POLICY TITLE:	Governance and Monitoring - Education

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Outcome:	Robust governance is critical for all schools and colleges. The key functions of robust governance are to support and challenge Head Teachers and College Leaders to: • ensure that pupils and students are kept safe, receive the best possible educational provision and achieve aspirational outcomes; • secure positive inspection outcomes; • ensure that provision is delivered in a cost-effective manner; • ensure that relevant assurance is available for the organisation. Robust governance also enables prompt actions to be taken where there is indication of significant concerns regarding a school or college and intervention is required.

Cross Reference:	AOP06 Safeguarding children in Education AOP06BSafeguarding Children in Education – Wales AOP08 Safeguarding Adults AOP08A Safeguarding Adults - Wales AOP31 Risk Management Strategy and the Group Risk Register AH&S01 Health and Safety Policy, Organisation and Arrangements

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Aspris is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy cover all parts of Aspris Services – The Care and Education Divisions; Central services and our Fostering service. For the Fostering service and the 2 operational divisions, there are local procedures that relate to some of these policies, where necessary.

Governance and Monitoring - Education

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, email AsprisGovernanceHelpdesk@aspris.com

1 INTRODUCTION

Aspris is committed to providing high quality provision underpinned by a robust governance framework. We nurture a culture of continuous quality improvement that transcends compliance and aspires to deliver outstanding service outcomes. The following principles underpin our governance framework:

- Governance procedures and activities are focused on outcomes, safety and quality
- We work together in a co-ordinated way to deliver services safely and effectively, with risks managed appropriately
- Information about our schools and colleges is reported promptly to enable us to assess our performance, understand risks and decide next steps
- Our 'Central Services' have clear functions that support the schools and colleges within our Education Division (see 4.2)
- Each school and college operates within a structured management and organisational framework
- Every colleague has a line manager to whom they report
- Schools and colleges are organised into broadly geographical portfolios which are overseen by an Regional Director (RD) who also acts as the Chair of Governors

The Regional Directors are line-managed by the divisional Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O.) who reports into the Aspris Group's Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.), who has management oversight of the whole Group

2 VISION, AIMS and RATIONALE

2.1 Vision
Aspris Education Division is committed to providing high quality Governance through structures and processes that:

- Establishes a culture of continuous quality improvement that transcends compliance and focuses on ensuring outstanding services and outcomes for our children and young people
- Establishes ownership of and accountability for quality in all colleagues in order that sustained quality improvement is routine practice
- Monitors quality and risk through quality assurance metrics and use this information to support sites when needed
- Uses a range of quality metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to inform interventions and develop the strategic direction of the Division
- Facilitates an open and transparent culture, observing Duty of Care and Candour, that encourages learning from incidents, complaints, and feedback from stakeholders in order to create a positive outcomes culture
- Ensures that Aspris has highly competent and motivated staff who deliver outstanding education and care to our children and young people
- Ensures that each school and college has a highly impactful senior management team that drives forward the quality improvement agenda to ensure we have schools and colleges that are well-led and deliver high quality services to our children and young people
- Ensures there is a senior management team that drives forward the divisional governance agenda to ensure well lead and well managed schools/colleges that deliver high quality services to children and young people
- Ensures statutory compliance
- Ensures provision is cost-effective
- Nurtures a culture that encourages new ideas and innovation.

2.2 Aims of Governance
Aspris Governance has three aims that underpin its principles and processes:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders
- Ensuring best value for our children and young people and other stakeholders

2.3 Rationale
The following are the key principles that support the Aspris model of effective Governance:
- Competent strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy
- Robust accountability that drives up standards and financial performance
- Having people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- Clearly defined structures that set out defined roles and associated responsibilities
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements
- Commitment to quality assurance processes that monitor and improve provision and outcomes of each school or college

3 GROUP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.1 Group governance structure and Key Meetings

Executive	Executive Committee Meetings
Divisional	Divisional SMT Meetings
	Governance and Specialist Areas Committees
	Commercial and Quality Reviews
	Divisional Commercial and Quality Reviews
	Group Health and Safety/IPC committee
	Safeguarding committee
	Policies and Procedures Committee
	Task and Finish Groups as appropriate
Portfolio	Regional Cluster Meetings
Service	Service SMT Meetings
	Governance Meetings
	Service Business Reviews
	Other Service Operational Meetings

4 KEY GOVERNANCE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCESSES

4.1 Regional Director as Chair of Governors
Operationally all Aspris schools and colleges are line-managed by an Regional Director (RD) who also acts as a Chair of Governors (CoG).

4.1.1 RD Responsibilities
The Regional Director as Chair of Governors:
- Line manages and provides operational support/challenge to Head Teachers and College Leads
- Holds responsibility as Regional Lead for Safeguarding and must ensure that supervision is provided to all Designated Safeguarding Leads at the schools and colleges in their portfolio
- Must chair at least three formal governance meetings a year (one per term). Forms are provided for this purpose (ACS Form 16G and ACS Form 16GA)
- Must undertake regular visits to all schools and colleges in their cluster providing challenge and support as appropriate
- Must be available to and provide regular communication to the Head Teacher or College Lead and provide specific feedback in a timely manner (verbal and/or written) when this has been requested or is an integral part of a process e.g. Service Leader Weekly Report to Regional Directors
- Must provide assurance to the C.O.O. and the Board of Directors related to operational integrity e.g. regulatory inspection readiness, company compliance and risk etc… The monthly Quality Review process provides a conduit for this

- Should undertake additional visits to schools and colleges in their cluster that require enhanced support e.g. those designated as Enhanced Support Sites, providing challenge and support as appropriate
- Should chair emergency governance meetings when necessary
- Should ensure that all the schools and colleges in their portfolio meet statutory requirements as appropriate for that type of service (e.g. Equalities Duty, compliance with Independent School Standards etc...)
- Should provide regular communication and feedback (verbal and/or written) to the C.O.O/Specialist Directors/Head of Quality (Education) as appropriate
- Should give consideration to and commission additional support whenever necessary
- Should commission and cooperate closely with Central Services Teams to provide enhanced challenge/support to services when this is necessary

4.2   Central Services
Aspris has a comprehensive Central Services Structure which provides support/challenge to local governance through specialist teams. These central teams provide front-line services and operational leaders with effective frameworks required to deliver high quality provision and comprehensive monitoring and support networks. The diagram below illustrates the specialist teams
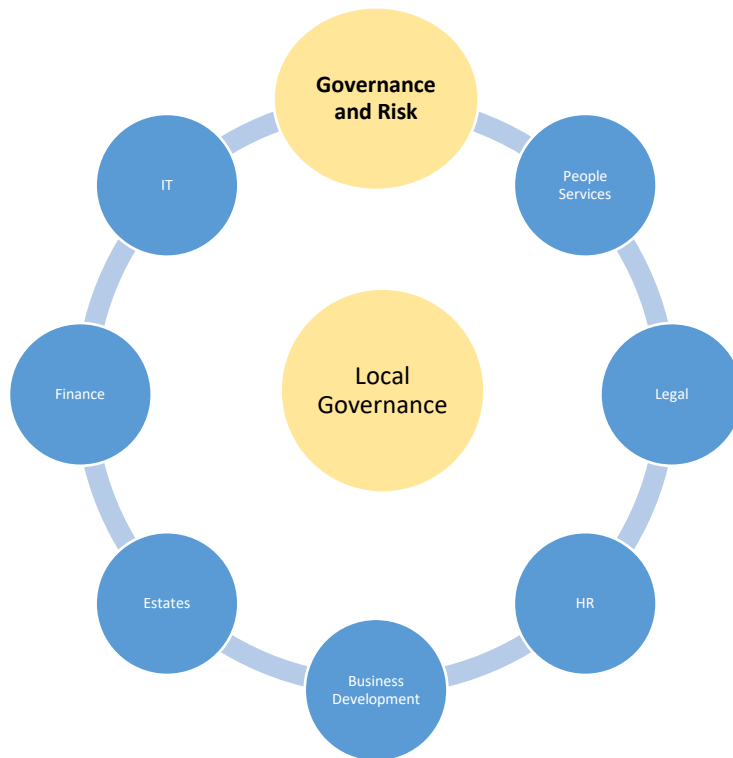
4.2.1   Governance and Risk Team
The Governance and Risk team has a specific role in ensuring the aims of governance are met. It consists of the following sub-teams/individuals
- Health and Safety Team
- Aspris Group Policy Manager
- Registration & Regulations Co-ordinator
- Group Claims & Complaints Coordinator
- Independent Monitoring and Compliance Team
- Safeguarding Team
- Quality Teams (Education and Care)
- External Investigators/Advisers

4.2.2 Education Quality Team
The Education Quality Team sits within the Governance and Risk Team and as such is overseen by the Director of Governance and Risk (DoG&R). It consists of a Head of Quality (HoQ) and 2 Quality Improvement Leads (QILs). Each QIL maintains a portfolio of settings for which they have responsibility.

4.2.2.1 The purpose of the Education Quality Team is to be collaborators with and critical friends to both the schools and colleges and the Regional Directors. Their core function is to provide assurance to the Executive Committee. As a critical friend they provide challenge and support to operational governance with regard to
• Operational quality
• Readiness for regulatory inspection
• Provision of post-inspection support
• Compliance with statutory and company expectations
The Education Quality Team works proactively with Regional Directors (RDs), school and/or college leads and Central teams to: drive improvements in quality and young person outcomes; teach, coach and mentor colleagues to build operational capacity and sustainability; and ensure that quality indicators, educational standards and statutory and regulatory requirements are fully met.

4.2.2.2 Education Quality Team Visits
The Education Quality Team offers remote support and a range of support/challenge visits:
• Entitlement Visits
• Enhanced Entitlement Visits
• Focussed Visits

4.4.2.3 Entitlement Visit
Each school and college will receive a minimum of one on-site QIL support/challenge visit each term as a base entitlement. A record of this visit with identified actions and or recommendations will be provided to the OD and the Head Teacher by the QIL following their visit

4.4.2.4 Enhanced Entitlement Visits
The number of termly visits from the QIL will increase if/when identified triggers deem it appropriate. Possible triggers include:
• A regulatory inspection is due within 6 months
• A school or college receives a less than 'Good' grading from the relevant Regulator
• Available evidence suggests that the school or college is highly likely to receive a less than 'Good' grading at an anticipated upcoming regulatory inspection
• School or college has had significant leadership changes or has been without a Head Teacher for 30 days or more
• School is judged to be seriously non-compliant with relevant Independent School Standards
• School or college has had a particularly serious incident
• There are ongoing serious safeguarding concerns
• Significant concerns are raised by any of the following RD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R/CEO/Central Teams

4.4.2.5 Focussed Visits
In addition to entitlement visits, schools and colleges may also receive specifically focussed visits from their QIL. These will usually be commissioned by one of the following RD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R but may on occasion be requested by the service itself. Focussed visits will usually be one of three types, a Mock Inspection, an Independent School Standards Compliance Check or an Integrated Quality Review (a visit by a joint services team focussing on aspects of provision that have been identified as potentially

causing concern) but occasionally 'Other' visits to evaluate a very specific aspect of a setting's provision may be commissioned

4.4.2.6 Additional QIL Activities to support Governance
In addition to entitlement and enhanced entitlement visits to a school or college, the Education Quality Team will also undertake some or all of the following activities to support governance process at all levels
- Remote analysis of company intelligence e.g. Engage, Aspris Insights, Upward Escalations, Learning Lounge compliance, safeguarding concerns, outcomes data etc…
- Dissemination of latest regulatory requirements/changes
- Sharing of best-practice and lessons-learned
- Creation, review and monitoring of action plans
- Follow-up to safeguarding issues/concerns
- Follow up to significant incidents
- Delivery of HT (Head Teacher) and other specialist calls
- Preparation and dissemination of materials to support quality of provision e.g. audits
- Validation of setting documentation/practice (e.g. SEF (Self Evaluation Form), SDP, Local Procedures etc…)
- Quality Assurance of Governance
- Training
- Policy creation and review
- Other specific divisionally instigated activities

4.5 Registration & Regulations Co-ordinator
Aspris has a Registration & Regulations Co-ordinator who supports effective governance by:
- Ensuring services are appropriately registered
- Maintaining records of compliance and distributing inspection feedback and reports

4.5.1 The Registration & Regulations Co-ordinator must be notified of and involved in (as appropriate) the following:
- Registration or changes to the registration (e.g. material changes) of schools and colleges
- Regulatory inspection
- Formal communication from the respective Regulatory body

4.6 School Improvement Partner
As a school or college approaches its inspection window, to enhance the governance process and supplement the support/challenge of the Education Quality Team, Aspris can commission a visit from an external School Improvement Partner (SIP). The Head of Quality is the conduit for the engagement of the SIP

4.6.1 The School Improvement Partner is independent of the operational functions of Aspris. A SIP visit supports services by ensuring they are working within the required legislation, regulations and standards that govern education across England, Scotland and Wales.
This process allows an objective view of services using methodologies that reflect the approach of our regulators. The School Improvement Partner is an experienced and qualified professional with a robust background in education. This enables them to effectively:
a) Undertake risk-based inspections that benchmark against regulatory frameworks
b) Identify thematic issues across the organisation to allow focused and targeted improvement
c) Act as an early warning system to the organisation, identifying potential and existing areas of non-compliance
d) Provide information and advice to operational colleagues
e) Monitor progress in services where improvement is required

4.6.2   Following the school improvement partner visit a report is generated and shared with the Head Teacher or College Lead, The RD as Chair of Governors and the Head of Quality for Education. The Report will identify areas for improvement. These should be addressed by a site action plan which clearly lays out the remedial actions and deadlines for their completion. This Plan should be monitored closely by the RD as Chair of Governors and supported by the Education Quality Team and other Central services as appropriate

4.7   Enhanced Support Process (previously Watch Site Process)
Occasionally as a result of negative factors a setting may require significantly enhanced support from the wider governance team. Triggers that may indicate the need for this include:

- School or college receives a less than 'Good' grading from the relevant Regulator
- Evidence available suggests that school or college is highly likely to receive a less than 'Good' grading from the relevant Regulator at an upcoming regulatory inspection
- School or College has had significant leadership changes or has been without a Head Teacher for 30 days or more
- School is judged to be seriously non-compliant with the relevant Independent School Standards
- School or College has had a serious incident or more usually a series of such
- School or College has ongoing serious safeguarding concerns
- Other significant concerns raised by any of the following RD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R/CEO

4.7.1   Full details of what is involved and what form the significantly enhanced support will take will be captured in a Recovery Action Plan that will be generated collaboratively by the OD, Head Teacher, and member of the Education Quality Team. Full details of its implementation are contained in the Enhanced Support Process document available from the Education Quality Team.
The Recovery Action Plan must have an in-built duration, deadlines for actions and clearly allocated responsibilities for actions. Progress towards the plan's completion and impact will be monitored by regular Watch Site Calls involving a range of Central colleagues and Senior leaders and reported back to the Quality Review Meetings

4.8   The Health and Safety Team
Aspris has a Health Safety Team who offer support/challenge to all schools and colleges. They also undertake an annual Health and Safety Audit at each service. This will result in a grading and a Report with recommendations that must be actioned. It is the responsibility of the school and its Governance to ensure that these recommendations are addressed

4.9   The Safeguarding Team
Aspris has a Safeguarding Team who offer support/challenge and training options to all schools and colleges. They also undertake or facilitate an annual Safeguarding Audit at each service. This will result in a Report and recommendations that must be actioned. It is the responsibility of the school and its Governance to ensure that these recommendations are addressed

4.10   Aspris Group Policy Manager
Aspris has a Group Policy Manager. They support school and college governance by ensuring that Aspris Policies are updated and in place. They offer policy related support to services. Policies are updated by company subject matter experts (SMEs)

4.12   Group Claims & Complaints Coordinator
Aspris has a Claims & Complaints Coordinator. They support school and college governance through advice and guidance pertaining to complaints

5 GOVERNANCE MEETINGS AND REPORTING STRUCTURE

5.1 Group and Board Level
Executive and Board meetings are scheduled through the year and place focus on the quality, and Key performance indicators for the Company as a whole. Some specialist committees are also used in order to ensure effective Governance across a range of issues

5.2 Divisional Level
- Aspris Children's Education Division hold a Quality Review Meeting monthly to discuss themes and issues and identify settings which require strategic attention as well as service level intervention. These themes will be identified through a range of sources including regulatory inspection, visit reports, incidents and complaints, requests for support and intelligence that is collected at a Divisional level.
- Schools and Colleges identified as being in need of additional intervention will be designated Enhanced Support sites. Enhanced Support sites will have an improvement-focussed Action Plan and progress towards the achievement of the plan's objectives will be monitored by regular meetings. Minutes from these meetings should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately
- Regional Director Commercial Review Meetings
- Regional Director Quality Review Meetings

5.3 Local Level - Internal
Head Teachers and College Leaders must have an internal meeting structure in place that is communicated throughout their service, giving colleagues an overview of communication flow. This should enable all colleagues to understand the purpose of reporting, and the timelines for decision-making. An effective meeting schedule that is well communicated should have a beneficial impact on young people and their outcomes. Each meeting should be effectively chaired and minutes from that meeting should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately

5.3.1 It is expected that each school or college will hold regular senior leadership/management meetings (SLT or SMT Meetings). Membership of these meetings will be determined locally. They should be at least monthly but could be weekly. Agenda items will be determined locally but are likely to include all or some of the following as appropriate:
- Safeguarding (Mandatory)
- Quality of Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum
- Pupil behaviour and attitudes (including attendance, bullying, RPIs, exclusions)
- Health and safety (Mandatory)
- Incidents and Reporting and Lessons learnt
- Young people's progress towards targets
- Outcomes and transitions of children and young people
- Finance (Mandatory)
- Referrals and admissions (Mandatory)
- Therapy/Medical
- Residential care (Residential Schools/Colleges only - Mandatory)
  - Standard 20 independent visit reports
- Staffing
- SEF/SAR/SER/SDP/Other Development or Action plan review.
- ISS compliance
- Pupil Premium
- Equality and Diversity
- Careers

These meetings will feed into the formal termly governance meetings held by the Regional Director

5.5 Local Level – Formal Governance Meetings

In schools and colleges formal governance meetings should take place at least termly. A Service Leaders Report (ACS Form 16G) should be prepared and distributed to all relevant persons 10 days in advance of the meeting. The Regional Director, in the capacity of the Chair of Governors, should chair the meeting and provide support and challenge with the view of making further improvements as well as celebrating, and building upon, successes. Where the Regional Director feels the need to provide additional expertise, they can commission this from a range of sources. Minutes from formal governance meetings should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately

5.6 RDs in their capacity of Chair of Governors may choose to hold additional meetings with their head teachers and college leaders to enhance the governance process e.g. Portfolio meetings or regional Safeguarding Meetings. Attendance at these will be locally determined

5.7 A Service Leader Weekly Report to Regional Directors form (insert code) is available for those Regional Directors that require weekly updates from their services.

6 OTHER OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

6.1 Governance takes many forms and is not limited to formal governance meetings. There are a number of other functions and activities which support and contribute to an overall framework of governance. These include the monitoring and analysis and benchmarking of data, including that gathered from reporting systems, MIS systems and stakeholder feedback. All governance activity should support the core aim of providing the best outcomes for the children and young people in our schools and colleges. It is also intended to assist services in meeting their; compliance obligations, regulatory expectations, and Aspris key performance indicators

6.2 To ensure that the stated aims of Aspris governance are met (see 2.2) governance processes and activities must ensure the following are addressed

6.3 Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Schools and colleges should have a clear and explicit vision for the future which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart and is communicated to the whole organisation. This should include a clear curriculum rationale
- Schools and colleges should have strong and clear values and an ethos in place
- Schools and colleges should have effective strategic planning in place that defines medium to long-term strategic goals (with improvement priorities in place)
- Schools and colleges should have effective processes in place to monitor and review progress against agreed strategic goals and to refresh the vision and goals periodically and as necessary including at key growth stages or if performance of the organisation drops
- Schools and colleges should have effective processes in place to listen, understand and respond to Stakeholders.
- Schools and colleges should actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs
- Schools and colleges should actively encourage students to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and accompanying guidance

6.4 Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders
- Schools and colleges should have effective Quality Assurance mechanisms for gathering data pertaining to school improvement, analysing this and implementing the necessary changes through a pertinent and effective Development Plan
- Schools and colleges should be effectively tracking their progress towards previous inspection recommendations

- Schools and colleges should have a positive learning culture which effectively tracks and challenges engagement, attendance, behaviour and bullying
- Schools and colleges should have rigorous processes in place for the analysis of pupil progress and attainment information with comparison against local and national benchmarks and over time;
- Schools and colleges should be raising standards for all children, including the most and least able, those who are Looked After, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals and those who are more broadly disadvantaged, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving
- Schools and colleges should be preparing pupils to be adequately engaged with the world of work and being best prepared for adult life. Schools should have secured access to independent careers guidance for pupils in years 8-13
- Schools and colleges should be promoting a healthy active lifestyle
- Schools should be actively promoting the cultural development of its pupils through the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development education requirements
- Schools should be effectively developing pupil reading skills
- Schools and colleges should be tracking and challenging the quality of teaching
- Schools and colleges should be doing all it can to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers
- Schools and colleges should be keeping pupils safe. They should be ensuring that they are building pupil awareness of and resilience to the risks of extremism and radicalisation.
- Schools and colleges should have rigorous processes in place for overseeing and monitoring quality improvement and providing constructive challenge to its leaders at all levels;
- Schools and colleges should have the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements. Schools and colleges should have rigorous and transparent processes in place for performance managing staff, which is understood and linked to defined strategic priorities
- Schools and colleges should be compliant with statutory requirements placed upon them
- Schools and colleges should be adhering to their responsibilities under the Equalities Act, promoting equality and diversity
- Schools and colleges should have and implement a fair and effective complaints and grievance policy and procedure

6.5 Ensuring best value for our children and young people and stakeholders
- Schools and colleges should have a regular cycle of meetings and appropriate processes to support business and financial planning
- Schools and colleges should have effective controls for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money

7 INSPECTION REPORTS AND ACTION PLANS

7.1 Following regulatory inspection published Reports must be made available to the young people, parents/carers and other stakeholders as per regulatory requirements. If necessary Action Plans should be generated. Generation of a Plan can be supported by the Education Quality Team. Governance processes should ensure that all required actions are completed within the timescales identified on the action plan and regular monitoring takes place through visits, remote monitoring and calls.

8 REFERENCES

The Education Inspection Framework (2023)
Further education and skills Inspection handbook 2023
Guidance handbook for the inspection of further education colleges from September 2019

A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations (Overarching Framework)

The Independent School Standards (2019) – England

The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024

Associated forms:

ACS Form 16A Validation of School Compliance with Independent School Standards

ACS Form 16AB Blank NMS for Residential Special Schools

ACS Form 16AA Welsh Schools ISS Compliance Tracker

ACS Form 16M Governance and Challenge Record Schools and Colleges

ACS Form 16G Schools/Colleges Termly Governance Report

ACS Form 16GA Termly Governance Meeting Notes

ACS Form 16QA Action Plan For Specific Quality Improvement Template

ACS Form 16R ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 colleges

ACS Form 16RA ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 Estyn

ACS Form 16RB ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 Ofsted

ACS Form 57A Careers Guidance Gatsby Benchmarking Checklist Self-Assessment Tool