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22 December 2016

Mrs Jane Cooper
Chief Inspector
The School Inspection Service
Pembroke Road
Clifton
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BS8 3BA

Sir Michael Wilshaw
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Dear Chief Inspector

Annual report on the quality of inspection work by the School Inspection Service in the academic year 2015/16

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2015/16 annual report of the School Inspection Service, which I have sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon. Justine Greening MP, today. The annual report will also be published on Ofsted's website. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your professionalism during the year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Wilshaw'.

Sir Michael Wilshaw

22 December 2016

The Rt Hon. Justine Greening MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

**Annual report on the quality of the inspection work carried out by the
School Inspection Service in the academic year 2015/16**

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report on the quality of the inspection work carried out by the Schools Inspection Service (SIS) in 2015/16. The report will be published on Ofsted's website.

During 2015/16, the Department for Education did not commission Ofsted to carry out any on-site monitoring of the SIS during its inspections. Ofsted's monitoring role this year has therefore been limited to the evaluation of a sample of inspection reports published by the inspectorate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Michael Wilshaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sir Michael Wilshaw

Annual report on the quality of the inspection work carried out by the School Inspection Service in the academic year 2015/16

Introduction

The School Inspection Service (SIS) is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect selected registered independent schools that are members of:

- the Focus Learning Trust
- the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
- the Cognita Group, where such schools do not belong to an Independent Schools Council Association.

Under section 107(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has a duty to prepare and send a report to the Secretary of State about the inspectorates for independent schools, at intervals of no more than a year. Under section 107(2), HMCI must have regard to matters that the Secretary of State may direct about the form and contents of the report.

The Secretary of State's directions to HMCI are set out in Annex A of the 'Memorandum of understanding (MoU) for Ofsted's monitoring of the independent inspectorates for independent schools in England' (June 2016). Ofsted's monitoring of SIS's work since March 2015 was carried out in line with this MoU. Prior to the MoU, the 'Protocol between Ofsted and the approved independent inspectorates' (February 2015) was in place.

The School Inspection Service's inspection activity for 2015/16

SIS carried out 47 inspections during the academic year 2015/16.

Ofsted's monitoring of the School Inspection Service in 2015/16

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) reviewed three published inspection reports. The Department for Education did not commission Ofsted to carry out any on-site monitoring of SIS inspections.

Findings

- All three reports give parents a clear insight into the nature and range of the school's provision.
- The reports are written in keeping with the guidance issued by SIS. One report in particular was noted for its 'high-quality prose.'

- The reports exemplify how the independent school standards are met. Where the standards are not judged to be met, the reports provide a clear rationale for this judgement.
- The reports indicate that judgements are supported by a range of evidence.
- All three reports provide clear examples of how effectively the schools develop pupils' understanding of British values.
- The reports provide detailed information on the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. In one report, safeguarding judgements are noted well throughout the report and the report gives a clear picture of the school's safeguarding culture.
- One report notes leaders' failure to keep up to date with the latest legislative requirements and the school's failure to ensure that pupils receive enough information to keep themselves safe in their daily lives, particularly online. These failings are reported clearly in the relevant sections of the report. The report would be further strengthened if the leadership and management section also reflected these weaknesses.
- In the same report, there is a potential mismatch between the inspectors' evidence within the report and the overall grade awarded for pupils' personal development, which is graded as good. The text in the report would suggest the inspectorate's grading of 'requires improvement' to be more appropriate.
- In one report, the recommendations for improvement are not drawn from the summary. This is not in keeping with the guidance issued in the inspectorate's handbook.

Recommendations

Ofsted has sampled only a small number of reports.

Ofsted recommends that SIS should strengthen its quality assurance arrangements to ensure that:

- inspectors' judgements within the reports are consistent with the overall grades awarded
- the recommendations for improvement within inspection reports are accurately drawn from the summary of the report.