

# Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools

A leaflet for parents and carers, independent, maintained and non-maintained boarding and residential special schools

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## **In which schools does Ofsted inspect residential provision?**

Ofsted inspects the residential provision made by all independent boarding and residential special schools, except those which are members of associations affiliated to the Independent Schools Council. We also inspect the residential provision of all maintained and non-maintained residential special schools, and maintained boarding schools.

## **How often do inspections happen?**

Ofsted conducts an inspection of boarding provision in a maintained or independent boarding school once in a three-year period. In a residential special school we conduct an annual inspection of the residential provision.

## **Are inspections of residential provision ever combined with the inspection of the school?**

Yes. Where the school inspection and the residential inspection are both due at the same time, they are combined into an integrated inspection of the whole school. At all other times the inspection of boarding or residential provision is carried out as a single activity. The timing of inspections varies with the type of school and its performance as follows.

- **Independent residential special schools.** Education inspections will be

conducted in all independent special schools every three years. As inspections of residential provision take place annually, they will only be integrated in the year when the education inspection is also due.

- **Maintained or non-maintained residential special schools.** The timing of a school inspection is varied according to performance and risk factors. As inspections of residential provision take place annually, they will take place on their own except in the year in which the education inspection is also due.
- **Association independent boarding schools who are not members of the Independent Schools Council** receive an inspection of boarding provision once in a three-year period. The education inspection of these schools is conducted by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate or the School Inspection Service. Ofsted will align its boarding inspection with that of the Bridge Schools Inspectorate or the School Inspection Service wherever possible.
- **Independent boarding schools which are not members of schools' associations.** School inspections are conducted in all independent schools every three years or six years, based on risk and performance. The inspection of residential provision will occur every three years and may therefore be either integrated with the school inspection or conducted on its own.

- **Maintained boarding schools.** The timing of a maintained school inspection is varied according to performance and risk factors; the inspection of boarding provision occurs once in a three-year period. It is unlikely that school and boarding inspections will fall within the same year and therefore be integrated.

## How long do inspections last?

The length of an inspection can vary but it is generally spread over three days in school, which includes up to two evenings. A residential inspection is never longer than three days and may be shorter in a very small school.

The number of inspectors on a team is also varied to suit the circumstances of the school. More information may be found in our guidance *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* which is available on our website:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/conducting-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-schools](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/conducting-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-schools).

## Who inspects residential provision in schools?

Residential provision is inspected by Ofsted's own inspectors. They are either social care inspectors or Her Majesty's Inspectors. All inspectors have been trained to our standards and are experienced in the inspection of boarding and residential settings.

## Notice periods

Independent schools will usually be notified of an integrated inspection one day in advance. Maintained schools will normally be notified of an integrated inspection at around 11am on the day before the start of the school inspection. When the boarding provision only is being inspected the lead

inspector will contact the school on the morning of the inspection to tell the school that the inspection will start later that day.

## What happens during an inspection?

Inspectors draw on information that the school keeps, including any evaluation of its boarding or residential provision that the school may wish to share. They also analyse the views of boarders or residential pupils, parents and carers, and staff. They talk to the headteacher, governors if they are available, boarding, residential or care staff, and boarders or residential pupils. They inspect the quality of the premises and accommodation provided for boarders. They observe mealtimes, before- and after-school routines, extra-curricular activities and arrangements for the healthcare and support of residential pupils.

The inspection of boarding or residential provision follows *The framework for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools* whether it is conducted as a single activity or integrated with the school inspection. Inspectors make judgements about the effectiveness of the boarding or residential provision and assess whether it meets the national minimum standards relevant for the type of school. Where it does not, they state clearly in the inspection report which standards are not met.

On an integrated school inspection, inspectors also make judgements about the effectiveness of the education provision according to the criteria set out in *The framework for school inspection* or *The framework for inspecting non-association independent schools*, as appropriate.

## Gaining the views of parents, carers pupils and others

- Parents and carers can give their views about their child's education and boarding/residential provision on [Parent View](#), which can be accessed at any time.
- Pupils will be asked every year to comment on their boarding/residential provision (and in the case of independent schools, their education provision) through an online point-in-time survey.
- Local authorities who place pupils in an independent school will be asked every year to comment on the school through an online point-in-time survey.
- Staff working in the boarding/residential provision of boarding or residential special schools will be asked to comment on the boarding provision through an annual online point-in-time survey.
- All other staff working in schools will be asked to complete a [questionnaire](#) at the point of inspection.
- The point-in-time surveys are also available on the Ofsted website as Word documents, and Ofsted will provide a copy of them to schools which do not have access to the internet.

## What happens after the inspection?

Following the inspection, the provisional inspection findings and judgement(s) are reported to the headteacher and if appropriate, the governors. The inspectors' findings are published in a report for the school, parents and the wider community. This may either take the form of a separate report on the residential provision (where it has been inspected as a single activity) or as part of an integrated report which covers both education and boarding provision.

The inspection report provides information about how effective the residential provision

is and will usually contain points for improvement. The school is given time and opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the draft report prior to publication.

When the report is finalised, the school must take all reasonable steps to make sure parents and carers receive a copy of the report. The school must also take steps to ensure that pupils are made aware of the findings of the inspection. The report of an independent school is sent to the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registering authority. Reports are also published on our website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report).

## What happens if Ofsted judges the residential provision in a school to be inadequate?

If the inspectors judge the residential provision in a school to be inadequate, or if the school has failed to meet national minimum standards, this will be made clear in the inspection report.

In the case of an **independent school**, whether the inspection of boarding or residential provision was carried out as a **single activity or integrated** with the school inspection, the DfE may serve the school with a statutory notice to improve and ask the school to produce an action plan for improvement within a given timeframe. It is likely that the DfE will ask inspectors to monitor and report on the school's progress. If the school does not make satisfactory progress, the DfE can issue an order to prevent the school from taking residential pupils; in extreme circumstances, the DfE may issue the school with a deletion order from the register of independent schools.

If the education provision of a **maintained or non-maintained school** is judged to be inadequate in an **integrated** inspection, the school will be placed in a category of concern. In such cases, the lead inspector will return to the school to carry out a monitoring inspection. More information can be found on our website at:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-schools/inspecting-schools/inspecting-maintained-schools/after-maintained-school-inspection/monitoring-inspections-f](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-schools/inspecting-schools/inspecting-maintained-schools/after-maintained-school-inspection/monitoring-inspections-f). In the event that boarding or residential provision is the only inadequate aspect of the school, social care inspectors will make a monitoring inspection to the school to report on its progress. This report will be published.

Where the boarding or residential provision of a **maintained or non-maintained school** is judged to be inadequate, where the inspection was carried out as a **single activity**, Ofsted would take account of the inadequacies in deciding the timing of the next full inspection of the school.

### What happens if headteachers or others have concerns about the inspection?

Complaints are rare, but we treat them very seriously. You can find out more on our website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk), or by calling our helpline on 0300 123 1231.

If you need any more information about our work, please visit our website or call our helpline.

### How can parents or carers express concerns about their child's school?

If parents are concerned about their child's school, they should start by talking directly to the boarding or care staff or the headteacher. Or, if necessary, they can talk to the governing body, proprietor or the local authority (in a maintained school).

In the case of maintained schools, if parents are not satisfied with the responses they receive, Ofsted may be able to help.

Concerns about independent schools school should be addressed to the registration authority:

Independent and Boarding Team  
Department for Education  
Mowden Hall  
Staindrop Road  
Darlington  
DL3 9BG.

The registration authority may ask Ofsted to investigate.

Parents can find out more about inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools on our [website](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) or by calling our helpline.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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**Helpline: 0300 123 1231**  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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