

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

# Alternative Provision Guidance for Schools

May 2022

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overarching Principles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Parameters – unregistered provisions, registered schools, LA-run provisions, work experience</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>When considering and planning alternative provision</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Checks</b>	<b>8</b>
Setting status	9
Safeguarding	9
Health and Safety	10
Attendance	11
An inclusive environment which is conducive to meeting needs and recognises diversity	11
Progress	12
Liaison with parents/carers and the home school	12
Clarification on ‘approved providers’	12
<b>During the period of intervention</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Transition/re-integration</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Ofsted and alternative provision</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Reviewing the use of alternative provision at a whole school level</b>	<b>15</b>

# Introduction

The Local Authority (LA) believes that all children and young people should be able to access a high-quality, rounded and relevant, full-time education provision which meets their needs within their school placement and alongside their peers. Occasionally, however, there is the need for a child or young person to have some additional, different or perhaps specialist provision which the school cannot source from within. In these cases, schools might consider commissioning short-term intervention from the wide range of alternative providers. This document offers schools guidance when considering the use of alternative provision. It should be read in conjunction with the following legislation and guidance:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Ofsted Education Inspection Framework](#)

[School Inspection Handbook](#)

[DfE Alternative Provision Guidance](#)

[Alternative Provision Ofsted Findings 2016](#)

[Creating Opportunity for All: DfE Vision for Alternative Provision 2018](#)

[Independent School Registration Guidance](#)

[Report an Unregistered School](#)

[DfE School Attendance Guidance](#)

[Hampshire and Isle of Wight SEN Support Guidance for Schools](#)

## Overarching Principles

- The child or young person's individual needs and best interests are prioritised.
- Wherever possible, a child or young person's individual needs should be met in-house by the school in which they are placed
- All children and young people have an entitlement to suitable full-time education
- Pedagogical approaches and curriculum delivery should aim to have sufficient flexibility to respond to and meet the individual needs of all children and young people in their home school, other than in very exceptional circumstances
- Schools should match the workforce and their skillsets to the broad range of needs within their communities including, for example, those who can offer specialist support and/or specific pastoral roles such as family support worker or well-being/mental health support adviser
- Tailored, in-house provision within an inclusive environment maintains a child or young person's connection with their school community and therefore with key adults and their peers

- A range of in-house interventions, adaptations and additionality should be considered at an early intervention stage when it is clear that action needs to be taken to better meet a child or young person's needs
- Alternative provision can play a positive role in supporting a very small proportion of children and young people, in order to have their needs met and/or to secure positive re-engagement with education, benefiting from specialist offers and skillsets not available 'in-house'
- If alternative provision beyond the school is being explored, there are a range of considerations for the school which should be taken into account to inform the decision-making, including the views of parents/carers and the child or young person (see section on selecting a provision below)
- Alternative provision should be seen as a short-term, time-bonded intervention which is focused on specialist input and/or supporting the child or young person to get back on track and/or re-integrated with peers in their home school setting. In some exceptional cases, it can also be used as part of a transitional arrangement to a new setting, for example phase transfer
- The body holding responsibility for the child or young person's education (usually the school, sometimes the LA – see section on responsibilities below) retains responsibility for the child or young person, including their welfare and safety, attendance in education and progress, both academic and personal.
- Schools should systematically monitor the impact of alternative provision on the wider progress and outcomes of children and young people
- Schools should consider the above impact relative to cost effectiveness and explore whether investing in specialist support 'in-house' could provide greater value for money long-term.

## Responsibilities

The LA has responsibility for certain groups of children and young people's education, as set out in the DfE Alternative Provision Guidance 2013, see link above. This largely relates to the responsibility for children and young people who have been permanently excluded, and arrangements for those who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made.

The Education Centres in Hampshire are a form of alternative provision. They are registered as schools and have the same responsibilities as mainstream or special schools when commissioning further alternative provision or a 'third party'. When schools commission from Education Centres, children and young people remain on the home school roll but are also on the roll of the Education Centre (known as 'dual rolled') and responsibilities are shared.

In very exceptional cases, a child or young person becomes 'Educated Other Than at School' (EOTAS). This means that the child or young person is no longer on a school roll and therefore responsibility for arranging provision falls to the LA. This is the only circumstance when the LA has direct responsibility for arranging suitable education, other than due to permanent exclusion, being medically unwell or other circumstances, as above.

Schools are responsible for arranging suitable provision for their children and young people. They may also direct pupils off-site for education to help improve their behaviour but retain responsibility for their provision whilst on their roll.

Governing bodies of schools are responsible for ensuring arrangements are made for suitable provision from the sixth day following a suspension where it exceeds five days. Governing bodies also have a role in monitoring the school's performance and effectiveness, including meeting the needs of all children and young people in its care. The section below on reviewing alternative provision at a whole school level offers a selection of questions governors or their equivalent may wish to draw on in monitoring the use and evaluating the effectiveness of alternative provision accessed, as part of their responsibilities.

Should a school decide to access alternative provision for a child or young person, the school retains responsibility for the education of that child or young person, including their welfare, safety and attendance, academic progress and personal development.

In some exceptional cases the LA, for example the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team, will make arrangements for alternative provision to support a school in meeting a child or young person's needs. The child or young person remains on the school roll whilst awaiting transfer and therefore the responsibilities remain with the school.

In a small minority of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), a type of provision will be described which is beyond the school's own internal resource, with alternative provision therefore needing to be commissioned. Once again, the child remains on the roll of the school, therefore it is the expectation that the school will identify, commission, quality assure and oversee that provision at an operational level.

Children and young people benefit from participating in well-planned and managed outdoor learning and adventurous activities. Where this is being organised by an alternative provider as part of an alternative programme, it remains the school's responsibility to ensure that the visit/activity is appropriate and valuable, risk assessed, and conducted by qualified individuals, just as if the school were organising the visit/activity directly. Further guidance is available via Hampshire Outdoors Offsite Visits Guidance available within the Resources section of the Hampshire EVOLVE system ([www.hampshireoutdoors.com](http://www.hampshireoutdoors.com)) .

Every young person should have the opportunity to explore the world or work, and to have encounters with employers that help them consider their future career options. This is reflected in statutory guidance [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#). Where an alternative provider is offering work experience, or a visit to an employer's premises, or organising a careers intervention as part of an alternative programme, it remains the responsibility of the school to ensure the placement is appropriate and that all checks are undertaken. Guidance is available from the Health and Safety Executive website on organising work experience [HSE work experience](#) .

The responsible body – usually the school but occasionally the LA as above – must make informed decisions to assure the suitability of education, including undertaking checks of any alternative provision accessed (see below).

## Parameters – unregistered provisions, registered schools, LA-run provisions, work experience

Many alternative provisions are unregistered and therefore without oversight from a regulatory body such as Ofsted. This is permissible but it is important that the alternative provision's operating model is within the unregistered boundaries. To understand these, knowing the threshold which would trigger the need for registration, for example as an independent school, is helpful.

What constitutes a registered school as opposed to an unregistered alternative provision can be found in the link for Independent School Registration above. Key points to remember include:

- An independent school is defined as any school at which full-time education is provided for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or for one or more such pupils with an EHCP or a statement of special educational needs or who is looked after by an LA, and is not a school maintained by an LA or a non-maintained special school
- There is no legal definition of what constitutes 'full-time' education for these purposes. However, the DfE considers an institution to be providing full-time education if it is intended to provide, or does provide, all, or substantially all, of a child's education.
- Relevant factors in determining whether education is full-time include:
  - the number of hours per week that is provided - including breaks and independent study time
  - the number of weeks in the academic term/year the education is provided
  - the time of day it is provided
  - whether the education provision in practice precludes the possibility that full-time education could be provided elsewhere.
- Generally, the DfE considers any institution that is operating during the day, for more than 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education. This is because the education being provided is taking up the substantial part of the week in which it can be reasonably expected a child can be educated, and therefore indicates that the education provided is the main source of education for that child.
- A child begins to be of compulsory school age if he or she attains five years of age on one of the prescribed days, or on the next prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday. The prescribed days are currently 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the school leaving date for any calendar year if he or she attains the age of 16 on (or will do so by) that date or will do so after that date but before the beginning of the next school year. The school leaving date is currently set as the last Friday in June.

The education centres in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are a form of alternative provision. Where a child or young person is attending an education centre within Hampshire or the Isle of Wight, these are schools and therefore registered provisions with a DfE number and regulation by Ofsted. Schools can request access to an education centre for a child or young person. For more information on the referral process, schools should contact the Inclusion Support Service (for Hampshire) using [ReducedHoursData@hants.gov.uk](mailto:ReducedHoursData@hants.gov.uk) or the Education Inclusion Service (for the Isle of Wight) using [educationandinclusion@iow.gov.uk](mailto:educationandinclusion@iow.gov.uk). Alternatively, schools can contact their local education centre for information and advice.

The LA also provides services such as PBS (Primary Behaviour Service). This can be deemed an alternative provision. It provides a maximum of two days per week in-reach support as a short-term intervention and therefore does not reach the threshold to require registration as a school. Checks for LA-run provisions, for example safe recruitment checks, are undertaken by the LA, which is itself regulated by Ofsted. Schools do not need to undertake checks of LA-run provisions.

## **When considering and planning alternative provision**

First and foremost, alternative provision must be in the best interests of the child or young person, considered in the context of both current needs and future re-integration to their home setting or transition to an onward destination.

The LA takes a position of neutrality on the different alternative providers and does not make recommendations. The LA does not currently have a duty to quality assure or carry out checks on alternative providers, other than those from which it is commissioning directly, and therefore is not in a position to make recommendations.

Wherever possible, the LA believes that suitable provision to meet need should be 'in-house'. It is recognised that transition and change can be challenging for many children and young people and imposing a transition or new situation at a point when a child or young person is already experiencing vulnerability, may present a further obstacle or exacerbate a situation further. It is of course recognised that the benefits of the alternative provision may outweigh any negative impact or indeed help to address a child or young person's ability to cope with change.

For some children or young people, being 'sent' to alternative provision can present as a rejection from their home school and can cause fragmentation from their valued peer groups and indeed familiar adults. It can also make re-integration more complex and challenging. The LA therefore encourages all schools to, wherever possible, use alternative provision within a blend of offer which includes continued contact with education in the home school setting.

All children have the right to a suitable, rounded education. Consideration must therefore be given to how this will be delivered when selecting an alternative provider. This is endorsed by Ofsted, who will consider the extent to which school leaders ensure that children and young people benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum when accessing alternative provision. Thought is needed and plans should be put in place to address how any

short-term narrowing of the learning offer will be mitigated and not compromise the child or young person's needs and progress further.

Consideration must be given to how children and young people are learning about keeping themselves safe during any period of alternative provision, particularly if it is in isolation and not part of a blended package alongside regular attendance at school. Schools should probe how the alternative provider is delivering relevant aspects of a safeguarding curriculum and the Relationships, Sex and Health (RSHE) curriculum.

Schools should consider the provider's offer matched to need in terms of relevance, suitability, and quality. The ambition of the alternative setting and its track record in meeting that ambition should inform the decision as to whether it is right for the child or young person.

Good quality alternative providers often have a form of governance arrangement such as a trust board or management committee, which gives oversight of the provision beyond those who own, manage or deal with its day-to-day running. This is not a requirement but is generally seen as best practice, as it provides a level of scrutiny and quality assurance. When selecting an alternative provider, schools are encouraged to consider the arrangements in place to offer accurate self-evaluation of performance alongside scrutiny and challenge beyond those with a personal investment in the provision and those working within it.

Schools should use alternative provision as a short-term, time-bonded intervention, having first explored and regularly reviewed other strategies and means to meet the child or young person's needs effectively. There should be a clear, agreed plan which sets out the goals of the alternative provision and the means to achieve them, with built-in milestones against which progress can be measured. It is critical that, from the outset, there is a clear plan of re-integration and/or transition which supports the child or young person in returning to full-time provision within their home setting or in moving to their onward destination. This should include how academic progress will be recovered, if appropriate.

Schools should consider the location of the alternative provision relative to the child or young person's home. The time it would take to access the provision should be a factor in decision-making, as lengthy travel could have a negative impact on the child or young person, including consuming learning time. Means of travel, cost and related logistics are further factors.

## Checks

When accessing alternative provision, it is the *commissioner* of that provision – usually the school, sometimes the LA in the case of permanent exclusions, those medically unwell and those on EOTAS packages, as above – who needs to undertake checks. These would include, for example, suitability of provision and provision type, safeguarding, health and safety, arrangements for attendance and reporting progress, and information sharing.

In this section, some exemplification of the type of checks a school might undertake and the questions it might ask is offered. **It is important to note that this is for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list.** A school must devise its



own checks tailored to the context yet with some core aspects, for example compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Guidance.

A school must devise and implement checks based on the principle that children and young people are entitled to access a suitable education that meets their needs, including their academic and personal needs. This must be within a safe environment that is conducive to learning, recognises the importance of information sharing and have systems in place to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. It is helpful for a school to consider what core checks are undertaken of its own provision –both self-administered and through a regulatory body – to help guide the checks it would want to have in place for a child or young person in a different environment.

Checks should be undertaken by a member of school staff with sufficient knowledge and seniority to carry out the task effectively. A dated record should be kept of the checks undertaken and the outcomes. Schools are advised to re-visit checks at an institution/provider level at least annually as a minimum.

### Setting status

Firstly, the school should be clear about the status of the provision being accessed; for example, whether it is an unregistered alternative provision or a registered school. Part of the checking process would then be to ensure that the provision is operating within the parameters permissible for its status (see parameters section and relevant links above for further guidance).

In undertaking checks, if there is concern that a provision may be operating as an unregistered school, contact **MUST** be made with the Inclusion Support Service Manager ([jonathan.willcocks@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.willcocks@hants.gov.uk)) immediately. The provision should **not** be alerted to those concerns; please follow the guidance in the link above for 'reporting an unregistered provision'. There is a central email address for reporting concerns to Ofsted which is: [unregistereddschoolreferrals@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:unregistereddschoolreferrals@ofsted.gov.uk) . You may also be interested in the Ofsted Blog [Investigating unregistered schools – how you can help](#)

### Safeguarding

A school has a duty to protect and safeguard the children and young people on its roll. That overarching responsibility when accessing alternative provision sits very firmly with the school, whilst the alternative provision enacts duties in practice when children and young people are in its direct care. Safeguarding checks would ultimately need to gain assurance that the provision is working within KCSiE Guidance, see link above. For **exemplification purposes only**, this should include:

- Staff training – are all staff aware of and trained in KCSiE? When was the most recent training? Is there at least one named and suitably trained designated safeguarding lead (DSL)?
- Safe recruitment checks, including an up to date and accurate single central record, which reflect DBS checks at the appropriate level, right to work in the UK, suitable qualifications, ability to demonstrate two references for all appointments etc
- Identity checks for visitors and appropriate supervision levels

- A child protection policy and procedures, including arrangements for timely information sharing with the home school
- A peer-on-peer abuse policy/sexual violence and harassments policy or equivalent and procedures, including arrangements for timely information sharing with the home school
- Clear procedures for managing allegations against staff or volunteers and in relation to low level concerns, including knowledge of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and their role
- Training and awareness in relation to the Prevent Duty with appropriate arrangements for reporting, recording and sharing information with the home school
- A generic safeguarding policy which reflects wider safeguarding matters
- A Code of Conduct for staff
- Arrangements for on-line safety, including the protections and filters in place on equipment, how children and young people are taught to stay safe on-line, the use of social media and an Acceptable Use policy
- A behaviour policy and procedures
- A policy and procedures as appropriate on the use of physical intervention and restraint, including staff training, how incidents are reported and arrangements for timely information sharing with the home school
- A positive relationships, language, behaviours and attitudes/anti-bullying policy and procedures
- A data protection policy and procedures, including a named data protection officer
- A mechanism for staff to raise concerns relating to unsafe/poor safeguarding practice and whistleblowing
- Oversight of arrangements and practices – is there evidence of internal systems to quality assure safeguarding practice and learn from that process? Is there any external validation or peer challenge in relation to practice?

When undertaking safeguarding checks, the school should assure itself that the relevant policies and procedures are not simply just in place; they should also be appropriate, regularly reviewed and in line with local arrangements, for example the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Inter-Agency Referral Process and Thresholds Chart. The school may also wish to see some examples of the policies and procedures 'in practice', perhaps through observation, or talking to children and young people, or reviewing some records/evidence, to gain assurance that they are implemented consistently and as intended.

### Health and Safety

The school must ensure that suitable health and safety arrangements are in place to protect and safeguard children and young people. It will be useful to refer to the school's own health and safety requirements/practices when determining what the checks should entail but wider consideration may also be needed. For example, if a child or young person is accessing a higher risk environment such as involving construction, mechanics or agriculture, additional measures would be expected. For **exemplification purposes only**, health and safety checks should include:

- Appropriate levels and types of insurance
- A health and safety policy and procedures
- Core risk assessments
- Risk assessments for specific children and young people as appropriate, for example relating to their behavioural needs
- A policy and procedures relating to first aid/medical assistance including suitable equipment
- A policy and procedures relating to the administration of medicines
- Accident recording and reporting procedures, including how information is shared immediately with the home school
- A fire safety policy and procedures, alongside a fire risk assessment and evidence of regular checks on equipment and regular evacuation practices, with procedures known to all staff and children and young people
- Housekeeping, toilets and washing facilities including any additional measures when in higher risk environments such as with animals
- The general condition of the environment and its suitability for the welfare and protection of children and young people
- Site security arrangements.

### Attendance

Accurate records of a child or young person's attendance are critical, as is the sharing of those records between the alternative provision and the home school or other commissioner. Checks on attendance arrangements, for **exemplification purposes only**, should include:

- An attendance policy and procedures, including arrangements for timely and regular information sharing with the home school
- Arrangements for how the alternative provision works with the child or young person and their family to promote strong attendance
- Systems for accurate recording of attendance and absence, using agreed coding (see link to the DfE attendance guidance above)

### An inclusive environment which is conducive to meeting needs and recognises diversity

All children and young people are entitled to an education within an environment which supports their development and learning, and which promotes values of inclusivity, equity and diversity. Checks relating to this area, for **exemplification purposes only**, might include:

- An equality and diversity policy which demonstrates commitment and adherence to the Equality Act
- Arrangements for supporting personal development and well-being
- A Code of Conduct for staff
- A behaviour policy and procedures
- A positive relationships, language, behaviours and attitudes/anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Evidence of a calm, purposeful and respectful environment which fosters positive relationships and embraces diversity

- Arrangements for addressing and recording incidents of prejudicial language, attitudes and behaviours, including for timely information sharing with the home school.

### Progress

The school must assure itself that the provision will enable the child or young person to make good progress, both in the area which causes the need for an intervention and/or a specialist offer, and in relation to wider areas of need. Checks relating to this area, **for exemplification purposes only**, might include the arrangements the alternative provision has in place for a school to review:

- Progress against the intervention plan, a personalised plan, EHCP or personal education plan (PEP) for a looked after child
- Progress towards achieving age-related expectations (ARE) in reading, writing and maths or against GCSE grade 4 or above in the Basics
- Progress against personal development targets including, for example, self-esteem, confidence, resilience
- Progress against a behaviour plan
- Progress in securing increased attendance, participation and engagement
- Progress towards a successful re-integration or transition

### Liaison with parents/carers and the home school

Before commissioning from an alternative provision, a school will want to assure itself of the arrangements in place for the provision to work positively in partnership with parents/carers. Similarly, the school needs to be confident that the appropriate systems and lines of communication are in place to share important information regularly and in a timely fashion, with good, open communication lines and appropriate record keeping.

### Clarification on 'approved providers'

In 2015, a directory of alternative provision was trialled in Hampshire, with names of providers that had shown an interest in featuring in the directory later being transferred onto the Family Information and Services Hub (FISH) website, also the Local Offer. Being on the FISH or Local Offer website does not mean a provision or service has undergone checks, either for quality or compliance. The directory is now out-of-date and obsolete. There is no published list of alternative providers for Hampshire or the Isle of Wight which have been approved centrally by the LA that schools can access. Should schools come across providers using the term 'approved by the LA', this phraseology should be questioned, and clarification sought. In all cases, a school must undertake its own checks and have its own approval and quality assurance process if it is the commissioner.

## During the period of intervention

In the vast majority of cases, the child remains on the roll of a school whilst accessing alternative provision, hence the school should maintain close contact both with the provision and with the child or young person and their family.

The school continues to hold responsibility for the child or young person's welfare and safety. There should therefore be continued involvement in such matters as any child protection concerns and any multi-agency meetings or reporting.

The school should have a real-time knowledge of the child or young person's attendance at the alternative provision. This means that for any session that the child or young person is expected to attend, the school should ensure it knows whether that child has attended or the reason for absence. Both the school and the alternative provision should code attendance consistently, with the DfE attendance guidance (see link above) being always adhered to by the school. Pages 10 to 16 of the DfE attendance guidance (see link above) offers clarity on attendance coding, including for educational activity off-site and dual registered education.

The school should review the pattern of the child or young person's attendance at alternative provision at least weekly to spot and intervene early with any patterns or trends.

If whilst attending an alternative provision a child or young person's package of education is not full-time (that is, they are not offered the equivalent time in education as their peers), this must be reported to the Inclusion Support Service (Hampshire) using the [Child not in receipt of full-time education form \(Reduced Hours Provision\)](#) or the Education Inclusion Service (Isle of Wight) using [Reduced Hours Provision - data collection](#).

There should be regular reviews of the intervention package in place, to check on a range of progress indicators, for example those listed above. As a minimum, it is anticipated there would be a significant, overarching review at least six weekly. It is anticipated that any review process would include input from the parents/carers, also the child or young person.

It is good practice for the school to see the child or young person on-site and engaged with the alternative provision on a regular basis, in order to experience and understand the nature and impact of the provision, gaining first-hand evidence to inform the review process.

## Transition/re-integration

Throughout the time a child or young person is accessing alternative provision, there must be a clear focus on preparation for full-time return to their home school or transition to a new destination. This should be built into the plan from the outset, with

clear, time-bonded targets, milestones and specific strategies to support a successful exit from alternative provision. A staggered or phased approach may be required and whilst this may extend the period of the intervention, can be a helpful approach to securing successful, sustained re-integration or transition. The school or onward destination must consider how it will prepare for the return or arrival of the child or young person and what adaptations/arrangements are needed. The school should also work with the child or young person and their parents/carers on this process; all parties need to work together in partnership to assure success.

## Ofsted and alternative provision

Schools should ensure they are familiar with the most recent Ofsted Framework and the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (see links above) and expectations within them, with regards use of alternative provision. Paragraphs 288 to 294 of the School Inspection Handbook published in May 2019 and updated in April 2022 are worthy of particular note:

- Para. 288. 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.
- Para. 289. 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.
- Para. 290. 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.
- Para. 291. 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.
- Para. 292. 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
- Para. 293. 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.
- Para. 294. 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.

In the blog referred to in the checks section of this document above, Ofsted recommends a folder for each child or young person accessing alternative provision so that information such as checks, plans and progress details are to hand. Ofsted also strongly recommends the maintenance of a table for all alternative provisions used as follows:

- Name of alternative provision
- Address of alternative provision
- Unique Reference Number (URN) of alternative provision, if registered
- Ofsted rating, where applicable.

## **Reviewing the use of alternative provision at a whole school level**

Governing bodies or their equivalent are strongly advised to monitor and evaluate the use of alternative provision systematically, as this assists them in their support and challenge role. It also offers evidence to inform their self-evaluation in respect of providing suitable education and meeting the needs of all children and young people in their care.

School leaders and governors may wish to draw on the following questions when considering the quality, impact and effectiveness of alternative provision arrangements and the school's own resources/skillset of the workforce:

- How many pupils are currently accessing or have in the last term accessed a form of alternative provision and what is the age profile?
- How long has each pupil been accessing that provision and what is the main purpose/focus of it?
- Is there any pattern or trend to those pupils who have accessed alternative provision in the last year; for example, do they share a common need, is there a more dominant pupil group such as those open to social care?
- If the alternative provision also involves a reduced hours timetable, has this been reported to the Inclusion Support Service (Hampshire) / Education Inclusion Service (IoW), in accordance with requirements?
- What checks were carried out ahead of using the alternative provision and when were checks last carried out? Specifically, address checks relating to any regulatory requirements, safeguarding, health and safety, quality and relevance of education provision, suitability matched to the pupil's needs
- Was the person undertaking those checks of suitable seniority/do they have the knowledge and understanding required to carry them out effectively?
- Is there a record of checks undertaken which can be reviewed and have any recommendations/required actions been followed up?
- How are you assured that the provision is operating within the appropriate parameters and not beyond its remit, for example as an alternative provision and not as an unregistered school?
- How are you assured that the alternative provider's child protection arrangements align to those of the school, with clear arrangements in place for appropriate action and swift sharing of information in the event of a concern?
- What are the arrangements for collecting and monitoring a pupil's attendance data on a daily/weekly basis?
- What are the arrangements for collecting and monitoring a pupil's progress data on a regular basis?
- How does the school maintain regular contact with parents/carers in respect of any pupil accessing alternative provision?
- Is there in every case a plan for reintegrating a pupil when the intervention in alternative provision ceases? Is there a support package in place to ensure this is successful, including how the school will work differently/adapt provision to meet needs?
- What has the impact of alternative provision been on each pupil who has accessed it over the last year?
- How much has been spent on alternative provision in the last financial year and is this cost effective and value for money relative to the impact on pupils' needs, progress and successful, sustained re-integration?



- If there is regular, multiple use of alternative provision over time, does this suggest areas of the school's own provision or structure that may benefit from review/consideration of adaptation to better meet needs in-house?
- Is the commissioning of the provision in line with procurement requirements?
- Is the school's current workforce and the range of skills within it fit for purpose; by changing or adding to the workforce, might the school have a broader skillset and range of specialism which could meet need in-house and in a more cost-effective way?

