



**Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP**  
Secretary of State

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Amanda Spielman  
HM Chief Inspector  
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31 January 2019

Dear Amanda,

Thank you for your letter of 31 January about Steiner schools. I appreciate the swift and thorough work that has been carried out by Ofsted since my letter of 15 November.

Your letter and the inspection reports together show that there is a mixed picture across the schools inspected, but it is also clear that there are serious concerns about some of the schools. In line with our normal processes, we are taking action against those independent schools which were found to have failed to meet the independent school standards, and special measures procedures have been started in relation to the three Steiner academies that were judged to be inadequate.

I can also confirm that we will take enforcement action against any independent school that does not improve quickly following a failure to meet the independent school standards. You will understand that decisions on enforcement action are, and must be, taken on a case-by-case basis according to the specific failings identified for each school. In terms of the three inadequate academies, the Regional Schools Commissioner's team have started work to re-broker the academies into strong multi-academy trusts to ensure swift improvement.

For inspections of other Steiner schools, as the School Inspection Service has now ceased inspection of independent schools in England, Ofsted becomes the default inspectorate for all of these schools. You will therefore be accommodating the schools into your cycle of inspections.

I think our officials should then review together what the inspection evidence tells us about these schools. That would include what may be helping or hindering them, what may be lying behind those schools that are failing to

meet the standards, and what may be preventing other schools from sustaining improvements to meet the standards. I would be interested to see your analysis of any common themes that may emerge from a wider set of inspections of this group of schools.

That would point to the need to inspect all of the Steiner schools which, as I have noted above, you will be doing anyway. It is of course open to Ofsted to decide where these schools should fit within the current inspection cycle, but given the concerns you have raised, there is clearly a case for scheduling them relatively early. That would also allow us to make quicker progress on the thematic analysis.

Thank you again for your work on this issue. Our officials will continue to liaise closely with yours as this work progresses.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damian Hinds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Damian Hinds**  
**Secretary of State for Education**