



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

The handbook for inspecting independent schools

This handbook sets out the statutory basis by which the School Inspection Service conducts inspections of independent schools in England under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Part A sets out the framework for inspection and explains how the School Inspection Service conducts inspections and the judgements that inspectors make.

Part B sets out the evaluation schedule and provides grade descriptors for the key judgements. This includes a section about inspecting the Early Years when they are part of the school provision.

PART A: THE FRAMEWORK FOR INSPECTION

The legal basis and purpose of inspection

1. The School Inspection Service (SIS) is approved by the Secretary of State under section 106 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to conduct inspections of all schools in England which are affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT); or are members the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and its constituent associations.
2. SIS inspections of independent schools in England are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
3. SIS inspections provide parents and carers, prospective parents, proprietors, schools and communities with an expert and independent assessment of how well a school is performing. The reports inform the registration authority, the Department for Education (DfE), about the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014¹, and, where relevant, the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They report on whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding young people are effective.
4. SIS intends its inspections to be a helpful and developmental process for school leaders and managers, staff, proprietors and trustees, leading to improvement which will ultimately benefit pupils.
5. This framework sets out how SIS conducts inspections with effect from September 2015.

Frequency of inspection

6. The School Inspection Service will inspect to this framework and report on all of the schools in its remit over the next three years. This will result in an up to date and comparable report for all schools which will record inspection judgements and compliance with the independent school standards (ISS). The reports are published on the SIS website.²
7. Schools which do not meet all the ISS and are judged to be inadequate or to require improvement in one or more aspects will be inspected more frequently. The frequency of a follow-up inspection will generally be

¹ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made

² www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk

governed by the action taken by the DfE, who may have asked the school to produce an action plan to address its weaknesses. The DfE may request SIS to conduct an unannounced inspection to monitor the school's progress against an action plan. In such cases, a monitoring inspection generally occurs within six months of the original inspection. Schools which require improvement, but where the DfE has not requested specific action from SIS, will be re-inspected within two years.

The inspectors

8. All professional inspectors working with SIS are independent experts who have lengthy experience of school inspection. They are recruited almost exclusively from among former or retired Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) and have a proven track record of inspecting in a variety of schools, including in independent schools. The very few inspectors who are not former HMI have worked previously in senior positions with Ofsted's former inspection service providers or bring to the inspection team valuable knowledge and expertise of particular types of schools and/or Early Years settings.
9. The SIS professional inspection team is augmented for inspections of schools which are members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) and Focus Learning Trust (FLT) by a lay inspector from these communities. Their role within the inspection is to assist the professional team by providing the community context. They contribute to the team's work, for example by investigating the way the school communicates with parents or the way it handles complaints. They also contribute to corporate judgements on ethos and the effectiveness of school governance. Lay inspectors are not involved in inspecting the academic work of the school or in evaluating teaching and learning.
10. All SIS inspectors have undergone the same rigorous checks for their suitability to have contact with young people, as are expected of teachers in schools. They are well trained for their role and have all received recent and up to date training in safeguarding young people. For further information on the inspectors and their training, please refer to the more detailed Recruitment, Employment and Training Policy available on our website.³
11. All SIS inspectors must be impartial and have no connection with the school being inspected. They are expected to declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest that could undermine their or the inspectorate's objectivity. The list of connections is refreshed at regular intervals and kept under review by the SIS Administrator.

³ This is available on SIS website www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk

Code of Conduct

12. The SIS Code of Conduct requires inspectors to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct. These are to:
 - evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour;
 - base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence;
 - report honestly and fairly, ensuring that judgements are accurate and reliable;
 - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, sensitivity and respect;
 - take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and minimise stress in schools;
 - act in the best interests of children by prioritising their safety and welfare;
 - maintain a purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected and communicate judgements sensitively but clearly and frankly;
 - respond appropriately to reasonable requests;
 - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work; and
 - take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues.

The inspection process

13. SIS inspections are routinely carried out over three days. Inspections of very small schools are completed within two days. For large schools, or those with more key stages, split sites or other complex factors, additional inspectors may be added to the team, but the standard length of the inspection is not increased. All inspections are completed within the timeframe of a week. Thus, inspections may start on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.
14. During the autumn term 2015 we will be trialling different inspection tariffs. After discussion and evaluation of the process we will produce an agreed tariff table which will be available to schools, proprietors and associations.

Before the inspection

15. Unless the DfE requests that SIS makes an unannounced inspection, which it may do where there are concerns about a school, SIS will give schools two working days' notice of inspection. All inspections will be completed within the week. Schools will be notified on Thursday for an inspection starting on the following Monday; on Friday for a Tuesday start; and on Monday for an inspection starting on a Wednesday.

16. The inspection process begins with a telephone call to the school to notify the headteacher, or their deputy if they are unavailable, of the date and timing of the inspection. This call is made by the Reporting Inspector (RI) who will lead the inspection team. In schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust the RI must telephone the Campus Administrator first to announce the inspection before contacting the headteacher. A list of contact numbers for the Campus Administrators is issued to all RIs at the start of the year.
17. During the call the RI will give details of the dates of the inspection, including start and finish times, and the composition of the team. S/he will ask the school to set aside a room to act as the inspectors' base for the duration of the inspection. The RI will discuss the inspection arrangements with the headteacher, determining which members of staff who lead on key aspects of the school's work the inspectors would need to interview; how inspectors will look at pupils' work; which governors/trustees and groups of pupils the inspectors would like to talk to; and the arrangements for feeding back the team's judgements at the end of the inspection. The RI will draw up an inspection plan, in discussion with the headteacher, so that interviews can be held with minimal disruption to the school's timetable.
18. Schools are asked to send by email the minimum amount of information to enable the inspection to be planned efficiently. This information is documentation which the school should already have to hand and should be sent immediately after the school is notified of inspection. It consists of:
 - the school's timetable(s)
 - a list of all staff and their roles and responsibilities in school
 - the school development plan
 - the completed Self-evaluation Tool (SET)
19. The SET document was introduced in September 2015. Its forerunner, the 'SISEF' or 'CCF', has been streamlined to seek some basic information, enable schools to evaluate their compliance with the ISS and seek their views on the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. The SET is a universal document which applies to all schools in the remit. It is the school's responsibility to complete it and to keep it up to date. Inspectors will expect to receive a completed SET from schools prior to inspection.
20. Immediately following notification of inspection, the SIS Administrator will send the school, by email, a letter confirming the inspection details. This has, as attachments, the Framework for inspection and the questionnaires for parents and, where relevant, for secondary pupils. The school is asked to distribute these questionnaires and seek their return by the start of the inspection. Responses to the questionnaires are confidential. Parents should return their response in a sealed envelope, clearly marked 'inspection'. Schools must not open them. They may gather up pupils'

questionnaire responses and place these in a sealed envelope, but they must not seek to influence pupils' views.

21. The RI will spend some time preparing for the inspection. This entails organising inspection activities, deploying the team inspectors, sending information to them and producing an inspection plan to secure the smooth and efficient running of the inspection. It will ensure that inspectors have sufficient time to reach an informed judgement of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The inspection plan, together with a short pre-inspection briefing, will be produced and shared with the team.
22. Schools should be aware that inspectors will look at the documents displayed on their website before the start of the inspection. Certain documents, for example the school's child protection policy, should, as required by the ISS, be available on the school website, where it has one, and inspectors will check its availability and the information it contains. For this reason, schools are strongly advised to ensure that their websites are kept up to date and that all policies displayed there are compliant, reviewed annually and in date.
23. Schools are not expected to prepare any extra documents for the inspection, nor to produce lesson plans to a particular format. Inspectors will look at information in whatever form the school wishes to present it.

During the inspection

24. A standard s109 inspection starts at lunchtime with the arrival of the RI. S/he may be alone, or may be accompanied by another inspector, as set out in the letter of confirmation to the school. In FLT and Steiner schools, the lay inspector is normally present for the whole of the inspection.
25. The use of the first afternoon is at the RI's discretion and is conducted according to the inspection plan. It may be used to look at the school's records, such as the single central register of staff appointments (SCR), or to read other documentation, meet key staff, governors or trustees, tour the school site, look at pupils' work or observe lessons. This will enable the RI to form an initial view of the school, identify any issues to be pursued, brief fellow inspectors effectively and use the allocated inspection time efficiently.
26. Unless advised otherwise, the team inspectors join the inspection at the start of the second day. They inspect teaching and learning and evaluate pupils' progress and achievements. They observe lessons, talk to the pupils, follow up inspection issues and talk to key personnel about their responsibilities. They pay particular attention to the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety and assess whether these are implemented effectively.
27. During their time in school the inspectors will look at a range of lessons. Because inspectors focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning, rather than on the performance of individual teachers, they

will not see all staff teaching except in very small schools. The work of unqualified, as well as qualified teachers, student teachers and the work of teaching assistants may be observed. Inspectors may also look at lessons via video conferencing links and talk to pupils about self-directed learning and private study arrangements, where appropriate. When observing teaching, inspectors will normally stay in lessons for about 30 minutes. Teachers should be aware that inspectors may arrive in the middle of a lesson or leave before its end.

28. Senior members of staff may observe some lessons alongside inspectors if they so wish, both for their own professional development and for inspectors to sample the accuracy of leaders' own assessment of the quality of teaching. The invitation to undertake joint lesson observations is at the discretion of the RI.
29. Teachers whose lessons have been observed are offered brief feedback, immediately after the lesson or at a mutually convenient time. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors will wish to see evidence of teachers' planning, marking, assessment, target-setting and records of pupils' progress.
30. Inspectors reach a balanced judgement of the quality of the teaching overall. This is not based solely on what they see in lessons, although this is fundamentally important, as they must also take into consideration the evidence of pupils' work, the school's assessment data, records of pupils' progress, and results of any public examinations when evaluating the quality of the teaching pupils receive over time through its impact on their achievement.
31. Similarly, inspectors' judgements about pupils' progress and achievement are not based on a single source of evidence. They look at evidence gathered during lessons and from talking to the pupils, looking at their work, examining assessment information and analysing the results of public examinations. They take account of any value-added information supplied by the school through analysis of its own data or via commercial services such as ALIS or MidYIS. Inspectors gather evidence to make judgements about pupils' speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills, but do not necessarily cover standards in other areas of the curriculum unless they are of particular relevance. Inspectors may ask to hear pupils read and talk to them about what they have read to gauge their understanding.
32. During their time in the school inspectors engage with the pupils, observing them at breaks and lunchtimes in social areas of the school. Where appropriate, they attend assemblies, tutorial and registration sessions and a range of other activities including lunchtime or after-school clubs. Schools should make no special arrangements to put on extra activities during the inspection. The RI will also ask the school to make arrangements for the inspectors to speak to groups of pupils. This is an opportunity for the inspectors to seek pupils' views and to explore aspects of their personal development. Inspectors must ensure in these conversations that their line

of questioning is sensitive to the ages of the pupils and the cultural ethos of the school.

33. The RI must keep in close contact with the headteacher/senior administrator during the inspection. They should touch base, preferably at the start and end of the inspection day, and provide brief interim feedback as the inspection proceeds. This gives senior managers the opportunity to ensure that the inspection team has not missed any important evidence. It also helps to ensure that the final feedback to the school contains no surprise revelations.
34. It is the responsibility of the RI to assure the quality of the team's evidence throughout the inspection. As much of the first level evidence will consist of contemporaneous, handwritten notes, inspectors must write legibly. Where inspectors record observations electronically, for example on aide-memoirs, they should ensure that these are transferred to the RI electronically, so that they are part of the evidence base of the inspection. The RI should ensure that there is sufficient time planned during the inspection for inspectors to meet and consider the first level evidence. S/he must also ensure that systems for collating the first level evidence and reaching key judgements and main findings are effective. The RI may request that supporting evidence for the key judgements is typed and transferred by memory stick.
35. The formal inspection stops at lunchtime on the third day. At this point inspectors meet to discuss, agree and record their findings.
36. If inspectors judge that one or more aspects of a school are inadequate, the RI must inform the Chief Inspector by telephone, who will alert the DfE, as the registration authority, to the weaknesses as a matter of urgency. The RI must ensure that the Compliance Record contains full details of which standards are failed and why. The Chief Inspector may be telephoned as soon as the inadequate aspect is identified in the inspection, or during the final team meeting before the feedback to the school. If the Chief Inspector is unavailable, the RI should send the information through by email to: chiefinspector@schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk
37. At the end of the afternoon inspectors meet the senior leaders and trustees or governors to feed back the key inspection judgements from each part of the inspection and state the extent to which the school meets the required standards. There are opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification, but the inspectors do not read from a draft report at this stage.

The role of the lay inspector

38. A lay inspector is allocated to full inspections of schools in the Focus Learning Trust and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. The lay inspector is a member of the Steiner or Brethren community, but has no connection with the school being inspected. They are selected and trained by their respective communities and receive additional training from SIS in

the use of the framework for inspection. The lay inspector is a valued member of the inspection team who is able to advise professional inspectors on distinctive aspects of the school and its ethos. S/he is at the school throughout the inspection.

39. The lay inspector's deployment is at the discretion of the RI. However, it is usual practice for the lay inspector to perform the vital first task of analysing the views of the pupils and parents as expressed through their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. This occurs on the first afternoon of the inspection. The lay inspector produces an analysis of the views of pupils and parents for the inspection team, drawing their attention to any matters of concern which have been raised. The analysis is discussed at the first team meeting and is crucial information to shape inspection priorities.
40. The lay inspector is generally also responsible for checking the school's compliance with Parts 6 and 7 (information for parents and procedures for handling complaints). They gather and record evidence and present their findings at the inspectors' meeting, in the same way as all other inspectors. The lay inspector contributes to the team's inspection of leadership, management and governance of the school, particularly by interviewing trustees or governors. The lay inspector in FLT schools completes further compliance checks for FLT which are shared with the inspection team.
41. The lay inspector attends all team meetings and may contribute their observations and evidence to the discussion of all inspection findings. The final judgements reached are rooted in corroborated evidence and are agreed by the inspectors. The RI is responsible for organising the feedback for the school and will call upon the lay inspector to contribute to this session as required. This may include detailed feedback on governance, and, if so, the lay inspector should produce key points for this section of the report.

Judging compliance with regulatory requirements

42. During the inspection the inspectors check the extent to which the school meets the independent school standards and the statutory requirements of the EYFS. They use the Compliance Record for this purpose. Where a standard is not met, inspectors must record the evidence to explain why this is so. They do not record the evidence where the regulations are met. Inspectors must report formally any regulatory failures to the school at the end of the inspection and ensure that these are recorded and explained in the report. Inspectors should refer to the guidance document 'Interpreting the standards' to judge whether or not the school complies with the standards and EY requirements.
43. Schools should note that compliance with the ISS will be judged by the school's arrangements as they are at the start of the inspection. Where errors or omissions are found, these will be pointed out to the school, and the school may rectify them in the course of the inspection, but the inspectors' judgement will remain unchanged.

The judgements made during inspection

44. Part B of this document, the evaluation schedule, sets out the judgements that inspectors make during the course of an inspection. It also provides guidance to schools and inspectors about the evidence inspectors consider in reaching these judgements. A table of grade descriptors guides inspectors to reach a 'best fit' for each judgement. SIS inspectors are required to use common sense, professional knowledge and expertise and the descriptors in reaching the 'best fit' for their judgements. Certain judgements are obviously linked, but there are no limiting judgements in the SIS evaluation framework. There is no judgement on the overall effectiveness of the school. We will reflect on whether an overall judgement grade for a school is needed as part of the evaluation of the new framework trial.
45. Inspectors will make the following key judgements:
- The quality of education
 - The quality of pupils' personal development
 - Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety
 - The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance
 - The effectiveness of the Early Years provision (where relevant).

The inspection grades used to make judgements

46. Inspectors use the following scale when making the key judgements above.
- grade 1: outstanding
 - grade 2: good
 - grade 3: requires improvement
 - grade 4: inadequate

The effectiveness of the Early Years provision

47. Where the school makes provision for children aged two to five years, inspectors check whether this provision complies with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), except where the school has an exemption from part of the learning and development requirements.
48. They will also judge the overall quality and standards of the early years provision. The judgement takes into account how well children achieve so that they are ready for the next stage of their education. The judgement also takes into account how well the provision, including the quality of

teaching, meets the needs of the range of children in the early years. Inspectors will examine how well the provision contributes to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors will take into account whether the school meets the independent school standards in relation to early years provision, and how well the provision is led and managed.

49. An inspection of the quality of the early years provision for children aged two to five years is part of the school inspection and a separate judgement is made on its effectiveness which is reported in the early years section of the school report.

Registered childcare provision

50. Legislative changes in August 2015 reduced the age range for separate registration of EY provision in schools. This change has affected a high proportion of the schools which SIS inspects where the age range for children in the nursery extends from 2+ years, and this provision is now inspected as part of the whole school inspection. There are now only a few schools in SIS' remit which are required to register their provision for young children. Where a school also provides care for children aged from birth to two years, or for children in the early years age group where no child attending is a pupil of the school, or if the provision is not made as part of the school's activities, it must be registered separately with Ofsted. This provision is inspected within seven months of registration and then at intervals of no more than 47 months. The inspection of registered provision is a free-standing event but, where possible, SIS carries out this inspection at the same time as the school inspection and produces a separate report.
51. The provision which allows schools to seek exemption from the learning and development part of the EYFS is not extended to provision for pupils aged under three years. Thus provision for two-year-olds is always inspected against the EYFS even where a school has gained an exemption for older EY pupils.

After the inspection

52. After the inspection it is the responsibility of the RI to write the report. The report then goes through SIS' editing and quality assurance procedures described below.
53. By the end of the week following the inspection, the draft report is sent by email to the school. It is still at that stage a confidential document. The school leaders are asked to read the draft carefully and to advise SIS of any factual errors. They are given two days to complete this task and to return it to SIS where it is finalised for publication.

54. Thereafter, the school is sent a copy of the final report in a pdf format and advised of the intended date of publication, which is generally two or three days later. At the same time the SIS Administrator sends the invoice for the inspection to the school, together with a survey questionnaire which seeks feedback from the school on the quality of the inspection and report. The feedback is sent to the Chief Inspector who takes forward suggestions for improvement.
55. The SIS Administrator sends a copy of the report to the DfE and the proprietor or association prior to publication and on the same day that it goes to the school. The SIS Administrator also sends the Compliance Record by email to the DfE.
56. All inspection reports are published on the SIS website no later than twenty working days from the end of the inspection. This timeline is not interrupted in the event of a complaint and the report will under normal circumstances proceed to publication. In the event of an appeal against the report being upheld, therefore, SIS will amend and republish rather than hold back the publication of a report.

The report

57. SIS reports are written in high quality prose and capture the unique individuality of each school. They are fair and accurate, rooted in the evidence of the inspection, and report without fear or favour the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The key judgements for each section are reported in the form of a grade on the front of the report, and these judgements are explained by the text of the report. An overall summary draws together the main findings of the inspection from which recommendations for improvement or further development are derived.
58. The report must be clear about the school's compliance with the standards required of independent schools, the EYFS requirements (where relevant) and the Equalities Act. Reports must state clearly which, if any, of the independent school standards are not met, together with a reference to the relevant paragraph number. Where all the statutory requirements are met, there must be a clear statement to this effect.

The evidence base

59. It is the RI's responsibility to check and sort the evidence base into a form which is easily accessible to a quality assurance reader. The RI must retain the evidence base at the end of the inspection for the period of time specified in the SIS retention policy on our website. If the evidence base is randomly selected as part of the SIS quality assurance process, the RI will be asked to send it by recorded delivery to the assigned editor.

The quality assurance process

60. SIS takes very seriously its responsibility for producing high quality inspections and reports. During the inspection the RI must set clear expectations for the team inspectors and ensure that these are met. S/he must ensure that the judgements are fair, accurate and rooted in the evidence of the inspection. S/he must ensure that all evidence is recorded appropriately.
61. It is the responsibility of the RI to write the first draft of report, taking care that it covers the required judgements of the framework and is written in clear, accessible prose. The first draft should be checked carefully and sent by email to the assigned editor on or before the day allocated in the inspection programme. This is generally two working days after the end of the inspection.
62. It is the responsibility of the editor to ensure that the report meets the SIS writing requirements, and is clear, consistent, evaluative and convincing. The summary should be clear and concise, summarising the main findings of the inspection. Key weaknesses should not be hidden. The recommendations should address the weaknesses identified by the inspection and lead to school improvement. The editor must ensure that the report is free of typographical errors or mistakes in grammar, spelling and syntax.
63. The RI must send the edited second draft to the Chief Inspector by email on or before the date allocated in the inspection programme. The Chief Inspector will proof-read and sign off the report and SIS will send it to the school for leaders to check its factual accuracy.
64. The school has two working days in which to check the report for factual accuracy and return it to SIS. On receipt of the checked report from the school, the Chief Inspector finalises the report for publication, where necessary in consultation with the author and editor.
65. SIS assures the quality of inspection by on site spot check visits to inspections made by the Chief Inspector or another senior member of the team.
66. The Chief Inspector will select a sample of evidence bases from inspection. These will be checked by editors to ensure that they meet SIS' quality standards. The Chief Inspector will notify the RI if their evidence base has been selected.

Failure to meet the independent school standards (ISS)

67. The majority of the schools in SIS' remit met the minimum standards required by the ISS at their last inspection. However, where one or more of the standards are not met, the DfE, as the registration authority for independent schools, is likely to require the proprietors or trustees to submit

an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan must set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standard(s), and the date by which each step will be taken. Following submission of the action plan, the DfE may reject or approve it, with or without modifications. Where an action plan is not submitted, or is submitted but rejected, the DfE may determine that the school is to be removed from the register of independent schools, or it may make an order requiring the proprietor to cease using any specified part of the school premises, close any part of the school's operation, or cease to admit any new pupils as specified by the order.

68. Where an action plan has been approved but the steps identified have not been taken by the required date, the DfE may substitute a later date; make an order as above, or determine that the school is to be removed from the register of independent schools.
69. If the DfE considers that there is a risk of serious harm to the welfare of the pupils, it may remove the school from the register of independent schools.
70. The DfE may ask SIS for professional advice on the suitability of a school's action plan. Where this occurs, SIS generally asks the RI to analyse and comment on the action the school plans. Detailed advice to inspectors together with the action plan evaluation form for use by them is to be found in the section of the inspection handbook dealing with 'other types of inspection'.

Monitoring a school's progress against its action plan

71. The DfE may ask SIS to undertake a monitoring inspection of the school to evaluate and report on its progress against the action plan. In these cases, the inspection will take place without prior notification to the school. SIS will normally allocate two inspectors to the inspection, but this will depend on the size of the school and the issues involved. Detailed advice on the conduct of these inspections, and the instruments for use, are found in the section of the inspection handbook dealing with 'other types of inspection'.
72. The report resulting from the monitoring inspection will follow the same quality assurance procedures as for a standard inspection report. The school will have the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the report, and it will be published on the SIS website within 20 days of the end of the inspection.

Inadequate schools

73. Schools which are found to be 'inadequate' in any of the key judgement sections will have failed to meet the minimum standards of the ISS, and are followed up by the DfE. These schools will be subject to SIS monitoring their progress in partnership with the DfE. The timing and scope of the progress monitoring inspection will occur in connection with action taken by the DfE regarding the school's continued registration as described above.

This is likely to occur within six months of the original inspection. All progress monitoring inspections are carried out without prior notification. They result in a report which is published on the SIS website. The DfE takes further action where the ISS are still unmet and the school remains inadequate.

74. The next standard inspection of a school that had an 'inadequate' judgement is likely to occur within two years of the previous standard inspection. The precise timing of this inspection will be agreed with officers of the DfE in order to coordinate with any action being taken by them.

Schools requiring improvement

75. Schools which are found to 'require improvement' in any of the key judgement sections are likely to be re-inspected within two years of the original inspection. The timing of the next standard inspection in these schools will be agreed in advance with officers of the DfE.

Emergency or unannounced inspection

76. The DfE may also request that SIS inspects a school out of the normal cycle and without prior notification. This usually occurs where they have concerns about a school and ask SIS to investigate the concern as a matter of urgency. In these circumstances, the inspection may be focussed on a particular standard or set of standards, which the RI will make clear to the school on arrival. SIS will generally allocate two inspectors to such an inspection which will take place over one or two days. The allocation of time and inspectors is at the discretion of the Chief Inspector, and is made according to the circumstances of the DfE's request.
77. The publication of a report following such an inspection is at the request of the DfE. A report is not published where the concern is unfounded. SIS recommends publication where the issues identified by the inspection indicate failure to meet the standards for independent schools or where the findings are significantly at odds with the last published report.
78. Where the DfE requires SIS to publish a report following an emergency inspection, the reporting process will follow the same quality assurance procedures as for a standard s109 inspection report. The school will have the opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the report and it will be published on the SIS website within 20 days of the end of the inspection.

New schools and material changes

79. All new schools are first inspected by Ofsted. They are transferred into the remit of SIS at the request of their proprietor or association and in agreement with the DfE.

80. Where a registered school applies to the DfE to make a material change to its registration, for example an amalgamation or a change of premises or an extension to the age range, SIS will, at the request of the DfE, make an inspection of the school to assess the proposed changes. The staffing of such an inspection depends on the scope of the changes, but is generally one inspector visiting for a single day.
81. The outcome of this inspection is reported to the DfE whose officers write to the school concerned approving or rejecting the proposed change(s). This type of inspection does not result in the publication of a report. On occasions, it may occur that a request to make a material change coincides with the timing of a standard inspection. In such cases, SIS will consider the material change request as part of the inspection and subsume the findings in the published report.

Complaining about an inspection

82. The vast majority of SIS inspections are carried out successfully and without incident. Should any concerns arise during the inspection, the trustees or senior teacher/ administrator should raise them with the RI as quickly as possible, preferably while the inspection is taking place, as it is often easier to resolve issues on the spot and avoid a formal complaint later. The RI must seek to resolve the concerns. However, we recognise that this is not always possible, and where this is the case, the school may wish to make a formal complaint. The SIS complaints policy is available on our website.

Deferral of inspection

83. It is not SIS policy to change or defer the timing of an inspection other than in the exceptional circumstances specified in SIS deferral policy.⁴ An inspection might be cancelled or deferred after the school has been notified, following a request made by the school. Normally, however, if pupils are receiving education in the school, the inspection will go ahead even if, for example, the headteacher is off site or building work is taking place.
84. The publication of a report is only deferred or delayed in exceptional circumstances. In most cases the report will be published even though a complaint about it or the inspection may be under investigation. The report will be amended in the event of an appeal being upheld.

⁴ The Deferral Policy is found on the SIS website www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk

PART B: THE EVALUATION SCHEDULE

85. This part sets out the key judgements of the evaluation schedule and the evidence inspectors consider in reaching them.
86. Each section contains grade descriptors for each of the key judgements. Inspectors must use the descriptors to guide their judgements. The grade descriptors will not all apply in every case. Inspectors must take a 'best fit' approach to reaching each key judgement, and use their common sense and professional knowledge and expertise to do so.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

87. Inspectors reach a balanced professional judgement of the quality of education in the school by taking account of:
- the quality of the school's academic curriculum;
 - the quality of the teaching;
 - the effectiveness and use of assessment; and
 - the impact of all these factors on pupils' learning and achievement.

Sources of evidence

88. Inspectors must consider a wide range of first-hand evidence before reaching their overall judgement of the quality of education at the school.
89. Inspectors must examine schemes of work, teachers' medium term and weekly plans; lesson planning and pupils' work to assess the quality and impact of the curriculum. They also examine how the school supplements the formal curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities, and how the school uses trips and visiting speakers to support the curriculum.
90. Evidence of the quality of the teaching is found through observing lessons; assessing the impact of the teaching on the learning and progress of pupils of different age groups and abilities; talking to them about their work; and judging the contribution that homework, private study and computer-based distance learning strategies have on their learning. Inspectors must examine the quality and impact of support and intervention strategies for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the challenge made of more able pupils. The quality of the teaching is judged **both** by observing a range of lessons in different subjects and over a range of age groups, **and** by assessing the impact of the teaching over time as seen through examination and test results and pupils' work. Inspectors record their observations on Evidence forms (Efs). They must grade the quality of the teaching in lessons.
91. Inspectors judge the quality, effectiveness and use of the school's assessment procedures by considering evidence of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils alongside testing and the school's procedures for assessing and recording data which track pupils' progress. Schools must know and be able to prove how well their pupils are doing. Inspectors consider how well staff use the information recorded on progress and attainment to plan lessons and set targets for pupils of all abilities, ensuring that no-one gets left behind without support and all pupils are actively helped to succeed.

92. Inspectors must conduct a scrutiny of pupils' work, paying particular attention to the standards reached by pupils of different abilities; the quality, range and accuracy of their writing in a range of subjects; and their ability to understand and use mathematics. They note standards achieved in other subjects and the quality of pupils' presentation and their pride in their work. The work scrutiny is a primary source of evidence about pupils' progress and attainment. It also provides evidence of curriculum planning, marking, assessment, target-setting and the feedback given to pupils to help them to improve their work.
93. Inspectors must take account of the results in standardised tests and public examinations, including any scholarships achieved by pupils in preparatory schools, and the destinations of school leavers. They must consider the school's own data, including any evidence from value-added data, and teachers' marking and records when assessing how well pupils achieve relative to their abilities and starting points. Inspectors talk to pupils to find out what they enjoy about their learning and how the school helps them to achieve. They should listen to a selection of primary aged pupils reading and talk to them about what they have understood. They also take account of the views of staff, pupils and parents about teaching, learning and achievement.

The independent schools standards covered by this section

94. Inspectors must consider whether the school meets paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(c); 2(2)(f)–2(2)(i); and 3–4 in part 1 of the independent school standards. In order for the school's provision to be graded 'good' or 'outstanding', all of these standards must be met. These standards may be met, and yet the school's quality of education may be judged to 'require improvement' if it does not fit the descriptors for 'good'.

Considerations for reaching overall judgements

95. In reaching their overall judgement of the quality of education, inspectors must consider:
 - the breadth, balance and special features of the curriculum; how well it is suited to pupils' needs and interests; how useful schemes of work, self-directed learning programmes and teachers' plans are in challenging and supporting all pupils so that individuals and all groups of pupils are enabled to progress well and achieve to the best of their ability;
 - the contribution of the extra-curricular programme, including trips and visiting speakers, to pupils' progress, achievement and learning;
 - the effectiveness of the support and challenge for those with SEND in enabling these pupils to overcome barriers to learning and succeed; and the effectiveness of provision for any gifted or talented pupils;

- the quality of assessment information and how effectively it is used to establish a baseline for pupils' achievement, plot progress, identify any pupils who are falling behind or who need additional support, plan lessons and tasks, and ensure that all pupils are enabled to make good progress and achieve well'
- the quality of marking and feedback to pupils so that they understand how to improve their work;
- the extent to which lessons are well-planned, interesting, challenging and effective, so that pupils enjoy learning, make good progress, contribute positively to their own success and achieve well;
- the range of tasks set for pupils in school and for homework and how they contribute to effective learning;
- examination and test results over time and the school's own data, as indicators both of how well the pupils achieve relative to their starting points, and of the impact of the quality of the teaching they receive over the time they are in school;
- where relevant, how well pupils read and understand what they have read; how well they speak and write; can understand and use numbers, and have acquired other skills necessary to function as an economically active member of British society.

Grade descriptors for the quality of education

96. Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the common sense and professional judgement of the inspection team. Where there are differences in the key aspects of the quality of education, inspectors should give greater weight to pupils' progress and achievement and to the quality of the teaching in reaching the overall grade.

Outstanding (1)

- The curriculum is broad, balanced, interesting and innovative. It meets the aims of the school and is very well adapted for the needs of all abilities. Curriculum planning is excellent: it demonstrates very high expectations leading to exceptional progress for pupils of all abilities. It is augmented by a lively extra-curricular programme which extends pupils' skills, interests and talents.
- Teaching is consistently of high quality, so that all pupils understand that the school has high expectations of their good behaviour, concentration and engagement. Pupils are challenged to do their best and there is scope for them to pursue their interests further and to a higher level. There is a 'learning buzz' in lessons and around the school. Pupils' behaviour is managed highly effectively.
- Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They vary methodologies and employ resources skilfully to suit pupils' different ways of learning. They use questioning highly effectively, set challenging homework and

enthusie pupils with a desire to learn. Lessons are planned very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and ensuring that tasks for all pupils are varied and demanding.

- Support for pupils with special educational needs is highly effective in enabling pupils to overcome barriers and equipping them with key skills to make excellent progress. Teachers stretch more able learners to reach their potential.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support. Pupils receive incisive feedback about how to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills, which they use effectively. The school's procedures for assessing and tracking progress are highly effective so that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress and succeed at school.
- Reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills are exceptionally well embedded across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS in place, the teaching of phonics is effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' achievement is exceptionally high, considering their different starting points. As they move through the school in all subjects, including in English and mathematics, pupils make substantial and sustained progress, developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(c); 2(2)(f)–2(2)(i); and 3–4 in part 1 of the independent school standards are met.

Good (2)

- The curriculum is broad, balanced, interesting and well suited to the needs and interests of the pupils. It meets the aims of the school. Curriculum planning is strong: it plans for and leads to good progress for pupils of all abilities. It is augmented by a lively extra-curricular programme which extends pupils' skills, interests and talents.
- Teachers use effective planning to help pupils learn well. Resources and time in lessons are used productively. Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations of good behaviour and set clear tasks that challenge and engage pupils well. Homework provides good opportunities to consolidate knowledge. More able learners are set challenging tasks.
- Teachers identify and support effectively those pupils who struggle and intervene quickly to help them to improve their learning. Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective and equips them with key skills to make good progress.
- Teachers give pupils useful feedback which they use well to improve their work. The school's procedures for assessing and tracking progress are effective and ensure that pupils of all kinds and all abilities make good progress and that teachers can identify quickly those who need extra help and provide it.
- Reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills are embedded securely across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS in place, the teaching of phonics is effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils develop the capacity to learn from mistakes and they become keen learners who want to find out more. Most are willing to find out new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills, both in lessons

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| <p>and in extra-curricular activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils make consistently good progress in almost all year groups and in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress is above average, including those with special educational needs. Their attainment is good in relation to their different starting points. ■ The school meets paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(c); 2(2)(f)–2(2)(i); and 3–4 in part 1 of the independent school standards |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The curriculum and assessment meet the minimum standards of paragraphs 2(1) and 4 but are not good enough to best fit the descriptor for 'good'. ■ The quality of the teaching is adequate in that it enables most pupils to make the expected, but not the consistently good progress, required by the descriptor for 'good'. |
| <p>Inadequate (4)</p> <p>The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The curriculum is narrow and poorly planned with inappropriately repeated work and/or gaps in knowledge and understanding. It fails to meet the needs of pupils or particular groups of pupils and results in poor progress. ■ The curriculum undermines fundamental British values. ■ Weak assessment practice means that teachers are unaware of pupils' strengths and difficulties and thus do not provide them with appropriate challenge and support. Pupils receive inadequate feedback and do not know how to improve their work. ■ Teaching is poor. Pupils or particular groups are making inadequate progress because teaching does not develop their knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently. ■ Teaching does not challenge or interest pupils so that the pace of lessons is slow and pupils become bored and disruptive. Poor behaviour goes unchallenged. ■ Pupils cannot communicate, read, write, or apply mathematics as well as they should, given their starting points, so they do not make sufficient progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. ■ Pupils are entered for public examinations inappropriately and results are poor. They have not attained the standards or qualifications appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment. ■ One or more of the paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(c); 2(2)(f)–2(2)(i); and 3–4 in part 1 of the independent school standards are not met. |

PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

97. Inspectors reach a balanced judgement of pupils' personal development by considering:
- the personal qualities and attitudes pupils develop;
 - pupils' behaviour, consideration and respect for others and contribution to school, local and wider society;
 - pupils' attendance, punctuality and attitudes to learning;
 - pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness;
 - the schools aims, values and ethos and their impact on pupils' personal development;
 - the quality of the school's programmes for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and careers education, and their impact on how well pupils are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain; and
 - pupils' knowledge and understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Sources of evidence

98. Inspectors must consider a wide range of evidence in reaching the overall judgement. This includes how the school's ethos contributes to the values and attitudes which pupils develop. Inspectors talk to trustees or governors, school leaders and staff about the aims and ethos of the school and consider how well these are built into the life of the school.
99. Inspectors consider parents' views of how well the school helps their children to develop good attitudes and values.
100. They talk to staff with particular responsibility for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding. They consider the range of visitors and visiting speakers, trips and extra-curricular opportunities, alongside the curriculum itself, and the contribution these factors make to the breadth of pupils' experiences and their moral and cultural development. Opportunities for fund-raising, voluntary work and contributing to local and wider society provide further sources of evidence.
101. Inspectors talk to pupils, both formally and informally, and gauge their attitudes to and perceptions of others, and the respect they have for people in all sections of society. They assess pupils' awareness and understanding of British life and the contribution they make to it.

102. They consider the opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop good manners and social skills; organise themselves; develop personal qualities and social responsibility; take responsibility and develop leadership skills, for example as monitors, team captains or prefects; and understand how democracy works in action. The contribution of the School Council, or similar, provides evidence of this.
103. Inspectors consider pupils' behaviour in lessons and how they conduct themselves during break times. They consider the quality of the relationships in school and pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
104. Registration periods and attendance registers provide evidence of pupils' attendance and punctuality, and their commitment to arriving at school promptly and ready to learn. Lesson observation and pupils' engagement with private study and self-directed learning provide evidence of their attitudes to study and commitment to their own progress.
105. Inspectors consider the content and quality of the PSHEE, citizenship and careers programmes and how well these programmes inform and prepare pupils to make choices about their future careers and lifestyles. They talk to staff with particular responsibility for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values, and assess the impact of these programmes on pupils' attitudes and actions.

The independent schools standards covered by this section

106. Inspectors must consider whether the school meets the standards in paragraphs 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(e) in part 1; and all parts of paragraph 5 (a-e) in part 2 of the independent school standards. In order for the school's provision to be graded 'good' or 'outstanding', all of these standards must be met. These standards may be met, and yet the pupils' personal development may be judged to 'require improvement' if it does not fit the descriptors for 'good'.

Grade descriptors for pupils' personal development

107. Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the common sense and professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- Pupils are considerate, polite, well-mannered and thoughtful young people. They are active and thoroughly reliable members of the school and wider societies, making an excellent contribution to both. They volunteer their help willingly for the benefit of others.
- They have strong moral values which influence all aspects of their lives. They are tolerant, open-minded young people who have good knowledge of and show respect for the beliefs, cultures, views and lifestyles of other people.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured learners. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress. They show initiative. They value their education and are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable and reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Relationships are excellent. Pupils develop strong friendships, show empathy for others and actively ensure that no-one gets left out.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils' cultural development, so that they emerge as well-rounded individuals with a strong awareness of culture in its widest sense and have been able to develop their own sporting, dramatic, musical, creative and artistic talents to the full.
- High quality PSHEE throughout the school enables the pupils to make strong and well-informed choices about moral perspectives and how they would like to live their lives. They promote and are excellent ambassadors for fundamental British values.
- High quality impartial careers guidance helps pupils to make informed choices about which courses suit their academic needs and aspirations. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, apprenticeship, employment, self-employment or training and have attained or are on course to gain relevant qualifications.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. Attendance is above the national average. They arrive at lessons punctually and work hard.
- Paragraphs 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(e) in part 1; and all parts of paragraph 5 (a-e) in part 2 of the independent school standards are met.

Good (2)

- Pupils are polite, thoughtful and caring. They are reliable members of the school and wider societies, and make a strong contribution to both.
- They have good moral values that guide their actions. They are tolerant, have good knowledge about and show respect for the beliefs, cultures, views and lifestyles of other people.
- Pupils are confident and have good self-esteem. They take pride in their work and their school. Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive and have a good impact on their progress.
- They behave well in lessons and at break times reflecting the school's efforts to promote high standards. Relationships are strong and pupils make good friendships.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop cultural interests and awareness and to develop their talents through the cultural life of the school.
- A comprehensive programme of PSHEE equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and wider society, and to make informed choices about how to live their own lives. They understand and model British values.
- Pupils are well prepared to make choices about the next stage of their education,

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| <p>training or employment and have attained or are on course to attain relevant qualifications to help them to progress towards their goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils value their education. Few are absent or persistently absent. They are punctual and prepared for lessons. |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The basic standards in paragraphs 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(e) in part 1; and all parts of paragraph 5 (a-e) in part 2 of the independent school standards are met, but aspects of pupils' personal development, attitudes, behaviour and/or attendance require improvement before they fit best with the descriptor for 'good'. |
| <p>Inadequate (4)</p> <p>Pupils' personal development is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other or staff and a lack of self-discipline. They ignore or rebut requests from teachers to moderate their conduct. This results in poor behaviour and disruption to lessons which prevent other pupils from learning. Attitudes to learning and homework are poor. ■ The school's provision for PSHEE is poor. There are significant gaps so that pupils do not understand how or why to live healthy, positive lives both physically and emotionally. ■ Pupils show a lack of care and common courtesy towards others. They are prejudiced, narrow-minded and antagonistic towards the views, cultures, beliefs and lifestyles of others. They do not model or uphold British values. ■ There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop good moral values. Pupils' cultural development is inadequate. ■ Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows little sign of sustained improvement. ■ For secondary pupils, the careers programme is inadequate, such that they are ill-prepared to make informed choices about their future. |

SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

108. Inspectors reach a judgement of safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety through consideration of the school's policies and their implementation alongside their impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, their understanding of how to stay safe and their feelings of safety in school. Inspectors may use the aide-memoir, interview guide and checklist in the 'forms' section of the handbook to collect and record evidence for their judgements in this section.

Sources of evidence

109. Inspectors give careful consideration to how effectively senior leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees ensure that all pupils are safeguarded. This includes consideration of the policies they have produced, their compliance with the requirements of the standards and government guidance, and the effectiveness with which they are implemented.
110. Inspectors interview staff with responsibilities for safeguarding and for particular aspects of pupils' safety in the widest sense, including staff recruitment and vetting, fire precautions, health and safety, risk assessments, anti-bullying strategies, supervision and the promotion of good behaviour. They assess how well the school raises pupils' awareness of the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and what the school does when it suspects that pupils are vulnerable to these issues.
111. They scrutinise records of staff training for evidence of safeguarding and safe recruitment. They talk to staff about how to identify concerns and how to report them. They assess staff knowledge of key guidance documents, such as *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. They look at the school's child protection records and judge whether these are clear and helpful in ensuring that cases are fully documented and followed up promptly and effectively.
112. They examine the school's recruitment and vetting procedures, and records, including the Single Central Record (SCR) of staff appointments and verify, through a random sample of staff files that the information in the SCR is correct. They speak to those with responsibility for appointing staff and look at any records kept of recent appointments as evidence of the school's recruitment process in action.
113. Inspectors take account of pupils' views of bullying and how safe they feel in and out of school, including on the internet and when using mobile telephones, electronic devices and social media. They consider the school's awareness of extremism and radicalisation issues, how vulnerable the pupils might be to these, and the strategies in place to safeguard them from undesirable influences.
114. They also take account of any views expressed by parents.

115. Inspectors take into consideration how safe, secure, clean and well-maintained the school's accommodation and premises are.

The independent schools standards covered by this section

116. Inspectors must consider whether the school meets the standards in all paragraphs (6-16) in part 3; and all paragraphs (17 – 21) in part 4 of the independent school standards.
117. In order for the school's provision to be graded 'good' or 'outstanding', all of these standards must be met. The school's provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety may be judged to 'require improvement' if it does not fit the descriptors for 'good' because there are minor matters which need to be rectified but do not put pupils at risk of harm.

Grade descriptors for pupils' welfare, health and safety

118. Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the common sense and professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- Safeguarding is at the heart of the school. There is a strong culture of vigilance where pupils' welfare is actively promoted and they feel safe at all times. All staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding to pupils' welfare, health and safety and go the extra mile to consider all aspects which will enable them to feel safe and fully protected.
- Staff are fully trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and they know how to report their concerns. The school works effectively with external partners to support pupils who are at risk or who are the subject of a multi-agency plan. CP records are clear, detailed and easy to follow. They provide an effective mechanism for ensuring that all cases are followed up promptly and efficiently.
- Pupils work hard with the school to prevent all forms of bullying and prejudice, including misuse of electronic and social media. Staff and pupils deal very effectively with the very rare instances of bullying behaviour and/or use of derogatory or aggressive language. Pupils report that there are always adults with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online, the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites. This includes awareness of radicalisation and extremism. The pupils are resilient to negative influences.
- Pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy. They make informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation.
- Every care and attention has been given to promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety in school and on trips. Risk assessments identify clearly and precisely any issues which might prove hazardous and prompt highly effective action to minimise risks to pupils. The accommodation and premises are safe, secure, clean, well-maintained and regularly monitored to minimise risks to pupils.
- Pupils are very well supervised as befits their age and stage of development.
- The standards in all paragraphs (6-16) in part 3; and all paragraphs (17 – 21) in part 4 of the independent school standards are met.

Good (2)

- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and effective. The pupils' welfare is actively promoted and they report that they feel safe. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) works effectively with external partners. CP records are clear and well-kept and are monitored regularly.
- Teachers and other adults are quick to tackle the rare use of derogatory or aggressive language and always challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Teachers and other adults promote clear messages about the impact of bullying and prejudiced behaviour on pupils' well-being. The school works well to tackle and prevent any instances of bullying that occur. Pupils acknowledge that bullying is rare.
- The school's open culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils say they feel safe. They have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about how to stay fit and healthy and maintain emotional and mental health. They say there is an adult they can turn to with concerns.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online, and have been taught the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites. The pupils are resilient to negative influences, including radicalisation and extremism.
- The school monitors its accommodation, premises, and on- and off-site activities carefully and assesses and minimises the risks to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The standards in all paragraphs (6-16) in part 3; and all paragraphs (17 – 21) in part 4 of the independent school standards are met.

Requires improvement (3)

- Pupils say they feel safe, and their parents agree.
- In general, the standards in all paragraphs (6-16) in part 3; and all paragraphs (17 – 21) in part 4 of the ISS are met, but there may be minor issues or aspects thereof which require improvement and can be quickly rectified and do not put pupils at risk.

Inadequate (4)

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies:

- Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent. Pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle bullying successfully.
- Pupils or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school.
- The school does not teach pupils how to stay safe online; they are unaware of the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites and could thus fall prey to online bullying, abuse or radicalisation.
- One or more of the standards in parts 3 and 4 of the independent school standards are not met and these failures could put pupils' welfare, health and safety at risk.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

119. Inspectors reach a judgement of the effectiveness of the leadership, management and governance of the school through consideration of a wide range of evidence.

Sources of evidence

120. Inspectors obtain a range of evidence from meetings with school leaders and governors or trustees and first-hand evidence of their work across the school. They also examine documentary evidence and records provided by the school to evaluate the impact of leaders' and governors/trustees' work, both currently and over time. The views of staff, parents and pupils also provide useful evidence for judging the culture that has been established in the school and the effectiveness of its leaders. Inspectors take account of any client surveys the school has conducted itself.
121. Inspectors must also consider whether the school meets part 8 of the ISS and the requirements of the EYFS, where relevant.
122. Inspectors must consider:
- the leaders' and governors/trustees' vision and ambition for the school and how these are communicated to staff, parents and pupils;
 - how effectively the vision for the school is turned into reality;
 - whether leaders have established and maintain an ethos commensurate with the aims and values of the school and, where relevant, the philosophy of their association or parent body;
 - how leaders ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities are helped to excel, fulfil their potential, develop their personal qualities and enjoy their education;
 - leaders' expectations for social behaviour among pupils and staff and how well they are realised;
 - the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and how effectively it leads to development plans and actions that secure improvement;
 - the work of the leaders and trustees/governors/proprietors in creating and implementing policies and procedures which ensure pupils' progress, welfare, health and safety;
 - the quality of induction procedures and the continuing professional development for staff;
 - how leaders use performance management to promote effective practice across the school and sustain or increase motivation among staff;
 - the safeguarding culture of the school; whether pupils feel safe, are made aware of how to keep themselves and others safe; and the effectiveness of the schools procedures for ensuring their welfare, health and safety;

- how well senior leaders and trustees/governors ensure that the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- how effectively leaders and governors/trustees promote equality and enable pupils to respect the cultures, abilities and lifestyles of others;
- how effectively leaders and governors/trustees engage with parents and carers to support pupils and keep them informed about and involved in the life of the school and the progress of their child;
- how effectively the school's premises and accommodation support pupils' learning and their welfare, health and safety;
- the way the school handles complaints and the record of complaints;
- how effectively governors and trustees hold senior leaders to account for the success of the school;
- the effectiveness of the proprietors' and governors/trustees' contribution to the development and success of the school; and
- the extent to which parents, pupils and staff are happy and have confidence in the school.

The independent schools standards covered by this section

123. The extent to which the school meets the independent school standards is linked directly to the judgement on leadership and management. In order to meet the standards in part 8 (quality of leadership in and management of schools), the school must meet the standards in parts 1–7. Where one or more standards are not met, this leads to a judgement of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.

Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management

124. Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the common sense and professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees have articulated a vision and ambition for the school which is committed to achieving excellence in all respects. The school's culture enables pupils and staff to succeed and excel.
- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees have established and maintain an ethos commensurate with the aims and values of the school and its proprietors. This enables pupils of all ages and abilities to flourish, fulfil their potential, enjoy their education and develop their personal qualities to the full. The ethos and culture of the whole school counters any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.
- Relationships in the school are exemplary. Leaders have the highest expectations of behaviour, so that respect, courtesy and good manners are the norm.
- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees have a deep and accurate understanding of

the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this knowledge to plan and drive forward school improvement. Development plans are clear, well-structured, ambitious but achievable and result in benefit to pupils.

- There is a relentless focus on maintaining the outstanding quality of the school and/or securing its constant improvement. Leaders are able to make and carry through challenging decisions for the good of the school. The actions of school leaders have resulted in substantial improvement in the quality of education and in excellent progress and achievement for all pupils.
- Performance management is highly effective and leads to professional development that encourages, challenges and supports staff. Teaching is highly effective across the school, and staff are well motivated.
- Safeguarding is integral to the life of the school. Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance where pupils' welfare is actively promoted and they feel safe.
- The promotion of fundamental British values is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is exemplary. Leaders respond swiftly where pupils are vulnerable to these issues. High quality training develops staff's vigilance, confidence and competency to challenge pupils' views and encourage debate.
- Leaders communicate in a highly effective manner with parents, providing them with the information they need about the school and their child's progress. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve. The school involves parents fully in the life of the school, and it enjoys very strong support from parents.
- The school is run in a highly efficient manner. Proprietors, governors and trustees systematically hold school leaders to account for the quality of education, effective deployment of staff and use of accommodation and resources, including the use of any government funding, so that pupils benefit. They understand the school's data well and do not shy away from challenging leaders about variations in outcomes for pupil groups.
- Proprietors, trustees and governors make an outstanding contribution to the school's success by offering the senior leaders a high level of challenge and external support. They are actively involved in the life of the school and its development.
- Proprietors, governors and trustees are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities and the requirements of the standards for independent schools. They have ensured that all ISS are met.

Good (2)

- Leaders set high expectations of pupils and staff. They lead by example to create a culture of respect and tolerance. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils support the progress and good behaviour of all pupils at the school.
- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees are ambitious for all pupils and promote improvement effectively. The school's actions secure improvement in all pupils' progress, and standards of achievement are rising, including in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of education at the school. This helps them plan, monitor and refine actions to improve all key aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders and proprietors/governors/trustees use performance management effectively to improve teaching. They use accurate monitoring to identify and spread good practice across the school.
- Teachers value the continuing professional development provided by the school. It is having a positive impact on their teaching and pupils' learning. Teaching is consistently good across the school or where it is not, it is improving rapidly.
- Proprietors/governors/trustees hold senior leaders closely to account for all aspects of the school's performance, including the use of any government funding, ensuring that the skilful deployment of staff, accommodation and resources delivers good or improving achievement.
- Leaders consistently and actively promote fundamental British values, equality and tolerance well, resulting in a positive school ethos. Staff and pupils work together to prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour and do not tolerate

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| <p>prejudice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect, abuse or sexual exploitation, reporting concerns and supporting the needs of those pupils. ■ Leaders protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Staff are trained and are increasingly vigilant, confident and competent to encourage open discussion with pupils. ■ Leaders and managers communicate effectively with parents and provide them with the information they need. They know how well their child is progressing and what their child needs to do to improve. The school enjoys strong support from parents. ■ Proprietors, governors and trustees are aware of their statutory responsibilities and the requirements of the standards for independent schools. They have ensured that all ISS are met. |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proprietors, governors and trustees may or may not be fully aware of their statutory responsibilities, but they have not ensured that all the basic standards for independent schools and EYFS requirements are met. There may be some minor aspects of the regulatory requirements which are not met but these can be corrected quickly without significant detriment to the welfare, health, safety or learning of the pupils. ■ Leadership and management ensure that the school runs smoothly but their work is not good enough to best fit the descriptor for good. |
| <p>Inadequate (4) Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Capacity for securing improvement is poor. There has been little or no improvement since the last inspection on issues identified for development. Improvements made are unsustainable, have been implemented too slowly or are overly dependent on external support. ■ Leaders are not doing enough to tackle poor teaching, learning and assessment, which significantly impair the progress of pupils. ■ Standards are falling and leaders are not aware of this or are not taking effective action to stem the decline in the progress of individuals or groups of pupils. ■ Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline. ■ Leaders and governors/trustees undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity. They do not prevent discriminatory behaviour and prejudiced actions and views. ■ Safeguarding is ineffective. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements, or they give serious cause for concern. Insufficient action is taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident. ■ Leaders and governors are not protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremist views when pupils are vulnerable to these. Policy and practice are poor, which means pupils are at risk. ■ Proprietors, governors and trustees are not aware of their statutory responsibilities and have not ensured that the ISS and EYFS requirements are met. There are significant failures which have a detrimental impact on pupils' progress, personal development or welfare, health and safety. |

PART C: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Background to the evaluation schedule

125. In line with the common inspection framework, inspectors will make the following judgements:

- overall effectiveness
- effectiveness of leadership and management
- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- personal development, behaviour and welfare
- outcomes for children.

126. Inspectors use a four-point scale to make all judgements.

- grade 1: outstanding
- grade 2: good
- grade 3: requires improvement
- grade 4: inadequate.

127. Inspectors must use their professional judgement to interpret and apply the grade descriptors to the setting they are inspecting. In doing so, they consider the following factors:

- a childminder who has only a very small number of children
- settings in which only babies and very young children are present
- settings that provide for funded two-year-olds or groups who may be disadvantaged
- settings that have children who receive their main Early Years Foundation Stage experience elsewhere.

128. Where there is a mixed age-range, inspectors must note any differences in the provision or outcomes for children of different ages and make a 'best fit' judgement, taking into account all their evidence and the reasons for their judgements.

129. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a child in the provision. In making their judgements about a provider's overall effectiveness, inspectors will consider whether the standard of education and care is good or whether it exceeds good and is therefore outstanding. If

it is not good, inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.

130. In judging the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the four key judgements. They will also make a judgement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding children.
131. Inspectors should take account of all the judgements made across the evaluation schedule. In particular, they should consider:
- the progress all children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points and their readiness for the next stage of their education including, where appropriate, readiness for school
 - the extent to which the learning and care that the setting provides meet the needs of the range of children who attend, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs
 - children’s personal and emotional development, including whether they feel safe and are secure and happy
 - whether the requirements for children’s safeguarding and welfare have been fully met and there is a shared understanding of and responsibility for protecting children
 - the effectiveness of leadership and management in evaluating practice and securing continuous improvement that improves children’s life chances.

Outstanding (1)

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- All other key judgements are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgements may be good as long as there is convincing evidence that this area is improving rapidly and securely towards outstanding.
- Safeguarding is effective. There are no breaches of statutory requirements.

Good (2)

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good.
- All other key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgement areas may require improvement as long as there is convincing evidence that it is improving rapidly and securely towards good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Requires improvement (3)

- Where one or more aspects of the setting’s work requires improvement, the setting’s overall effectiveness is likely to require improvement.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Where there are any breaches of the safeguarding and welfare and/or the learning and development requirements, they do not have a significant impact on children’s safety, well-being or learning and development.

Inadequate (4)

The setting's overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if:

- any one of the key judgements is inadequate and/or
- safeguarding is ineffective
- breaches of statutory requirements have a significant impact on the safety and well-being and/or the learning and development of children
- it is a nursery or pre-school that has been judged as requires improvement at two consecutive inspections and is still not judged to be good at its third inspection.

THE EVALUATION SCHEDULE AND GRADE CHARACTERISTICS

Effectiveness of leadership and management

132. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and governors:
133. demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all children can achieve and ensure high standards of provision and care for children
 - improve staff practice, teaching and learning through effective systems for supervision, rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development
 - evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self-evaluation, taking account of the views of parents and children, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement
 - provide learning programmes and a curriculum that has suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that it meets any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children
 - successfully plan and manage the curriculum and learning programmes so that all children get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, especially being ready for school
 - actively promote equality and diversity, tackle poor behaviour towards others, including bullying and discrimination, and narrow any gaps in outcomes between different groups of children
 - actively promote British values
 - make sure that arrangements to protect children meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Sources of evidence

134. The main evidence comes from interviews with the manager and/or registered provider or their nominee, supplemented by discussion with staff, parents and children, and through sampling policies and procedures.
135. Inspectors should obtain evidence of:
- how well practitioners and any trainees or students are monitored, coached, mentored and supported, and how under-performance is tackled
 - qualification levels and the effectiveness of a programme of professional development, arising from identifying staff needs and improving qualifications
 - the deployment of staff, taking account of their qualifications, skills and experience to work with children of different ages, including babies and toddlers
 - the extent and range of completed training, including child protection, first aid and safeguarding training that fully meets statutory requirements, and its impact on improving children's well-being
 - how well the physical environment is organised to meet the needs of individual children of different ages, including for babies and toddlers where appropriate
 - the effectiveness of the staff's monitoring and revision of the learning programmes to ensure that they have sufficient depth, breadth and challenge and reflect the needs, aptitudes, ages and interests of children
 - the effectiveness of the monitoring of children's progress, and interventions where needed, to ensure that gaps are narrowing for groups of children or individual children identified as being in need of support
 - how effectively leaders use additional funding, including the early years pupil premium, and measure its impact on narrowing gaps in children's outcomes
 - the effectiveness of arrangements for safeguarding, including recruitment practices, and how well safe practices and a culture of safety are promoted and understood
 - how well training enables staff to identify possible signs of abuse and neglect at the earliest possible opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way
 - how well statutory policies and procedures are implemented

- the effectiveness of self-evaluation, including contributions from parents, carers and other stakeholders
 - whether leaders have implemented well-focused improvement plans through engagement with staff, children, parents and carers
 - the effectiveness of arrangements for sharing information and working in partnership with other providers, schools and professionals to identify all children’s needs and help them to make good progress.
136. Inspectors must use their professional judgement to interpret and apply the grade descriptors for leadership and management for childminders.
137. Inspectors must consider which set of descriptors best fits all the evidence available and the reasons why.

Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding (1)

- The pursuit of excellence in all of the setting’s activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising, highly successful drive to improve achievement or maintain the highest levels of achievement for all children.
- Incisive evaluation of the impact of staff’s practice leads to rigorous performance management, supervision and highly focused professional development. As a result, teaching is highly effective or improving rapidly.
- Leaders and managers actively seek, evaluate and act on the views of parents, staff and children to drive continual improvement.
- Highly effective monitoring identifies where children may be slow to develop key skills so that specific programmes of support are implemented to help them catch up. Gaps in achievement between different groups of children, especially those for whom the setting receives additional funding, are negligible or closing.
- The provider has an excellent knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and implements them highly effectively.
- Leaders’ deep understanding of the curriculum and how to apply it to meet the needs and interests of children results in all staff planning highly effective activities. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared to move on, including, where appropriate, to school.
- Leaders set high standards for children’s behaviour at all times. Exemplary relationships between staff provide an excellent model for children’s behaviour towards each other.
- Highly effective partnership working leads to improvement in provision and outcomes for children and their families.
- The promotion of equality, diversity and British values is at the heart of the setting’s work. It is demonstrated through all its practices, including tackling any instances of discrimination and being alert to potential risks from radicalisation and extremism.
- Safeguarding and welfare meet statutory requirements. Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance where children’s welfare is actively promoted. Children are listened to and feel safe. Staff are trained to identify and support children who may be at risk of neglect or abuse and they report any concerns. Work with partner agencies to safeguard children’s welfare is effective.

Good (2)

- Leaders and managers are ambitious and communicate high expectations to all. Self-evaluation is accurate and includes the views of parents, staff and children. Actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of provision, as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage, are carefully planned, concerted and effective.
- An effective and well-established programme of professional development helps practitioners to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice. Through effective systems for supervision and performance management, practitioners are monitored regularly and under-performance is tackled swiftly. As a result, teaching is consistently strong or improving steadily.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides a broad range of interesting and demanding experiences that help children to make progress towards reaching the early learning goals. As a result, children are well prepared to move on, including, where appropriate, to school.
- Monitoring ensures that individual children or groups of children who have identified needs are targeted and appropriate interventions are secured so that children receive the support they need, including through effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers.
- Relationships between staff provide a good model from which children learn about how to behave towards others. Leaders have high expectations for consistently good behaviour.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively to narrow gaps in outcomes. Partnerships with local providers are leading to improvements in provision and outcomes for children in the setting.
- Leaders and managers actively promote equality, diversity and British values through all policies and practice. They tackle instances of discrimination effectively.
- Safeguarding is effective and the setting meets statutory welfare requirements. The provider ensures that staff have a good understanding of how to manage, and minimise, risks for children without limiting opportunities for their development. Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, including safer recruitment, are implemented consistently; practice is reviewed regularly and clearly evaluated.

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and management are not yet good.
- Any breaches of statutory requirements do not have a significant impact on children's safety, well-being or learning and development.

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:

- Leaders do not identify weaknesses in practice or understand how to improve practice or any actions taken to tackle areas of identified weakness have been insufficient or ineffective. Training for staff is ineffective.
- Monitoring of teaching and/or of educational programmes is ineffective. As a result, provision is inadequate and children fail to thrive.
- Leaders' poor understanding of the learning and development requirements results in breaches that have a significant impact on children's progress, particularly for disadvantaged children.
- Links with parents, other settings or professionals involved in supporting children's care and education are not strong enough to ensure that individual needs are identified and met.
- Leaders fail to recognise and/or tackle instances of discrimination. Equality, diversity and British values are not actively promoted in practice.

- Safeguarding and welfare requirements are not met. Breaches have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

138. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which:

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- teachers, practitioners and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each child can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged
- teachers, practitioners and other staff have a secure understanding of the age group they are working with and have relevant subject knowledge that is detailed and communicated well to children
- assessment information is gathered from looking at what children already know, understand and can do, and is informed by their parents and previous providers as appropriate
- assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify children who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling children to make good progress and achieve well
- children understand how to develop as a result of regular interaction and encouragement from staff, and parents understand how their children should progress and how they can contribute to this
- information for parents helps them to understand how children are doing in relation to their age and what they need to do to progress; engagement with parents supports their child's learning
- equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- teaching supports children to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively, and to be ready for the next stages in their learning, especially school where applicable.

Sources of evidence

139. The main evidence comes from inspectors' direct observations of the way in which children demonstrate the key characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning

- creating and thinking critically

and their evaluation of how practitioners' teaching supports the learning of children of different ages.

140. Direct observation should be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate the impact that practitioners have on the progress children make in their learning. Such additional evidence should include:

- evidence of assessment that includes the progress of different groups of children:
 - assessment on entry, including parental contributions
 - progress checks of two-year-olds (where applicable)
 - formative assessments, including any parental contributions
 - the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (where applicable) or any other summative assessment when children leave
- evidence of planning for children's next stages of learning, based on staff assessment and a secure knowledge of the key characteristics of learning and children's development. Inspectors should consider the impact of staff knowledge, qualifications, training and expertise on their practice and on children's learning and development. Inspectors should also consider the quality of activities and choices for babies and toddlers
- evidence from observations, including:
 - the inspector's own observations of children's responses to the range of activities they take part in
 - joint observations with managers or early years professionals
 - any evidence of practitioners' observations
 - ways in which communication and language are developed and literacy taught
 - the quality and timeliness of adults' interventions and how well any learning that children demonstrate is built on by the adults working with them
- the inspector's tracking of selected children, including children of different ages, funded two-year-olds and other children whose circumstances may suggest they need particular intervention or support
- discussions with practitioners, key persons and managers to establish:
 - how well the provider and practitioners know and understand the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - their plans for reviewing children's progress at age two

- how changes are made to activities, resources, routines and/or the environment as a result of observations, and how the impact of those changes is evaluated
- whether practitioners accurately and reliably identify children whose learning and development are not at a typical level for their age and what actions they have taken to ensure that those children make sufficient progress
- the impact of the involvement of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and/or other partners where there are concerns about a child’s development and learning
- discussions with parents about:
 - how often practitioners share a good-quality summary of their observations of children with the children’s parents
 - how and when parents are asked for information about their child’s development.

Grade descriptors for teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding (1)

- All practitioners have very high expectations of what each child can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged.
- Teaching is consistently of a very high quality, inspirational and worthy of dissemination to others; it is highly responsive to children’s needs.
- Practitioners use their expert knowledge of the areas of learning and deep understanding of how children learn to provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences that enthuse, engage and motivate children to learn.
- Accurate assessment, including through high quality observations, is rigorous and sharply focused and includes all those involved in the child’s learning and development. Where appropriate, children are involved in the process. Information from assessment is used to secure timely interventions and support, based on a comprehensive knowledge of the child and their family.
- Provision across all areas of learning is planned meticulously and based on regular and precise assessments of children’s achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.
- Highly successful strategies engage parents, including those from different groups, in their children’s learning, both in the setting and at home.
- Practitioners provide an exceptional range of resources and activities that reflect and value the diversity of children’s experiences. They actively challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping and help children gain an understanding of people, families and communities beyond their immediate experience.
- The extremely sharp focus on helping children to acquire communication and language skills, and on supporting their physical, personal, social and emotional development, gives children the foundations for future learning.

Good (2)

- Practitioners have high expectations of all children based on accurate assessment of children’s skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the setting.
- The quality of teaching is consistently strong. Practitioners have a secure

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| <p>knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practitioners make regular and precise assessments of children’s learning that they use effectively to plan suitably challenging activities. They observe carefully, question skilfully and listen perceptively to children during activities in order to re-shape activities and give children explanations that improve their learning. ■ Practitioners teach the basics well and support children to learn the communication and language skills and develop the physical, personal, social and emotional skills they need for the next steps in their learning. Where appropriate, early literacy skills and mathematical development are promoted effectively to ensure that children are ready for school. ■ The key person system works effectively to engage parents, including those who may be more reluctant to contribute, in their children’s learning. Parents contribute to initial assessments of children’s starting points on entry and they are kept well informed about their children’s progress. Parents are encouraged to support and share information about their children’s learning and development at home. ■ Practitioners provide a wide range of opportunities for children to learn about people and communities beyond their immediate experience. Resources and activities reflect and value the diversity of children’s backgrounds and experiences. |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The provision is not yet good. ■ Any breaches of the statutory requirements do not have a significant impact on children’s learning and development. |
| <p>Inadequate (4)</p> <p>Provision is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expectations are not high enough and so children are not well prepared for school or the next stage of their learning. ■ Some practitioners have a poor understanding of the prime and/or specific areas of learning and/or knowledge of how to promote children’s learning and development. This results in ineffective teaching that is not matched to children’s needs. ■ Breaches of the statutory requirements have a significant impact on children’s learning and development. ■ Information from assessment is not accurate and not well used to enable children to make the progress they should. ■ Practitioners do not promote equality and diversity or extend children’s understanding of communities beyond their immediate environment. ■ Strategies for engaging parents in their child’s learning and development are weak and focus too much on care practices. As a result, parents do not know what their child is learning or how they can help them improve. |

141. Inspectors must use their professional judgement to interpret and apply the grade descriptors. Where there is a mixed age-range, inspectors must note any differences in provision for children of different ages and make a ‘best fit’ judgement.

142. The main evidence comes from inspectors’ direct observations of children’s behaviour and their interactions with practitioners and each other. Inspectors will consider the quality of care practices, including how well routines are adapted for babies and toddlers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

143. Inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children by evaluating the extent to which the provision is successfully promoting and supporting children's:
- sense of achievement and commitment to learning through a positive culture that is evident across the whole setting
 - self-confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner
 - enjoyment of learning and the development of their independence and ability to explore their surroundings and use their imagination
 - social and emotional preparation for their transition within the setting, into other early years settings, and into maintained nursery provision and/or Reception class
 - emotional security, through emotional attachments with practitioners and carers, and their physical and emotional health
 - prompt and regular attendance
 - following of any guidelines for behaviour and conduct, including management of their own feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others
 - understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks, including when using the internet and social media
 - knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, including through exercising and eating healthily
 - personal development, so that they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.
144. Direct observation should be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate the impact that practitioners have on children's well-being. This additional evidence is likely to include:
- evidence of planning for the prime areas of learning and especially for children's personal, social and emotional development
 - evidence of assessment of children's well-being
 - discussions with practitioners, children and parents and with managers about the key person system
 - inspectors' tracking of children's care arrangements
 - records of accidents, incidents and children's attendance at the setting.

145. Although attendance at the setting is not mandatory, providers should be alert to patterns of absence that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns. Inspectors will explore how well providers work with parents to promote children’s good attendance, especially the attendance of children for whom the provider receives the early years pupil premium.

Sources of Evidence

146. To reach an overall judgement about how the provision promotes children’s personal development, behaviour and welfare, inspectors must use their professional judgement to consider the impact of the provision on children’s all-round development.
147. Inspectors must consider which set of descriptors best fit all the evidence available and the reasons why. In doing so, inspectors must be mindful of the ages and stages of development of the children in the setting.

Grade descriptors for personal development, behaviour and welfare

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| <p>Outstanding (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The highly stimulating environment and wide range of activities ensure that children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently show the characteristics of effective learning. They show high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. Older children listen intently and are highly responsive to adults and each other. ■ Children’s health, welfare and well-being are significantly enhanced by the vigilant and highly consistent implementation of robust policies, procedures and practice. High standards of care and hygiene practice support the personal care needs of babies and toddlers. ■ Practitioners are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children of all ages form secure emotional attachments. This gives children a strong base for developing their independence to explore their world and increases their confidence in their own abilities. ■ Children increasingly show high levels of confidence in social situations. They develop a positive sense of themselves and their place in the world. They develop a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to manage risks and challenges. ■ The strong skills of all key persons ensure that all children are emotionally well prepared for the next stages in their learning. Practitioners skilfully support children’s transitions both within the setting and to other settings and prepare them for the move to school. ■ Children demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others that are appropriate for their age. They do not distract others or become distracted themselves. ■ Children’s welfare and personal development are central to everything practitioners do. They are very effective in supporting children’s growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. ■ Practitioners give children a wide range of experiences that promote understanding of people, families and communities beyond their own. They teach children the language of feelings and give them opportunities to reflect on their differences. |
| <p>Good (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practitioners provide a stimulating, welcoming environment, both indoors and out, that keeps children motivated and interested in a broad range of activities. Children are keen learners who regularly display the |

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| <p>characteristics of effective learning. They listen carefully to adults and each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A well-established key person system helps children form secure attachments and promotes their well-being and independence. Relationships between staff and babies are sensitive, stimulating and responsive. ■ Practitioners adhere consistently to agreed strategies to promote good behaviour and regular attendance. They provide clear guidance for children about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. ■ Practitioners help children to become independent in managing their own personal needs. ■ Key persons ensure children are emotionally well prepared for the next stages in their learning. ■ Children's good behaviour shows that they feel safe. They gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment. ■ Practitioners give clear messages to children about why it is important to have a healthy diet and the need for physical exercise while providing these things within the setting. ■ Children are learning to respect and celebrate each other's differences. They develop an understanding of diversity beyond their immediate family experience through a range of activities that teach them effectively about people in the wider world. |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provision to support children's personal development, behaviour and welfare is not yet good. ■ Any breaches of the statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare and/or learning and development do not have a significant impact on children's safety, well-being and personal development. |
| <p>Inadequate (4) Personal development, behaviour and welfare are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breaches of the statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare and/or learning and development have a significant impact on children's safety, well-being and personal development. ■ Practitioners do not support children's social and emotional well-being and prepare them for transitions within the setting and/or to other settings and school. ■ The key person system does not work effectively to support children's emotional well-being and so some children fail to form secure attachments with their carers. Babies are not stimulated. ■ Children's behaviour is not managed consistently. As a result, more than occasionally, their lack of engagement in activities and/or poor behaviour leads to a disorderly environment that hinders children's learning and/or puts them and others at risk. ■ Not all practitioners have sufficient knowledge and/or they are not vigilant enough to ensure that children are kept safe and that their health and welfare are promoted. This means children do not know, relative to their ages, how to keep themselves safe and healthy. ■ Children have a narrow experience that does not promote their understanding of people and communities beyond their own or help them to recognise and accept each other's differences. |

Outcomes for children

148. Inspectors will take account of current levels of development and progress and make a relevant judgement on learning outcomes for children by evaluating the extent to which:
- all children progress well from their different starting points
 - children meet or exceed the level of development that is typical for their age so that they can move on to the next stage of their education.

Sources of evidence

149. The main evidence should come from direct observation of children's learning and outcomes. This should be supplemented by the setting's records and assessment information, which inspectors should sample.
150. Any evaluation of children's progress towards the early learning goals must be judged in relation to their starting points, their individual needs, how long they have been at the provision and how often they attend.
151. The inspector should examine the information that the provision gathers about what children know, can do and enjoy when they start to attend. Evidence of starting points can also be gained by talking to staff and parents about the level of children's social, communication and physical skills on entry and, importantly, by observing children who are new to the provision.
152. The inspector must use the evidence to evaluate how well the provider and practitioners know about, and understand, the progress children are making towards the early learning goals. The inspector must judge whether adults' expectations for children are high enough.
153. The inspector must evaluate:
- whether children are working at typical levels of development for their age, including whether they are exceeding or reaching or are likely to reach typical levels of development for their age
 - whether children who are disadvantaged or under-performing are catching up quickly
 - children's progress at age two
 - whether outcomes are consistent across areas of learning
 - whether children are developing skills in the prime and specific areas of learning that help them to be ready for school
 - how well disabled children and those with special educational needs are supported to make progress

- how quickly children who speak English as an additional language gain the skills they need to communicate effectively.
154. Evaluation of children’s outcomes should take account of the proportions of children who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. An example of typical progress for a child would be that she or he consistently displays the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for her or his age. She or he would be moving steadily towards the early learning goals. Children who start at a lower level of development than would be typical for their age should catch up quickly. A child joining the setting at a higher level of development than would be typical must be given challenges to deepen and extend their learning.
155. Where there is a mixed age range, inspectors must note any differences in progress for children of different ages and make a ‘best fit’ judgement.

Grade descriptors for children’s outcomes

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| <p>Outstanding (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. ■ Almost all children in the provision, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the setting receives additional funding and the most able, are making substantial and sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement. ■ Gaps between the attainment of groups of children in the setting, including those for whom the setting receives additional funding, have closed or are closing rapidly. Any differences between outcomes in different areas of learning are closing. ■ Children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. |
| <p>Good (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children make at least typical progress and most children make progress that is better than typical from their starting points. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the setting receives additional funding and the most able. ■ Where children’s starting points are below those of other children of their age, assessment shows they are improving consistently over a sustained period and the gap is closing. Any gaps between the attainment of groups, including those for whom the setting receives additional funding, are closing. ■ Children are working comfortably within the range of development typical for their age, taking account of any whose starting points are higher or any disabled children and those with special educational needs. ■ Children develop the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning, including, where appropriate, for starting school. |
| <p>Requires improvement (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outcomes are not good. |
| <p>Inadequate (4)</p> <p>Outcomes are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The learning and progress of individual or specific groups of children, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs |

and/or those for whom the setting receives additional funding, do not match the levels of progress made by most children.

- Gaps between different groups show little sign of closing or may be widening.
- Children are not well prepared for school or their next stage of learning.
- Not enough children are working within the range of development that is typical for their age, given their starting points.