

Official Statistics Release

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Introduction

This official statistics release reports on children’s centre inspections that occurred between 1 April 2010 and 31 August 2012 under Section 3A of the Childcare Act 2006.

This release reports on inspections carried out between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012 and supports the findings in the Early Years sector report which is published alongside the 2011/12 Ofsted Annual Report.

Ofsted recently undertook a review of the effectiveness of this and other official statistics releases to ensure they are fit for purpose and meeting user needs. This consultation is now closed but a response to the comments and suggestions received will be published in the near future.

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Key findings

Latest inspection year (1 September 2011 – 31 August 2012)

- Of the 708 children's centres inspected between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012, 65% were judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. This is a decrease of eight percentage points from the proportion judged good or outstanding in the previous inspection year. This could be the result of a move towards inspecting more of the less established children's centres this year and this decline in grades highlights a clear difference between the quality of centres that have been established longest and those established more recently. In addition, the inspection criteria for children's centres were strengthened in September 2011, making it harder for centres to be judged good or outstanding.
- Eighteen of the children's centres inspected this year were judged inadequate. This is six more than during the previous year.
- The strongest aspects of provision were found in the quality of care, guidance and support offered to families and the effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding, where 85% of children's centres inspected this year were judged good or outstanding for both areas.
- The least positive outcome for users is the extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence, where 53% of children's centres were judged good or outstanding.

Most recent inspections (as at 31 August 2012)

- The inspection of children's centres commenced in May 2010. By 31 August 2012, 1,443 children's centres had been inspected and their findings published on the Ofsted website.
- Of the 1,443 centres inspected, 69% were judged as good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection and almost all (98%) were judged to be at least satisfactory.
- At a regional level, the North East has the highest percentage of children's centres judged as good or outstanding (84%), in contrast to the South West with 55% of inspected children's centres judged good or outstanding.
- Thirty four children's centres have been judged inadequate since May 2010. Of these, 14 centres have received a second inspection. All 14 were judged satisfactory for overall effectiveness at this most recent inspection.

Methodology

1. The data in this release are from inspections carried out between 1 April 2010 and 31 August 2012. For this period, all inspection reports were published within one month of the end of the inspection period, therefore, the data are final.
2. Following an evaluation of the first year of children's centre inspection, the children's centre inspection framework was refreshed to remove repetition and ensure a sharper focus on families in target groups. The refreshed evaluation schedule took effect on 1 September 2011 and impacts on the way the statistics should be viewed. Two judgements in the quality of provision section and two in the leadership and management section were combined. The outcomes for these new judgements do not match across to either of the judgements they replaced. Conversely, whilst the wording of most of the remaining children's centre judgements were slightly amended to increase the focus on outcomes, in particular for families in target groups and those most in need of intervention and support, the focus of these has not significantly changed. These revised judgements, therefore, can be matched across to the relevant pre-September 2011 outcomes.
3. In earlier quarterly publications there had been two tables covering inspection outcomes over the full period since April 2010. Previously table 3 covered all inspections carried out, including the re-inspection of centres found inadequate at their first inspection, and table 4 covered only each centre's most recent inspection. The table which covered all inspections (previously table 3) was removed from the January 2012 to March 2012 provisional publication to bring the statistics published for children's centres into line with those published by Ofsted for other types of provider. Now only the most recent inspection for each centre is published. This change is also reflected in Table 6, which provides most recent inspection outcomes broken down by region and local authority, and the supplied provider level data in Excel and csv file format. Only a small number of centres have received more than one inspection and so the impact of this change is small.
4. Revisions are published in line with Ofsted's revisions policy for official statistics which can be found on the Ofsted website:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/statistical-notice-ofsted-revisions-policy-for-official-statistics>

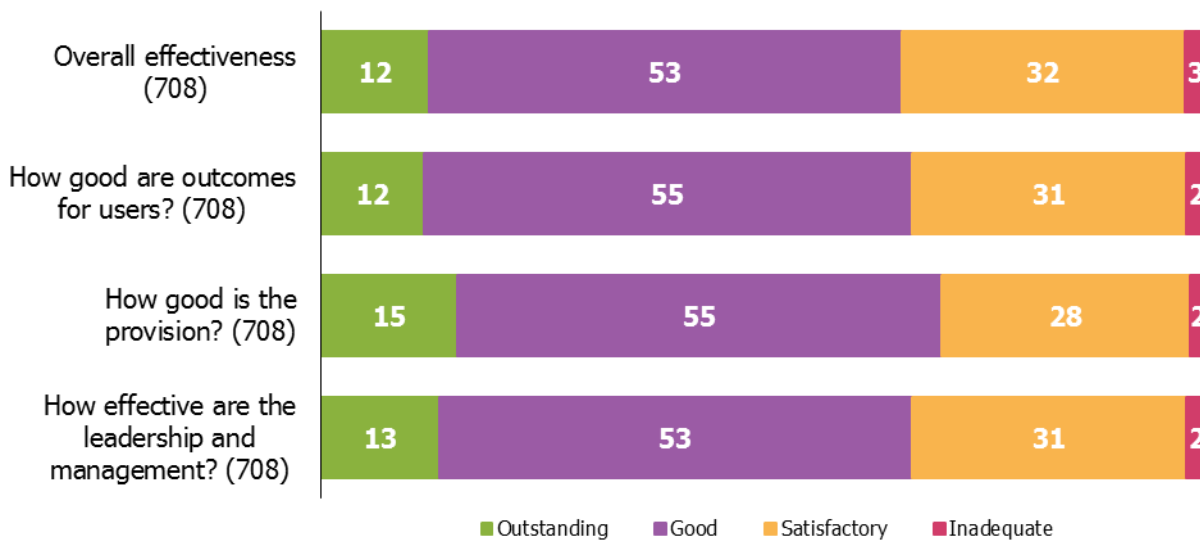
5. The inspection framework for children's centres was published in April 2010 and refreshed in September 2011. For more information about the framework and how Ofsted inspects children's centres please go to the Ofsted website:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Framework-for-children-s-centre-inspection>

Additional information

All the tables and charts shown in this release, along with additional analysis at regional and local authority level, are available in Excel and csv format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document.

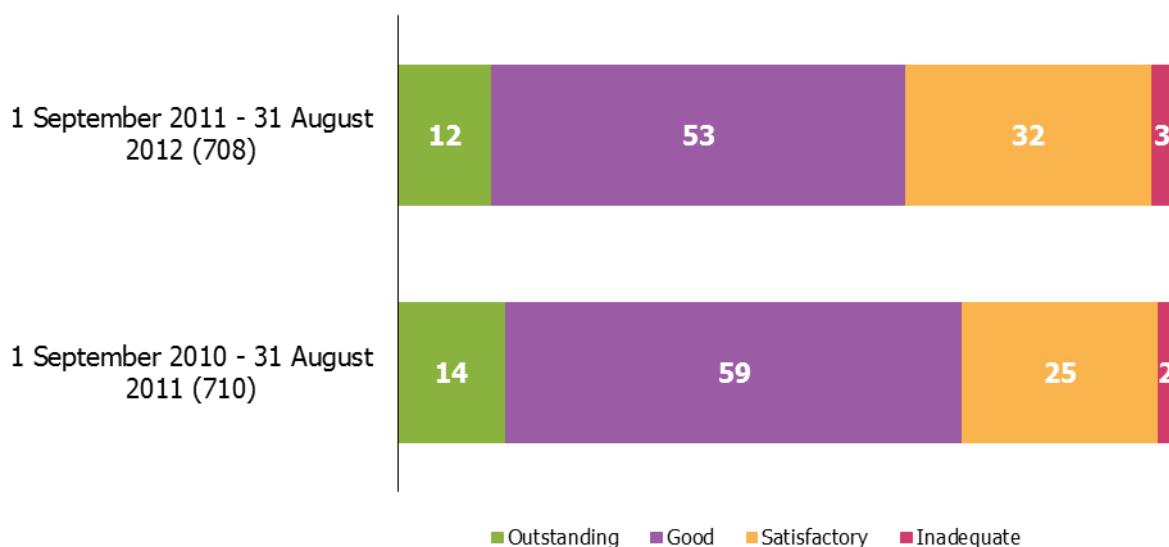
Chart 1: Key inspection judgements for children's centres inspected between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012¹



Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Chart 2: Overall effectiveness of children's centres inspected over two inspection years¹



Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Table 1: Number of children's centres inspected between 1 April 2010 and 31 August 2012

	Full inspections
All inspections since April 2010 ¹	1,457
1 September 2011 - 31 August 2012	708

Source: Ofsted Inspections

¹ These are all inspections since April 2010, including 14 re-inspections

Table 2: Inspection outcomes of children's centres inspected between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012¹

	Total number inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Inadequate	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families	708	86	12	378	53	226	32	18	3
The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management	708	103	15	369	52	220	31	16	2
How good are outcomes for families?	708	82	12	390	55	219	31	17	2
The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	708	77	11	374	53	249	35	8	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	708	175	25	416	59	109	15	8	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	708	92	13	407	57	204	29	5	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	708	105	15	356	50	231	33	16	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	708	64	9	311	44	318	45	15	2
How good is the provision?	708	109	15	387	55	198	28	14	2
The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users ²	1	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups ²	707	96	14	375	53	218	31	18	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	708	99	14	395	56	206	29	8	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community ²	1	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0

Table 2 (continued)

	Total number inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Inadequate	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	708	227	32	373	53	100	14	8	1
How effective are the leadership and management?	708	94	13	378	53	219	31	17	2
The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	708	90	13	361	51	240	34	17	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes ²	707	97	14	325	46	267	38	18	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community ²	1	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	708	119	17	350	49	222	31	17	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	708	99	14	383	54	212	30	14	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	708	200	28	404	57	97	14	7	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities ²	1	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	708	162	23	362	51	174	25	10	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	708	100	14	350	49	246	35	12	2

Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

2. One inspection began in August and ended in September 2011. Although the inspection was completed in September, outcomes were recorded against 4 judgements that were no longer part of the inspection framework after 1 September 2011 and 2 new outcomes included after 1 September 2011 were not judged. Several re-worded judgements were amalgamated.

Table 3: Most recent inspection outcomes of children's centres as at 31 August 2012^{1 2}

	Total number inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Inadequate	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families	1,443	190	13	814	56	419	29	20	1
The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management	1,443	221	15	804	56	398	28	20	1
How good are outcomes for families?	1,443	182	13	857	59	387	27	17	1
The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1,443	199	14	824	57	412	29	8	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1,443	349	24	887	61	199	14	8	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1,443	209	14	883	61	346	24	5	0
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1,443	237	16	769	53	419	29	18	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	1,443	145	10	715	50	568	39	15	1
How good is the provision?	1,443	233	16	830	58	365	25	15	1
⁴ The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	737	169	23	400	54	166	23	2	0
³ The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	706	96	14	375	53	218	31	17	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1,443	210	15	878	61	347	24	8	1
⁴ The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	737	124	17	412	56	198	27	3	0

Table 3 (continued)

	Total number inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Inadequate	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1,443	493	34	758	53	185	13	7	0
How effective are the leadership and management?	1,443	210	15	811	56	403	28	19	1
The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	1,443	210	15	769	53	438	30	26	2
³ The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	706	97	14	325	46	267	38	17	2
⁴ The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	737	127	17	392	53	212	29	6	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1,443	261	18	759	53	405	28	18	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1,443	213	15	814	56	402	28	14	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1,443	399	28	843	58	192	13	9	1
⁴ The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	737	98	13	349	47	280	38	10	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1,443	393	27	727	50	310	21	13	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	1,443	220	15	754	52	451	31	18	1

Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.
2. Wording of some judgements refreshed on 1 Sept 2011 but the criteria for assessing them is unchanged. Data are amalgamated for inspections conducted before and after this date.
3. Judgement only made at inspections since 1 September 2011.
4. Judgement only made at inspections between 1 April 2010 and 31 August 2011.

Table 4: Overall effectiveness of children's centres inspected over two years

	Total number inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Inadequate	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012	708	86	12	378	53	226	32	18	3
1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011	710	99	14	419	59	180	25	12	2

Source: Ofsted Inspections

Glossary

Children's centres

Children's centres are expected to provide, or make arrangements for parents-to-be and families with young children, including wider family members such as grandparents, to access early childhood services. They are a local port of call when a mother, father or carer needs help or advice; whether that is in relation to their role as parent/carer, their child's well-being or learning and development, to find out about neighbourhood activities for parents or activities for children including play groups or nurseries. In this context, early childhood services are:

- childcare for young children
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents
- employment support from Jobcentre Plus for parents or prospective parents¹
- the local authority's information, advice and assistance service relating to childcare and other services and facilities relevant to young children and their families.

Children centre phases

Children's centres are categorised by three phases. Phase 1 are centres established between 2004 and 2006 under the Sure Start Local Programme. This delivered Sure Start through community based local programmes reaching a minimum of the top 20% most deprived wards in England. Phase 2 incorporates centres established between 2006 and 2008 and reached a minimum of the top 30% most deprived wards. Phase 3 established centres ensured that, by March 2010, every community had access to a Sure Start Children's Centre. Phase three centres reach 70% of the least disadvantaged areas.

The inspection cycle began in April 2010 and initially focused on inspecting phase 1 children's centres. By August 2012, the cycle had progressed to include inspections of a high number of phase 2 centres.

Additional full inspections

Children's centres judged inadequate for overall effectiveness will receive an additional full inspection approximately 12 months after the inspection that judged them to be inadequate. Apart from inadequate provision, Ofsted will inspect all other provision once in the current cycle.

¹ This may include partnership working with other services to provide services to parents and prospective parents on site or by referral elsewhere.

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