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4 November 2020

The Rt Hon. Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
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**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

### **Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2019/20**

During 2019/20, the Department for Education did not commission Ofsted to undertake any monitoring of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Ofsted has therefore only reported on the number of inspections carried out by ISI in 2019/20 and on the extent of the collaborative work between ISI and Ofsted. We have prepared this report under new arrangements.

Last year, you asked us to work in a new way with ISI. However, much of our planned collaborative work has been hampered due to the pandemic. Despite this set-back, we have already begun to plan joint activities for the new academic year ahead.

Yours sincerely

*Amanda Spielman*

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

4 November 2020

Richard Johnson and Rhiannon Williams  
Acting Chief Inspectors  
Independent Schools Inspectorate  
Cap House  
9–12 Long Lane  
London  
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**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

**Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2019/20**

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2019/20 annual report for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which I have today sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon. Gavin Williamson MP. The annual report will also be published on Ofsted's website.

We have all faced unprecedented challenges this year as a result of the pandemic. Despite this, it is encouraging to see the collaborative work that has taken place between our inspectorates. I look forward to working with you next year.

Yours sincerely

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

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

## **Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2019/20**

### **Introduction**

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect registered independent schools belonging to the associations that make up the Independent Schools Council. This includes their registered early years provision and boarding provision.

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 were set out in a letter from the Department for Education (DfE) to HMCI on 4 November 2019. The letter states that the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding for the monitoring of the independent inspectorates for independent schools in England no longer has effect. The new arrangements mean that Ofsted will report only on the number of inspections carried out by ISI and on the extent of the collaborative work undertaken. The DfE did not commission any other monitoring activity by Ofsted in 2019/20. These arrangements mean that Ofsted cannot infer anything about the quality of ISI's work.

### **Independent Schools Inspectorate's inspection activity for 2019/20**

Between September 2019 and March 2020, ISI carried out 401 inspections. This included 156 educational quality inspections and 123 regulatory compliance inspections. Other types of inspection, including additional, short visit and British Schools Overseas inspections, account for the remaining 122 inspections. In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, ISI suspended its routine inspection activity.

### **Ofsted's collaborative work with the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2019/20**

During the autumn 2019, spring 2020 and summer 2020 terms, Ofsted and ISI embarked on a small number of collaborative activities. This included:

- in autumn 2019, Ofsted and ISI working collaboratively to help DfE take enforcement action against two failing schools
- in December 2019, Ofsted shadowing an ISI-led regulatory compliance inspection (in addition to the initial shadowing of two inspections in the summer term of 2019)
- in January 2020, Ofsted staff attending the ISI annual training conference
- in July 2020, ISI staff attending an Ofsted online training session
- other meetings and discussions being held between senior staff.

Ofsted and ISI had planned further activities for this academic year. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to pause most of these plans. Ofsted and ISI have remained in regular contact and continued a constructive working relationship. This has included discussing our approaches to restarting inspection so that it can be sufficiently aligned across the independent sector.