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2 March 2018

Kate Richards  
Chief Inspector  
Independent Schools Inspectorate  
Cap House  
9–12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Dear Kate,

**Annual report on the quality of inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2016/17**

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2016/17 annual report of the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which I have today sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon. Damian Hinds MP. The annual report will also be published on Ofsted's website. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your organisation's cooperation and professionalism during the year.

Yours sincerely

**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

2 March 2018

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

Dear Damian,

**Annual report on the quality of inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2016/17**

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report on the quality of the inspection work carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in 2016/17. The report will be published on Ofsted's website.

During 2016/17, the Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to monitor two ISI inspections and to evaluate 11 ISI inspection reports.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Spielman".

**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

## **Annual report on the quality of inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2016/17**

### **Introduction**

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect selected registered independent schools with membership of the associations that make up the Independent Schools Council, including their registered early years provision and boarding provision.<sup>1</sup>

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. HMCI must have regard, under section 107(2), 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 for Ofsted's monitoring of the independent inspectorates for independent schools in England' (internal, June 2016). Ofsted monitored ISI's work in 2016/17 in line with this MoU and in accordance with the work commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE).

### **Independent Schools Inspectorate's inspection activity for 2016/17**

ISI carried out 415 inspections during the academic year 2016/17.

### **Ofsted's monitoring of the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2016/17**

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) reviewed 11 published inspection reports. HMI also monitored two inspections on site, in line with the commission from the DfE. The two on-site inspections were educational quality inspections, which include a focused compliance inspection.

Ten of the 11 reports sampled were of regulatory compliance inspections. The ISI's inspection handbook states that the purpose of such inspections is to make clear whether the school meets or does not meet the various Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and, depending on the type of school, the related early years foundation stage requirements and/or the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

The remaining report was of an inspection of educational quality. The ISI's inspection handbook states that the purpose of such inspections is to 'focus on the outcomes for pupils in terms of their achievement and in their personal development'. These

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<sup>1</sup> Under Section 106 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, as set out in the agreement of 13 January 2015 between the Department for Education and ISI.

inspections do not report on whether the school meets or does not meet the independent school standards.

## Findings

- In both inspections that Ofsted monitored on site, inspectors carried out a range of activities to gather secure evidence from which they were able to arrive at their judgements. This was the case for inspectors' judgements of regulatory compliance and of the quality of the educational provision.
- Inspectors' checks on each schools' safeguarding procedures were rigorous.
- In both inspections, inspectors adhered strictly to the inspectorate's code of conduct.
- In the single educational quality inspection report reviewed, there was a strong match between the text of the report and the overall judgements. The report provided detailed information about pupils' achievements and personal development. The report's sole recommendation drew directly from the findings of the report. The report closely followed the inspectorate's guidance.
- The reports of the 11 regulatory compliance inspections complied with the inspectorate's guidance.
- The regulatory compliance reports provided sufficient detail to indicate whether the schools met the independent school standards or not. For each part of the standards that were met, the reports provided a brief commentary based on the wording of the independent school standards. When standards were not met, the reports provided appropriate information to explain why this was the case.
- All of the regulatory compliance reports commented succinctly on the schools' arrangements for safeguarding.
- Two of the 10 regulatory compliance reports judged that the school's leadership and management met the independent school standards, despite the fact that the inspectors judged the school not to be meeting at least one other standard. The inspectorate's 'Commentary on the regulatory requirements' states that, in considering whether the leadership and management of the school are compliant, inspectors should consider the frequency, severity or extent of any occasions that a school does not meet the independent school standards. In both inspections, the failings that the inspectors had identified indicated that leadership and management were not compliant. Consequently, in each report, the overall judgement that the school met the standards relating to leadership and management was not in line with ISI's guidance.

## **Recommendations**

Ofsted recommends that ISI ensures that inspectors' judgements on whether schools meet the independent school standards on leadership and management are in line with the ISI's guidance 'Commentary on the regulatory requirements'.

Owing to the limited range of evidence from monitoring commissioned by the DfE, Ofsted is not able to make any recommendation as to ISI's suitability for continued approval as an independent inspectorate.