



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Guidance for Inspectors on Conducting Inspections During COVID-19
(including registered EYFS Settings)**

January 2022

For the use of intended recipients only. Any copying or re-distribution of this document without permission is prohibited.
© Independent Schools Inspectorate January 2022. All rights reserved.

Contents

Contents	2
About this Guidance.....	4
Part 1 – Guidance for Schools and Reporting Inspectors.....	5
1. General information	5
2. Current position: January 2022	5
3. COVID-19 precautions	5
4. Remote collection of evidence as part of an RCI or EQI	5
5. Reports	5
6. Timings for RCIs	5
7. Timings for EQIs.....	7
8. Notification calls	8
9. Before the inspection (both remote and on-site elements).....	8
10. First telephone conversation with the head	8
11. COVID-19 arrangements for schools	10
12. Safeguarding.....	10
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs).....	11
INSPECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL STANDARDS REGULATIONS (ISSRs) – FAQs	11
13. What will be the focus of inspection?	11
14. How will inspectors evaluate compliance?	11
15. Will inspectors take into account the impact of COVID-19 on pupils’ achievements in 2020?	11
16. How will inspectors assess and compare exam results for 2020 and 2021?.....	11
17. Will there still be lesson observations in compliance inspections?	12
18. How will inspectors evaluate compliance in other areas?	12
19. What about health and safety?	12
20. What about recruitment checks?	12
21. Who will inspectors talk to?	12
22. How will inspection feel different?	12
23. What do we need to have ready?	13
24. Will there still be questionnaires?.....	13
25. What about EYFS?	13
INSPECTION OF THE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BOARDING – FAQs	14
26. What will be the focus of inspection?	14
27. How will inspectors evaluate compliance?	14
28. What about boarders’ welfare?	14
29. What about health and safety?	14
30. What about recruitment checks?	14
31. Who will inspectors talk to?	14
32. What do we need to have ready?	15
33. What about international boarders?.....	15
INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (ACHIEVEMENT) – FAQs	16
34. What will be the focus of inspection?	16
35. Will inspectors evaluate pupils’ achievement throughout 2020?.....	16
36. How will inspectors assess and compare exam results for 2020 and 2021?.....	16
37. Who will inspectors talk to?	16
38. What extra questions might inspectors be asking?.....	16

39. What do we need to have ready? 18

40. Will there still be lesson observations? 18

41. Will there still be questionnaires? 18

INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT) – FAQs 19

42. What will be the focus of inspection? 19

43. Will inspectors evaluate pupils’ personal development throughout 2020? 19

44. Who will inspectors talk to? 19

45. What questions might inspectors be asking? 19

46. EYFS 20

47. What do we need to have ready? 20

About this Guidance

This guidance has been prepared to assist both schools and Reporting Inspectors (RIs) as they prepare for the resumption of scheduled inspections following their suspension as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guidance is divided into two parts: Part 1 (Guidance and FAQs) is for the use of both schools and RIs, and Part 2 (Additional Guidance and Appendices) provides some more detailed guidance for use by Reporting Inspectors only.

The guidance will remain under review and subject to any updates necessary in the light of developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic or to feedback from schools or inspectors about the inspection processes.

Changes to January 2022 version

The document has been updated to reflect the current situation as at January 2022.

Changes to September 2021 version

The section on inspection of EYFS registered settings has been removed as the dis-applications from September 2020 to August 2021 no longer apply.

An element of flexibility has been introduced to the outline timetable for FCI/EQI inspections on Wednesday afternoons allowing for CTI and BTI(s) to be on site at the discretion of the RI and agreement of the school.

EYFS requirement references updated in line with new EYFS Framework.

Part 1 – Guidance for Schools and Reporting Inspectors

1. General information

This guidance is for schools and reporting inspectors who are involved in inspection during COVID-19. It supports inspectors in carrying out their work and is designed to ensure that consistent standards are applied across inspections that are conducted partly remotely and partly on-site. It ensures that there is reduced contact within the school setting to maintain the safety of all concerned. This guidance should be read alongside existing guidance on conducting inspections ([1.04 Guidance on conducting inspections 2022-01.pdf](#)).

2. Current position: January 2022

A full programme of scheduled inspections recommenced in September 2021 alongside on-site additional, progress monitoring and material change inspections. Inspectors have also conducted remote reviews for most material change requests and some progress monitoring inspections.

It is expected that a full programme of scheduled inspections will take place during the Spring term 2022, starting in the week beginning 10th January 2022.

3. COVID-19 precautions

All inspectors must take a lateral flow test in the 24 hours before an on-site inspection. They are also expected to follow any government guidance and any requirements stipulated by the school with regard to safety measures.

4. Remote collection of evidence as part of an RCI or EQI

In order to reduce the amount of time spent on face-to-face inspection activities, evidence will be gathered remotely wherever possible, either through scrutiny of materials and documentation provided by the school or through virtual interviews. Many aspects relating to compliance can readily be gathered remotely. The RI should allocate tasks carefully to ensure that remote evidence is collated effectively. The gathering of first-hand evidence on site (for example policy implementation, observation of educational quality and interviews), may need to take into account a school's arrangements for pupil bubbles.

Inspections will start at the normal time, ie midday Tuesday for an FCI/EQI and Wednesday for an RCI, but the first 24 hours will be devoted to scrutinising evidence remotely. This will be followed by two days on-site for an RCI and two and a half days for an FCI/EQI, during which time there will be a mixture of virtual and face-to-face inspection activities. As some evidence will have been gathered remotely prior to this, RIs should, wherever possible, minimise the amount of time spent physically on-site during these days.

Inspection evidence collected remotely must, in line with existing practice, be fully recorded in the inspection's Record of Evidence (RoE).

5. Reports

RIs will write reports in accordance with existing guidance. The Background Information section of the template will be amended to explain that some evidence was gathered virtually.

6. Timings for RCIs

These timings supersede those given in [1.04 Guidance on conducting inspections 2022-01.pdf](#) and remain in [force until further notice](#).

Pre-inspection	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Preparation</p> <p>RI gathers evidence in normal manner and completes RoE Parts 1 and 2 accordingly</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI gathers evidence and records in RoE Part 2 (Registered Settings) accordingly</p>	<p>Preparation</p> <p>School notified of inspection</p> <p>RI liaises with school for timetabling both off-site and on-site activities</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI liaises with setting for timetabling both off-site and on-site activities.</p> <p>Questionnaires open</p>	<p>Preparation</p> <p>RI prepares for inspection, including remote scrutiny of available evidence</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI prepares for inspection, including remote scrutiny of available evidence</p> <p>Questionnaires close at 20.00</p>	<p>Remote activities</p> <p>Inspection starts</p> <p>RI and EYCI carry out virtual interviews with key personnel in the school (including pupils)</p> <p>Travel to hotel</p> <p>Activities cease by around 16.00 so that RI and EYCI can travel to the hotel</p> <p>CTI and (as applicable) BTI(s) and EYTI travel to hotel</p>	<p>On-site face-to-face and virtual evidence gathering</p> <p>RI, CTI and (as applicable) the BTI, EYCI and EYTI triangulate all evidence gathered remotely through on-site activities, both virtual and face-to-face, including lesson observations</p>	<p>Onsite activities</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>Inspection ends</p> <p>Inspection continues with on-site activities, both virtual and face-to-face, including lesson observations</p> <p>Feedback at usual time (around 15.30, although may be earlier if sufficient evidence gathered) to include EYFS feedback for the registered setting.</p>

7. Timings for EQIs

These timings supersede those given in [1.04 Guidance on conducting inspections 2022-01.pdf](#) and remain in force until further notice.

Pre-inspection	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Preparation</p> <p>RI gathers evidence in normal manner and completes RoE Parts 1, 2 and 3 (FCI/EQI) accordingly</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI gathers evidence and records in RoE Part 2 (Registered Settings) accordingly.</p> <p>At discretion of RI, possible remote pre-inspection meeting for all members of inspection team.</p>	<p>Preparation</p> <p>School notified of inspection</p> <p>RI liaises with school for timetabling both off-site and on-site activities for both FCI and EQI</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI liaises with setting for timetabling both off-site and on-site activities</p> <p>Questionnaire opens</p>	<p>Morning preparation</p> <p>RI continues preparation for inspection</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI continues preparation for inspection</p> <p>Afternoon Remote scrutiny Inspection starts</p> <p>RI starts remote scrutiny of available evidence, to include virtual interviews with key personnel for both FCI and EQI</p> <p>Registered EYFS Inspection</p> <p>EYCI starts remote scrutiny of available evidence, to include virtual interviews with key personnel</p> <p>Late afternoon travel to hotel</p> <p>RI and EYCI travel to hotel</p> <p>Questionnaire closes at 20.00</p>	<p>Morning - remote scrutiny</p> <p>RI continues remote scrutiny of available evidence, to include virtual interviews with key personnel, for both FCI and EQI</p> <p>EYCI continues remote scrutiny.</p> <p>At discretion of RI and agreement of the school, these activities may take place in the school rather than in the hotel (NB: if EYCI on school site, RI must also be present)</p> <p>EYTI, if deployed, CTI and BTI(s) to travel to the school to arrive no earlier than 11:00</p> <p>12.00 noon on-site inspection starts</p> <p>On-site inspection activities which may include virtual interviews.</p> <p>EYCI (and as applicable EYTI) begin on-site inspection activities</p> <p>EQI TIs travel to hotel</p>	<p>Whole team on site for face-to-face and virtual evidence gathering</p> <p>Morning: EQI inspection starts</p> <p>RI, CTI and (as applicable) the BTI(s), EYCI and deployed EYTI triangulate all evidence gathered remotely through on-site activities</p> <p>FCI inspection normally concludes by noon (or may in exceptional circumstances continue into Friday)</p> <p>NB: Feedback on EYFS registered setting and on FCI to take place at the end of Friday prior to EQI feedback</p>	<p>On-site inspection continues</p> <p>On-site face-to-face and virtual activities for EQI (and FCI if this is continuing)</p> <p>Feedback on FCI, EYFS registered setting, and EQI at normal time (around 17.00)</p>

NB. The earliest time for CTI, BTI(s) to start inspecting is 12:00 on the Wednesday and for EQI TI(s) is 08:00 on the Thursday.

8. Notification calls

For scheduled routine inspections (RCI and FCI/EQI), including **announced** brought forward inspections, members of ISI’s delivery team will make the notification call to the school no more than two days before the inspection is due to start. This will usually be on a Monday between 08:30 and 10:00.

For unannounced brought-forward regulatory compliance inspections (BF RCIs), the reporting inspector will telephone the school on the morning the inspection starts, as soon as possible after 08:00. This may be on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Remote evidence gathering, including virtual interviews, will start at 09:00.

For unannounced brought-forward educational quality and focused/regulatory compliance inspections (BF R/FCI/EQIs), the reporting inspector will telephone the school as soon as possible after 11:00 on the day the inspection starts. This may be on a Monday or Tuesday. Remote evidence gathering, including virtual interviews, will start at 12:00.

9. Before the inspection (both remote and on-site elements)

The RI:

- checks any relevant documentation on the school’s website/ISI portal. Inspectors will be able to access documentation in the same way as previously from the details about the school on the ISI portal;
- drafts a timetable for the remote collection of evidence which is shared and agreed with the school on first discussion: the RI should remember to factor in time away from the computer screen;
- prepares for the first telephone conversation with the head (see table in points 6 and 7). All detail must be recorded in the RoE;
- prepares RoE Parts 1 and 2 and ensures that questions/trails for evidence gathering are appropriately tailored;
- ensures that early reviews of questionnaires are undertaken to ensure they are being completed and to view any developing trends;
- liaises with inspection team members to ensure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to any virtual meetings and other evidence gathering;
- confirms that all inspectors still have appropriate access to the internet to support remote evidence-gathering and have been reminded of the code of conduct during online interviews;
- checks that all inspectors are competent in using the platforms that are generally used for virtual meetings such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams;
- ensures that all inspectors involved in carrying out virtual meetings have a suitable room that is as quiet as possible and free from distractions, such as pets and family.

10. First telephone conversation with the head

The RI informs the head about:

- how inspectors will gather some inspection evidence remotely during the inspection activities;
- documentation required to be sent through to the RI directly via their ISI email address (if not already available via the portal or school website). This part of the conversation should include asking whether the school is following government COVID-19 guidance and requesting their COVID-19 risk assessment with a view to safeguarding pupils’ welfare.

The RI discusses the following points regarding the school’s COVID-19 arrangements in order to:

- ascertain whether anyone at the setting has or has recently reported COVID-19 symptoms;
- confirm that the school has been following the Government guidelines on COVID-19;
- check that the school is taking part in the NHS Test and Trace system;
- discuss and agree arrangements for the inspection and how the inspection team and the school will ensure that Government guidelines can be followed during the inspection;
- request copies of all school policies, protocols, risk assessments etc relating to COVID-19.

The RI liaises with the school about:

- the timetable for remote evidence-gathering activities: it is advisable to begin any virtual evidence gathering with a brief meeting with the person in the school responsible for ICT to ensure that all links are working effectively and are secure; the RI should build in regular catch-up sessions with the head, as would happen during an on-site inspection.
- receipt of the school's pre-inspection information;
- the timetable for all on-site activities that will follow the remote evidence gathering;
- arrangements for interviews with governors, senior staff, staff and pupils;
- whether arrangements for questionnaires for parents, pupils and staff are understood by the school and/or that notification of these has been received from ISI;
- how data will be used by the inspection team;
- virtual consideration of confidential documentation, eg staff files etc. For each virtual meeting the school must be prepared to share evidence effectively;
- technological processes for any virtual tour and/or interviews: the RI will work with the school to identify the most appropriate platforms and arrangements for virtual meetings, interviews, virtual tours etc. **It is important that the RI states that the recording of any virtual discussions is not permitted.** Once the virtual meetings have been scheduled, the school should send out 'invitations' to team members: RI, CTI and BTI and/or EYCI, if applicable. Separate advice is available for EYFS registered settings as Appendix C to this guidance;
- the school's online safety procedures and how those carrying out the virtual evidence gathering will operate under strict safeguarding arrangements;
- lateral flow testing for inspectors: the RI will explain about the lateral flow test that each RI will have taken in the 24 hours prior to arrival at the school;
- the school's operating procedures during the current pandemic; for example, how 'bubbles' are organised and the arrangements in boarding houses. This will assist the RI in planning for all on-site activities, including for an EQI. Inspectors will work within the school's operating procedures where possible. If the RI remains concerned about any aspect of team safety and the potential integrity of the inspection, they should contact a member of the duty team.
- whether there are any cases of COVID-19 in the school and if any staff or pupils are in self-isolation, including in any boarding areas. The RI will determine what impact this may have on the inspection process for both remote and on-site elements.

If the remote evidence gathering cannot happen for any reason, including technological difficulties, the RI must inform the duty team immediately. The duty team will advise how to proceed.

NB: These are abnormal circumstances, but the school's safeguarding procedures must be adhered to during all virtual evidence gathering and subsequent on-site activities. **The safeguarding of pupils must not be compromised by these arrangements.**

11. COVID-19 arrangements for schools

Schools must:

- provide the RI with organisational information relating to year-group bubbling; staffing arrangements; movement around site protocols, etc;
- ensure that the RI is aware of protocols in place for the EYFS and boarding (as applicable);
- facilitate forums for online meetings with staff personnel and pupils as required by the RI;
- facilitate areas where an inspector can meet with a group of ‘bubbled’ staff or pupils (either inside or outside) in line with COVID-19 protocols;
- facilitate separated areas for inspectors to work, with online access (to prevent close and prolonged contact in team rooms, such as that required for team meetings), unless an appropriately spaced and well-ventilated area is available;
- ensure that documentation, such as work scrutiny, is provided for inspectors in individualised areas or, preferably, is scanned or shown virtually;
- ensure that inspectors are provided with detail relating to online provision if applicable, such as assembly times, virtual lessons and work stored on virtual learning platforms;
- ensure that areas provided for each inspector have appropriate sanitising supplies.

12. Safeguarding

If inspectors observe or hear anything that causes them concern about the safety or well-being of a pupil, they should act immediately to ensure the safety of the pupil, in line with the ISI policy on safeguarding on inspection. The RI should inform the school DSL of any concern and contact the ISI Office as soon as possible for further guidance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

INSPECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL STANDARDS REGULATIONS (ISSRs) – FAQs

13. What will be the focus of inspection?

The scope of Regulatory Compliance Inspections (RCIs) and Focused Compliance Inspections (FCIs) remains as set out in the ISI Inspection Framework. (NB: schools should also have begun to teach the new RSE and Health Education curriculum by the start of the summer term 2021).

See the additional FAQs below regarding the inspection of boarding regulations and/or those linked to Registered EYFS settings.

14. How will inspectors evaluate compliance?

Inspectors' approach to evaluating compliance will not change, with an emphasis on first-hand evidence gathering. Some evidence-gathering methods may vary (see above).

15. Will inspectors take into account the impact of COVID-19 on pupils' achievements in 2020?

Inspectors will not evaluate levels of achievement evident in September 2020 which relate to pupils' learning between March and September 2020. Inspectors will not take into account schools' responses to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020. They will continue to evaluate the impact of teaching (whether on-site or online) on pupils' outcomes (Part 1, Para 3).

16. How will inspectors assess and compare exam results for 2020 and 2021?

RIIs will look at relevant exam/assessment results over the following time frames:

	Exam/assessment results 2017	Exam/assessment results 2018	Exam/assessment results 2019	Final grades (the higher of the centre-assessed grades [CAGs] or calculated grade) 2020	2021 teacher-assessed grades [TAGs]
EQIs Spring and Summer 2022		Overarching statement on public examinations results based on a two-year average.		Will be evaluated, but not compared directly with those from previous years nor with any form of national average	Will be evaluated, but not compared directly with those from previous years nor with any form of national average

These data will be considered in RCIs in conjunction with all other evidence on outcomes for pupils (including work scrutiny and pupil and staff interviews), in relation to the requirements of Part 1 of the ISSRs.

In recognition that public examinations have been disrupted, the evaluations for Part 1 of the ISSRs will be against pupils' progress as required by Part 1, Para 3(a) with a statement such as:

'In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 20xx to 20xx have confirmed that teaching enables/does not enable pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).'

Inspectors will continue to review the school's own framework for assessment in RCIs for evidence of pupils' progress, as evidence of compliance with Part 1, Para 4 of ISSRs. They will not review data specific to the spring and summer terms 2020.

Inspectors will continue to focus on provision for pupils with particular needs, including those with SEND.

17. Will there still be lesson observations in compliance inspections?

Yes, inspectors will still observe lessons in RCIs. Tours of lessons will also continue where possible and have the benefit of limiting the time spent by an inspector in any one place. Inspectors will avoid crossing 'bubbles' where possible, but moving between groups may be necessary. In EYFS settings, inspectors will view activities from a distance where possible.

Lesson observations are not normally necessary in FCIs. (Observations of pupils in whole or part-lessons will continue to happen in EQIs).

18. How will inspectors evaluate compliance in other areas?

Pupils' welfare, including safeguarding, remains the key focus of regulatory inspection. Related policies will be reviewed as usual and interviews held with relevant staff, pupils and governors, together with review of records. As much as possible, inspectors will avoid handling paper and may ask for sensitive documents to be scanned.

Any scans of sensitive documents that are required as evidence will be deleted after the inspection. Key contents will continue to be noted in the record of evidence. Entire documents will not be kept except with the school's agreement.

Similarly, inspectors in RCIs will continue to evaluate the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes the recognition of and respect for protected characteristics. Any evidence of potential discrimination relating to a protected characteristic will be scrutinised and evaluated, whether the inspection is an RCI or FCI.

19. What about health and safety?

Health and safety remain a focus of regulatory inspection. Inspectors will review relevant records remotely and gather evidence outdoors wherever possible. If inspectors cannot physically view areas safely, they may instead request virtual evidence such as a screen shot or video tour.

Inspectors will also ask to see a school's own COVID-19 risk assessments and evaluate their implementation.

20. What about recruitment checks?

Inspectors will continue to check that the school's recruitment procedures are operating effectively. Inspectors may undertake remote scrutiny of some documentation.

21. Who will inspectors talk to?

After notification, inspectors will hold initial discussions with the head or deputy head. These will include academic progress as reflected in data, and how to provide evidence for compliance in all other relevant areas.

Inspectors will hold separate discussions with other senior staff with regard to other areas of compliance. **In many cases, these will be virtual discussions on the remote scrutiny day preceding inspectors' arrival in the school.** They may require **virtual scrutiny of documentation.**

22. How will inspection feel different?

There will be fewer opportunities for informal discussion with staff and pupils. To compensate for this, inspectors may hold additional discussions online. Inspectors may also review pupils' work on virtual learning environments and/or scanned work, and review virtual assemblies and other online activities such as performances, debates and pupil meetings recorded since September 2020.

Inspectors will use different types of evidence gathering to sample work from a range of year groups.

23. What do we need to have ready?

The range of evidence reviewed by inspectors is detailed in *Documentation Required for Inspection*. Evidence should cover the period before March 2020 and from September 2020.

Schools are reminded that they can upload documentation and evidence to the ISI portal, or a secure place on their own website to which they provide access, and do not have to wait for the notification of inspection.

24. Will there still be questionnaires?

Yes, these will contribute evidence from pupils, parents and staff about pupils' achievement currently and before March 2020. Questionnaires will cover all areas of the school, including EYFS and boarding where relevant. The preamble has been slightly amended to reflect the current situation.

25. What about EYFS?

Where a school has a non-registered EYFS setting, inspectors will consider:

- how the school assessed children's attainment in September 2020;
- what action the school has taken or is planning to address any need to catch up and the effectiveness of these actions;
- how progress has been tracked;
- how the school has mitigated the impact of COVID-19 disruption on children's progress towards any of the Early Learning Goals;
- whether related welfare requirements specific to EYFS such as paediatric first aid, the use of mobile phones, etc, continue to be met.

Separate guidance is provided below for Registered EYFS settings.

INSPECTION OF THE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BOARDING – FAQs

26. What will be the focus of inspection?

The scope of Regulatory Compliance Inspections (RCIs) and Focused Compliance Inspections (FCIs) in relation to the NMS remains as set out in the [ISI Inspection Framework](#).

27. How will inspectors evaluate compliance?

Inspectors' approach to evaluating compliance will not change, with an emphasis on first-hand evidence gathering. Some evidence-gathering methods may vary (see above).

In particular, it is likely that boarding houses will be sampled, rather than it being the expectation that every boarding house is visited in depth.

The RI will select the sampled houses. These will not include any areas where a boarder or member of staff is self-isolating.

BTIs will plan carefully to ensure that an effective range of year groups and houses is sampled, whilst minimising the need for inspectors to cross between 'bubbles' physically. For example, inspectors may interview online boarders in any houses not visited.

The absence of visits to dining and social areas will restrict inspectors' ability to chat with boarders. This may mean that inspectors will collate evidence for some areas, such as regularity of fire drills or the availability of optical or other services, from records alone.

28. What about boarders' welfare?

Boarders' welfare, including safeguarding, remains the key focus of regulatory inspection.

Guidance is given under the ISSRs FAQs on how inspectors will review sensitive documentation remotely.

Similarly, inspectors in RCIs will continue to evaluate the school's provision for equal opportunities under NMS 16. This includes the recognition of and respect for protected characteristics. Where any question arises of pupils perceiving discrimination related to protected characteristics, inspectors will evaluate this, whether the inspection is an RCI or FCI.

29. What about health and safety?

Matters of health and safety, including in boarding accommodation, remain a significant focus of regulatory inspection. Inspectors will review relevant records remotely and gather evidence outdoors wherever possible. If inspectors cannot physically view areas safely, they may instead request virtual evidence such as a screen shot or video tour.

Inspectors will also ask to see a school's own COVID-19 risk assessments for boarding. They will evaluate their content and implementation in relation to national guidance, including that on quarantine.

30. What about recruitment checks?

Inspectors will continue to check that the school's recruitment procedures are operating effectively. This will include checks on adults living in boarding accommodation who are not employed by the school.

31. Who will inspectors talk to?

The RI's initial discussion with the school's head or a deputy after notification of the inspection to the school

will reference boarding. They will ask to speak as soon as possible to the head of boarding or equivalent senior member of staff. These discussions will focus on provision to meet the NMS and evidence of compliance.

32. What do we need to have ready?

The range of evidence reviewed by inspectors will be as indicated in *Documentation Required for Inspection* and should cover the periods before March 2020 and since September 2020.

See ISSRs FAQs above for further guidance on evidence gathering.

Advance provision by schools of plans of boarding houses would be particularly helpful.

33. What about international boarders?

The position and experiences of international boarders will vary and may be affected by requirements relating to their country of origin.

Schools are invited to provide evidence of any events or situations that may have an impact on compliance as soon as they can. This should include evidence of how the school has mitigated any risk to a boarder's welfare. Potentially relevant matters include guardianship, lodgings and quarantine.

INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (ACHIEVEMENT) – FAQs

34. What will be the focus of inspection?

The overall approach to evaluating achievement will be as it was pre-COVID. The framework criteria remain consistent, but evidence-gathering methods may vary, as described in earlier sections of this guidance. The emphasis remains on first-hand evidence-gathering where practical. Inspectors will review evidence of pupils’ achievement prior to March 2020 as well as online achievement since September 2020.

35. Will inspectors evaluate pupils’ achievement throughout 2020?

Inspectors will not evaluate levels of achievement evident in September 2020 which relate to pupils’ learning between March and September 2020. Inspectors will not take into account schools’ responses to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020. They will continue to evaluate the impact of teaching (whether on-site or online) on pupils’ outcomes, where relevant.

36. How will inspectors assess and compare exam results for 2020 and 2021?

RIs will look at relevant exam/assessment results over the following time frames:

	Exam/assessment results 2017	Exam/assessment results 2018	Exam/assessment results 2019	Final grades (the higher of the centre-assessed grades [CAGs] or calculated grade) 2020	2021 teacher-assessed grades [TAGs]
EQIs Spring and Summer 2022		Overarching statement on public examinations results based on a two-year average.		Will be evaluated, but not compared directly with those from previous years nor with any form of national average	Will be evaluated, but not compared directly with those from previous years nor with any form of national average

Inspectors will continue to review the school’s own framework for assessment for evidence of pupils’ progress, excluding data specific to the spring and summer terms 2020.

37. Who will inspectors talk to?

Initial discussions with the head or deputy head after notification will include focus on academic progress as reflected in data. Any further relevant data may be evaluated and discussed on site or remotely, as part of evidence of pupil achievement and outcomes.

38. What extra questions might inspectors be asking?

All Schools

Inspectors will consider:

- how the school assessed pupils’ attainment as at September 2020;
- what that assessment showed about the attainment of pupils, especially in regard to different groups, eg year groups, the most able, those with SEND or EAL, and any other groups significant in the school;
- what action the school has taken or is planning to address any need to catch up and the impact of these actions on pupils’ achievement;
- how progress has been tracked since September 2020 (including progress made by year groups, the

most able, those with SEND or EAL, and any other groups significant in the school);

- whether overseas pupils returned in September 2020: if so, how the school is catering / has catered for their specific needs;
- how the school has reviewed the impact of any changes in the curriculum necessitated by precautions taken against COVID-19 on:
 - pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding; and/or
 - their attitudes to learning and learning skills;
 this will include actions taken to mitigate the impact in affected areas of learning;
- how the school has continued to enable pupils’ achievement in extra-curricular activities and successes in these areas, including in activities and events held online.

Senior Schools only

Inspectors will consider:

- what pupils aspired to do and where they progressed to when they left the school: universities/further training or apprenticeships or, where relevant, sixth forms or vocational education; whether the school holds any data on this;
- the school’s view of university applications in 2020 and 2021.

RIs will bear in mind that the 2020 CAGs were heavily influenced by the 2019 public examination results.

Pre-Prep, Junior and Prep Schools only

Inspectors will consider:

- what approach the school has taken with regard to all assessments (internal, Common Entrance, underlying ability, etc);
- senior schools to which pupils progressed;
- what scholarships have been gained to which senior schools; how scholarships to senior schools were affected in 2021; and whether there was any effect in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 (when these can be objectively evaluated).

Non-registered EYFS

Inspectors will consider:

- how the school assessed children’s attainment in September 2020;
- what that assessment showed about children’s current progress, especially in regard to different groups, eg the most able, or those with SEND or EAL;
- what action the school has taken or is planning to address any need for children to catch up and the effectiveness of these actions;
- what data the school has been collating;
- how progress has been tracked;
- how the school has reviewed the impact on children’s progress and development of any changes in the curriculum necessitated by precautions taken against COVID-19;
- how the school has mitigated the impact on children’s progress towards any of the Early Learning Goals.

39. What do we need to have ready?

The range of evidence reviewed by inspectors will be as indicated in *Documentation Required for Inspection* and should cover the periods before March 2020 and since September 2020.

- work scrutiny, curriculum documentation, records, etc may need to be scanned and shown on screen or uploaded for inspectors to review;
- inspectors will be ready to review work and other evidence already stored on virtual learning platforms and by other electronic means (memory sticks are fine);
- interviews may happen online rather than face to face;
- evidence of extra-curricular achievement may need to be provided where inspectors cannot view sporting, musical, dramatic activities and clubs in person.

See ISSRs FAQs above for further guidance on evidence gathering.

40. Will there still be lesson observations?

Yes, where these can be carried out within the school's COVID-19 precautions. Inspectors will avoid crossing 'bubbles' where possible but some occasions may necessitate moving between groups. In EYFS settings inspectors will try to view activities from a distance where possible.

41. Will there still be questionnaires?

Yes, as with compliance inspections, these remain a significant source of evidence of the views of pupils, parents and staff about pupils' achievement and personal development, both currently and in the period prior to March 2020. The preamble has been slightly amended to reflect the current situation.

INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT) – FAQs

42. What will be the focus of inspection?

The overall approach to evaluating pupils' personal development will be as it was pre-COVID. The framework criteria remain consistent, but evidence-gathering methods may vary, as described in earlier sections of this guidance. The emphasis remains on first-hand evidence-gathering where practical. Inspectors understand that pupils' involvement in some areas mentioned in the criteria may have been limited by COVID-19 precautions, for example wider community involvement. They will review evidence of involvement prior to March 2020 as well as online involvement since September 2020.

43. Will inspectors evaluate pupils' personal development throughout 2020?

Inspectors will not evaluate pupils' personal development in the period March to September 2020. Inspectors will not take into account schools' responses to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020. They will continue to evaluate the impact of teaching (whether on-site or online) on pupils' outcomes, where relevant.

Schools may feel that pupils' personal development has flourished in certain areas since September 2020 in response to the impact of COVID-19. Inspectors will ask schools for evidence of this. Inspectors will discuss this with schools within the wider context of pupils' overall personal development since the previous inspection.

44. Who will inspectors talk to?

Initial discussions with the head and/or senior leaders after notification will include focus on sources of evidence of pupils' personal development. Further discussions will be held with relevant staff, including with any boarding staff.

45. What questions might inspectors be asking?

Inspectors will consider:

- how the school assessed pupils' personal development as at September 2020;
- what that assessment showed about the personal development of pupils, especially in regard to different groups, eg year groups, boarders, the most able, those with SEND or EAL, boarders and any other groups significant in the school;
- pupils' development since September 2020. Inspectors will evaluate this in the light of measures used by the school to mitigate the effects of interrupted learning. They will evaluate the significant contributory factors, such as the role played by boarding.
- how pupils have developed their decision-making skills, including, for older pupils, making careers decisions;
- how pupils have developed spiritually and morally in unfamiliar circumstances as well as over the longer period of time since the previous inspection. Inspectors will also consider the effectiveness of the school provision for this development;
- how the school has reviewed the impact on pupils' personal development of any changes in the curriculum necessitated by precautions taken against COVID-19 and how it has mitigated the impact in affected areas;
- how the school has reviewed the impact on pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem, etc of any changes in the curriculum necessitated by precautions taken against COVID-19 and how it has mitigated any

negative impact;

- how pupils have developed their respect for diversity in the light of recent developments in society as well as over the longer period of time since the previous inspection;
- how pupils have developed their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy across all relevant areas, as well as in the context of COVID-19;
- pupils' involvement in the school and wider communities, including through activities and events held online.

In each of the above areas inspectors will ask for objective evidence of any assertions made.

46. EYFS

Inspectors will consider:

- how the school assessed children's development in September 2020;
- what that assessment showed about children's current development, especially in regard to different groups, eg the most able, or those with SEND or EAL;
- what action the school has taken or is planning to address any need to catch up and the effectiveness of these actions;
- how development has been tracked;
- how the school has mitigated the impact of those changes on children's progress towards any of the Early Learning Goals.

47. What do we need to have ready?

The range of evidence reviewed by inspectors will be as indicated in *Documentation Required for Inspection* and should cover the periods before March 2020 and since September 2020.

Inspectors will consider the sources of evidence outlined above for evaluating pupils' achievement. They will also be ready to review excerpts of recordings of online events and projects that demonstrate pupils' personal development. These might include cultural, social, performance, community and other virtual events, such as debates. They may be prepared in advance or viewed directly on virtual learning platforms. Inspectors will talk with pupils about their experience of such events in virtual interviews or face to face.