

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 March 2014 under Section 3A of the Childcare Act 2006. The reporting period covers inspections carried out between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014.

A new children’s centre framework was introduced on 1 April 2013. The inspections carried out under this framework focus sharply on the impact of children’s centres on targeted young children and their families, especially those that centres have identified as being in most need of intervention and support. The framework distinguishes between groups of centres that share leadership and management and work together to deliver integrated services, and single centres. Although this is a new framework it is a continuation of the same five year inspection cycle, and therefore, not all children’s centres have received an inspection.

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Key findings

- Between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014, there have been 112 inspections of single children's centres and 76 inspections of children's centre groups. These 76 group centres are made up of 219 individual children's centres, which represents 7% of all main centres nationally.
- Of the total 188 inspections, 93 inspections or 49% resulted in a judgement of good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. This is three percentage points lower than the proportion of centres judged good or outstanding within the last published reporting period of 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2013. This was, however, a seven month reporting period compared to five months in this report.
- Of the 112 single centres inspected, 52 centres, or 47%, were judged good or outstanding and nine centres (8%) were judged inadequate. Of the 76 group centres inspected, 41 or 54% were judged good and outstanding and seven group centres (9%) were judged inadequate. These grade profiles illustrate a reversal in the outcomes for the single and groups centres compared to the last reporting period where single centres performed the strongest. This could be that group centres are demonstrating at inspection that they are meeting the needs of the local area; however, the number of group centres inspected is relatively small and prone to volatility.
- Between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014, 40% of all inspections were of group centres; this is an increase from the proportion inspected between 1 April and 31 October 2013 where they made up 24% of the inspections. This better reflects the position held on SureStart_On, the DfE database that local authorities must record their children's centre provision on, that shows over half of all children's centres are group centres.
- The judgements recorded for children's centres are fairly consistent across the board, although centres receive the highest proportion of good or outstanding judgements for their role in ensuring users can access services and for the quality of those practices and services.
- Since the new framework was introduced in April 2013, the satisfactory judgement was replaced with requires improvement. Between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014, 42% of centres were judged as requires improvement – 46% of single centres and 37% of group centres.
- Ofsted began inspecting children's centres in April 2010, and by 31 March 2014 had inspected 2,035 children's centres. Of those inspected, 67% were judged good or outstanding, and 2% inadequate at their most recent inspection. This shows a slight drop from 68% at the end of October 2013, with a one percentage point reduction in 'outstanding' centres and a one percentage increase in the proportion of 'satisfactory'/'requires improvement' centres. However, as we have not completed a whole inspection cycle as yet, it is not possible to state the quality of the centres has declined nationally.

Methodology

1. The data in this release are from inspections carried out between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2014.
2. Statistics relate to inspections undertaken in the five month reporting period and include inspections where the inspection report was published within one month of the end of the reporting year. Data are provisional.
3. The state of the nation figures show the most recent inspection outcomes for centres open at the end of the reporting period. Under the new framework, some former single centres are now inspected as part of a children's centre group. Where centres in these groups have been inspected previously, these grades are removed from the state of nation/most recent inspections figures once the new group has been inspected. Data on which centres are working as children's centre groups are based on data received from the Department for Education (DfE), based on data submitted to the DfE by local authorities through the Sure Start_On database.
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 first inspection framework for children's centres was published in April 2010 and refreshed in September 2011. A new children's centre framework was introduced on 1 April 2013. The main changes to the new framework are a reduction in the number of key judgements, increased engagement with the local authority as the responsible body for children's centres, and a more flexible framework that allows the inspection of single children's centres, joint inspection of groups of centres that the Sure Start_On database indicates share leadership and management and integrated services, and the simultaneous inspection of those that work collaboratively in a clearly defined geographical area or locality. Information and guidance on the new framework is published on our website.

Children's centre framework:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-childrens-centre-inspection-april-2013>

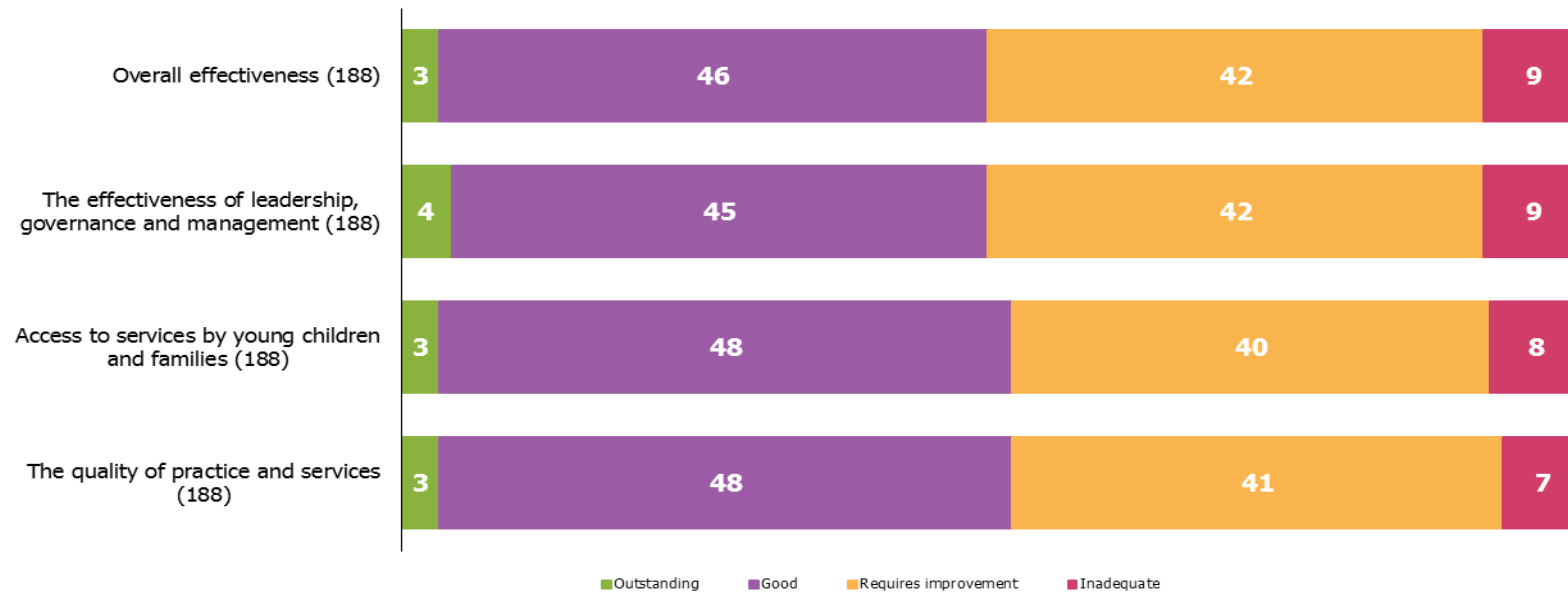
Children's centre handbook:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/childrens-centre-inspection-handbook-for-inspections-april-2013>

Additional information

All the tables and charts shown in this release are also available in Excel format along with additional analysis at regional and local authority level. Provider level data is also available in csv format. These supplementary datasets are stored on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document.

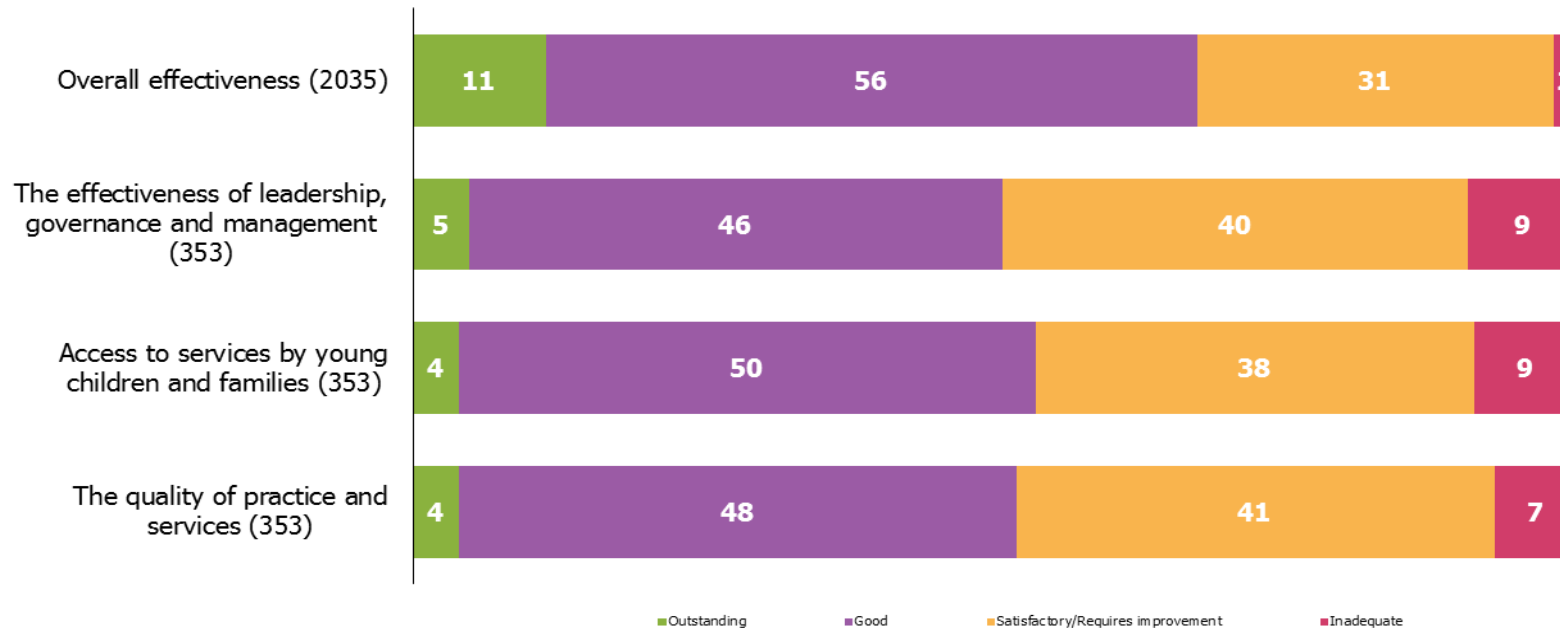
Chart 1: Inspection judgements for children's centres inspected between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014 – all judgements (provisional) ¹²



Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.
2. For inspections after 1 April 2013, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.

Chart 2: Most recent inspection of children's centres inspected as at 31 March 2014 (provisional) ^{1 2 3 4 5}



Source: Ofsted Inspections

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

2. 'Overall effectiveness' includes the judgement 'How effective is the children's centre in meeting the needs and improving outcomes for families?' from the previous framework and 'The overall effectiveness of the children's centre' from the current framework. The overall effectiveness judgement is the only outcome recorded across frameworks. The three additional judgements were recorded at inspection since 1 April 2013.

3. 'Satisfactory' judgements were recorded at inspections that took place up until 31 March 2013. For inspections after 1 April 2013, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.

4. Centres are included in the figures if they were open on the Ofsted systems as at 31 March 2014.

5. Where previously inspected single centres have joined to form a group centre, only the current group inspection outcome will be included. If the group has yet to be inspected, the previous single centre inspection outcomes will be shown. Where a single centre has joined a group after the group has been inspected, the single centre outcome will still be included.

Table 1: Overall effectiveness outcome of children's centres inspected between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014 (provisional) ¹²³

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
All inspections	188	6	87	79	16	3	46	42	9
Single centre provider	112	4	48	51	9	4	43	46	8
Group provider	76	2	39	28	7	3	51	37	9

Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Where the number of inspections is small, percentages should be treated with caution. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.
2. For inspections after 1 April 2013, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.
3. 'Single centre provider' includes centres inspected as a stand-alone event or as part of a simultaneous inspection. A 'group provider' is when a number of children's centres share leadership and management and integrated services and are inspected as one inspection event.

Table 2: Inspection outcomes of children's centres inspected between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014 (provisional)¹²³

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	188	6	87	79	16	3	46	42	9
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management	188	8	85	79	16	4	45	42	9
Access to services by young children and their families	188	6	91	76	15	3	48	40	8
The quality of practice and services	188	6	91	78	13	3	48	41	7

Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Where the number of inspections is small, percentages should be treated with caution. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

2. For inspections after 1 April 2013, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.

3. 'Single centre provider' includes centres inspected as a stand-alone event or as part of a simultaneous inspection. A 'group provider' is when a number of children's centres share leadership and management and integrated services and are inspected as one inspection event.

Table 3: Most recent inspection of children's centres inspected as at 31 March 2014 (provisional) ¹²³⁴⁵

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires improvement	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	2035	232	1140	622	41	11	56	31	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management	353	17	162	141	33	5	46	40	9
Access to services by young children and their families	353	14	175	133	31	4	50	38	9
The quality of practice and services	353	14	169	145	25	4	48	41	7

Source: Ofsted Inspections

1. Where the number of inspections is small, percentages should be treated with caution. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.
2. 'Overall effectiveness' includes the judgement 'How effective is the children's centre in meeting the needs and improving outcomes for families?' from the previous framework and 'The overall effectiveness of the children's centre' from the current framework. The overall effectiveness judgement is the only outcome recorded across frameworks. The three additional judgements were recorded at inspection since 1 April 2013.
3. 'Satisfactory' judgements were recorded at inspections that took place up until 31 March 2013. For inspections after 1 April 2013, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.
4. Centres are included in the figures if they were open on the Ofsted systems as at 31 March 2014.
5. Where previously inspected single centres have joined to form a group centre, only the current group inspection outcome will be included. If the group has yet to be inspected, the previous single centre inspection outcomes will be shown. Where a single centre has joined a group after the group has been inspected, the single centre outcome will still be included.

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 parents
- the local authority's information, advice and assistance service relating to childcare and other services and facilities relevant to young children and their families.

New Framework – 1 April 2013 onwards

Under this framework:

- an inspection will either be of a single centre or of a children's centre group that offers integrated services and shares leadership and management
- wherever possible and appropriate, inspections will take place simultaneously across a locality where local authorities or partner organisations deliver integrated services collaboratively
- a centre that is not yet 'good', but that is not judged 'inadequate', is a centre that 'requires improvement'
- there will be increased engagement and participation with the local authority as the responsible body for children's centres, and a more flexible framework that allows the inspection of single or groups centres, depending on the information held in the Sure Start_On database
- if a centre is judged as 'requires improvement' at two consecutive inspections and is still not 'good' at a third inspection, it is likely to be deemed 'inadequate'
- a centre judged as inadequate will be re-inspected within 12 months of the previous inspection – the quality of the action plan produced by the local authority in response to the inspection and its implementation will be an important feature of the re-inspection.

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