

From: Robert Gairey on behalf of Enquiries
To: [s](#)
Cc: "[s](#)"
Subject: FOIA follow-up and further information requests — response
Date: 03 September 2025 13:03:18
Attachments:

Dear

Thank you for your email, in which you formally request information in regard to inspections of schools in Wales.

When dealing with requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'Act'), Estyn's obligations include:-

1. Confirming or denying whether it holds information of the description specified in the request; and
2. Communicating the information requested to the applicant.

There are a number of exemptions under the Act that impact these obligations. Estyn is required to consider whether an exemption applies in the context of the information being released into the public domain, not just in the context of the information being released to the particular applicant that has requested the information.

If Estyn releases information in response to a Freedom of Information request, this is essentially a decision that the information can be released in response to any similar request from any member of the public.

In response to your request, I can confirm the following responses to your queries, in red text below:

1) Inspection-numbers summary (2018–19 to 2022–23) — confirmation requested

As previously supplied:

Academic year	Core inspections	Context
2018–19	≈ 349	Pre-pandemic baseline
2019–20	≈ 322	Activity continued until the formal suspension on 16 March 2020
2020–21	≈ 3	Transition year – only focused inspections carried out
2021–22	62	Pilot inspections, the majority in Spring 2022 (exact restart date not publicly stated)
2022–23	391	Full resumption – inspection volumes exceeded the 2019–20 level

Please:

- Confirm whether these headline totals are correct or provide Estyn's definitive figures.
- State the exact date in 2022 on which the general suspension was lifted and normal inspections formally resumed (if staged, please set out the timeline).

Information was not correct as the figures above seem to relate to financial rather than academic years. The actual figures for academic years are as follows for core inspections:

2019–2020 – 213
2020–2021 - 0
2021–2022 – 182
2022–2023 – 383

The date on which core inspection activity was resumed for schools in Wales was in the week of 28th February 2022.

2) Holiday-period inspections of independent schools (2010 – July 2025) — FOIA request

Please confirm whether any core inspections or follow-up/monitoring visits (I am NOT Requesting any initial Estyn's Inspection) to independent schools were conducted during school holidays (Christmas, Easter, Summer) or half-terms in the period 2010–July 2025.

- If none, please say so plainly.
- If any occurred, please provide for each instance: school name, date(s), inspection/visit type, and which holiday/half-term period it fell within.

If you consider the above too broad for the cost limit, please discharge the s.16 duty to advise and assist by proposing a practicable refinement (e.g., by date bands, region, or sampling).

We can confirm that there was one follow-up inspection in an independent school carried out in this period during a half-term or holiday period, with the agreement of the provider.

3) "Independent Schools Visits Toolkit" (or equivalent) used in 2023 — FOIA request

Please disclose the Independent Schools Visits Toolkit (or nearest equivalent) in force during 2023, including sections covering:

- (i) planning and conduct of independent-school visits;
- (ii) the factual-accuracy (FA) process; and
- (iii) report publication workflow/timescales.

Please find attached a copy of the toolkit that was relevant at the time of the inspection.

If you are not satisfied with the decision Estyn has taken regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to the Feedback and Complaints Manager, and received no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner through their website:

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/who-we-are/wales-office/>

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Email: enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Robert Gairey
Swyddog Arweiniol Cyhoeddiadau / Lead Officer:
Publications

Estyn

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His Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Training in Wales

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Cyfeiriad: Llys Angor, Heol Keen, Caerdydd, CF24 5JW

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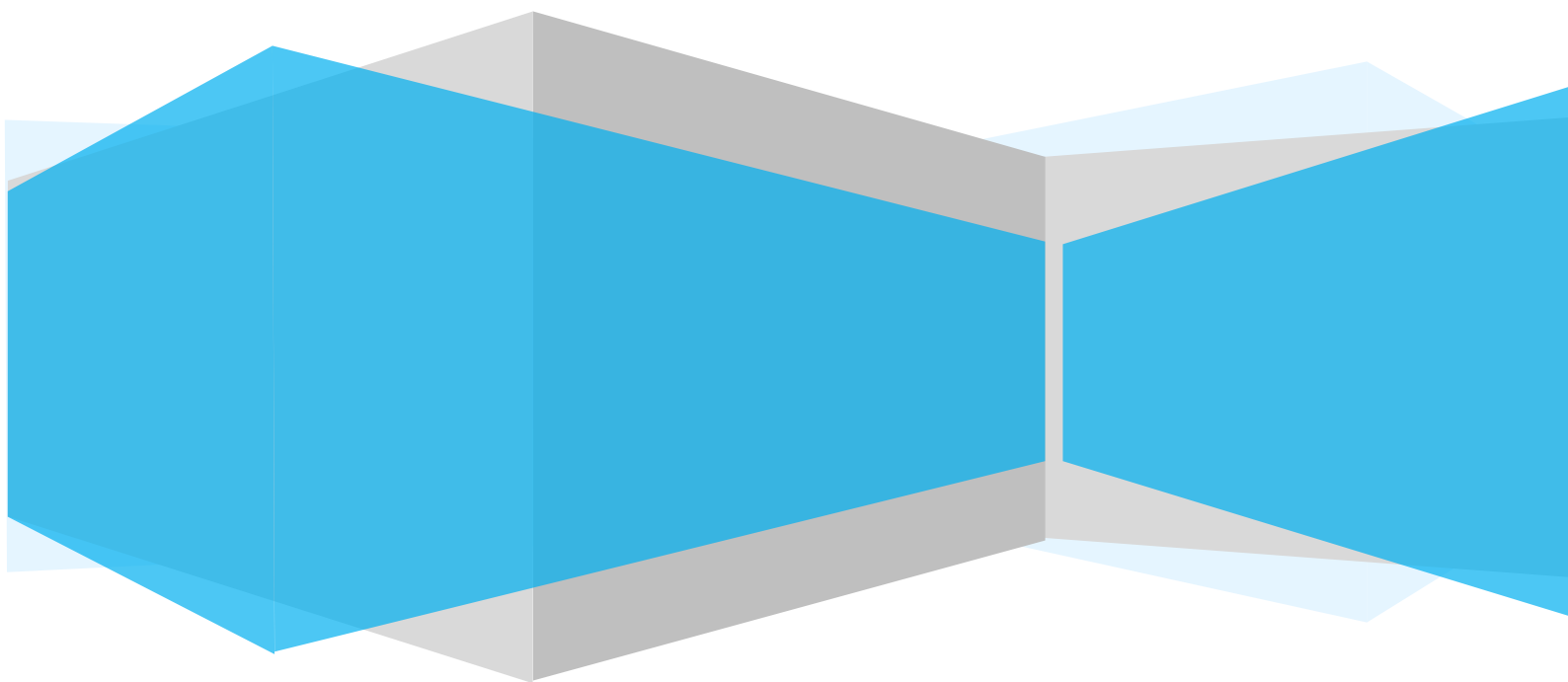
www.estyn.llyw.cymru | www.estyn.gov.wales



Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth.
Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

Independent Schools visits toolkit 2023

Version 8 September 2023



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Introduction

This toolkit contains additional instructions for organising and carrying out visits that are specific to independent schools.

As with the inspector's toolkit, this is very much a working document that will develop as we go through the inspection cycle.

The latest version will always be stored in the independent site in SharePoint.

We hope you find this document useful.

Richard Murray

Mary Hughes

August 2023

Support for all visits

Roles and Responsibilities

IC – makes initial contact with the providers and DarntonB3 (core inspections), completes the ICF, ensures appropriate documents are in the VIR and checks post activity progress

RI – confirms visit details with the provider, completes documentation and liaises with IC. RI liaises with DarntonB3 Architecture and edits reports where appropriate

DarntonB3 – visits providers as requested by RI

AD – edits reports when appropriate

Sarah Perkins – leads the IC team for independent schools

VIR

A VIR will be set up for these visits as indicated in the table below. Each event will be displayed in the provider dashboard.

General Principles

1. The follow up to registration and post-inspection monitoring visits will be published
2. IC to be used for all activities, with the exception of unregistered provision visits. The IC role for each activity will vary, see table below

Type of visit	VIR set up	Notification to be made by IC	3b Checklist	ICF	Report published on Estyn web	Provider requires access to VIR (provider area/data)
Unregistered Provision	No	No	No	No	No	No
Material change	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Initial reg	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Follow up to reg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unannounced focus visit	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Announced focus visit	Yes	Yes (Date only)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Core	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual monitoring visit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ER – desk based	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Letter on website	Yes
ER visits 1 - 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes for visit 3	Yes
PIAP	No	No	No	No	No	No

Working with Darnton B3

When an independent school visit other than a core inspection requires a visit from Darnton B3 it is the responsibility of the RI to contact Gareth Jones to make arrangements for his visit Gareth.Jones@darntonb3.com.

For all visits, the RI must complete the attendance record for DarntonB3 in the VIR, (the same as for PIs).

For all core inspections the IC will inform the provider of the documents required to meet standard 5. The provider must upload these documents to the VIR prior to the inspection. DarntonB3 will have access to the VIR and will check these documents prior to visiting the provider.

The provider has 10 working days from the first day of a core inspection to provide DarntonB3 with any outstanding information.

DarntonB3 will provide Estyn with a completed report no later than 15 working days from the first day of a visit / inspection.

Writing reports for independent school visits: Guidance for lead inspectors and editors

General guidelines

- For a small sector, we write what often seems like a bewildering array of different types of reports! Different types of reports require different approaches. If you are unsure of the precise requirements for a particular type of report, please seek advice from the sector lead officer – currently, Michelle for mainstream independent schools or Richard for independent specials. They can provide you with examples of previous reports written for similar schools or for similar circumstances, for example, focus visits or certain types of material change request.
- This guidance applies to visits other than core inspections. For core inspections, please follow the published sector guidance for independent schools
- Focus visits in particular require an individualised approach and if you are asked to undertake one of these, you will receive advice and guidance from the lead officer or AD. Similarly, you may find it useful to use the Provider Files facility to search for specific types of reports, particularly when these are not published on our website
- When writing a report, please be mindful of which reports are published on our website and which are not (see table on page 2)

About the school/provider

- When writing the **About the school** section of a report, please refer initially to the most recent report. Having been through edit, this should provide a reliable example of how to set out the important information about a school. It is important to keep this section **concise** and **factual**. Where relevant include the name of the proprietor company and details of funding (esp. independent special).
- This section provides information about the location of the school, the number of pupils it is registered for, the nature of SEN it is registered for, staffing, etc. It should not contain information that is evaluative or suggests an evaluation of any aspect of the provision – this comes later in the main body of the report
- The lead inspector should check these details against those contained on the WG list of independent schools (follow link on the one stop shop), and during the visit with the headteacher
- The length of this section may vary depending on the nature of the provision, and the type of report. For example, this section is frequently longer and more detailed for initial registration visits (unpublished) than for subsequent published reports

Strengths/areas for development

- In the main body of the report, we write about the school in terms of its strengths and areas for development. For initial registration visits (unpublished), it is acceptable to list these as bullet points. For follow-up registration and monitoring visits (published), we write in short paragraphs
- Again, it is important to keep these concise. Do not feel tempted to include too many strengths, even if you are confident this is a strong provider. These visits do not provide sufficient time to check the evidence the school is providing or to test what you see over time. It is important that you do not make the inspectorate a 'hostage to fortune' by writing in such a way that may not be substantiated under the greater scrutiny of a core inspection. Generally, it is advisable to include no more than five strengths and two or three areas for development. **Please aim to cover each inspection area, and always include a comment – either as a strength or an area for development – about the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve**
- Where there are fewer than 5 pupils present at the time of the inspection we do not write about learning or well-being to avoid identifying individual pupils. We do however still record evidence for these IAs.
- Remember, each area for development will lead to a recommendation, so it is important not to include too many areas for development as most schools will not have the capacity to address them before the next monitoring visit
- Where a school has many areas for development, the specific shortcomings should be captured through the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 (ISSR) checklist. The areas for development in the report should represent a summary of these: it is not necessary to include additional shortcomings. This means that the first area for development will always be: The school does not comply fully with the ISSR
- Where a school does not comply with the ISSR, this in turn will always lead to a recommendation: Comply with the ISSR not met on this visit

Commentary on progress against recommendations

- Regular monitoring visits will leave recommendations based on the areas for development identified during that visit. Teams should inspect every recommendation from the previous visit (this is different to the process for follow-up visits to maintained schools in statutory categories) and write a concise summary of the school's progress against the recommendation.
- There is no word limit for the commentary, as this will depend on the nature of the recommendation. Generally, however, this will be no longer than two paragraphs, or 200 words.
- Initial and follow-up registration reports do not identify areas for development or make recommendations but leave **recommended areas for action**. This means that at the follow-up registration and first monitoring visit, we do not write an explicit commentary on the school's progress against these. Instead, we include an evaluation of the school's progress against the recommended areas for action within the strengths and areas for development section of the report

Overview of visits

Inspection of unregistered provision

- The purpose of the inspection is to determine whether the provision may need to register as an independent school.

Initial inspection of a new independent school

- Registration inspection to advise the Welsh Government on the school's compliance with the registration standards.

Follow up to registration visit

- Follow up registration visit following the school's opening, to advise the Welsh Government on the school's continued compliance with **all** the registration standards, but in particular standard 1 (quality of education provided), regulation 1(3 a- h) (teaching).

Post-inspection monitoring of an independent school (Estyn Review)

- Post-inspection monitoring of compliance with the registration standards.
- For non-compliant schools this could consist of a series of follow-up visits, the third and final of which will re-evaluate compliance.

Responding to a post-inspection action plan

- HMI advise to Welsh Government on the school's response to recommendations from a full inspection where the regulations have not been met.

Application for material change

- Advise the Welsh Government on the school's application to make a material change.

Focused visit

- Follow-up focused monitoring visit to advise the Welsh Government on compliance with specified registration standard(s).

Monitoring Visits (schools and ISCs)

- Follow-up visit focused on monitoring progress against the recommendations of the previous report and advising the Welsh Government on compliance with specified registration standard(s).

Inspection of unregistered provision

The purpose of the inspection is to determine whether the provision may need to register as an independent school.

Deciding on the need for an unannounced visit

If the concerns raised about a provider are such that the Welsh Government or Estyn's AD considers that an unannounced visit may be called for, a meeting or conference call will be arranged to discuss the matter.

The meeting should include Welsh Government officials, Estyn's strategic director and, if possible, the link inspector for local authorities and, where appropriate, Estyn's safeguarding officer. Welsh Government officials will also invite other relevant parties such as CIW, where appropriate.

The focus of the meeting will be to decide whether a visit is necessary or whether the issues of concern could be addressed by other means. Other means are preferable. The sector lead or AD will complete an assessment prior to the visit to determine whether the provision meets the threshold for such a visit. The final decision will be made by HMCI. **See Annex 1**

If it is agreed that a visit is appropriate, the meeting should also agree on the preferred date of the visit and whether the membership of the visit team should include Estyn and CIW. Where there is a joint Estyn-CIW visit the methodology for the visit will be agreed in advance of the visit.

Where the meeting agrees a recommendation for an unannounced visit, the Welsh Government's registrar for independent schools, or nominated representative will make a formal written request to HMCI for Estyn to visit the provider and inspect the premises.

Other relevant inspectors, such as the LALI, should be kept informed of developments as necessary.

PROCEDURES

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Key:

Travel	Activity	Travel	Post - Activity
0.5	1	0.5	0.5

Team and time allocation

Role	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
RI	0.5	1	0.5 0.5
TI	0.5	1	0.5

Unannounced visits would normally be led by an inspector from the list below:

- the relevant assistant director;
- the sector lead inspector; or
- a sector member who has led an inspection in that sector.

The lead inspector will be accompanied by another inspector, so that the visiting team will always consist of at least two members.

The AD will arrange the pre-inspection work programme time for the inspection team. In addition, the team will normally be allocated half a day for on-site work and, depending on the location of the provider, may need additional travel time. The team will have a half a day following the visit for discussing and writing the note of visit, as they may not have the opportunity to complete this during the visit.

Pre-inspection

In the allocated time, inspectors should read all of the materials relating to the provision and attend a briefing meeting with the AD or SLT in preparation for the visit. CIW may also attend the briefing meeting, where appropriate.

At the briefing meeting, inspectors will agree the time that the unannounced visit will take place, allocation of responsibilities and procedures for the visit.

Prior to the visit, inspectors will ensure that they have the relevant note of visit template. It is also essential that inspectors have access to a copy of the Estyn Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, which may be required for post-visit write-up or action.

On-site inspection

At the start of the visit, the lead inspector will:

- ensure that risks to the health and safety of self and accompanying staff are properly assessed and controlled, including if necessary leaving the site;
- introduce themselves and colleague(s) and ask to speak to the person in-charge of the site-proprietor/headteacher;
- explain to the person in-charge of the site that the Welsh Government has asked Estyn to undertake the visit to establish whether or not the provision may need to register as an independent school;
- ask the person in-charge if they can show the inspectors around the site; and
- explain that inspectors will want to inspect relevant documents and speak to a small group of children.
- inspect relevant documents including the admissions and attendance registers, making a note of the names, dates of birth and addresses of any pupils of compulsory school age.

If the person in-charge refuses entry to the inspection team, the lead inspector will remind the person in-charge that it is an offence under paragraph 159(6) of the Education Act (2002) to wilfully obstruct the Chief Inspector in the exercise of his/her functions under subsection (4). If the person in-charge continues to refuse entry to the inspection team, the lead inspector will advise the person in-charge that they will report this to HMCI, who may inform the Welsh Government and the police. In this situation, the inspection team should withdraw from the premises and the lead inspector should contact the AD and SD immediately to take further advice.

In the discussion with the person-in-charge, the lead inspector will ask for information in order to complete the details on the note of visit form. This information includes:

- name and contact details of the person-in-charge;
- details of the owner/trustees/proprietor;
- background information about the nature and purpose of the provision;
- the number of children attending the provision;
- how often children attend the provision (days and times);
- how many teachers/adults work there;
- whether all teachers and adults with unsupervised access to children have DBS checks (with certificate numbers);
- a copy of the admissions and attendance registers in order to photo-copy or make a note of the names, dates of birth and addresses of any pupils of compulsory school age;
- what subjects are taught and curriculum arrangements; and
- whether the provision is registered with CIW (for U8s).

During the visit, inspectors will ask for a tour of the premises, when any safeguarding issues or matters of concern will be recorded. They will also ask to speak to a group of children from each key stage, using an adapted version of the usual listening to learners questions.

Throughout the visit, inspectors will ensure that risks to the health and safety of self and accompanying staff are properly assessed and controlled, including if necessary leaving the site.

Oral feedback

Wherever possible, inspectors should provide brief oral feedback of their findings to the person-in-charge of the provision at the end of the visit, including possible follow up actions. Inspectors should explain that findings will be reported back to HMCI and are subject to moderation and possible change.

Inspectors should explain that when the findings are agreed, HMCI will liaise with the Welsh Government's registrar for independent schools.

If the evidence gathered during the visit confirms that the school may be in breach of Part 10 of the Education Act 2002, the lead inspector should inform the person in-charge that this is the inspection team's provisional finding and advise them that it is illegal to operate an unregistered school. The lead inspector should explain that,

subject to confirmation, HMCI will confirm this advice with the Welsh Government's registrar for independent schools, who may decide to take further action.

After the visit

Following the visit to the site, HMI will give immediate oral feedback to the Chief Inspector and the Welsh Government's registrar for independent schools, followed by a note of visit advising whether the establishment may need to be registered as an independent school, subject to the legal definition of a school.

The lead inspector will draft a note of visit setting out the visit findings against the agreed template. This includes the recommendation to the Welsh Government on the basis of this visit as to whether there is evidence to indicate that the provision is an unregistered school or not.

The draft note of visit should be forwarded to the AD and SD who will liaise with HMCI before agreeing the final content of the note of visit. The AD will forward the final note of visit to the Welsh Government registrar for independent schools and liaise if further action is necessary.

Next steps

All decisions regarding the need for registration and, where appropriate, consideration of instituting proceedings for breach of Part 10 of the Education Act 2002 will be made by the Welsh Government. Estyn's role in this work is providing the note of visit, which may contain information, which will be of assistance to the Welsh Government in making decisions about proposed enforcement actions.

Where appropriate, Estyn will only revisit the provision when all documents required for registration have been received and verified by the Welsh Government. Estyn can then arrange an initial registration inspection.

The Welsh Government will notify the Local Education Authority/ies of the names of all pupils of statutory school age attending the school.

Initial inspection of a new independent school

Key:

Prep	Travel	Activity	Travel	Post activity
1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5

[Template%201%20Initial%20Inspection%20of%20New%20Independent%20Schools%20\(%20Jan%202015\).docx](#)

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Initial inspection of a new independent school					
Role	-20 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5
TI		0.5	1	0.5	

An additional team member may be required; this will depend on the type and size of the school and will be reviewed on a risk basis.

A new independent school must apply to the Welsh Government (WG) prior to opening. The school is required to submit:

- an application form
- a scale plan of the premises
- detailed curriculum policies, schemes of work and assessment procedures
- written policies on bullying, child protection, health and safety on school visits, first aid and behaviour
- a fire risk assessment
- the school's complaints procedure
- DBS disclosures for all proprietors

Welsh Government asks Estyn to visit the school to judge if the premises and school documents comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. One inspector makes the visit along with a building surveyor from DarntonB3 Architecture (contracted by WG to inspect Standards 3(4) and 5).

The relevant lead inspector for independent schools liaises with DarntonB3 Architecture to accompany the team or visit as soon as possible to the Estyn visit.

HMI informs provider of visit. IC will upload the following documents, usually supplied by WG to the VIR:

- an application form
- a scale plan of the premises
- detailed curriculum policies, schemes of work and assessment procedures

- written policies on bullying, child protection, health and safety on school visits, first aid and behaviour
- a fire risk assessment
- the school's complaints procedure
- DBS disclosures for all proprietors

IC ensures team members have access to the VIR as appropriate.

IC sends Independent School Standards checklist to the provider.

The 'Inspection documents' area of the VIR should contain:

- Team input form (TIF)
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Evaluating the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- Copy of this toolkit

The purpose of the visit is to determine the suitability of the premises and whether the school's policies and procedures meet requirements. You should use the checklist of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 to record your evidence. Indicate with a ✓ if the standard is met and make brief notes to indicate why a standard is not met and where there are areas of concern. Inspectors should also add a commentary where a standard is judged to have been met despite reservations which may have been shared with the school. This helps to ensure consistency on future visits.

When judging compliance with Standard 1 (curriculum and assessment). At this stage a school should:

- Have a curriculum policy and broad curriculum plans for pupils of differing ages / abilities, suitable for the learning needs of the pupils the school proposes to admit
- A plan for on site / off site activities
- An indication of what learning and assessment will 'look like' at key stages of development, and covering all the areas of learning
- An indication of qualifications pupils will be prepared for, (where appropriate)

The RI should upload the completed checklist to the VIR, clearly labelling this as a final version, and the IC will ask information services to upload it to the provider file after the visit.

If the school proposes to offer day-care for under-8s and/or boarding accommodation, or if there is residential accommodation attached to the school e.g. a children's home, the RI **must** contact the CIW inspector prior to the inspection. The RI should contact Lesley Roberts at CIW, notify her of the visit and ask if their inspections have raised any issues.

Contact details for CIW are Lesley.Roberts@gov.wales Tel: 0300 7900 126

Checklist for preparation for RI

Phone the school	
Base-room for the team, coffee & lunch arrangements	
Car parking	
Dates/times to meet the proprietor during the inspection	
Time of feedback	
Meetings with key members of staff	
Relevant documents (see above)	
Write a briefing note – examples available from RT or MG	
Contact CIW, where the paragraph above applies	

Inspectors should **not recommend** registration to WG if there are any concerns about the premises or documents. In this case, WG will write to the school identifying areas that need to be improved. It is important that issues are addressed **before** a school is granted registration and allowed to admit pupils.

If the premises fail to comply with Standard 5 and there are outstanding issues, for example unfinished building work or missing certificates, the building surveyor will carry out further work to judge the school's progress. **Estyn HMI are not qualified to sign off specialist aspects of this work.**

After the visit

The RI creates a reporting input form (RIF) and informs the appropriate sector lead inspector for editing. Where the RI is the sector lead, the RIF will be edited by the AD for the sector.

The IC will arrange for a new provider file to be opened, copy the report to the listed recipients and SharePoint. They will notify the responsible AD when WG registers the school and provides the school with their school number so that it can be added to the cycle for full inspection.

The IC will ensure information services upload the Darnton B3 report to the provider file.

It is the responsibility of the IC to check post-activity progress and make sure that the report is sent to all parties in a timely manner.

In a rare case, it may be necessary for HMI and/or the surveyor to carry out a further visit. In this case, the report should give clear details of the reasons.

Follow up to registration visit

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Follow up to registration visit						
Role	-20 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3		Day 4
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1
TM 1		0.5	1	0.5	0.5	

The follow up to registration visit is arranged for approximately 2-3 terms after the school has opened. The purpose of the visit is to advise WG if the school continues to comply with **all** the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, but in particular, standard 1 (quality of education provided), regulation 1(3 a- h) (teaching).

IC informs the school of visit 10 working days prior to inspection. IC completes ICF. IC will suggest to the school that they might want to upload the following documents to the VIR.

- Safeguarding SER (the template can be found in the VIR)
- Curriculum policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Educational visits policy
- First Aid policy
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy

IC ensures team members and the school have access to the VIR as appropriate.

The 'Inspection documents' area of the VIR should contain:

- Team input form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Evaluating the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- Copy of this toolkit

The 'Provider Area' of the VIR should contain:

- Blank safeguarding self-evaluation form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Completed ICF
- [WG Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance](#)

If the school proposes to offer day-care for under-8s and/or boarding accommodation or if there is residential accommodation attached to the school e.g. a children's home, the RI must contact the CIW inspector prior to the inspection. The RI should call Lesley Roberts at CIW, notify her of the visit and ask if their inspections have raised any issues.

Contact details for CIW are: Tel: 0300 7900 126 Lesley.Roberts@gov.wales

Checklist for preparation for RI:

Phone the school	
Base-room for the team, coffee & lunch arrangements	
Specific requirements such as dress code, Covid-19 requirements etc.	
Car parking	
Dates/times to meet the proprietor during the inspection	
Time of feedback	
Scrutiny of pupils' work	
Meetings with key members of staff	
Meetings with pupils	
Relevant documents (see below)	
Write the briefing note – examples available	
Contact CIW, where the paragraph above applies	

The lead inspector should contact the school to make the arrangements as soon as possible after the school has been notified of its visit.

You should:

- explain the purpose of the inspection
- ask the school to have ready for you at the school:
 - the policies and documents required by the regulations
 - copies of the timetable
 - samples of pupils' records
 - pupils' IDP (Individual Development Plan) / statements of educational need / EHCP (if appropriate)
 - pupils' IEPs (Individual Education Plans) (if appropriate)

Following the telephone conversation with the school, the lead inspector should then confirm the details discussed in an email to the school.

Inspectors should prepare by reading Estyn's report following initial registration, which will be in the provider file.

During the visit, you should re-check school documents considered on the initial visit, and evaluate all other aspects of the school, as there may have been significant changes since the first visit. You should observe a sample of lessons. Please use the checklist for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 **from the initial registration visit**. In red please indicate with a ✓ if the standard is met

and make brief notes to indicate why a standard is not met and where there are areas of concern. The RI should upload the completed checklist to the VIR and the information services will upload it to the provider file after the visit.

This visit should focus on Standards 1 and 2 and the 'application' of policies in Standard 3. Many aspects of the other standards may not have changed since the initial registration and the checklist should just confirm this.

Please note that although the TIF will include a section for progress against recommendations, this is not completed during a follow-up to registration visit and should be ignored.

Your programme should include:

- a brief meeting with the headteacher
- observe a small sample of lessons
- check school documents
- feedback to the school, making clear if there are any regulations that the school fails to meet

You may find it helpful to complete a draft Note of Visit on-site and use this to feedback to the school to ensure accuracy in the messages you give. You must make any shortcomings clear to the school.

Estyn may ask Darnton B3Architecture to re inspect Standards 3(4) and 5 if the school did not comply on the initial visit. The appropriate lead inspector will make the arrangements.

After the visit

The RI creates a reporting input form. The RI notifies the appropriate sector lead inspector when the report is ready for editing. Where the sector lead inspector is the RI the report will be edited by the sector AD.

After responding to the editor, the RI will upload it back into the VIR. The IC will arrange for a copy of the report to be sent to the listed recipients and SharePoint.

The IC will ensure information services upload the Darnton B3 report to the provider file.

It is the responsibility of the IC to check post-activity progress and make sure that the report is sent to all parties in a timely manner.

Follow up in Independent Schools

Where a school fails to meet any of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations, the RI will inform the school in the final feedback meeting and the requirement to comply with these regulations will be the **first** recommendation in the inspection report.

The school will receive a letter from Welsh Government informing them of the requirement to submit a post inspection action plan, and the date this **MUST** be received by. In addition, Welsh Government will outline that failure to successfully address the actions in the PIAP may result in the school being instructed to:

- (a) cease using any part of the school premises for all purposes or purposes specified in the order;
- (b) close any part of the school's operation;
- (c) cease to admit any new pupils, or new pupils of a description specified in the order

Or Welsh Government may

- determine that the school is to be removed from the register

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to ensure PIAPs (Post Inspection Action Plan) are submitted in a timely manner.

Estyn Review Activities

1. Estyn will review the PIAP submitted – see page 23
2. Estyn will advise Welsh Government whether or not to accept the PIAP

If the PIAP is accepted and Estyn believe the school has the capacity to make the required changes within a reasonable timescale (12 months maximum), the school will be revisited or a desk top activity completed as outlined on page 16.

This will result in a letter to Welsh Government to indicate that the school is now fully compliant and this will also be posted on our website.

If the PIAP is not accepted and /or Estyn believe the school does not have the capacity to make the required changes, without additional support the following process will be followed.

If the PIAP is rejected, 1 HMI will visit the school to work with leaders onsite to support them in completing the PIAP.

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is:

PIAP visit	
Role	Day 1
RI	0.5

Once a PIAP has been accepted, but Estyn believe the school does not have the capacity to make the required changes a series of visits over a maximum of 12 months will be planned.

Visit 1

- Notification by IC 10 days prior to the visit
- VIR required
- RI contacts the school to outline the process and ask for any documentation required to be uploaded.
- Evidence collected onsite by HMI on the Independent School Standards Checklist document
- NO published output from the visit
- Welsh Government will receive verbal feedback if requested, for example at the Tripartite Meetings

Ideally, a member of the team will have been present at the core inspection / monitoring visit when the school was judged to be non-compliant.

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is:

Post- inspection monitoring of an independent school				
Role	-10 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5

Visit 2

- Notification by IC 10 days prior to the visit
- VIR required
- RI contacts the school to discuss whether the school believes they are now fully compliant or whether they believe this should be the final PIAP visit.

If this visit is a second 'supportive visit'

- Evidence collected onsite by HMI on the Independent School Standards Checklist document
- NO published output from the visit

- Welsh Government will receive verbal feedback if requested, for example at the Tripartite Meetings

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is:

Post- inspection monitoring of an independent school				
Role	-10 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5

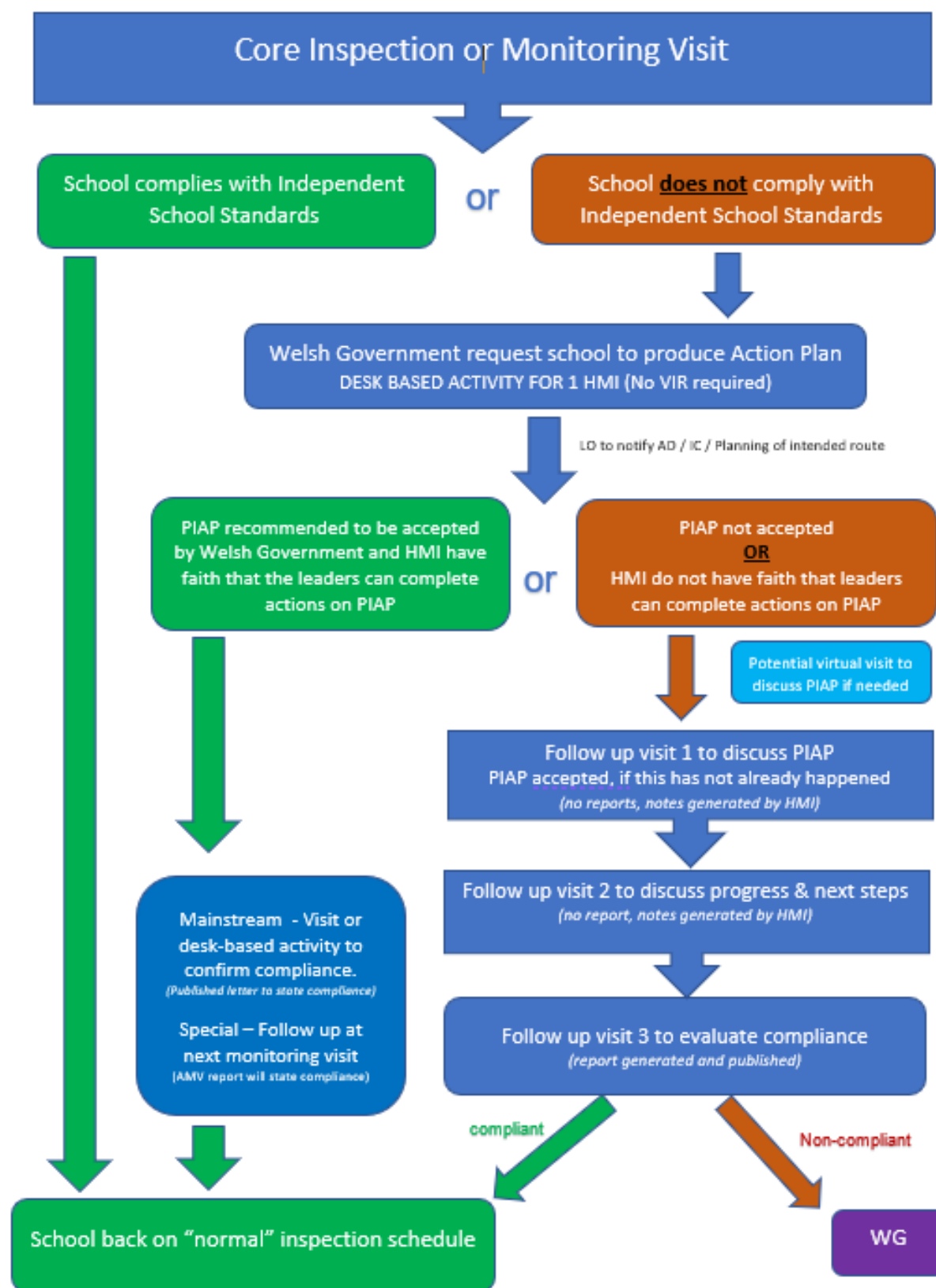
If this is the 'final visit' the guidance below should be followed.

Visit 3 (or final visit)

- This visit must take place with 12 months**
- Notification by IC 10 days prior to the visit
- VIR required
- Evidence collected onsite by HMI on the Independent School Standards Checklist document
- This will result in a report to Welsh Government to indicate whether the school is now compliant. This report will also be posted on our website.**
- Note to HMI regarding completion of report: please ensure that in the 'About the School' section of the report, you explain which standards the school failed in the initial visit.
- If the school is non-compliant at this stage it will be the responsibility of Welsh Government (as the regulator) to take the necessary further action.**

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is:

Post- inspection monitoring of an independent school					
Role	-10 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	1
TM 1		0.5	1	0.5	



Updated 10/08/2023

NB Inspection activity shown in BLUE boxes

Post- inspection monitoring of a mainstream independent school

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Post- inspection monitoring of an independent school					
Role	-20 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	1
TM 1		0.5	1	0.5	

The allocation of inspectors may be adjusted if the monitoring activity is desk based

Role	Day 1
RI	0.5

Process

IOD – regs not met

Visit OR Desk based (discussion with AD)

COBAS

IC

VIR

Report published

IC maintains a follow up 'dash board' / 'data base' to keep a record of when regs met.

The purpose of this visit is to check the school's progress in complying with those Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 that it failed on a full inspection, follow-up to registration visit or focused visit. Inspectors **should not** normally report on progress in response to other recommendations in the inspection report unless they are relevant to the Standards. Estyn arranges a one-day monitoring visit or desk based follow-up about a year after full inspection.

IC informs school/college of visit 3 weeks prior to visit.

IC ensures team members and the school have access to the VIR as appropriate.

The 'Inspection documents' area of the VIR should contain:

- Team Input Form (TIF)
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Evaluating the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

- Copy of this toolkit

The 'Provider Area' of the VIR should contain:

- Blank safeguarding self-evaluation form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- [WG Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance](#)

The programme for the visit will depend on the standards that need to be rechecked. It may not be necessary or appropriate to visit lessons. Inspectors should make suitable arrangements with the school so that the plan for the day is clear to all. Darnton B3 Architecture may be required to re-inspect Standards 3(4) and 5. The lead inspector should ask the independent school lead inspector to arrange with Darnton B3 Architecture.

Checklist for preparation for RI:

Phone the school	
Base-room for the team, coffee & lunch arrangements	
Specific requirements such as dress code Covid-19 requirements etc	
Car parking	
Time of feedback	
Scrutiny of pupils' work where appropriate	
Meetings with key members of staff & proprietor	
Meetings with pupils where appropriate	
Relevant documents	
Write the briefing note –contact RT,MG for examples	

Please use the checklist of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 to record your evidence. Indicate with a ✓ if the standard is met and make brief notes to indicate why a standard is not met and where there are areas of concern. Inspectors should also add a commentary where a standard is judged to have been met despite reservations which may have been shared with the school. This helps to ensure consistency on future visits.

The RI should upload the completed checklist to the VIR and the IC will ask information services to upload it to the provider file after the visit.

After the visit

The RI finalises the report and sends it to the appropriate sector lead inspector for editing. Where the RI is the sector lead, the report will be edited by the appropriate AD.

After responding to the editor, the RI will upload it back into the VIR. The IC will arrange for a copy of the report to be sent to the listed recipients and SharePoint.

The IC will ensure information services upload the Darnton B3 report to the provider file (if appropriate).

It is the responsibility of the IC to check post-activity progress and make sure that the report is sent to all parties in a timely manner.

Responding to a post-inspection action plan

When a provider does not meet all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, Welsh Government will ask them to produce a post-inspection action plan. Welsh Government may ask Estyn to comment on the effectiveness of the plan.

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Response to post inspection action plans	
Role	M 1
RI	0.5

In responding to an action plan HMI should consider the following:

The action plan must address all the recommended actions relating to the non-compliance with any Independent School Standards Regulations (Wales) 2003 in the inspection report, and for each issue, the plan should state:

- what is to be done (clear, specific actions)
- who is to do it (who is responsible for ensuring the action takes place, and who else is involved)
- what external support the school will draw upon
- when it will be done (timescale with key milestones)
- what resources are required, financial, time, personnel
- success criteria (quantitative targets where possible), against which progress will be judged
- how progress will be monitored (by whom, when and how)

Other aspects that you should also consider are noted below:

- check to ensure that the actions are accurate and reflect those included in the report
- does the PIAP / statement of action include clear milestones to monitor progress?
- is it clear who will lead on the work to address each of the actions?

A link to the template for these responses is found here: [PIAP Template](#)

Where the quality of a school's leadership is judged to be weak, it may be appropriate for inspectors to consider whether the school would benefit from an on-site visit to support leaders to write the PIAP. In this case, the lead officer will discuss arrangements with the inspector in advance.

The RI who finalises the letter arranges for a copy of the letter and PIAP to be sent to the listed recipients and uploaded to the provider file.
(providerfiles@estyn.gov.wales)

Application for material change

The scope of the material change that a school applies for will determine how Estyn will respond. The responses to a material change application could include:

- Desk based response
- Darnton B3 Architecture visit
- HMI visit
- Follow up at next annual monitoring visit
- Follow up during next full inspection

The basic ‘tee-shirt’ allocation is shown here:

Application for material change – Visit needed					
Role	-20 to -5	M 1	T 2	W 3	T 4
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	1

Desk based response

Role	M 1
RI	0.5

Independent schools are required to gain approval from WG if they wish to:

- change proprietor
- change the school address
- change the age-range of pupils
- alteration of premises
- age range of pupils
- increase the maximum number of pupils*
- propose to admit boys only, girls only or become co-educational
- provide boarding accommodation
- propose admitting pupils with special educational needs.

WG advises the AD if an independent school requests making one or more of these material changes.

RI contacts the provider to make specific arrangements for the visit

Checklist for RI preparation:

Phone the school	
Base-room for the team, coffee & lunch arrangements	
Specific arrangements such as dress code, Covid-19 requirements etc	
Car parking	

Dates/times to meet the proprietor during the visit	
Time of feedback	
Meetings with key members of staff	
Relevant documents	

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to arrange for Darnton B3 Architecture to visit the setting regarding Standards 3(4) and 5.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to contact CIW. If the school proposes to offer day-care for under-8s and/or boarding accommodation or if there is residential accommodation attached to the school e.g. a children's home, the RI must contact the CIW inspector prior to the inspection. The RI should call Lesley Roberts at CIW, notify her of the visit and ask if their inspections have raised any issues.

Contact details for CIW are Tel: 0300 7900 126 Lesley.Roberts@gov.wales

**Please note that a number of fire risk assessments may state the maximum number of persons to be in the building at any time. Please bear in mind when considering an increase in numbers. This may also apply to buildings who are leased.*

After the visit

The RI creates a reporting input form. The RI notifies the appropriate sector lead inspector that the report is ready for editing, copied to the IC. If the sector lead is the RI, the report will be edited by the appropriate AD.

After responding to the editor, the RI will upload it back into the VIR. The report is then forwarded to the IC. They will arrange for a copy of the report to be sent to the listed recipients and SharePoint.

The IC will ensure information services upload the Darnton B3 report to the provider file.

It is the responsibility of the IC to check post-activity progress and make sure that the report is sent to all parties in a timely manner.

Focused visit

The basic 'tee-shirt' allocation is shown here:

Focused visit						
Role	-20 to -5	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3		Day 4
RI	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1
TM 1		0.5	1	0.5	0.5	

Welsh Government may write to HMCI to request a focused visit at any time. If it is an unannounced visit, inspectors will follow the same process as outlined above under the arrangements for the inspection of unregistered provision'.

IC informs school/college of visit if it is an announced visit.

RI ensures team members and the school have access to the VIR as appropriate.

The 'Inspection documents' area of the VIR should contain:

- Team input form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Evaluating the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- Copy of this toolkit

The 'Provider Area' of the VIR should contain:

- Blank safeguarding self-evaluation form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- [WG Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance](#)

If the school has day-care for under-8s and/or boarding accommodation or if there is residential, accommodation attached to the school e.g. a children's home, the RI must contact the CIW inspector prior to the inspection. The RI should call Lesley Roberts at CIW, notify her of the visit and ask if their inspections have raised any issues.

Contact details for CIW are Lesley Roberts: Tel: 0300 7900 126

Lesley.Roberts@gov.wales

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to seek advice from Darnton B3 Architecture regarding Standards 3(4) and 5.

Checklist for preparation:

Phone the school, where the visit is 'unannounced' HMI may choose to call the school when they are 5 mins. away	
Base-room for the team, coffee & lunch arrangements	
Car parking	
Dates/times to meet the proprietor during the visit	
Time of feedback	
Meetings with key members of staff	
Relevant documents	
Write the briefing note	

If appropriate, use the checklist for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Indicate with a ✓ if the standard is met and make brief notes to indicate why a standard is not met and where there are areas of concern. Inspectors should also add a commentary where a standard is judged to have been met despite reservations which may have been shared with the school. This helps to ensure consistency on future visits.

The RI should upload the completed checklist to the VIR and the IC will ask information services to upload it to the provider file after the visit.

The RI should send the completed checklist to the IC, who will upload it to the provider file after the visit.

After the visit

The RI creates a reporting input form and notifies the appropriate sector lead inspector for editing, copied to the IC.

After responding to the editor, the RI will upload it back into the VIR and send an email copied to the AD for approval. The report is then forwarded to the IC. They will arrange for a copy of the report to be sent to the listed recipients and SharePoint.

The RI will ensure information services upload the Darnton B3 report to the provider file (if appropriate).

It is the responsibility of the IC to check post-activity progress and make sure that the report is sent to all parties in a timely manner.

Independent school and independent specialist college monitoring visits

Prep	Travel	Inspection	Post inspection
½ day for RI	½ day	1.5 days	½ day for RI 0.3 for QAR

The main purpose of the monitoring visit is to:

- check compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
(NB: this is for independent special schools only; there are currently no regulations for independent specialist colleges)
- evaluate progress against recommendations from previous visit
- briefly outline the school's/college's strengths and areas for development
- leave one or two recommendations for the school/college based on the most important areas for development

Monitoring visit model

Pre-inspection

The role of the Inspection Co-ordinator

Inspection co-ordinator (IC) contacts provider and asks them to complete the ICF.

IC informs school/college of visit 3 weeks prior to inspection. In the case of schools, IC will suggest to school that they might want to upload the following documents to the VIR (note: this is not a requirement but can be very helpful):

- School SER
- School development plan
- Progress against recommendations of previous visit
- Safeguarding SER (the template can be found in the VIR)
- Curriculum policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Educational visits policy
- First Aid Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy

In the case of colleges, the only documents to be uploaded are:

- Safeguarding SER (college version)
- Progress against recommendations of previous visit
- The college's self-evaluation report
- The college development plan
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Curriculum policy (or statement of purpose)
- Complaints policy
- Welsh language policy

IC ensures team members and the school/college have access to the VIR as appropriate.

The IC will make ensure that the following documents are uploaded to the 'Inspection documents' area of the VIR:

- Team input form
- Copy of last year's annual monitoring visit report or full inspection report
- Blank 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Copy of last year's 3b Standards checklist for schools
- Guidance on Evaluating the Independent School Registration Regulations
- Copy of this toolkit

The RI should check the school's provider file before the visit so that s/he is aware of any material change reports, action plans or other documents relating to recent visits. It would also be helpful for the RI to familiarise themselves with recent Darnton B3 reports to ensure the buildings being used by the school match those registered.

The IC will make sure that the following documents are uploaded to the 'Provider Area' of the VIR:

- Blank safeguarding self-evaluation form
- 3b Standards checklist for schools
- The ICF
- [WG Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance](#)

Preparation Stage 1

0.5 day prep day for
RI

In the allocated half day, the reporting inspector should:

- read the last note of visit/inspection report (which will be in the VIR);
- check the provider file for any other recent relevant documentation relating to the school/college
- contact the provider to discuss arrangements (telephone conversation and email to confirm);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact CIW (for all residential schools/colleges or schools linked to children's homes); and • Write a briefing note for other members of the team <p>RI phone call to provider</p> <p>RI phones the provider to establish a relationship with the headteacher/principal and to make arrangements for the visit, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic arrangements such as a base for the inspectors, tea/coffee/lunch, parking and internet access; • any specific requirements such as dress code, Covid-19 restrictions etc. • arrangements for arrival/feeding back the inspection findings to the headteacher/principal/proprietor on the 2nd day; • discuss which documents could be uploaded to the VIR (this is not a requirement for providers, but they might find it helpful; and • discuss which documents will need to be made available on arrival <p>The phone call to the provider should not take much more than 15 minutes, so there is time to start on other pre-inspection activities.</p> <p>Liaison with CIW</p> <p>In accordance with the Estyn/CIW protocol, RI should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact Lesley Roberts to inform CIW of the date of the monitoring inspection and ask if they wish to be present at the same time (although this is not a joint inspection); • ask for a copy of the most recent CIW report on the school's/college's residential provision; • ask for CIW views on the quality of education, safeguarding and leadership and management (especially care/education/therapy links); and • offer to share relevant findings from the monitoring inspection. <p>CIW contact details:</p> <p>Contact details for CIW are Lesley.Roberts@gov.wales Tel: 0300 7900 126</p>
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Inspection week	
Day 1	<p>Travel time during morning and team arrives no earlier than 12:00 (unless starting with a full day and feeding back the following midday)</p> <p>You should have downloaded all relevant documents from the VIR.</p> <p>It is also essential to have a copy of the Estyn Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, just as you would if leading a full inspection.</p> <p>On-site inspection</p> <p>On arriving at the school/college, it is usual to have a brief initial discussion with the headteacher/principal to set the scene for the inspection. In this meeting you should discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any changes since the last visit; • the issues as you see them; • the broad format for the duration of our visit; • any specific risks e.g. relating to the needs of the pupils; and • have a brief site tour. <p>As you will not have had any time for a pre-inspection meeting, all planning will need to be done on site. After meeting the headteacher, it is helpful for the inspectors to have time to look at documents and plan lesson observations and interviews.</p> <p>Checking compliance with the Independent School Standards (for independent special schools only)</p> <p>The team will not necessarily check compliance against every standard on every visit. <i>The aim should be to check compliance against EITHER Standard 1 or 3 and a selection from the remaining standards, with the aim that every standard will be checked at least every 3 years.</i> The RI will need to refer to the checklist and report from the previous visit to check which standards were covered the previous year.</p> <p>Standard 5 is only inspected on full inspections, or if there has been previous failure to comply. In this case, the lead inspector for Independent Special Schools will contact DarntonB3 to make arrangements. However, HMI can make judgements on areas of Standard 5 such as the standard of decoration and maintenance.</p> <p>A copy of the previous year's checklist will be in the Inspection documents section of the VIR.</p>

	<p>The Independent School Standards checklist should be completed electronically – a tick/yes if the regulation has been met, and a cross/no if it has not been met, plus a comment explaining why this regulation has not been met. Inspectors should also add a commentary where a standard is judged to have been met despite reservations which may have been shared with the school. This helps to ensure consistency on future visits. Please start with the checklist from the last monitoring visit and make any new comments in a different colour designated by the RI.</p> <p>The RI should upload the completed checklist to the VIR and the IC will ask information services to upload it to the provider file after the visit.</p>
Day 2	<p>Writing findings and feeding back</p> <p>The RI, with the support of the team inspector, will complete all relevant sections of the Reporting Input Form (RIF), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context section • Strengths • Areas for development • Recommendations • Progress against recommendations of previous visit. • Compliance with Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 <p>Team depart following feedback to the school or college.</p> <p>NB: for small providers where there are fewer than five pupils/learners, reports should focus on provision and avoid reporting on standards and wellbeing. This is to ensure consistency with other published reports and to avoid identifying individual pupils/learners. It is still possible to comment on progress and wellbeing in the standards checklist, as this is not a published document. Inspectors should always consider standards and wellbeing on each inspection and provide verbal feedback to the provider.</p>
Post inspection	
0.5 days for RI	<p>RIF</p> <p>The RI has half a day for post-inspection activity.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the RI completes the Reporting Input Form (RIF), standards checklist, creates and edits the RIF, and informs IC when this is done; • IC informs editor (normally lead inspector) that form is completed; • editor makes amendments and uploads completed template into VIR, to be checked by RI; • IC sends to school/college for factual accuracy; • IC sends report for translation; • IC informs relevant stakeholders that report is to be published shortly, including the school/college, WG • IC saves report, completed checklist, annual monitoring focus and confidential information section in provider area. <p>WG/Estyn follow up work</p> <p>WG will write to the school, cc to Estyn, requesting an action plan to address the key issues relating to non-compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations identified in the note of visit. When the school has submitted an action plan, WG will ask Estyn to comment on the suitability of the Action Plan (AP).</p> <p>The lead officer for independent special schools maintains an overview within Estyn of all annual monitoring inspection reports. He is also responsible for liaison with other inspectorates in cases where local authorities in other parts of the UK are funding placements in independent special schools in Wales.</p> <p>In cases where the monitoring inspection identifies pupils who may be inappropriately placed, the lead officer is responsible for following up with WG.</p> <p>In addition, where it is evident that authorities have failed to comply with statutory requirements or have not followed ALN Code of Practice guidance, the sector lead inspector may liaise with the relevant link inspector within Estyn so that the matter can be pursued with the local authority concerned. Examples may include evidence that an authority has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • placed a pupil with a IDP/statement of SEN in an independent school that does not have ALN approval for his/her range of needs, and without appropriate ALN consent arrangements in place;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• failed to provide the school with details of pupils' ALN e.g. up to date IDP/statement and appendices; or• failed to conduct annual reviews of the pupils' statements.
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Annex 1: Forms for unregistered provision visits

Form 1: HMCI's reasonable cause to believe checklist threshold test for establishments that maybe in breach of Part 10 Section 159 of the Education Act 2002

Name of establishment	
Address	
Nature of establishment	Record details from sources such as the establishment's web page, social media and LA and WG information. To include items such as stated purpose, when established and sex and age range of children attending
Owner/trustees/proprietor	name and give title, if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Estimated number of children attending	known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
How often children attend (days and times)	if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Number of days per week pupils attend	if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Average hours per week spent receiving tuition	if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Any evidence of home learning support	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Do parents provide written notification of election to home educate	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Does the establishment have	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school uniform 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school curriculum 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claims to call itself a school 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admission forms 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school policies 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school fees 	details if known, or confirm that this information is either 'Unclear' or 'Not known'
Other background information about the provision	to be completed by the lead inspector or AD

Overall comment	
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The Registration Body (Welsh Government) has requested a visit	Yes/No
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The above information does (not) provide reasonable cause to believe that the named establishment is an unregistered independent school and I may (not) exercise my powers of entry under section 159 (1) of the Education Act 2002.

Signed Date

Form 2: SD/AD email template to Welsh Government to confirm that, following HMCI's threshold test, an establishment does not provide reasonable cause to believe that the named establishment is an unregistered independent school.

Email to: Julie Webster DfES,

Subject: unregistered provision - confidential

Text:

Dear Colleagues,

As a result of information received, HMCI has applied a threshold test to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe that an offence is being committed by [INSERT NAME OF ESTABLISHMENT] through running an unregistered school. This threshold test is in accordance with the Welsh Government and Estyn protocol for managing arrangements for an establishment that may be in breach of Part 10 Section 159 of the Education Act 2002

From the information provided for the threshold test, HMCI has determined that there is not reasonable cause to believe that [INSERT NAME OF ESTABLISHMENT] is an unregistered independent school.

If Estyn receives further relevant information about this establishment, we will share this information with colleagues at Welsh Government in the way outlined in the protocol.

Best wishes

[INSERT: Name and signature]

Form 3: NOTE OF VISIT: unannounced visit to providers that may or may not need to register as an independent school

Provision	Name, address and phone no. Email
Purpose of visit	To report on whether the provider is operating as an unregistered school or not.
Date of visit	dd/mm/yyyy
Person-in-charge	Name and give title. Clarify that they are in day-to-day charge of the provision
Owner, trustees, proprietor	Names and addresses of all owners.
Background of the provision	Give details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the provision was established and for what purpose • type of premises
Staff	Do not name staff. Include number of teachers and teaching assistants.
Do all staff have DBS checks?	Include DBS certificate numbers
Children/pupils	From the attendance register specify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number, gender and ages of children/pupils • the addresses of pupils • include whether the provision caters for children with statements of SEN and/or LAC
Provision	Give details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of days children attend each week • the time that they attend each day for education • the available time that they could attend (opening hours) for education; • the length of each term • (where applicable) the time children attend for care arrangements • (where applicable) the available time that they could attend (opening hours) for care arrangements
What subjects are taught?	Give details of subjects taught and curriculum arrangements

Fee per child	State the annual fee (or range of fees) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • where applicable, care
Is there any evidence of home learning support?	Details:
Is the provision registered with CIW for U5s or other provision?	Details:
Are there are any safeguarding issues or matters of concern?	Details:

Compliance with the requirement to register as an independent school

Either

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the provision should be registered as an independent school.

Or

On the basis of this visit, there is evidence to indicate that the provision may need to be registered as an independent school. This is because:

List reasons for requirement to register

Inspectors' judgments on this limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

Annex 2: Sample briefing note for MV**Monitoring Visit****Headlands School**

Dear Mary

Please find below details for the annual monitoring visit to Headlands School.

Provider details	Headlands School
Head teacher	Matthew Burns
Contact details	Headlands School 2 St Augustine's Road, Penarth Cardiff Vale of Glamorgan CF64 1YY 02920 709771 Matthew.burns@actionforchildren.org.uk
Accommodation	Accommodation has been booked for us at the Novotel, Cardiff
Date of visit	Wednesday 16 – Thursday 17 May 2022

Context**About the school**

Headlands School is an independent special school, situated in the residential area of Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is part of the Action for Children charity group. The school provides residential and day placements for pupils aged 7 to 19 years with social, emotional and associated complex needs. All pupils have a wide range of additional learning needs including attachment disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity and autistic spectrum disorders and other various complex needs related to trauma and adversity. All pupils have either a statement of special educational need (SEN) or an Education health and care plan (EHCP). Around a quarter of pupils have looked-after child (LAC) status.

The school currently educates 69 pupils from Key Stage 2 to post-16. Currently there are 14 residential pupils who attend the school and the remaining 55 pupils are day pupils. Nearly all pupils come from Welsh local authorities, with a very few from English local authorities.

The school's aim is to develop young people wellbeing and independence through an individualised approach to both education and care.

The principal has been in post since 2009. The last full inspection by Estyn was in April 2019

Main findings from the annual monitoring visit of January 2017**Strengths:**

- The school provides a wide range of learning experiences that meet the needs of learners well.
- The curriculum is planned well at a departmental and whole-school level.
- The school works with a range of partners, for example a college, a mainstream school and local charities, to broaden pupils' learning experiences.

- The school places a strong focus on pupils' wellbeing. This has a positive impact on pupils' engagement in learning. Pupils generally behave well.
- Pupils develop their thinking skills well.
- Staff and pupils develop very strong working relationships. As a result, pupils are happy to ask for and accept help and advice.
- The school collects a wide range of appropriate data on pupil progress in relation to their learning and behaviour. Staff use this data effectively to plan relevant strategies and intervention programmes.
- The school is developing leadership roles within the school well. For example, heads of key stage take part in lesson observations, book scrutiny and curriculum planning.
- The school has a well-established programme of lesson observations. Teachers receive helpful verbal and written feedback. Managers analyse the strengths and areas for development and discuss this information with staff on training days. This has a positive impact on teaching, for example in the use of starter activities to engage pupils.
- The school carries out regular book scrutiny. Managers have recognised the need to use this activity to focus more on pupil standards and the quality of teaching in addition to the quality of written feedback.

Areas for development:

- Although the school has an appropriate range of policies, managers do not always review these carefully enough to ensure that they are clear and contain all the necessary information.
- Although the school keeps an attendance register, this has not been completed in line with current Welsh Government guidelines. For example, the register does not identify authorised and unauthorised absences clearly and does not use the correct codes. On occasions, entries are made in pencil. During the visit, managers made sure that all staff are fully aware of correct procedures.
- The school has a detailed self-evaluation report which is reviewed regularly. However, areas for development are not specific enough. As a result, it is not always clear what needs to be improved and why.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

At the time of the core inspection, the school did not meet the regulatory requirements for the following standards:

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- Maintain an attendance register in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 3(9)

Recommendations

Inspectors left the school with the following recommendations:

R1 Review all policies carefully on a regular basis to ensure that they are easy to read and that they contain all necessary information

R2 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify clearly the key areas that need to be improved

Responsibilities for this visit

Recommendations

R1 Review all policies carefully on a regular basis to ensure that they are easy to read and that they contain all necessary information	Richard
R2 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify clearly the key areas that need to be improved	Richard

Standards

During this visit, I propose we look only at the school's compliance with standards 1, 2, 3 and 4. Inspectors' notes from the Standards Checklist for that visit should provide a useful starting point for our document scrutiny and meetings with the head teacher.

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school	Richard
Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Mary
Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff	Richard
Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are handled	Mary

Proposed timetable for the visit

Please note, these are indicative timings only. We will need to be flexible in our approach to lesson observations in particular, due to the small number of pupils in the school and depending on the timetable for each day.

Wednesday 16 May 2022

	Richard	Mary	Notes
12.00	Team arrive		
12.30	Team meeting to discuss responsibilities and programme for the visit		
1.00	Meeting with head teacher to discuss progress against recommendations since the last visit and tour of site		
2.00 – 3.00	Lesson observations and work scrutiny	Document scrutiny – Standard 1	
3.00 – 4.00	Document scrutiny – Standard 3	Lesson observations and work scrutiny	
4.00 – 5.00	Document scrutiny – Standard 3	Meeting with the head teacher to discuss progress against recommendations 3 and 4	
5.00	Leave school		

Thursday 17 May 2018

8.30 – 9.30	Meeting with the head teacher to discuss progress against	Document scrutiny – Standard 1	
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	recommendations 1, 2 and 5		
9.30 – 10.30	Document scrutiny – Standard 4	Lesson observations and work scrutiny	
10.30 – 11.30	Activity to be confirmed as necessary		
11.30 – 1.00	Team meeting: writing & moderation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's strengths • Areas for development • Recommendations • Compliance with regulations 		
1.30	Feedback		

Final notes

I have made arrangements for a light lunch to be provided for us for Wednesday.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this visit on 07464 675031.

I look forward to catching up with you on Wednesday.

Best wishes

Richard

Annex 3: Sample email to provider (independent special school)

Dear

As promised, following our telephone conversation on DATE, I am forwarding further information regarding the Annual Monitoring Visit scheduled for DATE. X and I will be arriving at approximately TIME on DATE and will leave following the feedback on DATE currently scheduled for approximately TIME.

Thank you to agreeing to arrange a few sandwiches and fruit for us when we arrive. It would be very useful, following our arrival on DATE to have a meeting with you and your colleagues to discuss the following:

- any changes since the last visit;
- the issues as you see them;
- the broad format for the duration of our visit;
- any specific risks e.g. relating to the needs of the
- pupil /pupils; and
- to have a brief site tour.

The documents that we request to be available for us in the base room (if not in the VIR) are:

- the school's safeguarding SER;
- evidence / checklist to show that the school meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003;
- action plan (where relevant) addressing failure to comply with independent school standards;
- the school development plan;
- progress against recommendations from the last inspection/monitoring visit;
- a list of pupils, showing names, dates of birth, placing authorities, whether they have statements and/or are Looked after Children;
- pupil/pupils' files, including statements of SEN;
- timetable for the inspection days; and
- any other documents that you judge necessary to demonstrate progress in relation to previous recommendations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email () or phone () if you need any further clarification or to inform me of any changes.

Could you please confirm that you have received this message.

Kind regards

HMI

Annex 4: Sample email to provider (independent specialist college)

Good morning

Following our telephone conversation just now, I am confirming information regarding the monitoring visit scheduled for DATE.

X and I will be arriving at approximately TIME on DATE and will leave following the feedback on DATE, currently scheduled for approximately TIME.

It would be very useful, following our arrival on DATE, to have a meeting with you to discuss the following:

- any changes since the last visit;
- the issues as you see them;
- the broad format for the duration of our visit;
- any specific risks e.g. relating to the needs of the learner/learners; and
- to have a brief site tour.

Thank you for putting the relevant policies in the VIR. Other documents we would request to be available in the base room for the visit are:

- a list of learners, showing names, dates of birth, placing authorities, etc.
- learners' files
- timetables for the inspection days
- any other documentary evidence that you deem necessary to demonstrate progress in relation to previous recommendations

Many thanks for your assistance in preparation for this monitoring visit. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email on [EMAIL ADDRESS](#) or on MOBILE NUMBER if you need any further clarification or to inform me of any changes.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have received this message.

I look forward to seeing you on DATE.

Kind regards

HMI