither direct comparisons nor

production of three-year trends are possible. Details are provided in *School inspection update*.²²

69. The data, including that provided by the school, should be used to:
- check the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils' progress and attainment levels, particularly where there are no externally marked test or examination results
 - check the robustness and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, particularly on achievement, teaching, and behaviour and safety.

Meetings with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders

70. Inspectors **must** take advantage of opportunities to gather evidence from a wide range of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged, those who are receiving other forms of support and the most able. This can be gathered, for example, in formal meetings and informally before and after school, at lunchtime and during break or play times. During informal conversations with pupils, inspectors must ask them about their experiences of learning and behaviour in the school, including bullying. When engaging with pupils in lessons, inspectors should be mindful not to disrupt the flow of teaching and any activities taking place.
71. As well as meeting pupils, inspectors are highly likely to conduct meetings with:
- parents (these may be informal at the start and end of the day or through telephone conversations, especially of parents whose children are boarders)
 - staff
 - or other stakeholders.
72. These meetings must take place without the presence of the proprietor, headteacher or senior staff. In drawing on evidence from meetings with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders, every endeavour must be made not to identify individuals. There may, however, be circumstances in which it is not possible to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee. Inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures which raise child protection or safeguarding issues and/or where there are concerns about serious misconduct or criminal activity.
73. Inspectors must also have regard to their own safety and exercise caution in setting up interviews for example with vulnerable pupils in circumstances which could potentially put the inspector at risk if they are alone.

²² www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-inspection-update-newsletter.

Meeting with those with responsibility for governance

74. Inspectors will always seek to meet with the proprietor and those in leadership and governance positions during the course of the inspection.
75. Inspectors will expect those with responsibility for governance to know about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Inspectors will expect school governors to be familiar with and understand information available regarding the school's performance.
76. The contribution of governors to the school is evaluated as part of the judgement on leadership and management. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils, parents and staff, meetings with governors should take place without the presence of the proprietor, headteacher or senior staff.

Reviewing evidence from parents and other stakeholders

77. Inspectors will review the evidence from Parent View and any other evidence from parents throughout the inspection, to ensure that all online responses received during the inspection are taken into account. Where individual parents raise serious issues, these should be followed up with the school and the school's response recorded.
78. Inspectors must also have regard to the views of pupils and staff, including those provided through the staff questionnaire, when making their judgements. Data from surveys of pupils or staff should be corroborated with other evidence where possible.
79. During integrated inspections of boarding or residential special schools, social care inspectors will take account of the views that parents have given on Parent View about the school's boarding or residential provision. Views of boarders or residential pupils and boarding staff will have been gathered through Ofsted's annual point-in-time surveys.²³

Inspecting off-site provision

80. Inspectors may wish to speak to key partners who work with the school. They should make every effort to telephone or meet with those institutions where pupils are taught off-site to help assess the school's quality assurance arrangements. They must evaluate the rigour with which the school monitors the attendance, behaviour, learning and progress of pupils that receive alternative provision.

²³ See *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools-guidance-for-inspectors.

Performance management and professional development

81. Inspectors should consider how effectively senior leaders use performance management and the school's self-evaluation (if available) to focus professional development activities. This should include:
- how effectively the school is developing its middle and senior leaders and planning for succession
 - an analysis of the impact of professional development on teaching, and on specific teachers
 - scrutiny of anonymised information on the performance management of teaching staff, and its relationship to salary progression, provided to those responsible for the governance of the school
 - information about the performance management of the headteacher
 - information provided during discussions with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders, and other staff
 - scrutiny of the school's records of how leaders and managers evaluate the quality of teaching
 - evidence of improvements in teaching over time and improvement in systems for tracking, monitoring and analysing the impact of teaching on progress
 - scrutiny of the school's records on, and evaluation of, professional development
 - analysis of information from staff questionnaires, where available.
82. Inspectors must assess the effectiveness of the support for teachers who are new to the profession and/or new to the school.

How the headteacher or representative is involved in the 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 and learning, and enable further evidence to be provided
 - allow the headteacher to raise concerns, including those related to the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors
 - alert the headteacher to any serious concerns, such as the arrangements to safeguard children or health and safety.
84. The outcomes of all meetings with the headteacher should be recorded on an EF.

85. The lead inspector should ensure that the executive headteacher or equivalent, where such an arrangement exists, is invited to make a contribution to the inspection.

Team meetings held during the inspection

86. If the inspection merits more than one inspector, the inspection team should meet briefly at different points during the course of the inspection. In particular, the team should:
- meet briefly at lunchtime on day one
 - meet at the end of day one to discuss emerging findings (the headteacher should be invited)
 - meet at the end of day two to finalise judgements and identify areas for improvement (the headteacher should be invited)
 - record the outcomes of all team meetings on EFs.
87. As soon as there is evidence that the school may be judged as inadequate, the lead inspector should alert the headteacher to this possibility. It **must** be emphasised that final judgements are not made until the final team meeting at the end of the final on site day.

Reaching final judgements

88. Inspection activity, including lesson observations, should continue throughout the final 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. There also should be sufficient time planned for the team to meet, to consider the evidence available, and make final judgements. Final judgement grades should be recorded and key points for feedback should be identified as the meeting progresses.

Providing feedback to the school

89. Following the end of the inspection, there must be a feedback meeting that should include the proprietor and headteacher where possible. The feedback meeting should include as many representatives from the governing body, or those responsible for governance, as possible. It is for the lead inspector to decide, following discussion with the headteacher, whether other senior staff should be present.
90. The lead inspector should explain to those present that the purpose of the feedback session is to share the main findings of the inspection and recommendations for improvement. The lead inspector must make clear that inspection outcomes are restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the school) and that they must remain so until the school receives the final report. Governors and others may seek clarification

about the judgements. An EF should be completed by an inspector summarising the key points raised at the feedback and how these were addressed.

91. In the event that the headteacher has declined, or has been unable to take up, the opportunities to engage with the inspection team, the lead inspector should prepare a more extended formal feedback meeting. In such circumstances, the lead inspector should inform the headteacher of the main findings, including any standards not met in advance of the extended formal feedback meeting.
92. Before leaving, the lead inspector must ensure that the school is clear:
 - about the grades awarded for each key judgement
 - that the grades are provisional and may be subject to 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 they must not be shared under any circumstances; information about the inspection outcomes should only be shared when the school receives a copy of the final inspection report
 - about the independent school standards met/not met
 - that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report
 - about the recommendations for improvement
 - that the inspection process is not complete until the report is published and that until publication any findings are provisional and subject to quality assurance and moderation
 - that, on receipt of the draft report, it 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 school is invited and encouraged to complete the post-inspection survey
 - about (where relevant) the implications of the school being judged inadequate
 - about the procedure for making a complaint about the inspection.

Integrated inspections of education and boarding or residential provision

93. In boarding or residential special schools, the social care inspector begins to inspect in the afternoon of the first day of the inspection and must use 'boarding time' during the first evening to talk to young people in the boarding or residential accommodation.

94. Lead inspectors are advised to consider the timing of team meetings in schools with boarding/residential provision so that the social care inspector is available to join those meetings. It is important that their findings contribute to all key and overall judgements about the school.
95. 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 inspector during boarding time so that they can gain a full picture of provision at the school. This is particularly important in assessing behaviour and safety and the strength of the links between the day school and boarding provision. Further details can be found in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*.²⁴

Aligned inspections of independent schools with dual registration as children's homes

96. 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.²⁵ Where possible, Ofsted will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence.
97. 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.
98. Where the education and children's homes inspections are aligned, both inspectors should work together to share evidence. The lead education inspector should contact the social care inspector in advance to discuss the inspection. The social care 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 inspector any issues arising from the pre-inspection evidence or the initial telephone call to the school.

²⁴ *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools-guidance-for-inspectors.

²⁵ 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 April 2014* (100195), Ofsted, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework.

99. Throughout the inspection, inspectors should share the evidence that is required by them both in order to make the judgements required to fulfil 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 judgements with one another to ensure that their judgements match up, and that any inconsistencies are justified and clear to the school and the children's home.
100. 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 which is covered in both inspection schedules.
101. 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 group providers

102. Where education is provided in children's homes that are members of a group or company of schools which is registered as a single education provider, Ofsted will make separate arrangements to inspect the group provision as a whole, taking account of each of the settings. To be eligible for these arrangements the group must share common policies, procedures, records and teaching arrangements, and all of the settings must be in reasonable geographical proximity. The group must be registered as a single education provider. The registration is at the discretion of the DfE. The DfE, as the registration authority, may take other matters into consideration, such as the outcome of previous education or care inspections of individual settings in the group. Specific inspection arrangements will be matched to the provision made by each group.
103. The DfE will inform Ofsted of the registration of a group provider. The relevant regional Senior HMI for independent schools will arrange a meeting with the group's director of education. The meeting will review the nature of the group provision, the location of all settings and the arrangements made for care and education by the group. The meeting will also cover the specific inspection requirements, such as the number of days and size of the team needed to cover all settings, and the expertise required by the inspection team. The arrangements will vary between groups, but it is expected that the size of the inspection team will be sufficient to inspect all settings, for team meetings to occur and for feedback to be given to the group as a whole within a single week. The meeting between the Senior HMI and the education director will occur at a separate time in advance of the inspection and outside the normal notification period. After the meeting the Senior HMI will discuss and finalise

scheduling and tariff requirements and discuss these with the relevant ISP remit lead for independent school inspections and the lead inspector.

104. The lead inspector will be allocated two planning days in advance of the inspection to ensure that the more complex aspects of coordinating the team's inspection can be fully planned. The lead inspector should prepare a detailed plan and briefing for the team, indicating the locations and telephone numbers of all the settings and a list of those to be inspected by each inspector, together with an indication of the time they should spend in each location. The lead inspector must ensure that sufficient time is planned for travel between the settings, particularly if they are some distance apart, or if travel is required at peak times. The briefing must include a clear focus of activity for each inspector and their role in the inspection. The briefing should be recorded, made available to all team members, and included in the evidence base for the inspection.
105. Each setting must be seen, even where there are currently no young people in residence or being educated. Where there are currently no young people, the inspector must check that the accommodation and premises are suitable, and look at any individual records or procedures that are relevant to that setting.
106. The lead inspector must plan for inspectors to observe a range of teaching staff, without overburdening any one individual, so that the inspection team covers a variety of subjects, teachers and young people in the group in order to make reliable judgements about teaching and learning and the achievements the pupils make. Where it is possible to do so, inspection efficiencies should be built into the plan, so that group records, for example of pupils' progress, or staff recruitment files, may be looked at centrally.
107. The lead inspector must ensure that sufficient time is planned for all team inspectors to meet and discuss their findings and to contribute to the main inspection judgements of the whole group provision. Team meetings should weigh carefully the evidence from all settings to reach balanced and clear overall judgements. However, while there may be variations between settings and the response of young people may be different in each, all settings must meet the independent school standards, particularly for premises, welfare, health and safety, for the group provision to meet the standards overall.
108. In all other respects the normal inspection arrangements for notification, gathering stakeholders' views and conducting the inspection and feedback will apply. Such an inspection will result in a single report. The individual settings should be referred to in the report by their social care reference numbers only. For further guidance on inspection reports for group providers, please refer to

the *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions*.²⁶

Conducting an additional inspection as part of a standard inspection

109. The Department for Education 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 unmet independent school standards, or a complaint or other issue about a school, as part of a standard inspection.
110. Similarly, if a commission for an additional inspection from the DfE is received by Ofsted, and Ofsted has already scheduled a standard inspection to take place in the same or next term or so, the relevant regional senior HMI for independent schools will recommend to the DfE that the additional inspection be carried out as part of the standard inspection.
111. The 'additional matters' will be considered as part of the standard inspection, and reported to the DfE in the report and ISS compliance record for the standard inspection. Guidance for conducting an additional inspection as part of a standard inspection is available in *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*.²⁷

Inadequate schools

112. 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 must complete *Form A – initial advice to the registration authority that an independent school is not complying with the independent school standards* (Form A). The Form A must be uploaded to the ISP's portal, as soon as possible, and by the end of the writing day at the latest.
113. 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 which require most urgent attention.

²⁶ *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions* – internal training document which is available on the Ofsted intranet site. ,

²⁷ *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools* (090060), Ofsted, 2015; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090060.

114. The inspection service provider will send the completed Form A to the independent school remit team (independentschools@ofsted.gov.uk) as soon as possible, who will forward it to the relevant regional Senior HMI for independent schools.
115. On receipt, the Senior HMI will consider the information provided on the form and may, at that stage, hold a discussion with the lead inspector. The Senior HMI will return the completed form to the independent school remit team (independentschools@ofsted.gov.uk) as soon as possible, who will forward the form to the DfE.
116. Children's homes are registered, inspected and regulated by Ofsted. If any national minimum standards for children's homes are not met or any aspect is found to be inadequate Ofsted, as the registration authority, will take steps to follow up on this.

Reporting on evidence or allegations of child abuse

117. 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 maintained schools and academies*.²⁸ Inspectors should not attempt to investigate the incident.

After the inspection

Arrangements for publication of the report

118. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the whole of the inspection report and finalising the *Independent school standards compliance record* on the day after the inspection ends.²⁹
119. There are two timelines for the publication of reports, which are available at Annex B of this document.

²⁸ *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* (140143), Ofsted, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections. For the purpose of independent school inspections, all references to the *School inspection handbook* contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* should be considered to refer instead to the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook*. Any references to meeting relevant regulations and duties contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* are considered to include the requirement for independent schools to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

²⁹ Inspectors should refer to the internal training document *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions*, which is available on the Ofsted intranet site. The guidance for writing an integrated report on a boarding or residential special school is in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*. Lead education inspectors **must** refer to this document.

120. Normally, for day schools judged as requires improvement, good or outstanding, the ISP will forward an electronic version of the draft report to the school for a factual accuracy check around five working days after the end of the inspection (the draft report is restricted and confidential, as outlined in paragraph 92). The school has one working day to respond about any factual errors. The lead inspector will respond to the school's comments about factual accuracy.³⁰

121. Normally, day schools judged as requires improvement, good or outstanding will normally receive an electronic version of the final report within 10 working days of the end of the on-site inspection.

122. In the case of reports:

- following integrated inspections of boarding and residential special schools, judged outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate
- following aligned inspections of schools with dual registration as children's homes, judged outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate
- of day schools judged as inadequate

the ISP will normally forward an electronic version of the draft report to the school for a factual accuracy check around 16 working days after the end of the inspection (the draft report is restricted and confidential, as outlined in paragraph 92). The school has one working day in which to respond about any factual errors. We normally send an electronic version of the final version of the report to the school around 20 working days after the on-site inspection.

123. From time to time, all reports are quality assured and published using the 25 day timeline shown on page 91. This might be, for example, to enable Ofsted to gain a more detailed understanding of the quality of inspection reports.

124. Paragraph 32(1)(d) of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requires the proprietor to ensure that a copy of the inspection report is provided to the 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.

³⁰ If there should be a grade change or the text of a report has been subject to significant amendments made after the school has completed its factual accuracy check, the lead inspector should talk this through with the headteacher.

125. HMCI 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.
126. The final version of the report will be published on Ofsted's website.

The evidence base for the inspection

127. The lead inspector is responsible for sending the evidence base, which should include the top copies of all evidence forms, including any completed by the social care inspector in the case of integrated inspections, and any additional notes or hard copies of completed questionnaires by post to the inspection service provider within five days of the end of the inspection. The evidence base for the inspection needs to be retained for the period of time specified in Ofsted's *Handling and retention of inspection evidence* guidance.³¹

Quality assurance and complaints

How are inspections quality assured?

128. Responsibility for assuring the quality of the inspection and the subsequent report lies with Ofsted. The lead inspector is expected to set clear expectations for the team and ensure that those expectations are met. The lead inspector must ensure that all judgements are supported by evidence and that the way in which the inspection is conducted meets the expected standard.
129. All inspections are subject to internal quality assurance and some are quality assured by HMI and/or senior ISP managers. When an external quality assurance visit is scheduled, the lead inspector should explain clearly the purpose and likely format of the visit during the initial telephone conversation with the headteacher.

What happens if a school has a concern or complaint during the inspection?

130. If a school raises a concern or complaint during the course of an inspection, the lead inspector should seek to resolve it. It is often easier to resolve issues on the spot and this helps to avoid formal complaints later.
131. The publication of an inspection report will only be delayed by a complaint where there are exceptional circumstances.

³¹ *Handling and retention of inspection evidence* (100122), Ofsted, 2010;
www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-and-retention-of-ofsted-inspection-evidence.

132. If it has not been possible to resolve the concerns, then individuals or schools may decide to lodge a formal complaint. The complaints procedures are available on Ofsted's website.³²

³² www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure.

Part B: The evaluation schedule – how schools will be judged

133. The evaluation schedule sets out the sources of evidence, grade descriptors and independent school standards that guide inspectors in judging the quality of education provided by the schools they inspect. The schedule is not exhaustive and does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors make their judgements by using professional expertise to interpret the evidence in the light of the guidance and within the context of each school.
134. The evaluation schedule must be used in conjunction with the guidance set out in part 1 of this document and *The framework for inspecting non-association independent schools*. Inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to pupils' age, stage and phase of education.

References to the independent school standards

135. In the published regulations, each independent school standard is set out in one or more paragraphs. For example, paragraph 12 is a standard in its own right, and paragraph 5(a) is an element of the standard in paragraph 5. However, for the purpose of this guidance document, the term 'compliance with the standard' is used in the context of both examples shown above.

Judging overall effectiveness: the quality of education provided in the school

136. Inspectors must judge **the overall effectiveness** of the school; this is the **final and overarching judgement** and it is explained in the next section.
137. Inspectors should **first** make the key judgements on:
- the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school
 - the quality of teaching in the school
 - the achievement of pupils at the school.
138. In making these judgements, inspectors will consider the extent to which the school meets the independent school standards. Compliance with relevant standards informs the judgements as set-out in the grade descriptors below, and in Annex F.
139. In coming to each of these key judgements, inspectors will also draw on evidence from inspection of any **early years or sixth form provision** and consider its impact.
140. Inspectors should then judge **the effectiveness** of any early years or sixth form provision, taking into account compliance with the standards. For either (or both) cases, inspectors must report a numerical grade and write sections in

the inspection report that summarise the key findings and explain the effectiveness grading. Early years and sixth form provision grades may be higher or lower than the overall effectiveness grade; inspectors should explain any variation between the grades in the report text. The early years and sixth form provision grades may not determine, but could influence, the key judgements, including on leadership and management, and in turn the school's overall effectiveness.

141. Inspectors then make the key judgement on the quality of leadership in and management of the school. In making this judgement, inspectors must take into account the extent to which the school meets all paragraphs of the independent school standards. They will also take into proportionate account any significant issues in the quality of early years or sixth form provision that may reflect on the quality of leadership and management of the school as a whole.
142. Before making the final judgement on the overall effectiveness, inspectors must also evaluate:
 - the effectiveness and impact of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - the extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school and in particular the needs of:
 - pupils who have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010
 - pupils who have special educational needs.
143. Inspection is primarily about evaluating how well individual pupils benefit from the education provided by their school. It is important to test the school's response to individual needs by observing how well it helps all pupils to make progress and fulfil their potential. It may be relevant to pay particular attention to the achievement of:
 - disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
 - those with protected characteristics, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children,³³ as defined by the Equality Act 2010
 - boys
 - girls
 - the highest and lowest attainers
 - disadvantaged pupils, including:

³³ Pupils with protected characteristics and other groups of pupils may include: pupils for whom English is an additional language; minority ethnic pupils; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils; lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils; transgender pupils; young carers; and other vulnerable groups.

- looked after children
- those attending alternative provision.

144. In judging the school's overall effectiveness, inspectors consider whether:

- the standard of education is good (grade 2), or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged outstanding (grade 1)
- the school requires improvement as even though it may meet all of the independent school standards it is not a good school because one or more of the four judgements requires improvement (grade 3), and/or there are weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; any independent school standards that are not met will be judged by inspectors to be minor, easy to rectify, and to not have a serious impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development
- the school is inadequate (grade 4) as there are one or more un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) which 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.

Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

145. The DfE has published non-statutory advice *Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils – Departmental advice for independent schools and academies/free schools to help independent schools understand their obligations under the standards relating to a school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.*³⁴ 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 students).

146. In addition to checking compliance with part 2 of the independent school standards, inspectors will take the following guidance into account.

147. The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values

³⁴ *Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils – Departmental advice for independent schools and academies/free schools*, Department for Education; www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools.

- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

148. The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, readily apply this understanding in their own lives and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and being able to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

149. The social development of pupils is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

150. The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity, and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their

tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Grade descriptors – overall effectiveness: the quality of education provided in the school

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach, which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team. The exception is that teaching must be outstanding for overall effectiveness to be outstanding.

The quality of any early years or sixth form provision should be taken into account as explained in paragraphs 139 and 140.

Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- Teaching is outstanding and, together with a rich, relevant curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement, significant growth in students' knowledge, and excellent attitudes to learning. Exceptionally, achievement may be good and rapidly improving.
- Pupils and particular groups of pupils have excellent educational experiences at school and these ensure that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- There is excellent practice which ensures that all pupils have high levels of literacy and mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age.³⁵
- The school's practice consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Best practice is spread effectively in a drive for continuous improvement.
- Other principal aspects of the school's work are good or outstanding.
- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical wellbeing enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community.

Good (2)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is at least good. This leads to growth in pupils' knowledge, promotes very positive attitudes to learning and ensures that pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils and particular groups of pupils have highly positive educational experiences at school that ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- Pupils' progress is not held back by an inability to read accurately and fluently, or to use their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. Those pupils who have fallen behind are being helped to make substantial and sustained progress in their reading.
- The school takes effective action to enable most pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to reach their potential.
- Other principal aspects of the school's work are likely to be at least good.

³⁵ Pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their literacy skills are likely to be limited make excellent progress appropriate to their age and capabilities.

- Deliberate and effective action is taken to create a cohesive learning community through the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their physical well-being. There is a positive climate for learning.

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.
- The school requires improvement because one or more of the four key judgements requires improvement (grade 3) and/or there are weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Inadequate (4)

- There are one or more un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) which 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.

The school is likely to be inadequate if inspectors judge **any** of the following to be inadequate:

- the achievement of pupils
- pupils' progress in literacy
- the quality of teaching
- the behaviour and safety of pupils
- the quality of the leadership in and management of the school

and/or

- there are serious weaknesses in the overall promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or their physical well-being, so that pupils are intolerant of others and/or reject any of the core values fundamental to life in modern Britain.

Quality of leadership in and management of the school

151. Inspection must examine the impact of leaders at all levels, including, where relevant, the work of the proprietor or governors, and evaluate how efficiently and effectively the school is led and managed. This should include considering the implications of any strengths or weaknesses in early years or sixth form provision. Where schools are making an effective contribution to improving the performance of other schools, this will be noted by inspectors but should not inform the judgement on the leadership and management.
152. Inspectors should pay particular attention to the contribution being made by the headteacher and ensure that they give sufficient credit where a headteacher is bringing about improvement in a school.
153. Inspectors must take into account the extent to which the school meets all paragraphs of the independent school standards. In order to meet the standard in part 8 (quality of leadership in and management of schools), the school must meet all of the standards in parts 1–7.
154. Inspectors should consider how well leaders, managers and those in governance roles **pursue excellence, modelling professional standards in all of their work**, for example through:
- the creation of a culture of high expectations and aspirations and scholastic excellence in which the highest achievement in academic work is recognised as vitally important
 - having the highest expectations for social behaviour among the pupils and staff, so that respect and courtesy are the norm
 - the rigorous implementation of well-focused improvement plans which are based on robust self-evaluation
 - the consistent application of policies and procedures, in particular in relation to reading, writing and mathematics
 - the extent to which pupils, parents and staff are committed to the vision and ambition of leaders, managers and governors
 - the establishment of an orderly and hardworking school community.
155. Inspectors should consider the effectiveness of **monitoring and evaluation** and the extent to which it is shared with those in governance roles. This includes monitoring and evaluation of:
- the quality of teaching and the achievement and progress of all groups of pupils, relative to other schools nationally
 - the performance of the school, including, if applicable, the school's sixth form and/or early years provision
 - the satisfaction of pupils, parents and placing authorities.

156. Inspectors should evaluate how well leaders use formative and summative **assessment** to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents know if pupils are achieving the expected standard or if they need to catch up. Inspectors should consider how well:
- assessment information, including test results, is used by leaders and governors to improve teaching and the curriculum
 - leaders ensure the accuracy of assessment through internal and external standardisation and moderation
 - schools adopt the best practice of working together to moderate assessment for year groups and the end of key stages, and come to a common understanding of attainment and share records at points of transfer (within the context of the revised common transfer file).
157. In evaluating the effectiveness of reporting on pupils' progress and achievements, inspectors will assess the way the school reports on the progress and attainment of pupils to parents and carers. Inspectors will consider whether reports help parents to understand how well their children are doing in relation to any standards expected and how they can improve.
158. Inspectors see a range of curricula across schools. Schools may develop their own curriculum to respond to the particular needs of their pupils and ensure that they all achieve their potential. Inspectors should verify that good teaching within a broad and balanced curriculum, accompanied by effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is helping to prepare children and young people for life in modern Britain.
159. Inspectors should consider how well leadership and management ensure that the curriculum:
- meets paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) of the independent school standards
 - is broad and balanced and provides a wide range of subjects, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in modern Britain; inspectors should not expect to see a particular range of subjects but should be alert to any unexplained narrowness in the breadth of curriculum being offered by the school
 - actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - focuses on the necessary priorities for ensuring that all pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - promotes high levels of achievement and good behaviour
 - links to the school's system of assessment and that together they set out what pupils are expected to know, understand and do, and when

- information about what is taught in the curriculum each year is shared with parents and carers, meeting the requirement in paragraph 32(1)(b) of the independent school standards
- meets all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards
- promotes tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations (and other groups with protected characteristics³⁶) through the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, including through the extent to which schools engage their pupils in extra-curricular activity and volunteering within their local community
- is effectively planned and taught
- does not compromise pupils' achievement, success or progression by inappropriately early entry to public examinations, for example in mathematics
- is based at Key Stage 4 on an appropriate balance between academic and vocational courses that is appropriate for the pupils
- provides timely independent information, advice and guidance to assist pupils on their next steps in training, education or employment

160. Inspectors should consider how effectively pupils are grouped within lessons and across year groups. For example:

- where pupils are taught in mixed ability groups/classes, inspectors will consider whether the most able are stretched and the least able are supported sufficiently to reach their full potential
- where pupils are taught in sets, inspectors will consider how leaders ensure that pupils in lower sets are not disadvantaged or that teachers take into account that pupils within a set may still have very different needs.

161. Inspectors should explore:

- the extent to which the school has developed and implemented a strategy for ensuring that all pupils receiving secondary education receive effective **careers guidance**, meeting the requirement in paragraph 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii) of the independent school standards
- the impact of this guidance in helping young people to make informed choices about their next steps
- how well the school meets the needs of all vulnerable groups of pupils, including reducing the numbers who do not continue to education, employment or training

³⁶ As defined by the Equality Act 2010.

- how well the school works with families to support them in overcoming the cultural obstacles that often stand in the way of the most able pupils from deprived backgrounds attending university.
162. Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement. However, good intentions and an aspirational outlook, or a recent change of headteacher, following a period of poor leadership, do not in themselves provide sufficient proof of the capacity for further improvement. For example, inspectors should take account of:
- a track record of improvements in achievement and/or maintenance of high levels of achievement, with particular reference to disadvantaged pupils
 - improvements in the quality of teaching over time or the maintenance of good and outstanding teaching
 - rigorous self-evaluation that underpins actions and plans that are focused accurately on the areas requiring improvement
 - how effectively the school works in partnership with other schools, early years providers, external agencies and the community (including business) to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils
 - how effectively the school engages with and promotes the confidence of parents and placing authorities, including how well the school gathers, understands and responds to the views of parents.
163. Inspectors should consider the quality of **middle leadership** in the school and:
- the extent to which schools are adequately developing their middle leadership
 - succession planning and the development of future leaders in the school.
164. Inspectors should consider the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe.³⁷ This includes the:

³⁷ For full details, see *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* (140143), Ofsted, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections. For the purpose of independent school inspections, all references to the *School inspection handbook* contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* should be considered to refer instead to the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook*. Any references to meeting relevant regulations and duties contained in *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* are considered to include the requirement for independent schools to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- maintenance of the single central record and appropriate arrangements for child protection
- rigour with which absence is followed up, including appropriate checks when pupils cease attending
- effectiveness with which a school identifies any pupils who may be at risk, using a case study approach based on concerns about individual pupils that may have originated either inside or outside the school
- decision-making process involved in taking pupils off roll
- action taken following any serious incident
- effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils who are educated wholly or partly off-site at a unit run by the school or at alternative provision
- approach to keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and what is done when it is suspected that pupils are vulnerable to these
- promotion of safe practices and a culture of safety, including e-safety.

165. In reaching their judgement on leadership and management, inspectors should consider the school's use of **performance management** and effectiveness of strategies for improving teaching – this is demonstrated through:

- the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which underperformance is tackled
- a strong link between performance management and appraisal and salary progression
- how well the headteacher/principal and, where relevant, other senior staff are managing staff performance and using the staff budget to differentiate appropriately between high and low performers; however, inspectors should not consider or report on any individual's performance or on whether the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching of an individual is accurately reflected in that individual's progression on the salary spine
- the coherence and effectiveness of the programme of professional development, and the opportunities provided for promotion. Particular attention should be given to the extent to which professional development is based on the identified needs of staff and the needs of newly qualified teachers and teachers at an early stage of their career, and the involvement and impact of school leaders
- the accuracy with which best practice is identified, modelled and shared.

166. Where teachers' performance is less than good, inspectors will seek evidence that this is rigorously managed and that appropriate training and support are provided. Where teachers' performance is good, inspectors will expect to see evidence that this is recognised through the performance management process.

167. Inspectors must evaluate leaders' and managers' use of **alternative provision** through taking account of:

- how well the school identifies provision that matches pupils' needs and interests and enables them to gain appropriate knowledge and skills
- how well the school assesses the quality and safety of the provision
- the quality of information that the school gives to the alternative provider - for example about the pupil's special educational needs, behaviour and/or literacy levels
- how well the school monitors and evaluates pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, and intervenes to support pupils where needed
- the progress that pupils make while attending alternative provision
- whether any qualifications being taken are at the appropriate level
- the quality of support that pupils receive while attending the alternative provision.

168. Inspectors should consider whether those responsible for governance:

- carry out their statutory duties, such as safeguarding, and understand the boundaries of their role
- ensure that they and the school promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles; and support and help, through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community, to prepare children and young people positively for life in modern Britain
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, including long-term planning (for example, succession)
- contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and reviewing the impact of their own work
- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data
- assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process
- are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
- provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety, including by using progress data, examination outcomes and test results; or whether they hinder school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns or developing their own skills
- use resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics

- ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- are providing support for an effective headteacher
- monitor performance management systems and understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression , including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
- engage with key stakeholders including placing authorities
- are transparent and accountable, including in terms of recruitment of staff, governance structures, attendance at meetings, and contact with parents and carers.

Grade descriptors – Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- All of the requirements for good are met.
- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to strongly improve, or maintain, the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are highly ambitious for the pupils and lead by example. They base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance, and of staff and pupils' skills and attributes.
- Proprietors, governors, or those with a similar responsibility, stringently hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Excellent policies underpin practice that ensures that pupils have high levels of literacy, or pupils are making excellent progress in literacy.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning and provide focused professional development for all staff. This is underpinned by searching performance management that encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is at least consistently good and improving.
- The school's curriculum promotes and sustains a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. It covers a wide range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence. It has a very positive impact on all pupils' behaviour and safety, and contributes very well to pupils' academic achievement, their physical well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's actions have secured improvement in achievement for disadvantaged pupils, which is rising rapidly, including in English and mathematics.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and where appropriate, placing authorities to the benefit of pupils, including those who find working with the school difficult.
- Senior leaders in the school work to promote improvement across the wider system including, where applicable, with early years providers to raise the proportion of children who are well prepared to start school.
- Through highly effective, rigorous planning and controls, governors ensure financial stability, including the effective and efficient management of financial resources. This leads to the excellent deployment of staff and resources to the benefit of all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that early years and/or sixth form provision is highly effective.

Good (2)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- Key leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition.
- Teaching is good and/or improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the

needs of the school and staff.

- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and the school's actions are carefully planned, concerted and effective.
- Well thought out policies ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy.
- Proprietors, governors, or those in a similar position, systematically challenge senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved, or previous good performance in these areas has been consolidated.
- The school's curriculum encourages a thirst for knowledge and understanding and a love of learning. It is well organised and it demonstrates how pupils of all ages and aptitudes are to be challenged and supported. It covers a range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence. It contributes well to pupils' academic achievement, their physical well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes good behaviour and a good understanding of safety matters.
- The school's actions have secured improvement in achievement for disadvantaged pupils, which is rising, including in English and mathematics.
- The culture of the school is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all pupils.
- The school works well with parents and where appropriate placing authorities including those who might find working with the school difficult, to achieve positive benefits for pupils.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in identifying pupils at risk of harm and responding appropriately. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources. This leads to the effective deployment of staff and resources.
- Leaders work effectively with early years providers and other schools to ensure children's smooth transition into school.
- Leaders have ensured that early years and/or sixth form provision is effective.

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.
- In exceptional circumstances there may be a minor weakness in meeting a detail of the paragraphs in parts 3 and 4 but this should be easily rectified and must not compromise pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Leadership and management require improvement because they are not good but are demonstrating the capacity to secure improvement in the school.

Inadequate (4)

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

- There are one or more un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) which 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 limited because current leaders and managers have been ineffective in securing essential improvements.
- Improvements which have been made are unlikely to be sustainable, too slow or are dependent on external support.
- Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is inaccurate in its conclusions so that leadership and management do not have a realistic view of outcomes or provision.

- Leadership is not doing enough to ensure good teaching for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The organisation of the curriculum and classes is resulting in some pupils achieving less well than they should.
- Leaders and managers are not taking sufficiently effective steps towards securing good behaviour from all pupils and a consistent approach to discipline.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils or particular groups of pupils, or pupils are entered for public examinations inappropriately early, and pupils' achievement, physical wellbeing and enjoyment of learning are significantly impaired. The range of subjects is too narrow and does not provide preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Too little is being done to promote the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Poor literacy is not being tackled urgently and this is impeding pupils' progress.
- Proprietors and governors are not sufficiently diligent in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the effective and efficient deployment of resources.
- Leaders and governors, through their words, actions or influence, undermine the promotion of tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith) races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations (and other groups with protected characteristics³⁸) and so do not support and help prepare pupils positively for life in modern Britain.
- The school's strategies for engaging with parents and/ or placing authorities are weak and parents express little confidence in the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements and give serious cause for concern, or insufficient action has been taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident. The school fails to identify pupils at risk of harm when it might reasonably have done so.
- Leaders have neglected early years and/or sixth form provision such that it is ineffective.

³⁸ As defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school

169. The evidence collected for this judgement contributes to inspectors' evaluation of the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
170. When judging the behaviour and safety of pupils, inspectors must take into account whether or not the school meets all the paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards.
171. Inspectors must take account of the behaviour and safety of pupils attending off-site, alternative provision.
172. Judgements about behaviour and safety must not be made solely on the basis of what is seen during the inspection. Inspectors must take into account a range of evidence in order to judge behaviour and safety over time. This evidence **must** include documentary evidence about behaviour and how poor behaviour is tackled, as well as discussions with, and observations of, pupils at informal times of the day (including break and lunchtimes and between lessons).
173. Inspectors must make a clear written judgement about behaviour and a separate clear written judgement about safety within the inspection report. Where the judgements on behaviour and on safety differ, the lower of the two will determine the overall judgement on behaviour and safety. This overall judgement is recorded in the inspection report.
174. Evaluating, judging and reporting behaviour and safety in this way enables inspectors to make a clear distinction between each area, in order that schools and parents have a clear understanding of the reported judgements. For example, where behaviour is judged as requires improvement, but the safety of pupils is judged to be good, inspectors will grade behaviour and safety as requires improvement overall, while reporting to parents within the behaviour and safety section of the inspection report that pupils are safe. Inspectors should give careful consideration to the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils where the judgement for safety is requires improvement or inadequate.
175. Inspectors may look at a small sample of case studies in order to 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 and those with mental health needs.
176. Inspectors **must** also take account of the views expressed by pupils, including different groups of pupils, of their experiences of others' behaviour and attitudes towards them, and their understanding of the importance of such attributes in school and adult life. These views must not be gathered only

through formal discussions, but must include discussions with a range of pupils at informal times. Inspectors must also take account of the views of parents, staff, governors and others.

177. When judging behaviour and safety, inspectors should consider:

- the extent to which pupils' attitudes to learning help or hinder their progress in lessons³⁹
- pupils' attitudes to school, conduct and behaviour, during and outside of lessons, their attitudes to other pupils, teachers and other staff, including the prevalence of low-level disruption
- the school's analysis of, and response to, pupils' behaviour over time, for example incident logs and records of rewards and sanctions
- rates, patterns of, and reasons for permanent and fixed-period exclusions,⁴⁰ including the number of pupils taken off roll in the last year as a result of factors related to behaviour, safety and attendance
- any evidence of the use of 'unofficial exclusion' or any evidence that a pupil has been removed from a school unlawfully⁴¹
- pupils' contribution and response to the culture of the school and how they conduct themselves, including: their respect, courtesy and good manners towards each other and adults, for example when moving around the school; and their understanding of how such behaviour contributes to school life, relationships, adult life and work
- pupils' respect for the school's learning environments (including by not dropping litter), facilities and equipment, and adherence to school uniform policies
- types, rates and patterns of bullying and the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment; this includes cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability

³⁹ For example, inspectors may consider how quickly pupils settle at the start of lessons, whether they have the right equipment, their willingness to answer questions, whether they remain focused when working on their own, the tidiness of their work and the pride they show in its presentation, and the overall effort that they make.

⁴⁰ This includes patterns of permanent and fixed-period exclusions for different groups of pupils; the impact on behaviour of fixed-period exclusion and the impact of the school's work to follow up and support excluded pupils; the use and impact of internal exclusion; and the typical behaviour of any pupils who are not in school during inspection.

⁴¹ This may be the case where a child has been sent home for a disciplinary reason and it is not recorded as an exclusion, or where a pupil is removed from school for non-disciplinary reasons, such as special educational needs.

- the success in keeping pupils safe, whether within school or during external activities through, for instance, effective risk assessments, e-safety arrangements, and action taken following any serious safeguarding incident
- the school's policy and procedures for ensuring that visitors to the school are suitable and checked and monitored as appropriate, for example external speakers at school assemblies
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes language that is derogatory about disabled people, and homophobic and racist language
- the extent to which pupils are able to understand and respond to and calculate risk effectively, for example risks associated with child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism⁴² and are aware of the support available to them
- the school's response to any extremist or discriminatory behaviour shown by pupils
- overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups
- punctuality over time in arriving at school and at lessons
- the impact of the school's strategies to improve behaviour and attendance⁴³
- the views of parents, staff and governors.

⁴² This also includes risks associated with e-safety, substance misuse, knives and gangs, relationships (including sexual relationships), water, fire, roads and railways.

⁴³ This includes the use of rewards and sanctions, the effectiveness of any additional on-site provision to support behaviour, work with parents and absence 'follow-up'.

Grade descriptors – The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- All paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards are met.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Pupils' consistently display a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, including when being taught as a whole class or working on their own or in small groups. This has a very strong impact on their progress in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are of an equally high standard across subjects, years, classes and with different staff. Incidences of low-level disruption in lessons are extremely rare.
- Parents, staff and pupils are unreservedly positive about both behaviour and safety. Pupils are keenly aware how good attitudes and behaviour contribute to school life, adult life and work.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is impeccable. Pupils' pride in the school is shown by their excellent conduct, manners and punctuality.
- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and actively try to prevent it from occurring. Bullying and derogatory or aggressive language in all their forms are very rare and dealt with highly effectively.
- Pupils' excellent conduct and behaviour reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards; this makes a strong contribution to an exceptionally positive climate for learning. There are excellent improvements in behaviour over time for individuals or groups with particular behaviour needs.
- All groups of pupils are safe and feel safe at school and at alternative provision placements at all times. They understand very clearly what constitutes unsafe situations and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations, including in relation to e-safety.

Good (2)

- All paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards are met.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of learning, including when being taught as a whole class or working on their own or in small groups. These positive attitudes have a good impact on the progress the pupils make.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive across subjects, years, classes and with different staff.
- Pupils are properly prepared for each lesson, bring the right equipment and are ready and eager to learn.
- Pupils respond very quickly to staff's instructions and requests allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption in lessons is uncommon.
- There are no well-founded concerns expressed by parents, staff and pupils about behaviour and safety. Pupils understand the importance of good attitudes and behaviour in school life, adult life and work.
- There is a positive ethos in, and around, the school. Pupils conduct themselves well at all different times of day, including at lunch time, attend regularly, have good attitudes and are punctual to lessons.

- Pupils take pride in their work, their appearance and their school.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. There are few instances of bullying and these are dealt with effectively by the school.
- Pupils' good conduct and behaviour reflect the school's efforts to promote high standards. There are marked improvements in behaviour over time for individuals or groups with particular behavioural needs.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school and at alternative provision placements; they understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

Requires improvement (3)

- Behaviour and safety require improvement as these aspects are not good.
- All paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with the paragraphs in part 2, part 3 and part 4 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety.

Inadequate (4)

Behaviour and safety are inadequate when **any** of the following apply.

- Any non-compliance with the paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) has a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Pupils' lack of engagement and persistent low-level disruption contribute to reduced learning and/or a disorderly classroom environment.
- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect and intolerance for each other or staff and a lack of self-discipline, resulting in poor behaviour around the school. Pupils exhibit negative attitudes about the value of good manners and behaviour as key factors in school life, adult life and work.
- Incidents of bullying overall or specific types of bullying are frequent and/or pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to address bullying successfully.
- Pupils or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.
- Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows no or little sign of improvement.

Quality of teaching in the school

178. The most important role of teaching is to promote learning and the acquisition of knowledge by pupils and to raise achievement. It is also important in promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching includes:

- planning for lessons and learning activities at other times in the school day
- how teachers impart knowledge to pupils, instruct them and engage them in other activities which also increase their knowledge and understanding
- the setting of appropriate, regular homework across subjects
- marking, assessment and feedback.

It encompasses activities within and outside the classroom, such as additional support and intervention. The quality of teaching received by pupils who attend off-site alternative provision should also be considered and evaluated.

179. When judging teaching, inspectors must take into account whether the school meets paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and all the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards.

180. Inspectors should not grade the quality of teaching in individual lesson observations, learning walks or equivalent activities. In arriving at a judgement on the overall quality of teaching, inspectors must consider strengths and weaknesses of teaching observed across the broad range of lessons. These must then be placed in the context of other evidence of pupils' learning and progress over time, including work in their books and folders, how well they can explain their knowledge and understanding in subjects, and outcomes in tests and examinations.

Observing teaching and learning

181. Ofsted does not favour any particular teaching style and inspectors must not give the impression that it does. School leaders and teachers should decide for themselves how best to teach, and be given the opportunity, through questioning by inspectors, to explain why they have made the decisions they have and provide evidence of the effectiveness of their choices. Moreover, inspectors must not inspect or report in any way that is not stipulated in the framework or this handbook. For example, they should not criticise teacher talk for being overlong or bemoan a lack of opportunity for different activities in lessons unless there is unequivocal evidence that this is slowing learning over time. It is unrealistic, too, for inspectors to expect that all work in all lessons will be matched to the specific needs of each individual pupil. Inspectors should not expect to see pupils working on their own or in groups for periods of time in all lessons. They should not make the assumption that a particular way of working is always necessary or desirable. Its effectiveness depends on the

impact of the quality and challenge of the work set. Pupils may rightly be expected to sit and listen to teachers, which of itself is an 'active' method through which knowledge and understanding can be acquired effectively. Inspectors should not criticise 'passivity' as a matter of course and certainly not unless it is evidently stopping pupils from learning new knowledge or gaining skills and understanding. When observing teaching, inspectors should be 'looking at' and reflecting on the effectiveness of what is being done to promote learning, not 'looking for' specific or particular things. Inspectors should gather robust evidence to judge and report on how well pupils acquire knowledge, learn well and engage with lessons.

182. Inspectors must evaluate the use of and contribution made by teaching assistants. They should consider whether teaching assistants are clear about their role and knowledgeable about the pupils they support. They should also consider how well the school ensures that teaching assistants have sufficient knowledge of the subjects in which they provide support.
183. Inspectors must consider whether:
- teaching engages and includes all pupils with work that is challenging enough and that meets the pupils' needs as identified by teachers
 - teachers command the respect of their classes, set out clear expectations for pupils' behaviour in line with the direction set by school leaders, start and finish lessons on time and manage teaching resources effectively
 - pupils' responses, in lessons and over time, demonstrate sufficient gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, including of literacy and mathematics
 - teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons and adapt their approach accordingly; also, whether they monitor pupils' progress over time and use the information well to adapt their planning
 - teachers seek to assess the effectiveness of their own teaching and adapt accordingly
 - teachers routinely give the necessary attention to the most able and the disadvantaged, as they do to low-attaining pupils or those who struggle at school
 - teachers set homework in line with the school's policy and that challenges all pupils, especially the most able
 - assessment is frequent and accurate and used to set challenging work that builds on prior knowledge, understanding and skills
 - 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 Key Stages 2 and 3; inspectors should consider whether work in Key Stage 3 is demanding enough, especially for the most able when too often undemanding work is repeated unnecessarily

- pupils understand well how to improve their work, which goes beyond whether they know their current 'target grade' or equivalent
- teaching helps to develop a culture and ethos of scholastic excellence, where the highest achievement in academic work is recognised, especially in supporting the achievement of the most able
- teachers have high expectations of all pupils
- teaching across the school prepares pupils effectively for the next stage in their education.

Evaluating learning over time

184. Inspectors' direct observation must be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate what teaching is like typically and the impact that teaching has had on pupils' learning over time. Such additional evidence may include:

- the school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
- discussions with pupils about the work they have undertaken, what they have learned from it and their experience of teaching and learning over longer periods
- discussion about teaching and learning with teachers, teaching assistants and other staff
- the views of pupils, parents, placing authorities and staff
- scrutiny of pupils' work, with particular attention to:
 - whether marking, assessment and testing are carried out in line with the school's policy and whether they are used effectively to help teachers improve pupils' learning
 - the level of challenge provided, 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
 - pupils' effort and success in completing their work and the progress they make over a period of time.

Grade descriptors⁴⁴ – Quality of teaching in the school

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- All of the requirements for good are met.
- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards are met.
- Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Much teaching in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are making sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils. They plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum.
- Teachers and other adults authoritatively impart knowledge to ensure that pupils are engaged in learning and generate high levels of commitment to learning across the school.
- Consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback from teachers ensure that pupils make significant and sustained gains in their learning.
- Teachers use well-judged teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework that, together with clearly directed and timely support and intervention, match pupils' needs accurately.

Good (2)

- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards are met.
- Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently good. As a result, most pupils and groups of pupils on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.

⁴⁴ These grade descriptors describe the quality of teaching in the school as a whole, taking account of evidence over time. While they include some characteristics of individual lessons, they are not designed to be used to judge individual lessons.

- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested and engaged.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and progress regularly and accurately at all key stages. They ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework and well-targeted support and intervention are matched closely to most pupils' needs, including those most and least able, so that pupils learn well in lessons.

Requires improvement (3)

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not good.
- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development.

Inadequate (4)

Teaching is likely to be inadequate where **any** of the following apply:

- Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) has a negative impact on pupils' academic and personal development.
- As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils or particular groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are making inadequate progress.
- Pupils cannot communicate, read, write, or apply mathematics as well as they should.

Achievement of pupils at the school

185. This section deals with academic achievement. Other, broader aspects of achievement, such as those reflected in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, are taken into account in the evaluation of other areas for which there are key judgements and when reporting on the overall effectiveness of the school.
186. When judging achievement, inspectors must have regard for pupils' starting points in terms of their prior attainment and age. This includes the progress that the lowest attaining pupils are making and its effect on raising their attainment, and the progress that the most able are making towards attaining the highest grades.
187. Inspectors should pay particular attention to whether more able pupils in general and the most able pupils in particular are achieving as well as they should. For example, does a large enough proportion of those 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?
188. Inspectors should summarise the achievements of the most able pupils in a separate paragraph of the inspection report.
189. Inspectors should not insist that there must be three years' worth of data or that these data must show good progress or achievement, before judging a school's overall effectiveness to be good. A school can be good overall if teaching, leadership and management, and behaviour and safety are good, and if there is sufficient evidence that progress and/or achievement of current pupils are good as well. This is often the case when a school is improving from requires improvement or inadequate. However, inspection reports must state that this is the case and explain clearly why the school is good despite any published data that appear not to support that judgement.
190. National curriculum levels are being removed from September 2014. In 2014/15, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils will not have been taught the new curriculum. Therefore, in the case of schools that follow the national curriculum, the 2015 Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments and tests will be on the old national curriculum and will be the last to be reported on against levels.⁴⁵
191. In 2014/15, some schools will have historic performance data expressed in national curriculum levels, except for those pupils in Year 1. Inspectors may find that schools are tracking attainment and progress using a mixture of measures for some, or all, year groups and subjects.

⁴⁵ The independent school standards do not require independent schools to follow the national curriculum.

192. As now, inspectors will use a range of evidence to make judgements, including by looking at test and examination results, pupils' work and considering pupils' own perceptions of their learning. Inspectors will not expect to see a particular assessment system in place and will recognise that schools are still working towards full implementation of their preferred approach.⁴⁶

193. However, they will:

- spend more time looking at the range of pupils' work in order to consider what progress they are making in different areas of the curriculum
- talk to leaders about the school's use of formative and summative assessment and how this improves teaching and raises achievement
- evaluate how well pupils are doing against relevant age-related expectations as set out by the school and the national curriculum (where this applies).⁴⁷

194. Inspectors will consider how the school uses assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support to reach their full potential, including the most able.

195. In arriving at judgements about **progress**, inspectors will usually consider how well:

- pupils' work shows that, where possible, they have the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for their age as set out by the curriculum and assessment system

⁴⁶ Further advice and guidance to support schools in selecting an appropriate system may be found by following the links below:

[Department for Education \(DfE\) Assessment Principles;](#)

[Assessment Innovation Fund winners;](#)

[Department for Education \(DfE\) National curriculum and assessment from September 2014: information for schools;](#)

[Report of the NAHT Commission on Assessment;](#)

Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) case studies [one](#) and [two](#).

⁴⁷ Schools are likely to use a combination of relevant national curriculum expectations and performance descriptors where they apply (see below), and expectations set by the school for other subjects and age groups through the chosen assessment system. For the end of each key stage, the government will set the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In between, it is for schools to determine where pupils must be in relation to that standard. For Key Stage 1, the DfE will provide performance descriptors for expected national standards in mathematics, reading and writing. It will provide a single descriptor of the expected standard for science. For Key Stage 2, the DfE will provide performance descriptors for expected standards in writing. For science, reading and mathematics, it will provide a single descriptor of the expected standard. The DfE will publish the draft performance descriptors in autumn 2014. At both key stages, tests will be reported against scaled scores rather than levels. Key Stage 4 programmes of study for English and mathematics were published in July 2014 for teaching from September 2015. Science will be published for first teaching from September 2016.

- all pupils are set aspirational progress targets and that they are on track to meet or exceed these, and where possible, expected standards by the end of each key stage
- assessment, including test results, targets, performance descriptors or expected standards are used to ensure that all pupils make the progress their teachers expect and that more able pupils do work that deepens their knowledge and understanding
- progress in literacy and mathematics are assessed by drawing on evidence from other subjects in the curriculum, where this is sensible
- pupils' strengths and misconceptions are identified and acted on by teachers during lessons and more widely to:
 - plan future lessons and teaching
 - remedy where pupils do not demonstrate knowledge or understanding of a key element of the curriculum
 - deepen the knowledge and understanding of the most able.

196. Inspectors will bear in mind the following:

- independent schools do not have Raiseonline data
- independent schools will not have Fischer Family Trust data, although pupils may come with some Fischer Family Trust information and this could be used for setting targets and baseline assessments
- independent schools may use individual education plans but, as in mainstream schools, do not have to
- independent schools could use the Department for Education's progression materials 2010-2011⁴⁸
- a large proportion of pupils in independent special schools will be funded by local authorities (public money), so it is reasonable for local authorities to expect that independent schools' provision for these pupils is at least of equal quality as in mainstream schools when considering how well pupils' needs are met. This might include the use of external expertise, personalised programmes, preparation for the next stage in their education, information, advice and guidance, community links, appropriately trained staff
- statements of special educational needs often state entitlement to a full National Curriculum⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Progression 2010 to 2011: advice on improving data to raise attainment and maximise the progress of learners with special educational needs*: www.gov.uk/government/publications/progression-2010-to-2011-advice-on-improving-data-to-raise-attainment-and-maximise-the-progress-of-learners-with-special-educational-needs.

In schools where attainment is not benchmarked nationally, inspectors will draw on all the available evidence to decide whether attainment is above average, broadly average or low.

197. Inspectors must take into account whether the school meets paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards.

198. Inspectors must take account of:

■ **the learning and progress across all year groups of different groups of pupils currently on the roll of the school**, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able; evidence gathered by inspectors during the course of the inspection should include:

- observation of lessons and other learning activities
- scrutiny of pupils' work, particularly their written work, to assess standards, progress and the quality of learning of pupils currently in the school
- the school's own records of pupils' progress, including the progress of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision for all or part of the week and those who receive additional support
- the quality and rigour of assessment, particularly in Key Stage 1
- discussions with pupils about their work
- the views of parents, pupils, placing authorities and staff
- discussions with staff and senior leaders
- case studies of individual pupils
- in schools with primary-aged pupils and some secondary schools, listening to pupils read in order to assess their standards and rates of progress in reading, with a particular focus on weaker readers.

■ **pupils' progress in the last three years**, including that of looked after children, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most able; evidence gathered by inspectors during the course of the inspection should include, where available:

- where the school uses the National Curriculum Standard Assessment Tests, the proportions making expected progress and the proportions exceeding expected progress in English (or separately in reading and

⁴⁹ The independent school standards do not require independent schools to follow the national curriculum.

- writing) and in mathematics from each starting point, compared with national figures, for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils
 - value-added data for the school overall and for different groups of pupils and subjects
 - use of data below national curriculum Level 1 (if used), including the national data analysis
 - any analysis of robust progress data presented by the school, including information provided by external organisations.
- **pupils' attainment** in relation to national standards (where available) and compared with all schools, based on data over the last three years where applicable, noting any evidence of performance significantly above or below national averages; trends of improvement or decline; and inspection evidence of current pupils' attainment across year groups using a range of indicators, including where relevant:
- the proportion of pupils attaining particular standards
 - capped average points scores
 - average points scores
 - pupils' attainment in reading and writing
 - pupils' attainment in mathematics
 - pupils' attainment in other subjects (as relevant)
 - the outcomes of the most recent phonic screening check and any follow-up screening undertaken by the school
 - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data
 - attainment as shown by test and examination results available in school, but not yet validated or benchmarked nationally.
199. Inspectors must take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils 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. They should 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. Inspectors should consider the impact of what a school is doing to narrow all of these gaps in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, where they exist. Where in-school gaps are narrowing, inspectors should check that this is because the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is 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, while non-disadvantaged pupils in the school attain even more highly.

200. Where schools use national floor standards to evaluate pupils' progress, inspectors should compare a school's 2013 performance with the 2013 DfE floor standards. Once the 2014 floor standards are available,⁵⁰ inspectors should compare a school's 2014 results with those.
201. In relation to particular ages or groups of pupils, inspectors must consider the following:
- Evaluation of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage should take account of the proportions of children who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. An example of typical progress for a child would be to start Nursery or Reception displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for her/his age and then to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Children who meet all the early learning goals but who started at a lower level of development than is typical for their age might be said to be making rapid progress. However, a child starting school at a higher level of development who meets all the early learning goals but exceeds none of them is unlikely to have made enough progress. Evaluation of achievement should also consider attainment at the end of Reception in comparison with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national figures and in terms of how well it prepares children for Key Stage 1.
 - For those schools where children are aged three and four years and move to primary school before any nationally comparable assessments are made, the judgement should be based on an evaluation of children's learning and progress relative to their age and evidence of their starting points.
 - Evaluation of achievement in Key Stage 1 should take account of the proportions of pupils who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. For 2014/15, as a broad rule of thumb, Year 2 children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception ought to be reaching **at least** the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 1 (so attaining at least Level 2b in the 2015 assessments). Children exceeding the early learning goals at the end of Reception ought to be exceeding the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 and be reaching high standards. Inspectors should take into account of how well pupils with a lower starting point have made up ground, and the breadth and depth of progress made by the most able.
 - In schools where pupils have completed part of a key stage elsewhere, inspectors should take this into account when evaluating the pupils' progress.

⁵⁰ December 2014 for Key Stage 2 floor standards and January 2015 for Key Stage 4 floor standards.

- For those groups of pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their attainment is unlikely ever to rise above 'low', the judgement on achievement should be based on an evaluation of the pupils' learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages and any assessment measures held by the school. Evaluations should not take account of their attainment compared with national benchmarks (where used).

The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs

202. Inspectors should note that:

- pupils identified with special educational needs may or may not have a disability and disabled pupils may or may not be identified as having special educational needs
- inspectors must not assume that levels of attainment in all special schools will be below those expected of pupils of a similar age nationally
- it is not appropriate to evaluate achievement according to a pupil's type of disability or special educational need, or whether or not they have been identified as requiring school support or an education, health and care plan, as explained in the Code of Practice
- levels of identification and definitions of need vary considerably within an area or from one area of the country to another.

203. Inspectors need to take into account the proportion of pupils whose attainment is below that expected for their age and where these are related to cognitive difficulties. The judgement on these pupils' achievement should be based on an evaluation of their learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages, and any assessment measures held by the school. When reaching judgements in these schools, inspectors should consider the impact of these pupils on the school's overall attainments.

204. Schools may use a range of evaluation tools and evidence to judge whether pupils are making or exceeding the progress expected for their age and starting point. Inspectors must assure themselves that the methods used are robust and that the school's attainment data are accurate and reliable.

205. Where *Progression 2010–11* is used to contribute to the school's analysis then the starting point for evaluation is that expected progress is the median level for pupils' age and starting point.⁵¹
206. Where used, inspectors will consider national data for pupils whose attainment can be assessed within national assessment arrangements.
207. As with all progress information, inspectors must be cautious when considering data relating to small groups of pupils. For example, it is important to distinguish between health-related issues and educational provision. Inspectors must also distinguish between pupils' success towards achieving aspirational targets set by the school and the expected progress for pupils at different ages and starting points.
208. Inspectors should also look at the way the school identifies pupils who have special educational needs. They should find out whether pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, when in fact their progress has been hampered by weak teaching.
209. Inspectors should:
- note whether pupils who receive additional intervention are demonstrating accelerated or sustained progress – this would indicate whether the intervention is effective
 - evaluate the school's arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of its pupil performance data, as there is no statutory moderation of P scales (where used).

⁵¹ *Progression 2010–11: Advice on improving data to raise attainment and maximise the progress of learners with special educational needs*, Department for Education, 2010; www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180840/DfE-00557-2010.pdf.

Grade descriptors – Achievement of pupils at the school

Note: These descriptors should not to be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards are met.
- Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (where appropriate) are met.
- Pupils make substantial and sustained progress throughout year groups across many subjects, including English and mathematics, and learn exceptionally well.
- From each different starting point, the proportions of pupils making expected progress and the proportions exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are high compared with national figures. For disadvantaged pupils, the proportions are similar to, or are rapidly approaching, those for **other pupils nationally** and in the school.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils at least match or are rapidly approaching⁵² those of **other pupils nationally** and in the school.
- Pupils read widely, and often across all subjects to a high standard.
- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- Pupils, including those in the sixth form and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, acquire knowledge quickly and develop their understanding rapidly in a wide range of different subjects across the curriculum.
- The learning of groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, is consistently good or better.
- The standards of attainment of almost all groups of pupils are likely to be at least in line with national averages with many pupils attaining above this. In exceptional circumstances, an outstanding grade can be awarded where standards of attainment of any group of pupils are below those of all pupils nationally, but the gap is closing rapidly, as shown by trends in a range of attainment indicators. This may include attainment in reading.

Good (2)

- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards are met.
- Apart from where there is an exemption in place, the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Progress across year groups in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently strong and evidence in pupils' work indicates that they achieve well.
- From each different starting point, the proportions of pupils making expected progress and the proportions exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are close to or above national figures. For disadvantaged pupils, the proportions are similar to, or improving in relation to, those for **other pupils nationally** and in the school.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are similar to or improving⁵³ in relation to

⁵² Where the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is high, any in-school attainment gaps need not be closing rapidly.

those of **other pupils nationally** and in the school.

- Pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in a wide range of subjects. They develop and apply a wide range of skills, in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- The learning of groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, is generally good.
- Where attainment, including attainment in reading in primary schools, is low overall, it is improving at a faster rate than nationally, over a sustained period.

Requires improvement (3)

- All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development.
- Pupils' achievement, in any phase of the school's provision, requires improvement as it is not good.

Inadequate (4)

Achievement is likely to be inadequate if **any** of the following apply.

- Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) has a negative impact on pupils' academic and personal development.
- From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making expected progress, and the proportions exceeding expected progress, in English or in mathematics are consistently below national figures and show little or no improvement.
- For disadvantaged pupils, the proportions making expected progress or exceeding expected progress from the different starting points in English or in mathematics are consistently well below those of other pupils either nationally or in the school, and show little or no improvement.
- Pupils' learning and progress in any key subject⁵⁴ or key stage, which may, depending on the impact on overall achievement, include sixth form provision or the Early Years Foundation Stage as appropriate, indicate they are underachieving.
- Groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and/or those who have special educational needs and/or disadvantaged pupils and/or the most able, are underachieving.
- Pupils' communication skills (including reading and/or writing) or proficiency in mathematics are not sufficiently strong for them to succeed in the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Attainment is consistently below floor standards or is in decline and shows little, fragile or

⁵³ Where the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is high, in-school attainment gaps may exist.

⁵⁴ 'Key' subjects in primary schools are English and mathematics. In secondary schools they are English, mathematics, science and any specialist school subjects and/or GCSE subjects with very high levels of entry.

inconsistent improvement.

- There are wide gaps in the attainment and/or the learning and progress of different groups.

The effectiveness of the early years provision: the quality and standards

210. Inspectors are required to report a numerical grade for the quality of education provided in the early years and write a section in the inspection report that summarises its effectiveness. Inspectors will judge the overall quality and standards of the early years provision, taking into account:

- how well children, including those disabled children, those with special educational needs and the more able, achieve so that they are ready for the next stage of their education
- how well the provision, including the quality of teaching, meets the needs of the range of children in the early years
- how well the provision contributes to children’s physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- how well the provision is led and managed
- whether the school meets the independent school standards in relation to this provision.

211. Inspectors must consider:

- the proportions of children who have made at least typical or better progress from their starting points, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and the more 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
- whether achievement is consistent across areas of learning, particularly in the prime areas and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics, and if any groups are underachieving
- the quality of the approach to teaching phonics in Reception, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well teaching nurtures, engages and motivates children, includes a broad range of educational programmes and is based on accurate assessment of children’s learning and development, so that activities and experiences meet their needs
- how well all staff work with parents, engage them in their children’s learning and keep parents informed about their children’s achievements and progress
- children’s attitudes to 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 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 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; and setting challenging targets
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Grade descriptors – effectiveness of the early years provision: the quality and standards

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team. The exception is that teaching must be outstanding for effectiveness of the early years provision to be outstanding.

Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- 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 pupils in the early years provision, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the school receives additional funding and the most able, are making sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.
- Gaps between the attainment of groups of children and all children nationally, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, have closed or are closing rapidly. Any gaps between areas of learning are closing.
- A highly stimulating environment and exceptional organisation of the educational programmes reflects rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children exceedingly well.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding and never less than consistently good; it is highly responsive to children's needs.
- Accurate assessment, including through high quality observations is rigorous, sharply focused and includes all those involved in the child's learning and development. Provision across all areas of learning is well planned and based on regular and precise assessments of children's achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.
- Children are highly motivated, very eager to join in and consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning with high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. They listen intently and are highly responsive to adults and each other. They do not distract others or become distracted themselves.
- All children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and manage risks and challenges. They demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are significantly enhanced by the vigilant and highly consistent implementation of robust policies, procedures and practice.
- Highly successful strategies engage parents and carers, including those from different groups, in their children's learning in school and at home.
- The pursuit of excellence by leaders and managers is demonstrated by an uncompromising, highly successful and well-documented drive to improve achievement, or maintain the highest levels of achievement, for all children over a sustained period of time. The training and development of staff is highly focused and has a significant impact on improving outcomes for children.

Good (2)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met in relation to the early years provision.
- Children make at least typical progress and most children make good progress from their starting points. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs,

those for whom the school receives additional funding and the most able, who make good progress relative to their starting points. They develop the key skills needed to make a good start in the next stage of their education.

- Children who join the school at a level below what is typical for their age, but not significantly so, catch up quickly. Any gaps between the attainment of groups, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, and all children nationally are closing.
- The educational programmes have depth and breadth and, except where the school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, this is the case across the seven areas of learning. They provide interesting and demanding experiences that meet the needs of all children.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- All teachers and other adults have high expectations of children based on accurate assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the school. Learning opportunities are well planned and based on regular and accurate assessments of children's achievement so that every child is suitably challenged.
- Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities and are keen learners who regularly display the characteristics of effective learning. They listen carefully to adults and each other.
- Children's good behaviour 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.
- Parents and carers contribute to initial assessments of children's starting points when they join the school and they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to support and share information about their children's learning and development at home.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently; practice is reviewed regularly and clearly evaluated, and comply with the requirements of part 3 of the independent school standards.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision through effective self-evaluation. They take concerted action to improve provision and can demonstrate the impact of such action, including the training and development of staff, on children's achievement over time.
- Monitoring ensures that individual children or groups of children with identified needs are targeted, and appropriate interventions are secured so that children receive the support they need, including through effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers.

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 (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are minor, easily rectified, and do not have a serious impact on children's welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.

Inadequate (4)

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

- There are one or more un-met independent school standards in relation to the early years provision (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) 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.

- Children, or specific groups of children such as disabled children, those with special educational needs, those for whom the school receives additional funding, or the most able, do not achieve as well as they can so that many start Year 1 without the skills and knowledge they need. Low attainment of any group shows little sign of rising.
- Educational programmes do not adequately cover the seven areas of learning and/or do not provide interesting activities in enough depth or breadth to provide adequate challenge for children.
- 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, or particular groups of children, are not enthusiastic about learning, spend much of their time with little purpose and fail to thrive.
- Children's behaviour is not consistently well managed. 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.
- 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 to help them.
- Teachers and other adults are not knowledgeable enough and/or they are not vigilant enough to ensure that children are kept safe and safeguarded and that their health and welfare are promoted.
- 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.

Effectiveness of the sixth form provision: the quality of education provided in the post-16 study programmes

212. Inspectors are required to report a numerical grade for the quality of education provided in the sixth form and write a section in the inspection report that summarises its effectiveness. They must do this by evaluating achievement, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety, and leadership and management, and checking whether the school meets the independent school standards in relation to the provision. School sixth forms are covered, as is all provision for 16–19-year-old students
213. When inspecting and reporting on students' achievement in the sixth form, inspectors must take into account all other guidance on judging the achievement, behaviour and development of students, including specific groups such as disabled students, those with special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged and the most able, and the extent to which achievement gaps are closing and how well provision for them is led and managed, their safety assured and an appropriate curriculum provided.
214. Inspectors will additionally consider:
- how well students' personal, social and employability skills are developed and how well this prepares them for their next steps in education or at work, including the contribution of 'non-qualification' activity and/or work experience and appreciation of how to approach life in modern Britain positively
 - the extent to which students are supported to choose the most appropriate courses, taking into account retention and success rates, as well as destination and progression information and students' views
 - the extent to which teaching, including non-qualification activity and the quality of one-to-one and small group tutorial support, leads to all groups of students developing knowledge, understanding and skills, and enables them to make good progress over time
 - how well teachers monitor, review and assess students' achievement of challenging targets, take account of each student's current progress, and provide frequent, detailed and accurate feedback so that students understand how to improve
 - how well leaders and managers:
 - ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum and the arrangements to provide well-planned and well-managed individual programmes of study, including the contribution of partnerships with other providers and/or employers
 - ensure that all students are provided with high-quality impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance prior to starting post-16

courses, and about choices following completion of their post-16 study programme

- use information about the destinations of those leaving the sixth form to check the extent to which provision meets the needs of all groups of students.

215. Inspectors will draw from the range of inspection activities in the overall guidance, **and additionally:**

- analyse data to identify inspection questions and hypotheses
- check the suitability of the criteria for entry to the sixth form and the impact of these on students' achievement
- analyse retention rates and students' achievement and destinations to help determine the extent to which students are following appropriate study programmes
- talk to students to find out:
 - how well individual programmes of study meet their expectations, needs and future plans, including for disabled students, those with special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged or the most able
 - the quality of teaching, other tutorial support and the feedback they receive on progress and next steps
 - the development of personal and wider employability skills
 - how well teaching helps to develop their skills in English and mathematics
 - the quality and impact of any non-qualification activity and/or work experience
 - the quality and impartiality of the information, advice and guidance they were given prior to starting their post-16 studies.

Grade descriptors – effectiveness of sixth form provision: the quality of education provided in the post-16 study programmes

These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team. The exception is that teaching must be outstanding for effectiveness of sixth form provision to be outstanding.

Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth form provision.
- Teaching over time is outstanding and never less than consistently good. It contributes to outstanding learning and achievement, significant growth in knowledge, skills and understanding and excellent attitudes to learning. All groups of pupils make outstanding progress, including disabled learners, those with special educational needs, disadvantaged students and the most able. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise ensures that the needs of all students are met precisely and, as a result, all groups of students achieve highly. All students follow study programmes that build on their prior achievement and ensure progression to higher levels. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. All students access high quality non-qualification activity or work experience relevant to their study programme. Students in the sixth form make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school.
- The very large majority of students on all study programmes complete their programme. They make substantial and sustained progress. Achievement in the large majority of subjects, including for those following GCSE courses in English and/or mathematics or functional skills or similar programmes, are above the national rates and no significant subjects (with large entries) are below them.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students nationally have closed or are closing rapidly.
- The standards of attainment of almost all groups of students, given their starting points, are likely to be at least in line with national rates, with many students attaining above this. In exceptional circumstances, an outstanding grade can be awarded where standards of attainment of some students, given their starting points, are below those of all students nationally, but the gap is closing rapidly because of the progress being made by students currently in the sixth form.
- Students show excellent attitudes to their learning. They make best use of independent study time so that they are very well prepared for lessons and other activities.
- All students are provided with high quality impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance prior to starting post-16 courses and are fully aware of their choices following completion of their post-16 study programme.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the potential risks to their health and well-being and how to manage them.
- Leadership of the sixth form is highly effective.

Good (2)

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth form provision.
- As a result of teaching that is consistently good over time, students make good progress, including disabled students, those with special educational needs, disadvantaged students and the most able. Teaching makes a strong contribution to students' good learning and achievement, growth in knowledge, understanding and skills, and positive attitudes to learning, including punctuality to lessons and attendance.
- All students follow programmes of study that meet their needs. The programmes build on prior

achievement, provide clear progression to a higher level of attainment and ensure that students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. All students take part in non-qualification activity or work experience relevant to their programme of study. Students participate fully in the life of the school.

- Retention rates are high. Achievement in the large majority of subjects are at least in line with the national rate and some are above.
- Any gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students nationally are closing.
- All students who do not already have at least a GCSE grade C in English and/or mathematics follow a programme that enables them to achieve this or are following an appropriate functional skills or similar programme. Success rates on these courses are high or improving rapidly.
- The standards of attainment of almost all groups of students, given their starting points and for most subjects, are likely to be at least in line with national rates. A good grade can be awarded where standards of attainment of any group of students, given their starting points, are below those of all students nationally, but the gap is closing over a sustained period.
- The school provides good, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance prior to starting post-16 courses. Students are aware of their choices following completion of their post-16 studies.
- Students have a good understanding of potential risks to their health and well-being and how to manage them.
- Leaders of the sixth form maintain good levels of achievement and personal development for all students over a sustained period and/or secure improvement where necessary.

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 un-met 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.

Inadequate (4)

The quality of education in the sixth form is likely to be inadequate if any of the following apply.

- There are one or more un-met 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.
- Too few students complete their course successfully or courses do not meet their needs. Students' progress is inadequate overall or for particular groups, as indicated achievement being well below national rates.
- Students or specific groups such as disabled students, those with special educational needs, disadvantaged students or the most able do not achieve as well as they can. Low attainment of any group shows little sign of rising.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate overall or in a number of subjects and/or teachers do not have adequate specialist/subject knowledge.
- Students' attitudes to learning are poor.
- Students are uninformed and ill-equipped to deal with potential risks to their health and well-being and/or learning and progress.
- Leadership of the sixth form is ineffective.

Evaluating the quality of boarding and residential provision in schools

216. Where the school provides boarding or residential provision, and this has been inspected alongside the school provision as part of an integrated inspection, inspectors will make five judgements on that provision. These judgements will be made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools*.⁵⁵
217. If any national minimum standards have not been met by the provision, the following standard phrase must appear as one of the recommendations under 'What does the school need to do to improve further?':
- '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.'
218. The national minimum standards not met should be listed towards the end of the report, as set out in the guidance *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions*.⁵⁶
219. Inspectors must take account of the grades for the boarding/residential provision on the grades for the whole school, for which they will need to take account of the proportion of boarders/residential pupils in the school.
220. The school and boarding grades for leadership and management, and behaviour and safety should either match or be within one grade of each other, and the reasons for any difference should be clearly stated in the main body of the report.

⁵⁵ *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* (110096), Ofsted, 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-schedule-for-the-inspection-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools.

⁵⁶ *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions* is an internal training document which is available on the Ofsted intranet site.

Annex A. Actions as a result of Ofsted's reports in independent day, boarding and residential special schools

Inspection outcomes	Action that the Department for Education (DfE) will take, as registration authority	Further action by DfE	Further action by Ofsted	Any further action?
All judgements outstanding, good or requires improvement All independent school standards and/or national minimum standards met (with or without recommendations for improvement)	Letter to school noting inspection findings	None	School re-inspected according to routine cycle	No
Overall effectiveness judgement of requires improvement Any un-met independent school standards and/or national minimum standards (with or without recommendations for improvement)	DfE sends letter to school seeking a non-statutory action plan for how independent school standard/national minimum standard failures will be rectified	DfE assesses action plan and only seeks Ofsted's advice if necessary School may supply evidence of improvement Noted by DfE on school file	School re-inspected according to routine cycle Ofsted considers and reports on improvement at next inspection	No
One judgement of inadequate At least one serious regulatory and/or national	DfE serves Statutory Notice on school seeking an urgent action plan showing steps by which independent school	DfE seeks Ofsted's assessment of action plan and normally asks Ofsted to monitor the school's progress against the	Ofsted assesses action plan Ofsted monitors the school's achievement in	No further action if regulatory failings have been rectified. If failings not fully rectified, school may be asked for a

Inspection outcomes	Action that the Department for Education (DfE) will take, as registration authority	Further action by DfE	Further action by Ofsted	Any further action?
<p>minimum standard failure or many minor failures (with or without recommendations)</p>	<p>standard/national minimum standard failings will be rectified so as to meet standards</p>	<p>action plan at a progress monitoring inspection</p>	<p>implementing the action plan and rectifying regulatory failings, at DfE's request, and publishes a progress monitoring report</p>	<p>further action plan. Alternatively a determination to remove the school from the register, or an Order to cease part of its operations, may be made.</p>
<p>Boarding and residential provision Inadequate judgements in boarders' safety and/or leadership and management and overall effectiveness One or more serious national minimum standard failure</p> <p>Education provision Inadequate judgements in education report Serious regulatory failures Report accompanied by 'Form A'</p>	<p>Immediate issue of Statutory Notice requesting an urgent action plan showing steps by which independent school standard/national minimum standard failings will be rectified so as to meet standards</p>	<p>DfE seeks Ofsted's urgent assessment of action plan and asks Ofsted to monitor progress to the timescale declared in the Statutory Notice</p>	<p>Ofsted assesses action plan and monitors the school's achievement in implementing the action plan and rectifying regulatory failings to timescale set out in the Statutory Notice. Progress monitoring report published</p>	<p>No further action if regulatory failings have been rectified. If failings not fully rectified, school may be asked for a further action plan. Alternatively a determination to remove the school from the register, or an Order to cease part of its operations, may be made.</p>

Annex B. Inspection tariff and timeline

Tariff

221. The inspection tariff for a standard inspection of most non-association independent schools is four days for the lead inspector. This tariff is the total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, travel, on-site inspection, feedback and writing the report. The tariff is illustrated in the table below.
222. A standard inspection of all but the smallest schools takes place over three days and is detailed below. The lead inspector of a standard inspection in a school with five or more pupils on roll will always be on site for half a day on the first on-site day, and then two whole days. This structure allows sufficient time for the inspector(s) to undertake the required regulatory checks and evaluate the quality of the school. Evidence gathering concludes towards the end of the third on-site day. The lead inspector will have informed the headteacher of the likely time that evidence gathering will end in the notification of inspection telephone call. The timing depends on the circumstances of the school and is at the discretion of the lead inspector. After evidence gathering has concluded, the inspector/s will complete evidence records; where there is more than one inspector, conduct a final meeting of inspection team; and then provide the formal feedback of inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees.
223. The overall tariff for the inspection of a small school (where there are four or fewer pupils on roll) is three days. The lead inspector will normally be working alone, and will always be on site for one half day and then one whole day. This structure allows sufficient time for the inspector to undertake the required regulatory checks, which are the same for all schools irrespective of size and type, and to spend sufficient time inspecting teaching and learning to reach a fair and accurate evaluation of the quality of the school.
224. The precise use of inspection time is at the discretion of the lead inspector who will organise all inspection activities in a way that best suits the school, taking account of its context and circumstances. In all cases, the lead inspector must spend time on site during the first day of the inspection.
225. The size and composition of the inspection team takes account of the size and type of school, the age range of the pupils, whether the school is on one site or two or more sites, and any special features it has, such as residential provision. In many cases the inspection is conducted by one inspector working alone. Additional inspectors may join the team depending on the size and nature of the school. In integrated inspections of boarding or residential special schools, one or more social care inspectors will join the team to inspect the boarding/residential provision, depending on the number of boarders or residential pupils.

226. All inspectors are suitably trained to inspect all types of independent schools. However, on occasion, it may be necessary to deploy an interpreter (in the case of small schools) or an inspector on the team (where there are five or more pupils on roll) who speaks the appropriate language that matches the characteristics of the school being inspected.

Tariff illustration

LI – lead education inspector

TI – team education inspector

LSCI – lead social care inspector

TSCI – team social care inspector

Number of pupils on roll	Tariff: total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, inspection and writing the report	On-site days		
		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1–4 (small school)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI half a day preparation and travel ■ LI half a day on-site evidence gathering <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI half a day preparation and travel ■ LSCI half a day on-site evidence gathering* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day 	
5–74	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI half a day preparation and travel ■ LI half a day on-site** <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI half a day preparation and travel ■ LSCI half a day on- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day ■ LSCI provides the lead inspector with the findings from the boarding provision

Number of pupils on roll	Tariff: total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, inspection and writing the report	On-site days		
		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
		site evidence gathering		All cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of evidence records ■ Final meeting of inspection team ■ Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/proprietor
75–249	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI half a day preparation and travel ■ LI half a day on-site** If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI half a day preparation and travel ■ LSCI half a day on-site evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day**** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day ■ LSCI provides the lead inspector with the findings from the boarding provision All cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of evidence records ■ Final meeting of

Number of pupils on roll	Tariff: total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, inspection and writing the report	On-site days		
		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
				inspection team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/proprietor
250–399	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LI half a day preparation and travel LI half a day on-site** If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSCI half a day preparation and travel LSCI half a day on-site evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TI1 whole day TI2 whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSCI whole day**** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TI1 whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSCI whole day LSCI provides the lead inspector with the findings from the boarding provision All cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of evidence records Final meeting of inspection team Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and

Number of pupils on roll	Tariff: total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, inspection and writing the report	On-site days		
		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
				governors/trustees/ proprietor
400–599	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI half a day preparation and travel ■ LI half a day on-site** If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI half a day preparation and travel ■ LSCI half a day on-site evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI1 whole day ■ TI2 whole day ■ TI3 whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day**** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day Augmented education team:*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI1 whole day If integrated inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day ■ LSCI provides the lead inspector with the findings from the boarding provision All cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of evidence records ■ Final meeting of inspection team ■ Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/proprietor

Number of pupils on roll	Tariff: total number of days allocated to the lead inspector for preparation, inspection and writing the report	Day -1	On-site days		
			Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
600+	5	LI full day preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI half a day preparation and travel ■ LI half a day on-site** <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI half a day preparation and travel ■ LSCI half a day on-site evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day <p>Augmented education team:***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI1 whole day ■ TI2 whole day ■ TI3 whole day ■ TI4 whole day <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day**** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI whole day <p>Augmented education team:***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TI1 whole day <p>If integrated inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI whole day ■ LSCI provides the lead inspector with the findings from the boarding provision <p>All cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of evidence records ■ Final meeting of inspection team ■ Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/proprietor

* – the inspection of boarding or residential provision in schools with 4 or fewer pupils on roll will normally have a tariff of three days for the lead social care inspector, which also includes writing time. In exceptional circumstances, the length of inspection and deployment of inspectors may be adjusted if necessary to ensure that there is sufficient time for the residential inspection to take place. This will be discussed and agreed in advance by the relevant regional Senior HMI for independent schools and the Senior HMI for boarding provision in schools. Consideration is given to the number and location of the residential premises and to the needs of the young people.

** – in inspections of faith schools where there are 75 or more pupils on roll the team inspector(s) may need to be available on Day 1 in order to observe the secular curriculum being taught, if such lessons are only conducted towards the end of the school day. This may be recommended by the relevant regional Senior HMI for independent schools to the appropriate regional director who has the ultimate decision.

*** – total maximum number of additional education inspectors. Additional inspectors will only be added to the team where the nature of the inspection or the circumstances of the school requires it as recommended by the relevant regional Senior HMI for independent schools to the appropriate regional director who has the ultimate decision – please refer to paragraph 225 above.

**** – additional social care inspectors will be added to the team where there are more than 50 boarders on roll, or where there are more than two boarding houses which are not located in the same district, as recommended by the Senior HMI for boarding provision in schools to the appropriate regional director who has the ultimate decision.

Timeline for standard inspections

Timeline	Activity
Day –1	<p>Around lunchtime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inspection service provider (ISP) telephones school to announce the inspection will take place on the following day. ■ ISP sends formal notification letter by email to the school, copied to the lead inspector (and lead social care inspector (LSCI) in the case of integrated inspections). <p>Inspections of NOR 600+ only Lead inspector's (LI) planning day – one full day.</p>
Day 1	<p>Early morning (approximately 8–9am)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI telephones school to discuss inspection. ■ LI calls LSCI, where necessary, to confirm. ■ LSCI rings the head of boarding/care prior to departure. ■ LI and, where appropriate, LSCI short preparation time and travel to school. <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education and, where applicable, boarding/residential inspection starts – one half day on-site evidence gathering. <p>Evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI inspects during 'boarding time'.
Day 2	<p>Morning and afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On-site inspection – one full day. ■ Inspection of small schools ends (NOR $\geq 1-4$). <p>Evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LSCI/s may inspect during 'boarding time'.
Day 3 (NOR ≥ 5 only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On-site inspection – one full day. ■ Integrated inspections: LSCI provides the LI with the findings from the boarding provision. ■ Completion of evidence records. ■ Final meeting of inspection team. ■ Feedback inspection findings to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/ proprietor. ■ Inspectors travel home.
Day +1	<p>LI's writing day.</p> <p>For day schools: LI sends report and <i>Independent school standards compliance record (ISS record)</i> to ISP by the end of the day.</p> <p>Integrated reports: LSCI sends findings from the boarding provision to LI as soon as possible, if this was not practicable at the end of Day 3. LI sends whole report and <i>ISS record</i> to ISP by the end of the same day.</p> <p>All cases: LI has five working days from the end of the inspection to</p>

Timeline	Activity
	send the evidence base of the inspection to the ISP (Day +1 to Day +5).
Day +2–3	Quality assurance: ISP ensures quality of the whole report. ISP sends draft report back to LI to check.
Please refer to the options below for the next steps.	

Reports of independent day schools where the overall effectiveness judgement is outstanding (grade 1), good (grade 2), requires improvement (grade 3) normally follow the timeline below.

From time to time, all reports are quality assured and published using the 25 day timeline shown on page 91. This might be, for example, to enable Ofsted to gain a more detailed understanding of the quality of inspection reports.

Timeline	Activity
Day +4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LI checks report ■ LI sends final draft report to ISP by end of the day.
Day +5	By 10am ISP sends draft report to the school for factual accuracy check.
Day +5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report is with the school. ■ Draft report sent back to ISP with school comments form by the end of Day +6.
Day +7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ISP considers the comments made by the school and where appropriate agrees changes with LI (telephone contact with LI where needed). ■ LI liaises with LSCI where necessary.
Day +9	ISP finalises the report.
Day +10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ISP sends final report to the school with invitation to complete post-inspection survey. ■ ISP sends final report and <i>ISS record</i> to Ofsted. ■ In the case of integrated inspections, deadline for SCI to ensure any amendments made to the boarding aspects of the integrated report are reflected in the RSA toolkit (editing is possible up to 15 days after toolkit submission).
Day +11	Ofsted's Inspection quality and complaints administration team sends the report and <i>ISS record</i> to the DfE
Day +15	Report is published on the Ofsted website.
No further action.	

Reports of:

- independent day schools where the overall effectiveness judgement is inadequate (grade 4)
- integrated reports of boarding schools and residential special schools
- reports following aligned inspections of independent schools with dual registration as children's homes.

This timeline is also applicable where the ISP deems that a report written by an HMI requires further quality assurance by Ofsted. From time to time, all reports are quality assured and published using the 25 day timeline shown on page 91. This might be, for example, to enable Ofsted to gain a more detailed understanding of the quality of inspection reports.

Timeline	Activity
Day +4	ISP sends report to Ofsted's Inspection quality and complaints administration team (IQCA).
Day +5	IQCA sends report to region for quality assurance.
Day +6–14	The region quality assures the report and <i>ISS record</i> .
Day +8	ISP sends the evidence base to IQCA in the case of reports where the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. (Where the region requires an evidence base any other report, this will be requested on a case-by-case basis).
Day +14	Region returns quality assured report and <i>ISS record</i> to IQCA.
Day +16	By 10am ISP sends draft report to the school for factual accuracy check.
Day +16–17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report is with the school. ■ Draft report sent back to ISP with school comments form by the end of Day +17.
Day +18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ISP considers the comments made by the school and where appropriate agrees changes with LI (telephone contact with LI where needed). ■ LI liaises with LSCI where necessary.
Day +19	ISP finalises the report.
Day +20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ISP sends final report to the school with invitation to complete post-inspection survey. ■ ISP sends final report and <i>ISS record</i> to Ofsted.
Day +21	IQCA sends the report and <i>ISS record</i> to the DfE.
Day +25	Report is published on the Ofsted website.
No further action.	

Annex C. Notification telephone prompts for ISP administrators and lead inspectors

227. The **ISP administrator** should cover the following points during the notification telephone call with the headteacher:⁵⁷

- notify the school that the inspection will start on the following day in the afternoon, and confirm the inspection end date
- provide the names of members of the inspection team, where relevant, including the names of social care inspectors in the case of integrated inspections
- give brief detail about the shape and process of the inspection and what will happen once inspectors arrive, ensuring that the school knows how to access on Ofsted's website the important information about inspections of independent schools, such as *Inspections of non-association independent schools, boarding schools and residential special schools: a leaflet for non-association independent schools*⁵⁸
- ask whether the headteacher has a summary of the school's evaluation of the school's provision that they are content to share at the start of the inspection
- confirm the management arrangements for any registered childcare provision or out-of-school care run by the school, and establish clearly whether or not this provision will be inspected at the same time as the school inspection;⁵⁹ explain that holiday play schemes for under-five-year-olds and provision that is voluntarily or independently owned and managed is inspected under separate arrangements
- confirm the extent of the boarding or residential provision at the school and (if relevant) the arrangements for inspecting it
- explain that, following this initial phone call, the ISP will email a formal notification of inspection letter to the school, which will contain:
 - a letter for the school to send to the parents and carers of all pupils on Ofsted's behalf inviting them to fill in Parent View

⁵⁷ Inspection service providers have been provided with a telephone script for use when announcing inspections of independent schools, to ensure that schools receive a consistent message.

⁵⁸ *Inspections of non-association independent schools, boarding schools and residential special schools: a leaflet for non-association independent schools* (090135), Ofsted, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspections-of-non-association-independent-schools-boarding-schools-and-residential-special-schools-a-leaflet-for-non-association-independent-school.

⁵⁹ Inspection of registered childcare provision is no longer part of the school inspection. It may be inspected on a separate occasion, or at the same time as the school inspection, but will always receive a separate report.

- an inspection questionnaire for school staff
- in the case of integrated inspections of boarding and residential special schools, a copy of *The indicative timetable*
- confirm the following information about the school: full name of the school; unique reference number; name of the proprietor; number of pupils on roll; age range of pupils; number of staff; name of headteacher (and how this should appear on the inspection report); the nature of the school (for example faith school, catering for disabled pupils and those with special education needs)
- confirm the email address to send the notification letter to the school
- confirm that the school should:
 - inform all parents, carers and pupils that the inspection is taking place and draw parents and carers' attention to Parent View, where they may register their views
 - distribute the inspection questionnaire to all staff (apart from those in the boarding provision whose views will have already been sought through Ofsted's online point-in-time survey) – the ISP will provide the questionnaire to the school with the notification of inspection letter
 - inform the proprietor, governing body or board of trustees (as relevant) that the inspection is taking place
 - inform the lead inspector if any alternative provision is provided by the school for particular pupils

228. The **lead inspector** should cover the following points during the notification telephone call with the headteacher:

- confirm that the inspection will start this afternoon, give an estimated time of arrival, confirm the inspection end date, give the likely time that evidence gathering will end and the estimated times that final feedback will be given to the school's senior staff and governors/trustees/proprietor, and when the inspectors will leave the school
- ask:
 - the headteacher to arrange, where relevant and if possible, a meeting between the lead inspector and the proprietor, or one or more of the trustees or governors
 - how inspectors can see a selection of pupils' work and any case studies of individual pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, to show provision made for them and their progress since coming to the school
 - about domestic arrangements (such as availability of a room inspectors could use, parking, meals, refreshments) and indicate when inspectors will be on site

- explain:
 - in the case of integrated inspections, that the lead social care inspector would like to telephone the member of staff in charge of boarding to make arrangements for inspecting the boarding/residential provision and completing *The indicative timetable*; check that the headteacher is content with this, and the name of the member of staff
 - that in primary, preparatory and pre-preparatory schools, and in some secondary and special schools, inspectors will want to hear some children read
 - where relevant, such as in the case of larger schools, that not all teachers will be observed and that in some cases teachers may be observed more than once
 - that the headteacher or a member of the senior management team is invited to make joint lesson observations with inspectors and to be party to team meetings
 - how the school's summary of its self-evaluation will influence the work of inspectors
 - the arrangements for feeding back to teachers and at the end of the inspection
 - where further information about the inspection process may be found
- remind the headteacher of the policies, records and other documentation that inspectors will need to see in the course of the inspection and check that those which are not already on the school's website will be available during the inspection; these documents are listed in *Inspections of non-association independent schools, boarding schools and residential special schools: a leaflet for non-association independent schools*
- explain that inspectors may also ask to see other existing school documents, such as evidence of internal monitoring of teaching or minutes of meetings.

Annex D. Independent schools with exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Introduction

229. 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 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.^{60,61}
230. 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.
231. There are two routes for applying for exemption: the independent schools route and the established principles route.

Independent schools route

232. 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 upwards, however pupils aged '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.
233. **Quality threshold.** Quality is determined by the school's most recent inspection report.
- For a school where the last report still contains a separate EYFS judgement, the school must have received a judgement of good or better for Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - For a school where the last report does not include a separate EYFS judgement, the school must have received a judgement of good or better against parts 1 and 2 of the independent school standards.

⁶⁰ The Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) Regulations 2008: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1743/contents/made.

⁶¹ The Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2012: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2463/contents/made.

- In inspection reports written prior to 1 January 2013, this means a judgement of good or better for Quality of education provided and Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
 - For inspection reports written after 1 January 2013, this means a judgement of good or better for Quality of teaching, Quality of curriculum and Pupils’ behaviour and personal development.
- For any exemption taken up where the most recent inspection report dates after 1 January 2013, the report must also show that the school meets any standard under part 1 of the independent school standards relating to the education of children below compulsory school age.
234. 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*.⁶²
235. 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 notification is made to the DfE, provided that all the conditions have been met. 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

236. 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*.
237. The provider’s established principles cannot be reconciled with one or more of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. In their application, the provider is required to demonstrate that their early years provision is governed by established principles which cannot be reconciled with some of all of the EYFS learning and development requirements, for which they seek exemption or modification. They must set out how the early learning goals,

⁶² *The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: Guidance on exemptions for early years providers*, Department for Education, 2012; www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/delivery/education/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs.

educational programmes, or aspects of the EYFS profile assessment, conflict with the provider's established principles.

238. 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 guidance *The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: Guidance on exemptions for early years providers*.⁶³
239. Under the established principles route, exemptions can be granted, and modifications can be made, against the learning and development requirements, which in turn may be classified into educational programmes, early learning goals and assessment arrangements.
240. If an exemption is granted under the established principles route, it will be in 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?

241. Schools which 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 above 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.
242. 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

243. 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 last inspection report contains a judgement of good or outstanding for:

- Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, or

⁶³ *The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: Guidance on exemptions for early years providers*, Department for Education, 2012; www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/delivery/education/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs.

- 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 prior to 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.
244. 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 Early Years Foundation Stage. 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.
245. 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.
246. However, if the school has applied through the established principles route, and has not yet received a letter from the Department for Education 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

247. 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.
248. Inspectors may ask to see copies of letters granting exemptions via the established principles route.
249. All independent schools which 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

250. 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*.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions* is an internal training document which is available on the Ofsted intranet site.

Annex E. Point-in-time surveys

251. Ofsted's inspection management and support team 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. The online surveys will normally be open for a period of six weeks during the academic year.
252. All of the point-in-time surveys are available on the Ofsted website as Word documents, and Ofsted will provide a copy of them to schools which do not have access to the internet.⁶⁵ 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.^{66,67} Links to these adapted versions are included in the request sent to the school about the distribution and completion of the surveys.
253. 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 it 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.
254. The responses to all surveys are sent directly to Ofsted where they are collated and analysed. Ofsted's inspection management and support team will send the analyses to the relevant ISP, in order that they can form part of the pre-inspection information for the relevant school's next inspection, to inform inspection trails.
255. If any of the returned surveys appear to raise safeguarding concerns, the inspection management and support team will send them immediately to the HMI remit lead for inspections of independent schools, in the case of surveys

⁶⁵ The point-in-time surveys are available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-schools/inspecting-schools/inspecting-independent-schools/independent-school-inspection/preparing-for-independent-sc.

⁶⁶ The translated versions of the point-in-time survey for day pupils is available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/point-time-survey-for-pupils-aged-3-19-non-association-independent-schools.

⁶⁷ The translated versions of the point-in-time survey for boarders/residential pupils is available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/point-time-survey-for-boarders-and-residential-pupils.

completed by day pupils or placing authorities responding about independent day schools. If safeguarding concerns are raised on surveys completed by boarders/residential pupils, boarding staff or placing authorities responding about boarding or residential special schools, the inspection support team will send them immediately to the relevant HMI manager. This may have an impact on the timing of the next inspection. Such concerns should be discussed with the inspection manager and a recommendation about the timing of the next inspection should be sent to the Senior HMI for boarding provision in schools who will advise the DfE.

256. The ISP will make the analyses available on their inspection portal for the lead inspector to use to generate lines of enquiry. It is vitally important that the lead inspector has this information in advance so that the inspection can operate effectively with minimum notification.
257. 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.⁶⁸ In the case of boarding schools, there 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. If any of the returned surveys appear to raise safeguarding concerns, the inspection management and support team will send them immediately to the relevant HMI manager. This may have an impact on the timing of the next inspection.
258. 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 and so on. In integrated inspections of boarding and residential special schools, the lead social care inspector may contact Ofsted's inspection management support team to request a copy of the analyses from the previous year's point-in-time surveys for boarders and boarding staff and share this with the lead education inspector, however, analysis from previous years should only be used as a guide alongside other evidence, to help inform inspection trails. It must be included in the evidence base for the inspection.

⁶⁸ 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 publications such as the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. We keep the information from all of the questionnaires in our database, and the inspector might refer to some of it during inspection with the independent school, boarding school or residential special school to help them improve their service. We make sure no information identifies you whenever we use what you have told us.'

Annex F. How compliance with the independent school standards informs inspection judgements

	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of teaching	Behaviour and safety of pupils	Leadership and management
Outstanding	All paragraphs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Part 1 ■ Part 2 ■ Part 3 ■ Part 4 ■ Part 5 ■ Part 6 ■ Part 7 ■ Part 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) in part 1 ■ Paragraph 4 in part 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) in part 1 ■ All of paragraphs 3–3(j) in part 1 ■ All paragraphs in part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All paragraphs in part 2 ■ All paragraphs in part 3 ■ All paragraphs in part 4 ■ All paragraphs in part 5 	All paragraphs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Part 1 ■ Part 2 ■ Part 3 ■ Part 4 ■ Part 5 ■ Part 6 ■ Part 7 ■ Part 8
Good	All paragraphs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Part 1 ■ Part 2 ■ Part 3 ■ Part 4 ■ Part 5 ■ Part 6 ■ Part 7 ■ Part 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) in part 1 ■ Paragraph 4 in part 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) in part 1 ■ All of paragraphs 3–3(j) in part 1 ■ All paragraphs in part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All paragraphs in part 2 ■ All paragraphs in part 3 ■ All paragraphs in part 4 ■ All paragraphs in part 5 	All paragraphs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Part 1 ■ Part 2 ■ Part 3 ■ Part 4 ■ Part 5 ■ Part 6 ■ Part 7 ■ Part 8
Requires improvement	All of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet	All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school	All of paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and all paragraphs in part 2 of	All paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school	All of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet

	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of teaching	Behaviour and safety of pupils	Leadership and management
	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.	standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development.	the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development.	standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any non-compliance with the paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and in part 5 of the independent school standards (or non-compliance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) is minor, easily rectified, and does not have a significant impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety.	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.
Inadequate	There are one or more un-met independent school standards which have a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and	Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 4 in part 1 of the independent school standards has a negative impact on	Any non-compliance with paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(i) and 3–3(j) in part 1 and the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent	Any non-compliance with the paragraphs in part 2, part 3, part 4 and part 5 of the independent school standards has a	There are one or more un-met independent school standards which have a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and

	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of teaching	Behaviour and safety of pupils	Leadership and management
	safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	pupils' academic and personal development.	school standards (or non-compliance with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) has a negative impact on pupils' academic and personal development.	negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety.	safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Annex G. Inspecting schools where there are no pupils on roll

259. Where the inspection of a school has been previously deferred 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.
260. 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.
261. 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

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.

262. Where there are no pupils on roll, it will not be possible for inspectors to gather sufficient evidence to make a judgement on the overall effectiveness, leadership and management, behaviour and safety of pupils, quality of teaching, early years provision and sixth form provision. It may also not be possible to make a judgement on the achievement of pupils.
263. 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.
 - 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.
- 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 with dual registration as children's homes, 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.

264. In the inspection report, these matters should be reported in the 'Full report' section, under the appropriate headings.
265. Where it is not possible to make a judgement, inspectors must clearly state that no judgement has been made as there is insufficient evidence. The leadership and management section 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.
266. The 'Information about this inspection' section of 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.
267. 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.
268. 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 a judgement on achievement of pupils and quality of teaching.