



**Nick Gibb MP**

Minister of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 0012345 ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

Christine Gilbert, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector  
Christine Ryan, Chief Inspector, Independent Schools  
Inspectorate  
Meg Buckingham, Chief Inspector, Bridge Schools  
Inspectorate  
Simon Bennett, Chief Inspector, Schools Inspection  
Service

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*Dear Colleague*

## **FUTURE INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

I am writing to clarify the arrangements for inspecting independent schools once the next inspection cycle for each inspectorate starts. In making these new arrangements DfE has taken account of the extent of publicly available information about independent schools, the vulnerability of pupils in different types of independent school, and the performance of schools at their last inspection. We believe the new arrangements strike a careful balance between reducing the burden of inspection, and targeting inspection on weaker schools or schools where the nature of the pupil body, or the type of provision, poses greatest risk. I am grateful to Ofsted and the other inspectorates for their assistance in assessing risk and providing information which has allowed us to finalise these arrangements.

All independent schools will continue to be inspected on a regular cycle. Those mainstream independent schools with good or outstanding inspection reports will in future have education provision inspected at intervals of up to 6 years. Education at all other independent schools will continue to be inspected at least every 3 years. Provision for under-3s, and the welfare of boarders in independent and maintained schools will both continue to be inspected at least every 3 years, reflecting the vulnerability of these pupils. The welfare of pupils in independent and maintained residential special schools will be inspected annually, as it is now. New schools will continue to be inspected before opening, during their first year of operation and after a further three years of operation.

The following criteria will apply in deciding whether mainstream independent schools are eligible to have education provision inspected on a six cycle:

- A judgement of at least 'good' for the quality of education provided; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; the welfare, health and safety of pupils; and the recruitment of staff; and at least 'satisfactory' for all other areas; and
- No regulatory failings in parts one, two, three, or four of the Independent School Standards;
- No more than four regulatory failings in total over parts five, six and seven of the Independent School Standards; and
- All EYFS judgements good or better (if applicable).

The department will continue to request inspections under s162A of the Education Act 2002 where necessary outside the usual inspection cycle, which may include inspections commissioned earlier in the inspection cycle than initially anticipated. The arrangements do not prevent the independent inspectorates from planning additional inspections if their schools commission them, for statutory or other purposes.

I understand that Ofsted and ISI will be integrating inspections of education and boarding welfare from the start of the next inspection cycle. In order to bring the previously separate cycles together, it may be necessary for some inspections to be slightly earlier or later than would otherwise be the case. In these circumstances, the department will agree harmonised arrangements with inspectorates that take account of risk and minimise the burden on schools.

*Yours sincerely*



**Nick Gibb MP**