

# Pre-registration and material change inspections of independent schools

A leaflet for registered and proposed new independent schools

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## Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) is the registration authority for independent schools and maintains a register of them.

Proprietors wishing to open a new independent school must apply to the DfE for registration.

When the DfE has considered an application from a proposed new school to enter on the register, it will commission Ofsted to conduct a **pre-registration inspection** of the proposed school.

The purpose of the inspection is for Ofsted to report to the DfE whether the school is likely to meet all of the [independent school standards](#) when it opens, if the DfE decides to register it.

All independent schools must meet all the independent school standards, which are set out in The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

In addition, independent boarding and residential special schools must meet the national minimum standards for [boarding schools](#) or [residential special schools](#).

Ofsted will also report to the DfE whether the school is likely to meet the national minimum standards in pre-registration inspections of proposed boarding or residential special schools.

Registered independent schools wishing to make one of the following changes to their

registration must seek permission to do so from the DfE. These are known as **material changes**:

- change of proprietor
- change of school premises
- change to the age range of pupils
- change to the maximum number of pupils
- if the school proposes to admit boys instead of girls or girls instead of boys or become co-educational
- if the school intends to provide boarding accommodation
- if the school intends to admit pupils with special educational needs.

The DfE may commission Ofsted to conduct an inspection to consider the implications of the material change. Inspectors will report to the DfE whether or not the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

Schools cannot implement the proposed change until the DfE grants permission.

## Meeting the inspectors

As proprietor(s) and/or person(s) who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school, please ensure you are available to meet with the inspectors during the inspection.

If inspectors are unable to meet with you, they may not be able to gather sufficient evidence in order to judge whether the school is likely to meet paragraph 34(1) of

the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

## Which school documents will the inspectors wish to see?

Schools are not expected to prepare anything extra for inspectors. They should make the information listed over the page available during the inspection.

If any of the information is available before the inspection, you can upload it onto the inspection portal. Instructions for using the portal are provided in the notification of inspection letter.

## Pre-registration inspections

Please ensure that you can demonstrate that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards and that you have the necessary information ready for the inspection:

- the policies and information that are required by [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)
- a copy of your school prospectus, if available
- a plan of the school, including residential accommodation for pupils, if applicable
- a complete staff list giving qualifications, experience and, for part-time staff, hours worked per week, if staff are already in place
- a copy of the proposed school timetable, including details of extra-curricular activities, if your plans have reached this stage
- schemes of work for the subjects you intend to teach.

## Material change inspections

Please ensure that you can demonstrate that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards that relate to the material change that you have applied to make. You

should make sure that you have the necessary information ready for the inspection:

- the policies and information that are required by [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)
- any information about pre-planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
- if you have applied to make a change to the school premises:
  - a plan of the school, including residential accommodation for pupils if applicable
- if you have applied to change the age range, number of pupils, propose to admit boys instead of girls or girls instead of boys or become co-educational, or propose to admit pupils with special educational needs:
  - a complete staff list giving qualifications, experience and, for part-time staff, hours worked per week, if staff are already in place.

## What happens after the inspection?

Ofsted will send you a draft copy of the inspection report and you will be informed of the timescale for commenting on the draft. This will allow the lead inspector to consider any factual inaccuracies you may identify and make changes as appropriate.

Following this, an electronic copy of the final inspection report will typically be sent to you within 23 working days of the end of inspection. A copy of the inspection report will also be published on Ofsted's [reports website](#).

It is the DfE's decision whether your proposed school will be registered as an independent school or whether your proposed material change can be implemented.

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## Where can further details be found about school inspections?

The '[Handbook for conducting additional inspections of independent schools](#)' explains how pre-registration and material change inspections are conducted.

## Online inspection survey

Following a material change inspection we will invite you to complete an online inspection survey. The survey asks for your views on the inspection process, including the impact that the inspection is likely to have in bringing about improvement.

Ofsted values all survey responses: we use the outcomes to help keep us informed about the quality and impact of inspections, and help guide us in reviewing and improving the inspection process.

## Privacy notice

During the inspection of a school, the inspectors will collect information about staff and children by looking at school records, reviewing responses to the pupil and staff surveys where appropriate, and observing the everyday life of the school. No names will be recorded, but some of the information may make it possible to identify a particular individual.

Ofsted uses this information to prepare its report and for the purposes set out in its privacy policy. Ofsted will not publish any information that identifies an individual in the report, but may name the headteacher and the proprietor.

More information is available in [Ofsted's privacy policy](#).

The contact details for Ofsted's Data Protection Officer are as follows.

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