

Introducing a new framework for inspecting non-association independent schools

A consultation document

This is a consultation document that sets out Ofsted's proposals for revising the framework for inspecting non-association independent schools.

We seek the views of these schools and others who have an interest in them.

The closing date for the consultation is 21 February 2014.

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There will also be a children and young person's version of this consultation commencing from 10 January 2014. Details will be available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130248.

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Introduction

1. Ofsted's new framework for inspecting non-association independent schools was introduced in January 2013 in order to:¹
 - check and report on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012²
 - produce an evaluative report that informs the school, parents and carers, pupils and wider community about the quality and impact of the school's provision
 - bring about school improvement.
2. We are aware that the new framework is having a strong impact on raising standards in independent schools. However, we would like to make some changes to it, to improve our inspections further.
3. Our framework for inspecting boarding/residential provision in all types of school came into effect in September 2011 and was revised in January 2013 to replace the grade 'satisfactory' with 'adequate'.³ Under the framework, inspectors check and report on the school's compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools (as appropriate) and make qualitative judgements on the effectiveness of the school's boarding/residential provision.
4. We wish to change the boarding/residential provision framework to bring it into line with the revisions we are proposing to the framework for inspecting independent schools, and our current framework for inspecting maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools.⁴
5. Our intention is to introduce the revised inspection frameworks in two phases. The first phase will involve the inspection framework for independent day provision only and will start from 28 April 2014. This will be followed by the boarding/residential provision framework from September 2014. For independent boarding and residential special schools inspected between 28

¹ Ofsted inspects around half of the independent schools in England, known as the non-association independent schools. All instances of 'independent schools' in this document refer to non-association independent schools.

² The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made and The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2962/contents/made.

³ *The framework for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools* (110095), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110095.

⁴ *The framework for school inspection* (120100), Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100120.

April 2014 and the introduction of a revised boarding/residential framework – the January 2013 boarding/residential framework will be used.

6. We will conduct a separate consultation exercise on our proposals to revise the framework for inspecting boarding/residential provision in all types of schools in due course. All independent, maintained, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools whose boarding/residential provision is inspected by Ofsted will be invited to give their views.
7. We are aware that independent schools are diverse in size and nature, and we want to hear the views of all interested parties about our proposals.
8. This is a public consultation lasting nine weeks. We intend to implement the revised framework from 28 April 2014.

How we inspect now

9. Under *The framework for inspecting non-association independent schools*, inspectors make a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the school, taking account of the following six key inspection judgements:⁵
 - pupils' achievement
 - pupils' behaviour and personal development
 - quality of teaching
 - quality of curriculum
 - pupils' welfare, health and safety
 - leadership and management.
10. *The evaluation schedule for inspecting non-association independent schools* indicates how the independent school standards are included in the key judgements.⁶

What we plan to change

Inspection frameworks

11. We propose to make the same judgements about independent schools as those made on inspections of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools. We believe that all schools in England inspected by Ofsted should be judged in the same way and that the same grade descriptors should apply equally to them all. We think this will provide better information

⁵ *Framework for inspecting non-association independent schools* (090036), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090036.

⁶ *The evaluation schedule for inspecting non-association independent schools* (090049), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090049.

for parents, carers and placing authorities, and allow them to compare schools more easily.

12. We propose that, from April 2014, inspectors will make a judgement of the overall effectiveness of an independent school based on the following key judgements:
 - achievement of pupils
 - behaviour and safety of pupils
 - quality of teaching
 - leadership and management.
13. The inspection report will still make it clear whether or not the school meets the independent school standards. This is a statutory requirement and the information is required by the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools.
14. There will not be a separate judgement about pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development under the new proposals for inspecting independent schools. Inspectors will continue to check how well schools meet the standards in part 2 of the independent school standards for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but this will form part of the judgement for the leadership and management of the school, as is the case with maintained school inspection. Inspectors will report on how well schools equip young people to understand and take their place in modern British multi-cultural society. We will also report on how well schools enable young people to acquire the knowledge, values and skills to develop independence and confidence, participate in society and choose their path in life.
15. Schools' compliance with part 3 of the independent school standards concerning welfare, health and safety will form part of the judgement on behaviour and safety of pupils.
16. In future, we intend to maintain this alignment of frameworks between maintained and independent schools taking into account the independent school standards.

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the same judgements should be made on independent school inspections as those made on inspections of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools?

Changing inspection grades

17. We propose to change the inspection grades for independent schools and for boarding/residential provision in schools. Currently, we make judgements about an independent school using the following grades:

Grade 1	Outstanding	A school that provides an exceptional quality of education and care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school that provides a high quality of education and care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school that meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education and care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education and/or care has serious weaknesses.

18. We propose to replace the grade 'adequate' with 'requires improvement'. This grade will signify that, even though a school may be meeting all the independent school standards, this is the minimum requirement. A school graded with this judgement requires improvement to become good. This change will bring the inspection of independent schools in line with that of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools. We also believe it will encourage schools to improve more quickly.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the grade 'adequate' should be replaced by 'requires improvement'?

Proposals for school improvement

Improvement proposals for schools judged as requires improvement

19. Ofsted proposes to introduce improvement inspections to independent schools that have been judged as requires improvement. Inspectors will challenge schools to improve in the areas identified as requires improvement at the last inspection in order to become good. This will bring arrangements in line with those in place for maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools.
20. We propose to fully re-inspect all independent schools that were judged as requires improvement within two years of their last inspection. Legislation requires that the timing of the next inspection of an independent school must occur at the request of the DfE. We note that this request might be made within two years if the school had made sufficient improvement. Good and outstanding independent schools are currently inspected every six years.

21. It is intended that improvement inspections should be undertaken for independent schools judged as requires improvement from September 2014 onwards before they are re-inspected in order to challenge them to improve to good. We may pilot these arrangements.

Improvement proposals for schools judged to be inadequate

22. Ofsted proposes to re-inspect all schools that were judged to be inadequate within two years of their last inspection. As mentioned above, legislation requires that the timing of the next inspection of an independent school must occur at the request of the DfE. We note that this request might be made within two years if the school had made sufficient improvement. Good and outstanding independent schools are currently inspected every six years.
23. Progress monitoring inspections will continue to be undertaken to independent schools found to be inadequate before they are re-inspected. Improvement inspections may be carried out in order to further challenge schools to improve to become good.⁷

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that an independent school judged as requires improvement or inadequate should be re-inspected within two years of its previous inspection?

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that independent schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate should be challenged to improve through frequent improvement inspections by inspectors as described above?

⁷ The Department for Education (DfE) issues schools that are judged to have not met the standards with a statutory notice to improve, requiring them to submit a statutory action plan to address the unmet standards. DfE normally commissions Ofsted to evaluate the action plan, to inform their decision to accept (with or without modifications) or reject it. Normally, DfE will commission Ofsted to conduct one or more progress monitoring inspections to assess progress made in implementing the action plan, and whether the unmet standards are now met.

Consultation arrangements

24. As well as this online consultation, we will consult others who have an interest in inspection of independent schools in the following ways.
 - Pupils: we will provide a children's version of the online consultation for pupils. Details will be available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
 - Schools: proprietors, headteachers, trustees, governors and staff in schools will have the opportunity to take part in the online consultation.
 - The DfE is represented on our project board for the development of the new frameworks.
25. This online public consultation will run for nine weeks and close on 21 February 2014.
26. It is proposed that the revisions to *The framework for inspecting non-association schools* will come into effect from 28 April 2014.
27. We will publicise this consultation by writing to all the independent schools that we inspect. We will encourage as wide a range of users and stakeholders as possible to respond to this consultation through articles on the Ofsted website and other education publications. A separate consultation will be carried out for all types of boarding and residential special schools in due course on our proposals to revise the framework for inspecting boarding/residential provision.

What happens next?

28. The information from the online consultation will be collated and the key findings will be published in March 2014. These findings will be taken into consideration in the further development of the inspection judgements and grade criteria.
29. We will alert independent schools to the amended framework and evaluation schedule via an announcement on our website.

Sending back your questionnaire

30. There are three ways to complete and submit the questionnaire in the next section and/or send us your comments.

Online electronic questionnaire

31. Visit our website to complete and submit an electronic version of the questionnaire: www.surveymonkey.com/s/ofsted-ind2014-adt.

Download and email

32. This document can be downloaded and completed on your own computer. When you have completed the questionnaire, email it to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Please put 'Independent schools framework consultation' in the subject line.

Print and post

33. This document can be printed and completed by hand. When you have completed the questionnaire, please post it to:

Independent schools framework consultation
Ofsted
National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2DW.

Questionnaire for the consultation on the inspection of independent schools and boarding/residential provision in all schools

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, shape policies and inform inspection practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us. However, we may publish an organisation's views.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

- Yes please complete Section 1 and the following questions
 No please complete Section 2 and the following questions

Section 1

If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.

Organisation: _____

Section 2

Which of the below best describes you? Please choose one option.

I am:

a carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	a headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
a parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	a representative of a school or national association	<input type="checkbox"/>
a pupil in an independent school	<input type="checkbox"/>	an inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>
a representative of a placing authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
a teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	other (please tell us)	
a proprietor	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Questions

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the same judgements should be made on independent school inspections as those made on inspections of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and free schools (see paragraphs 11–16)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any comments on our proposal:

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the grade 'adequate' should be replaced by 'requires improvement' (see paragraphs 17–18)?

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please add any comments on our proposal:

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that an independent school judged as requires improvement or inadequate should be re-inspected within two years of its previous inspection (see paragraphs 19–23)?

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please add any comments on our proposal:

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that independent schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate should be challenged to improve through frequent improvement inspections by inspectors as described above? (see paragraphs 19–23)?

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please add any comments on our proposal:

What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in our strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had enough information about the consultation topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How did you hear about this consultation?

- Ofsted website
- Ofsted News
- Ofsted conference
- Another organisation (please specify, if known)
- Other (please specify)

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

Thank you for taking part in our consultation.

Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that all responses are confidential and you do not have to answer every question.

Please tick the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are you living as the same gender as you were born in?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age

Under 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	14–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25–34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35–44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45–54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55–64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Ethnic origin

(a) How would you describe your national group?

British or mixed British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

(b) How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian		Mixed ethnic origin	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black		White	
African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any White background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic background	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese			
Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Religion/belief

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other, please state:	

6. Disability

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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