

# Non-association independent schools: inspections and outcomes

Methodology and quality report

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## Introduction

1. This paper contains methodology and quality information relevant to our release of non-association independent schools inspection volumes and outcomes data, which is published once a year. This release can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes).
2. This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of non-association<sup>1</sup> inspections that were conducted within the relevant academic year. This release also includes the details of all schools that are open and eligible for inspection by Ofsted, and, where available, their most recent Ofsted inspection outcomes as at the end of the period. This report covers outcomes for all non-association independent schools in England.
3. This methodology and quality report should be read in conjunction with the notes contained within the statistical first release, because those notes will include helpful information that is not in this report.

## Methodology

4. From September 2015, data in this official statistics series is from inspections conducted under sections 99, and 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.<sup>2</sup> The regulations set out the standards that inspectors report on. This includes the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (referred to as the independent school standards).<sup>3</sup>
5. Further detail on the dates of inspections included can be found within the release. If an inspection report is not published by the cut-off date given in the release, then the previous inspection will be reported as a school's most recent inspection where applicable. Data will be presented and analysed in two ways:
  - inspections that have occurred within the academic year being reported where published by the given date
  - the most recent inspection outcome of open schools as at the end of the reporting period.
6. Official statistics on outcomes from inspections have a time delay between the end of the reporting period and the publication cut-off date of one calendar

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the glossary at the end of this publication for a definition of non-association independent schools.

<sup>2</sup> Education and Skills Act 2008; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents).

<sup>3</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made).

month. As the official statistics report main findings, we need to ensure that most of the reports of inspections undertaken within the reporting period have been published in order to minimise bias. For instance, the inspection reports of those schools judged inadequate undergo additional moderation checks. If these were omitted, the proportion of overall effectiveness would be more positive.

7. Under exceptional circumstances, we may withhold publication of an inspection report. Outcomes of withheld inspection reports are not included in any of the datasets. These are highlighted with footnotes throughout the report.
8. Where statements are made about whether inspection outcomes have declined or improved, they are referring to the most recent overall effectiveness outcomes compared to those of the most recent previous inspection only.
9. Data in this release is also used to update Ofsted's DataView tool: [www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk).
10. Schools are included within most recent inspection outcomes if they were open on the final day of the reporting period, or if they closed on that day and they have been inspected.

## Types of education

11. We report on various types of education within non-association independent schools:
  - other independent schools
  - other independent special schools.
12. State-funded schools and independent schools are required to register with the Department for Education. Early years provision that is governed by a school may also require a separate registration with Ofsted, and the provider will join the Early Years Register. Where the early years provision is not on the Early Years Register it will be inspected as part of the section 109 school inspection, and outcomes are included in this release. However early years provision which is registered on the Early Years Register will be subject to an Ofsted early years inspection, and included in the early years statistical release. For information on registered early year provision inspections please refer to the official statistics for early years and childcare at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics).
13. The welfare provision for boarding and residential special schools is inspected at the same time as the section 109 inspection, where possible. Inspections of this type are referred to as 'integrated inspections'. Documents relating to the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools).

14. The inspection of education in a school that is also registered as a children's home may take place as a standalone inspection of the education provision or be aligned with the full inspection of the children's home. Where possible, we will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence. Aligned inspections always result in separate reports: one that covers the education provision and is provided to the Department for Education (DfE), and one for Ofsted that reports the findings from the welfare inspection. They are not reported as part of the independent schools official statistics.

## Issues affecting comparability

15. We take a proportionate approach to inspection. All schools will normally have a standard inspection within three years. However, schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate will normally have a standard inspection within two years of the previous standard inspection.
16. Changes in inspection framework and policy over time may impact on these statistics, such as changes to the frequency of inspection and to the independent school standards. Also schools can move to and from different inspectorates over time which will also affect what is reported. Further information on this can be found within the comparability section of the quality report below.

## Recent changes

17. Between 20 July 2017 and 14 September 2017 Ofsted consulted on proposals to change the frequency of publishing statistics on inspections and outcomes for non-association independent schools. Our proposals include publishing management information on a regular basis. Respondents supported these proposals. The next publication will now be in November 2018. Additional management information will be published from early 2018. A full response to these proposals can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-frequency-of-publication-of-statistics>
18. In September 2015 we introduced a common inspection framework for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools and further education and skills providers. The common inspection framework can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).
19. Latest documentation for the inspections of non-association schools can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-inspections-of-non-association-independent-schools>.

## Revisions

20. Revisions to the data are published in line with our revisions policy for official statistics. For more information about the policy, please see:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics).

## Quality

### Relevance

21. We regulate and inspect to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. These official statistics are released to inform government and the public about the quality of schools in England, provide an evidence base for policymaking and to promote improvement across the school sector.
22. Non-association independent schools are inspected in accordance with sections 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/109](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/109).
23. Standard inspections of non-association independent schools also assess the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (referred to as the independent school standards).<sup>4</sup>
24. The common inspection framework was launched on 1 September 2015. Under this framework, schools are judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate (either having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures). The common inspection framework can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).
25. These official statistics aggregate the judgements made on individual school inspections. By aggregating the judgements made and showing these as proportions of the total number of inspections, we can identify messages from the data. We analyse the data in different ways, for example by region or by type of school, to identify important differences, patterns and trends. The official statistics release draws out the main messages and communicates these in an understandable way, which is appropriate for a wide range of different users. Users are able to interpret and manipulate the data published for their own purposes. The users of these official statistics include the DfE, local authorities, academics and the third sector.
26. More specifically, information found within this release is used in a variety of ways.

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<sup>4</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made).

- Media outlets use the main findings from our statistical release to inform the public about the quality of schools across the country and in particular local areas.
  - This data allows users to track movement in the education sector and monitor the quality of provision available at a national and local level and across provider types.
  - This accurate picture of the provision influences policy decisions about the quality of school provision.
  - This data helps identify areas of weak performance for independent schools, as well as forming a part of school standards at a national level. This informs policy development within DfE to address issues and implement strategies to mitigate them.
  - Within Ofsted, inspection profiles inform inspection framework development and underpin policies to improve standards. The main messages within the official statistics contribute towards the findings in our Annual Report.
27. The data included in the release is generated by our regulation and inspection process and is therefore administrative data.

## Meeting user needs

28. Since September 2015, a small number of additional tables and fields have been added to the release to include reference to revisions of previous releases or better illustrate charts and tables together in one place.
29. In 2016, the National Statistician published new guidance covering management information and official statistics:  
[www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports-reviews-guidance-and-advisory-committees/national-statisticians-guidance](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports-reviews-guidance-and-advisory-committees/national-statisticians-guidance).
30. We welcome feedback about our statistical releases. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please contact the Schools Data and Analysis team at [inspectioninsight@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:inspectioninsight@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Coherence and comparability

31. The tables and charts within the release compare inspection outcomes over the past several years. There have been a number of framework changes since the first release of statistics and these have been reflected in the publications. The overall effectiveness grade, and other sub-judgements where possible, have been mapped across frameworks when changes occur. This is explained in more detail in the 'frameworks' section below.
32. When these changes have occurred, users have been alerted via updates in the official statistics introduction and methodology sections of the main findings document. When changes to inspection frameworks or methodological changes

have been implemented to improve the output, guidance has been added to footnotes and the main findings document for easy access.

33. Inspection outcomes data presented in provisional official statistics releases will match the data shown in Dataview. Where inspection reports are published after the final publication date included within a release, the inspection outcomes will be reflected within the next provisional official statistics release.
34. There is no comparable data published by other producers of official or national statistics for non-association independent school inspections in England.
35. In Scotland, inspections are carried out by Education Scotland and can be found at:  
[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/about/independentschoolinspections/index.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/about/independentschoolinspections/index.asp).
36. In Wales, inspections are carried out by Estyn and can be found at:  
[www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspection-guidance/independent-schools](http://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspection-guidance/independent-schools).
37. In Northern Ireland, inspections are carried out by Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and can be found at: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk).
38. Third parties may provide interactive tools displaying publicly available Ofsted inspection judgements. We cannot comment on, nor are we responsible for, the quality of these datasets.

### **Changes that affect how comparable data is across time**

#### *Schools moving in and out of scope for inspection by Ofsted inspectorate*

39. Ofsted only inspects the educational provision in independent schools that are not members of independent school associations (referred to as non-association schools). Schools that are members of independent school associations are inspected by inspectorates approved by the Secretary of State for this purpose: the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the School Inspection Service. From time to time schools will move in and out of associations and therefore between inspectorates. This affects the inspection history of the school as it appears in the release.
40. The release reports on all schools that are not members of an association and are therefore eligible for an inspection by Ofsted. It shows the latest Ofsted inspection of a particular school, but does not include any inspections of the school conducted by the other inspectorates. In some cases it may appear that the school has not been inspected for a long period of time, but this may be because it was inspected by another inspectorate during that period. A school which has been inspected by Ofsted in the past but which is not currently in scope for an inspection by Ofsted will not be included in the release.



### *Integrated inspections*

41. Where a non-association independent school offers residential boarding or is a residential special school, we aim to inspect both the education and boarding provision during the same inspection. These are known as 'integrated inspections'. If integrated inspections have taken place during the period, these are included in the table showing inspection volumes.
42. The inspection of education in a school that is also registered as a children's home may take place as a standalone inspection of the education provision or be aligned with the full inspection of the children's home. Where possible, we will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence. Aligned inspections always result in separate reports – one which covers the education provision and is provided to the DfE, and one for Ofsted, which reports the findings from the welfare inspection. They are not reported as part of the independent schools official statistics.

### *Frameworks*

43. As noted above, framework changes have an impact on what we can report on in a consistent way. Consideration of how judgements change means that between frameworks, there may be breaks or changes in the way we report certain judgements.
44. The common inspection framework was introduced in September 2015 following the 'Better inspection for all' consultation.<sup>5</sup> This consultation initiated various changes to the way we inspect providers. The common inspection framework can be found at:  
  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).
45. The common inspection framework is designed to bring together the inspection of different education, skills and early years settings to provide greater coherence across different providers that cater for similar age ranges. Inspection judgements have therefore been standardised to apply across all remit areas.
46. Guidance on the framework and handbook for inspectors can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-inspections-of-non-association-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-inspections-of-non-association-independent-schools).
47. These framework changes have the following impact on current reporting.

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<sup>5</sup>More information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-education-inspection-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-education-inspection-from-september-2015).

- Overall effectiveness: this judgement is reported consistently across all frameworks from September 2005 to the current framework.
- Effectiveness of leadership and management: this judgement is reported consistently across all frameworks from September 2005 to the current framework.
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: this judgement is reported consistently across all frameworks from September 2005 to the current framework.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare: a new 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' judgement was introduced in September 2015 and supersedes the previous 'behaviour and safety of pupils' judgement, which is no longer presented in the most recent outcomes data. As such, analysis of this judgement will only represent inspections since September 2015 and will not provide a comprehensive view of the quality of this aspect of provision nationally. Users can consult inspection reports should they wish to obtain these outcomes.
- Early years provision: this judgement is reported consistently across all frameworks from September 2005 to the current framework, with the exception of 2012/13 and 2013/14 academic years when, due to legislation changes, the judgement was not reported. Since September 2015, nursery schools have not received a separate early years judgement.
- 16 to 19 study programmes: this judgement has been reported consistently since September 2005. However, this judgement was not reported in 2012/13 and 2013/14 due to changes in legislation.

### *Policy implications*

48. Not all schools are inspected with equal regularity. We must inspect all schools to which section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 applies within prescribed intervals. However, we take a proportionate approach to inspection, as indicated in our inspection frameworks.
49. The result of this is that the schools inspected in a particular academic year are very unlikely to be representative of schools as a whole. This may also affect the comparability of school inspection outcomes between years. This is as a result of the following.

### *Frequency of inspections*

- All schools will have a standard inspection within three years from September 2015.
- Schools inspected from January 2015 that are judged as requires improvement or inadequate will normally have a standard inspection within two years of the previous standard inspection.

- From January 2015, schools that are judged as requires improvement following a standard inspection may also receive a progress monitoring inspection before their next standard inspection. The purpose of the progress monitoring inspection is for inspectors to judge whether the school has addressed any independent school standards that were not met and the qualitative issues identified at the previous standard inspection.
- On a progress monitoring inspection of a school that was judged as requires improvement but met all the independent school standards, inspectors will judge whether the school continues to comply with the standards that the qualitative issues identified at the previous inspection relate to.
- The progress monitoring inspection of schools judged as inadequate in inspections from January 2015 also judges whether schools have addressed any independent school standards that were not met and the qualitative issues identified at the previous standard inspection.

#### *Conducting additional inspections as part of a standard inspection*

- The DfE may commission Ofsted to conduct an additional inspection as part of a standard inspection or as a standalone inspection. It may also commission Ofsted to consider a school's application to make a material change to its registration, a school's progress in implementing its action plan and in meeting independent school standards that were not met, or an emergency inspection due to concerns arising from a complaint or other information about a school.
- If the DfE commissions Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection and a standard inspection is already scheduled to take place in the same or next term, we will recommend to the DfE that the additional inspection be carried out as part of the standard inspection. Where this occurs, it will be a single inspection event, with one report published on our website.

#### *New schools*

- Proprietors wishing to open a new school must apply to the DfE for registration. They are asked to supply the information set out in section 98 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and The Education (Independent Educational Provision in England) (Provision of Information) Regulations 2010 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2919/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2919/contents/made)).
- The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires Ofsted to conduct a pre-registration inspection of a prospective school before it opens. Inspectors consider the written evidence supplied in the school's application before the pre-registration inspection is carried out and whose purpose is to advise the Secretary of State about the school's readiness for registration. Schools may not accept pupils until the school has been registered. Following a pre-registration inspection, the inspector reports

to the registration authority (the DfE) indicating the extent to which the independent school standards are likely to be met at the time of the school's opening. This report is not published, but is made available to the school. The decision on whether or not to register the school lies with the DfE.

- Once registered, new schools receive their first standard inspection in their first year of operation. These reports are published on our website.

#### *Boarding or residential provision*

- Where boarding provision in boarding schools has been judged inadequate or requires improvement, it is inspected again within two years. Where the boarding provision has been judged good or outstanding, it will be inspected within three years. Residential provision in residential special schools is inspected annually.
- An inspection of boarding or residential provision in a boarding or residential special school will be integrated with the school inspection where possible (see Annex). Integrated inspections cannot be carried out when inspection cycles do not coincide. In such cases, only an inspection of the boarding or residential provision will be conducted.

#### *Separately registered childcare provision*

- Early years or childcare provision of more than two hours a day that is not managed by the school's proprietor/governing body must normally be registered with Ofsted. If provision managed directly by the school's proprietor/governing body includes care for children under two years old, or where no child attending is a pupil of the school, it must be registered with Ofsted. Provision registered in this way is not inspected as part of an inspection of the school.

#### *Revised independent school standards*

- From 5 January 2015, a revised set of independent school standards came into force. These standards apply to independent schools and, in part, to academies and free schools. A summary of these changes and impact of them can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration).

## **Accuracy and reliability**

50. This release reports on:

- the most recent Ofsted inspection grade of all open non-association independent schools
- inspections that have taken place during the academic year.

A cut-off date for the publication of the reports included is given in the publication. Schools that have yet to be inspected are not included. If an inspection report has been published but subsequently withheld (usually with

the agreement of the school for minor amendments), then this will not be included in inspection outcomes. Footnotes will advise where this is the case. Where the inspection report is published after the cut-off date given for the release, the inspection judgement will not be included. These will appear in later releases, after they have been published.

51. We moderate all inspection reports where a school is judged to be inadequate. This may result in some inspection reports being published after the publication cut-off date required for inclusion within the provisional release. Therefore, provisional statistics are likely to under-represent schools being placed in a category of concern. In addition, where there are concerns that further evidence may be required to secure the inspection evidence base, this will delay publication of an inspection report. Further details of these procedures can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gathering-additional-evidence-to-secure-an-incomplete-inspection-ofsted-related-protocol](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gathering-additional-evidence-to-secure-an-incomplete-inspection-ofsted-related-protocol).
52. This release does not include the inspection outcomes of maintained schools and academies, further education and skills providers and providers of early years provision. These are included in separate releases. Further details of these can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics).

### **Use of Ofsted administrative data**

53. Inspection outcomes data is extracted from our administrative systems. Errors in recording inspection outcomes may affect the quality of source data. We have put in place a number of appropriate systems to minimise the risk of reporting error.

#### *Migration to new administrative system*

54. We introduced a new administrative system in September 2015. A thorough check of the migration from the old administrative system to the new system was undertaken to ensure that inspection data was correct.

#### *Since September 2015*

55. Inspection outcomes data is extracted from our administrative systems. Inspection outcomes are entered onto our systems by the lead inspector. Inspection reports undergo a quality assurance process, so any errors are likely to be identified at this stage. In addition, a sample of the entries made onto our administrative system is checked to ensure that these match the inspection report. There is a focus on checking those entries where the risk of there being an error is highest. An example of this is where the inspection outcome awarded changes during the quality assurance process. There remains a small chance that some outcomes are entered incorrectly onto our systems. Where this is identified and it affects the quality of data, a note will be provided in the release.

### *Technical production*

56. Technical production of the publications may also result in manual errors. A rigorous data quality assurance procedure is adopted with the aim of minimising the risk of reporting error. If an error is discovered within the document, a note is placed on the website and a corrected version of the document is uploaded as soon as possible.
57. More information of the issues relating to the use of administrative data is available here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics).

### **Data obtained from other sources**

58. Data indicating whether schools are opened or closed and their type and phase of education is obtained from the DfE's Edubase database. The quality of data relating to school opening and closures is considered to be good. Changes that occur are managed centrally by the DfE's Independent Education Division. The process for changes undergoes monthly reconciliation checks against other data systems within the DfE. The DfE is not always notified of these changes in a timely manner and therefore, these are sometimes identified after the event. These discrepancies are usually picked up as part of checks built into other processes.
59. Data obtained from Edubase on the type of education is also considered to be of good quality. Any change to the type of education requires verification from the DfE. Independent schools have some remit to change their age range through a local process but changes to key stages usually require agreement from the DfE (and a material change visit). Errors are picked up as part of the DfE's validation processes but this may be after the event. There is now a requirement for schools to update their Edubase record every 90 days.

### **Timeliness and punctuality**

60. Data is published once a year and includes details of inspections that have taken place and been published in the relevant period. To ensure that data is as timely as possible, each release includes the most recent possible full month of inspections.
61. Data is published at 9:30am on the date pre-announced in the publication schedule: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/statistics). Information on any delay in publication can also be found on the publication schedule.
62. We allow one calendar month after the end of the reporting period as the cut-off date for the inclusion of published inspection reports. This is to allow time for the publication of the majority of inspections that have taken place within the reporting period. The average production time for this release is approximately six weeks. This time includes obtaining and cleaning the data,

drafting findings, quality assuring all outputs and uploading the information onto the gov.uk website.

63. Publications are announced via social media. Pre-release access is given in accordance with the pre-release to official statistics order (2008). Details of this order can be found at: [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/pre-release-access/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/pre-release-access/index.html).
64. The list of post holders granted pre-release access can be found as a separate document accompanying each release.

### **Accessibility and clarity**

65. Our releases are published in an accessible format on the gov.uk website. The information is publicly available and there are no restrictions on access to the published data. Each release includes outcomes from our inspections that have subsequently been published. The data is aimed at keeping users informed of the progress of the inspection framework and of changes in the maintained schools and academies sector.
66. Supporting metadata in an accessible format accompanies each release to allow users to perform their own analysis. Users may use and re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence).
67. This metadata consists of provider level files in Excel and CSV. An Excel file is also provided with additional charts.

### **Performance, cost and respondent burden**

68. There is no respondent burden in relation to this statistics release as data is a by-product of our inspection process. The only cost involved is the internal resource involved in collating the release.

### **Confidentiality, transparency and security**

69. Where sensitive or personal data is held by Ofsted, the disclosure control processes we have in place ensure that this data is not published. This includes suppressing the number of pupils for providers with fewer than three pupils on roll.
70. All data releases follow our confidentiality and revisions policies: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics).



## Glossary

### Independent schools

Independent schools are defined by section 463 of the Education Act 1996, as amended. They provide full-time education for:

- five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or
- at least one pupil of that age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of [section 22](#) of the Children Act 1989).

It is immaterial if full-time education is also provided at the school for pupils under or over compulsory school age.<sup>6</sup>

The DfE's policy position with respect to full time education is contained within Part A of the departmental advice 'Registration of independent schools'.<sup>7</sup>

There are nearly 2,400 independent schools in England. We only inspect the educational provision in independent schools that are not members of independent schools associations (referred to as non-association schools). Schools that are members of independent schools associations are inspected by inspectorates approved by the Secretary of State for this purpose: the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the School Inspection Service. All inspections are carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. The Department for Education is the registration authority for all independent schools.

### Inspection types

#### Pre-registration inspections

The Secretary of State is the registration authority for independent schools in England and maintains a register of independent schools. When a proprietor has made an application for registration of an independent school the Secretary of State must notify HMCI, who must then inspect the school. The purpose of the inspection is to report to the registration authority on the extent to which the independent school standards are likely to be met if the school were to be registered. These inspections are conducted under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

When a proprietor makes an application for a new boarding or residential special school, an integrated pre-registration inspection is made by both an education and a social care inspector.

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<sup>6</sup> This definition of 'independent school' forms part of the definition of 'an independent educational institution' for the purpose of the 2008 Act.

<sup>7</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration).



## **Standard inspections**

Standard inspections of independent schools are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. We will report to the DfE on the extent to which the school complies with the independent school standards, and will also make evaluative judgements about the quality of education at the school under the common inspection framework.<sup>8</sup> We will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection around lunchtime on the day before the inspection is due to start.

## **Emergency inspections**

Emergency inspections of independent schools are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. They are carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for a variety of reasons, for example as a result of a complaint or concern made to the DfE. The issue that triggered the inspection will be used as the main line of enquiry for the inspection<sup>9</sup>, and we will report to the DfE whether the school meets the independent school standards relevant to the issue. Emergency inspections are conducted at no notice and reports of these inspections are only published at the request of the Secretary of State.

## **Progress monitoring inspections**

We conduct progress monitoring inspections at the request of the Secretary of State to check the progress made by independent schools to address weaknesses identified at their last inspection. These inspections are conducted under sections 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The Secretary of State issues schools identified as having weaknesses with a notice. Schools must submit an action plan to the Secretary of State setting out the steps they will take to address their weaknesses and meet the relevant independent school standards and/or national minimum standards, where relevant. Action plans must specify the timescale within which the steps will be taken.

In progress monitoring inspections, inspectors assess and report on the amount of progress schools have made with implementing their action plan. They will check whether the previously unmet independent school standards or national minimum standards are now met.

## **Material change inspections**

Outside normal inspection cycles, we carry out material change inspections of registered independent schools at the request of the Secretary of State, out of the

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<sup>8</sup> 'The common inspection framework: education, skills and early years', Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).

<sup>9</sup> We do not investigate individual complaints. Rather, the focus of inspection is any issues that impact the whole school that the complaint may give rise to.

normal inspection cycle, when the school wishes to make a material change to their premises, intake or age range, or to the provision they make for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, or there is a change to the proprietor. These inspections are conducted under section 162 of the Education Act 2002.

Inspectors will consider the implications of the material change and report to the Secretary of State whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards, if the material change is implemented. The school cannot implement the proposed change unless the Secretary of State grants permission.

### **Integrated inspections**

When the inspection of educational provision in non-association independent boarding or residential special schools is due at the same time as the welfare inspection, they are combined into an integrated inspection of the whole school. Inspections of welfare provision are carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools, as appropriate.



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