

Consultation Response: *Changes to Ofsted inspection fees for independent schools*

Submitted by: [Harrow Monitoring Group](#)

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Executive Summary

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. As a Harrow-based community group, our focus is on Harrow - a diverse borough in North-West London - but the points we raise are equally relevant across the country.

We oppose the proposed increases to Ofsted inspection fees for independent schools (referred to as “private schools” in the consultation document).

Harrow has at least ten independent schools, ranging from small, faith-based providers to larger establishments. Collectively, they play a vital role in the borough’s education ecosystem, complementing state provision and contributing to diversity, social mobility, and parental choice.

Independent schools in Harrow also contribute significantly to wider society by developing valued social and cultural models. Their role should be acknowledged and respected, not penalised through escalating inspection fees. Any increase in inspection fees would have a disproportionate impact, particularly on smaller schools, many of which serve specific community and cultural needs.

Consultation Response

(Consolidated response to Questions 1–13 and 14–16 of the consultation)

School inspections are conducted on behalf of children, parents, and the wider public to ensure pupil welfare, educational quality, and personal development. This is a state responsibility, and the cost should not be transferred to providers on a commercial or cost-recovery basis. Charging schools reframes a public accountability duty as a private service, which is fundamentally wrong.

We recognise that pre-registration inspections (Q5–Q10) are an organisational requirement linked to registration, and a modest fee may be appropriate in that limited context. However, such charges should remain regulatory rather than commercial and should not be increased to levels approaching or exceeding full cost recovery.

The proposed steep rises - particularly under Option 2 - risk deterring new providers, including in areas like Harrow where demand for diverse provision is high. Parents in such communities rightly expect access to schools offering smaller class sizes, enhanced facilities, and clear pathways to prestigious universities and career networks. Introducing advance payment requirements would further compound this risk and should not replace the current post-inspection model.

Raising fees - whether for standard inspections (Q1–Q4), pre-registration inspections (Q5–Q10), or progress monitoring inspections (Q11–Q13) - would impose additional burdens on schools without addressing the underlying principle that inspections serve a public purpose.

We are particularly concerned about the equalities impact (Q14–Q16). Increased fees will fall disproportionately on smaller, community-based, and faith schools, many of which serve

minority groups or families with limited resources. In a borough as diverse as Harrow, this would reduce access, choice, and equality in education.

For these reasons, we do not support the proposed increases. Inspection costs should remain a state responsibility, with only modest, regulatory-level contributions from providers in specific organisational cases such as pre-registration.

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[also, former Inspector of Schools (Ofsted work)]

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