

Ofsted Framework and Alternative Provision - note to commissioning schools

Inspecting off-site provision

277. Inspectors must evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible, including potentially through video/telephone calls.

278. Inspectors must ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that they use. Any provider of alternative provision must be registered as an independent school if it caters full time for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one pupil who is looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether this affects the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively.

279. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. This may be completed remotely. This is to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process. Inspectors should visit any registered alternative provision site that Ofsted has not yet inspected to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process.

280. Inspectors will consider the quality of registered alternative provision using Ofsted's latest inspection report and assess its impact on the overall quality of education for pupils in a proportionate way.

281. Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why leaders considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned
- whether leaders have made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision

- what safeguarding checks leaders have made and continue to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum
- the attendance and behaviour of the pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes the pupils' personal development

282. If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty desk so that staff can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine if we need to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.

283. A school is likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management if:

- it is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision
- it is using inappropriate alternative provision
- leaders have not taken the necessary steps to assure themselves of the suitability of a provision, including its COVID-19 safety arrangements
- leaders are not aware of how many of their pupils attend alternative provision
- leaders are not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision