

# Early years Leading to excellence

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# Early years Leading to excellence

A review of childcare and early education 2005–08 with  
a focus on organisation, leadership and management

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# Introduction

Christine Gilbert, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector



I am delighted to launch this report and new website that presents evidence from the three-year cycle of inspections of registered early years and childcare provision.

*Leading to excellence* is the third and final review of these inspections. It completes the picture of how well early years and childcare settings are supporting children and follows *Safe and sound* and *Getting on well*. The previous two reports focused on what best practice looks like in helping children to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy themselves and achieve, and make a positive contribution. *Leading to excellence* focuses on how providers organise, lead and manage their settings to promote positive outcomes for children.

I am pleased to say that overall providers are doing well and they are getting better. I am particularly impressed with the level of improvement in meeting the national standards. In 2005 we reported that less than 80% of registered early years and childcare settings met the national standards. Now almost all do. In the previous inspection cycle from 2003 to 2005 we had to require 22% of providers to take action to meet the national standards. That figure is now just 3%. This improvement following inspection represents a determination by providers to do better for the children they serve, often supported by local authorities and professional associations.

Taking the figures for the three years, fewer settings were judged inadequate. Though only a small proportion are inadequate, that masks the fact that there are almost twice as many inadequate childminders this year. Providers judged to be inadequate have significant improvements to make if they are to meet the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide the high quality education and care children deserve.

Most settings provide a level of childcare well above the minimum required: 60% are good or outstanding and provide very effective support for children's welfare, learning and development. Of the outcomes for children that we inspect, providers continue to be best at helping children to enjoy themselves and achieve well in what they do, as they were in 2005. Also, many providers continue to improve. In particular we have seen a rise in the levels of good and outstanding day-care provision inspected each year over the last three years. However, the proportion of childminders judged to provide good childcare has fallen and I want to see this trend reversed.

The range in quality of provision across the country is too wide. I am concerned that quality is generally poorer in areas where children and families are already experiencing high levels of deprivation. Local authorities should strive to support improvement in settings in these areas.

Clearly there is more to do before we see our early years and childcare provision becoming the best in the world, something I am determined to see for all our children and families. I want to see more good and less satisfactory provision. Improvement requires provision to be well organised, well led and well managed. This report and the associated website identify this as an area of challenge for many providers if they are to promote more positive outcomes for children. *Leading to excellence* points the way. I hope providers, local authorities and others will use it to help them improve so that we will see excellent leadership and management in many more settings during the inspection cycle starting in September.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Gilbert". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

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# Summary

*Leading to excellence* is based on evidence from 90,000 inspections of 84,000 early years and childcare settings during the three years to March 2008.<sup>1</sup> Additional evidence comes from a survey of leadership and management in full day-care settings, a study of settings that were part of quality assurance schemes, feedback from conferences for outstanding providers and our responses to complaints. *Leading to excellence* shows how well the whole sector is doing to promote positive outcomes for children.<sup>2</sup> It focuses on how early years and childcare settings are organised, led and managed so children make good progress.

The report is in two parts: Part 1 charts changes in the quality of provision and Part 2 gives examples of best practice in the way settings are organised, led and managed to promote the best possible outcomes for children.

The report identifies many positive features and highlights much good practice. However, it also identifies much practice that is only satisfactory and some that is inadequate, where improvement is needed.

Almost all settings (97%) provide at least satisfactory childcare, and approaching two thirds are good or outstanding. Of the small minority (3%) of settings judged inadequate most improve quickly although a few have not yet done so. We have set stringent actions for these settings and continue to monitor them closely.

The quality of childcare varies across the sector. The proportion of good or outstanding provision ranges from 47% in out-of-school schemes to 65% in full day-care settings. Well-established provision is generally of a higher quality than recently registered provision. There is also variation across the country with provision in socio-economically deprived areas generally below that elsewhere. There are, though, deprived areas that buck this general trend.

The proportion of day-care providers inspected with good or outstanding childcare has risen from 53% in 2005–06 to 64% in 2007–08, though the proportion of childminders judged good or outstanding has fallen from 65% to 59%.

We received some 24,000 complaints over the three-year period, which represents a very small proportion in relation to the childcare places available: five complaints each year for each 1,000 places.

The quality of organisation, leadership and management is key to ensuring provision supports positive outcomes for children. Part 2 of the report shows how the best settings place children at the heart of all that happens, and how the best providers are continually working to improve their already excellent practice.

Almost all registered early years and childcare settings (97%) are satisfactory or better in the way they are organised to promote positive outcomes for children. Over half the settings (54%) are good or outstanding.

In the best settings support for children to achieve the best outcomes is outstanding; children are at the heart of all that happens; adults have a robust approach to keeping children safe; stimulating environments enable children to thrive, well supported by knowledgeable adults who keep close watch over children's development and monitor progress; and adults continually strive to improve their already outstanding practice.

The website version of this report gives more detail and includes further questions for reflection and a PowerPoint presentation. It can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/leadingtoexcellence](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/leadingtoexcellence).

For an explanation of terms used in *Leading to excellence*, please see Annex A.

<sup>1</sup> There were 101,000 registered early years and childcare settings on 31 March 2008. Of these, 65,000 were registered for the whole three-year period covered by the report; we inspected all of these settings. A further 36,000 were new providers; we inspected 19,000 of these. (These figures are rounded.)

<sup>2</sup> Every Child Matters identified five outcomes to which all children are entitled. The outcomes are for every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. From April 2005 to August 2008 Ofsted inspections included judgements on the first four of these, plus a judgement on how well settings were organised to promote outcomes effectively for children.

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# Part 1: Where are we now?

## Key findings

- Almost all settings (97%) inspected provide satisfactory or better childcare; 60% are good or outstanding.
- Childcare is inadequate in 3% of settings inspected.
- Almost all settings judged inadequate (95%) improved.
- Almost all early education settings (98%) are satisfactory or better, including 65% that are good or outstanding.
- The quality of childcare and early education in day-care settings inspected has risen year on year. Providers have made a wide range of improvements for children in response to issues raised at their previous inspection.
- Of the outcomes assessed, providers are best at helping children to enjoy and achieve; 73% are good or outstanding.<sup>3</sup>
- The quality of childcare varies across the sector. The proportion of good or outstanding settings ranges from 47% of out-of-school schemes to 65% of full day-care settings. Well-established provision is generally of higher quality than provision that is recently registered.
- The quality of childcare also varies across the country. Children living in deprived areas have access to fewer good childcare settings.
- We received 24,000 complaints about provision over the three-year period: the equivalent of five complaints each year per 1,000 places on average.

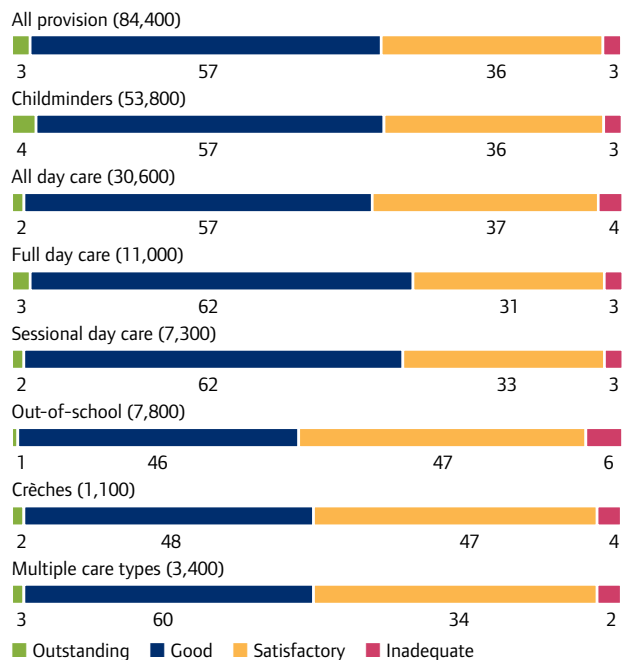
## How well do early years and childcare settings support children?

### Overall quality of childcare

Childcare is at least satisfactory in almost all (97%) of the settings inspected during the last three years. One in 30 settings (3%) provides outstanding childcare; well over half (57%) are good. However, the quality of childcare varies widely across the sector. Fewer out-of-school schemes (47%) and crèches (50%) are good or better: too often staff ratios are low and numbers of qualified leaders and staff do not meet requirements, putting at risk the quality of childcare in these settings.

**Figure 1. Quality of childcare by type of provision, April 2005–March 2008**

Percentage of providers inspected (100% = numbers in brackets)



Note: 2,200 settings were inspected more than once, usually because they were inadequate. This chart refers to the most recent inspection. Total numbers of settings inspected are shown in brackets. The numbers exclude providers with no children on roll. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100. For more details see Annex B.

<sup>3</sup> Ofsted inspections up to September 2008 included judgements on four of the Every Child Matters outcomes: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution. They also included a judgement on how well settings are organised to promote outcomes effectively for children.

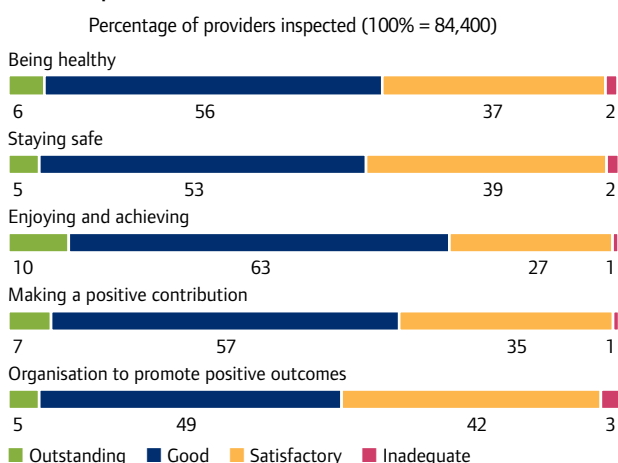
# Where are we now?

## Outcomes for children

Well over half the settings are good or outstanding in their support for children to be healthy (62%), stay safe (58%) and make a positive contribution (64%). Approaching three quarters of settings (73%) are good or better in supporting children's enjoyment and achievement, a higher proportion than for other outcomes.

Nearly all settings (97%) are satisfactory or better in their organisation. Overall, more than half (54%) are good or outstanding.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 2. Effectiveness of provision in promoting outcomes for children, April 2005 to March 2008**



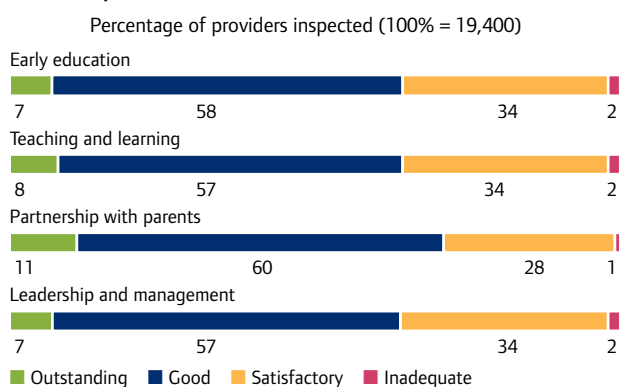
*Note: During the three-year period 2,200 settings were inspected more than once, usually because they were inadequate. This chart refers to the most recent inspection for each setting. Total numbers of settings inspected are shown in brackets. The numbers exclude providers with no children on roll. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100. For more details see Annex B.*

## Early education

Government-funded early education in registered settings is mostly provided by day-care groups. Approaching two thirds (65%) of registered settings that offer it are good or outstanding in providing early education.<sup>5</sup>

Partnership with parents is particularly strong: 71% are good or outstanding in this area. Leadership and management, and teaching and learning are good or outstanding in almost two thirds (64%) of settings inspected during the cycle. In 8% of settings teaching and learning are outstanding.

**Figure 3. Quality of early education and key aspects, April 2005 to March 2008**



*Note: We inspected early education in 400 settings more than once during the period; this chart refers to the most recent inspection for each setting. The numbers inspected exclude providers with no children on roll. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100. For more details see Annex B.*

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<sup>4</sup> The proportion of settings judged inadequate in their organisation overall is higher than for each separate outcome because inspectors are likely to judge organisation as inadequate if a setting inadequately supports children in any of the four outcomes assessed.

<sup>5</sup> A Department for Children, Schools and Families survey in 2008 showed that registered independent private and voluntary provision accounts for 39% of government-funded free early education places; 57% of free places are in maintained nursery and primary schools, and 4% are in independent schools (Statistical First Release, 'Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2008', available from [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)).

## Is provision getting better?

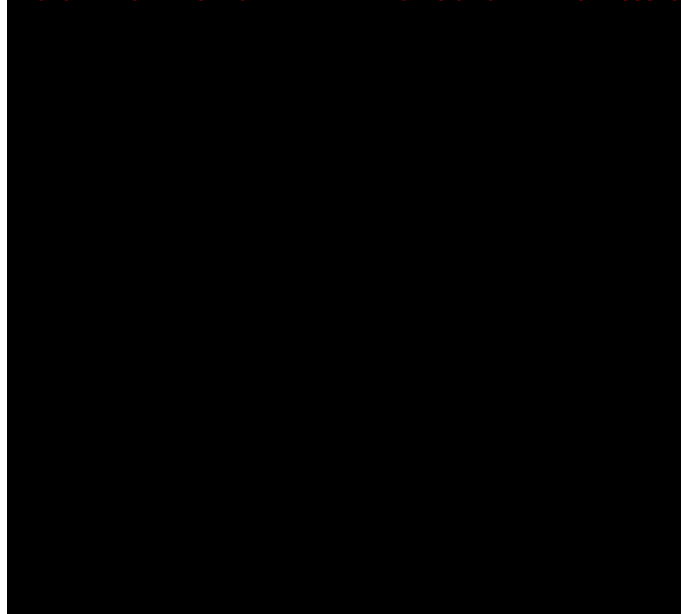
### Year-on-year changes

There are notable signs of improvement from 2005–06 to 2007–08, with steady increases in the percentages of settings providing:

- outstanding childcare – up from 2% to 5%
- outstanding early education – up from 4% to 8%
- good childcare in day-care groups – up from 52% to 61%
- good early education – up from 50% to 62%.

Year-on-year trends in supporting outcomes for children mirror the trends in early education and in childcare overall. However, among childminders the level of good childcare inspected has fallen from 62% to 54% and the level of inadequate childminding has risen from 2% to 6% over the period. Key issues include being unable to identify or respond to child protection concerns, and lack of training and understanding in first aid. Of all settings judged to provide inadequate childcare and reinspected, 93% are now at least satisfactory. We are monitoring the other 7% and taking appropriate further steps to ensure they also improve.

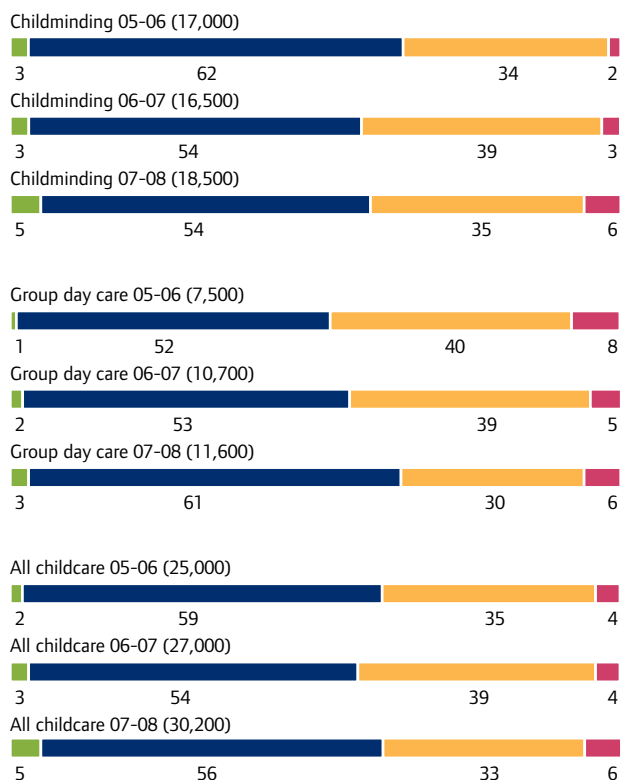
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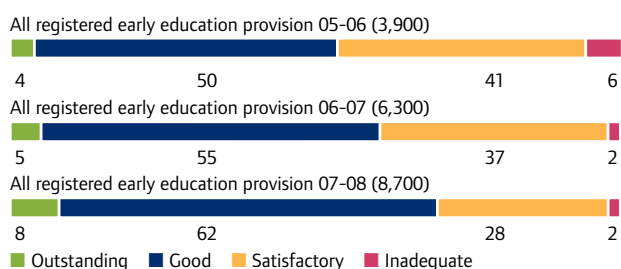
**Figure 4. Trends in quality of provision, April 2005–March 2008**

Percentage of providers inspected each year  
(100% = numbers in brackets)

#### Childcare



#### Early education



*Note: numbers refer to the most recent inspections of all providers still active at the end of each year. They exclude providers with no children on roll. The numbers are not the same as those on earlier charts which include providers no longer active. We inspected a different set of providers each year, so the annual trends in inspections may not reflect trends within individual settings. Total numbers of settings inspected are shown in brackets. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100. For more details see Annex B.*

# Where are we now?

## Typical improvements made

Settings show a wide range of improvements following inspections.

These include:

- better risk management to improve children's safety
- better understanding and knowledge to improve childcare
- better organisation of space to improve activities and experiences for children
- better use of a wider range of toys and equipment, including those to raise children's awareness and appreciation of each other's differences
- better use of records to improve children's health and safety, particularly records of medication, accidents, and parental permissions for medical advice or treatment
- better policies, particularly in responding to allegations about the conduct of a member of staff.

In a survey of parents using childcare which had been inspected within the previous two to six months, 91% of parents responding said they thought inspection helped settings to improve; 40% had already noticed improvements since the inspection.<sup>6</sup>

## Further improvements recommended

We gave 94% of providers inspected at least one recommendation on ways to improve. Most recommendations were to help support children better to stay safe (48% of inspections) and to improve organisation (45% of inspections).

Typical recommendations related to:

- adults' knowledge of child protection and the procedures to follow
- recording children's attendance
- first aid arrangements
- sharing information with parents
- use of observation and assessment in planning for children.

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## Variations in quality

### Quality across England

The quality of childcare varies widely across different areas of the country. For example, the amount of good or better childminding ranges from 29% in Hackney in East London to 81% in Wokingham in Berkshire. In 25 local authorities less than 50% of the childminding is good or better; at the other end of the scale, in seven local authorities more than 75% of childminding is good or better.<sup>7</sup>

There are regional differences in quality, ranging from 50% of childminders in inner London who provide good or outstanding childcare to 64% elsewhere in the south-east of England. There are similar regional differences in the quality of group day care and in early education.

### Childcare in deprived areas

Overall, quality is generally poorer where there is most poverty and social deprivation. In the 30 most deprived local authority areas:<sup>8</sup>

- 53% of childminders provide good or better childcare, compared with 60% in the rest of the country
- 54% of day care groups provide good or better childcare, compared with 63% in the rest of the country.

Children and families living in areas already experiencing relative deprivation therefore face further inequity because they have less access to high quality childcare provision.

There are notable exceptions. Some childcare is of high quality despite being in a deprived area; for example, 75% of childcare in Blackpool is good or outstanding.

### New and established provision

Well-established provision is generally of higher quality than provision registered more recently. This suggests that providers improve with experience and ongoing training and development, and that they meet the recommendations from their previous inspections. At their first inspection following registration 59% of settings provide good or

outstanding early education, compared with 66% of settings that have been registered for longer. For childcare provided by childminders the difference is similar: 56% of new childminders provide good or outstanding childcare, compared with 63% of childminders that have been registered for longer. For other childcare in day-care groups there is little difference in the judgements of newly registered provision and settings that have been registered for longer.

However, a higher proportion of well-established settings are judged inadequate. Only 2% of recently opened settings provide inadequate childcare compared with 4% of those that have been registered for longer. This suggests that some have lost focus: they have not sustained their initial adherence to minimum standards for children, and have not sufficiently appreciated the greater demands we introduced in our inspection framework: from April 2005, failure to meet any of the national standards routinely led to a judgement of inadequate. Local authorities say some established providers can be reluctant to look for or accept outside support. Changes in leadership or staff and the ending of time-limited local authority funding can have a negative impact.

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<sup>7</sup> Detailed statistics can be found by visiting [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) and searching for 'quality of childcare'.

<sup>8</sup> These are the most deprived 20% of all local authority areas, based on indices of multiple deprivation in England; details are available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk).

## Where is improvement needed?

### Inadequate provision

Childcare is inadequate in: 3% of childminders, 4% of day-care settings, and 6% of out-of-school settings (see Figure 1). We set actions for every inadequate setting to meet the national standards.

The percentage of inadequate providers of childminding, out-of-school care and crèches has increased year on year during the inspection cycle to 2008. In contrast, in full day care the percentage of provision judged inadequate has fallen.

Concerns about out-of-school schemes include inadequate checking of staff suitability, lack of well-qualified and experienced leaders, and insufficient staff levels to meet the needs of young children when older ones are present. Key issues for inadequate childminders include being insufficiently well prepared to identify or respond to child protection concerns, and lack of training in first aid.

The levels of inadequate provision are much lower than in the previous cycle from 2003 to 2005, when 22% of providers inspected were given actions to meet the national standards. In the most recent cycle we set actions for just 3% of providers. Of these, 45% related to specific action in their organisational arrangements and 24% related to children's safety.

Just 2% of settings providing early education are inadequate. Typical weaknesses include failure to manage assessment and planning for each child to make good progress, and failure to evaluate and improve children's early education.

## Actions for improvement

When a setting is judged inadequate we set the provider actions to improve. During the three-year period almost 24,000 actions were set. Typically, providers were asked to ensure that:

- adults are suitable to have unsupervised access to children
- training and qualification requirements are met
- space and equipment are appropriate for children to play safely
- enough adults are present to meet the children's needs
- assessment, planning and evaluation arrangements are sufficient to promote children's development.

## Improvement of inadequate provision

Inadequate provision is reinspected within a year, some within a week. Where there are serious concerns needing urgent attention, inspectors return as soon as they think necessary depending on the circumstances. By the next inspection almost all settings improve.

### Childcare

During the three-year period 5,500 inspections led to a judgement of inadequate childcare.<sup>9</sup> More than one in five (1,200) settings judged inadequate are now closed. We reinspect all inadequate settings within a year. Of the first 2,200 reinspected, 95% are now satisfactory or good – and three settings are outstanding. However, 110 (5%) of those reinspected remain inadequate and we are monitoring these closely. We will reinspect a further 2,100 inadequate settings during the year 2008–09.

### Early education

During the three-year period 760 inspections of early education led to a judgement of inadequate.<sup>10</sup> One in four (190) settings that were providing inadequate early education are now closed. Of the first 410 settings reinspected 97% are now satisfactory or good; 12 (3%) of those reinspected remain inadequate and their local authorities are monitoring them closely. We will reinspect a further 160 inadequate settings during the year 2008–09.

12 <sup>9</sup> Of these inspections, 1,500 were in 2005–06, 1,700 in 2006–07, and 2,400 in 2007–08.

<sup>10</sup> Of these inspections, 320 were in 2005–06, 250 in 2006–07, and 190 in 2007–08.

## Complaints, investigations and enforcement

During the three years to March 2008 we received 24,000 complaints about early years and childcare provision: 7,600 about childminding, 14,600 about day care, and 1,800 about unregistered care. This is equivalent to five complaints each year per 1,000 childcare places.

Around a third (35%) of people making complaints were parents; most of the others were either identified as members of the local community or anonymous. Complaints included allegations about insufficient staff, lack of staff training, and insufficient checks to confirm adults are suitable to work with children.

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In 70% of cases investigated, we found that national standards were being met and no further action was needed. Where action is needed the steps taken are intended to ensure children's safety and well-being. If there is reason to believe a provider's continued registration may expose any children to risk of harm the registration is suspended. During the last inspection cycle we suspended 410 registrations pending the outcome of an investigation.

In 25% of cases investigated we issued letters requiring providers to take specific action to meet their registration requirements.

In 2% of cases we issued formal warnings confirming that the provider had failed to comply with national standards or regulations, and indicating that any further breach of regulations would be likely to result in prosecution.

In 3% of cases we took enforcement action. The range of enforcement activity included: 600 compliance notices which are legally binding on providers and require them to comply with regulations; 140 enforcement notices on unregistered providers to comply with the law; and 28 notices to vary, remove or impose conditions of registration. We also issued notices of our decision to cancel 64 registrations where the person or premises were no longer suitable, or where specified conditions were not being met and cancellation of registration was the only way to ensure children's safety and well-being.

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# Part 2: Organisation, leadership and management

## Key findings

- Almost all settings (97%) are satisfactory or better in the way they are organised to promote positive outcomes for children; over half the registered early years and childcare settings (54%) are good or outstanding.
- The proportion of day-care providers inspected with good or outstanding organisation has risen from 44% in 2005–06 to 58% in 2007–08. The proportion of childminding judged good or outstanding has changed very little from 57% to 56%.
- Almost all settings (98%) providing government-funded early education are satisfactory or better in their leadership and management of early education; 64% are good or outstanding.
- A few settings (3%) are inadequate in their organisation and do not provide acceptable support for children;
- 2% of those offering government-funded early years education are inadequate in their leadership and management. However, almost all improve quickly: 95% of provision judged inadequate and reinspected was satisfactory or better by the end of March 2008.
- In the best settings: children are at the heart of all that happens; adults have a robust approach to keeping children safe; stimulating environments enable children to thrive, well supported by knowledgeable adults who keep close watch over children's development and monitor progress; and adults are continually improving their already outstanding practice.
- Settings that are part of a quality assurance scheme generally provide higher quality early education and childcare.

## What inspectors look for

Effective organisation, leadership and management secure good outcomes for children.

In assessing organisation, inspectors considered how well:

- providers ensure adults are suitable to be responsible for or given unsupervised access to children
- providers meet the adult-to-child ratios and the required standards for training, qualification, space and equipment to meet the children's needs
- records, policies and procedures ensure safe management of the provision to promote children's welfare, learning and development.

Where government-funded early education was provided, inspectors' judgements on leadership and management covered how well:

- clear directions lead to improvement in the organisation of early education
- the provision is managed and monitored
- equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is tackled so that all children make good progress.

## What does best practice in organisation, leadership and management look like?

In the best settings:

- children are at the heart of all that happens
- adults have a robust approach to keeping children safe
- providers further improve on already outstanding practice
- stimulating environments enable children to thrive safely
- records are used extremely well to support children.

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## Children are at the heart of all that happens

### Adults value and focus on every child

In the best settings adults organise the day to focus on the needs of each child. The providers promote an ethos where children are welcomed warmly and adults show how they value each child as uniquely special. Every child is treated as an individual. Each child has a key adult assigned who knows the child well. The key person also leads the assessment and planning in close liaison with parents to ensure the child's welfare, learning and development needs are met effectively. Adults listen and respond to children sensitively and this enables them to feel accepted and to make good progress in all areas of learning. Children delight in celebrating birthdays and achievements.

An inspector said: 'The achievements of individual children are celebrated; their photographs are displayed alongside a piece of their artwork on a special notice board for all to see. So children feel special and proud.' (out-of-school scheme)

An inspector said: 'To ensure the activities meet the learning needs of all the children, the childminder has particular regard for each child's individual interests, taking her cues from the children themselves. She knows the children extremely well, and uses this knowledge to help them feel nurtured and highly valued.' (childminder)

A child said: 'My childminder is the kindest lady in the world and she cares for me like a second mum and I love her very much.'

### Assessment informs planning

Expectations of children are high in the best settings. Thorough initial and ongoing assessment identifies what children can do, what they like to do, and what they need to do to progress. Skilled adults use this information and their understanding of child development to plan effectively the next challenges to stretch each child's learning, play and exploration. As a result children are enabled to build on what they already know and make good progress in their learning and development.

### Children are given responsibility and develop independence

In well-organised settings, time and thought are given to ensuring children can select activities and equipment to pursue their own interests. Adults help children to understand how to keep themselves safe, be healthy and maintain their personal care. Children learn to manage their own behaviour and act as positive role models for younger children. Sometimes children help plan the activities. This builds their confidence and further promotes learning.

### Children enjoy taking part

The best settings are organised to ensure children are provided with varied and exciting experiences which enrich their overall development. The children participate eagerly and with great enjoyment. They enthusiastically discover new ways to communicate their thoughts and ideas by writing messages, using pictures and telling stories. Consistent positive interactions enable children to feel secure and help them to thrive in their learning. Children learn to think and understand for themselves, inspired by adults' open questions.

A child said: 'I didn't know anyone when I first came to the club, but now I have lots of new friends.'

## The youngest children are secure and develop well

Babies develop a strong sense of security through close and caring contact with key adults who spend time with them and whom they get to know well. The all-round development of the youngest children is successfully promoted by activities specially planned or adapted to their needs. For example, new paint and craft activities encourage their curiosity and babies can choose what they want to play with, developing longer periods of concentration as they use all their senses.

## Everyone is included

Good providers give top priority to promoting the welfare of all children irrespective of background or ability. They know each child well and address appropriately any particular needs arising from their race, ethnicity, gender, ability, home language, culture or religion. They ensure all children have the opportunity to join in and have fun in a wide range of activities that challenge them in developing across the areas of learning.

Both girls and boys have appropriate opportunities for quieter and more boisterous activities in and out of doors. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit greatly from good relationships with adults within the setting, and from adults' good relationships with parents and with staff from other agencies, such as speech and language therapists. Knowledgeable and trained special educational needs coordinators ensure children's particular needs are identified early and children are properly supported. Adults are fully trained to address the needs of every child. Any barriers are actively addressed and overcome, for example by finding creative solutions to allow children freedom of movement within restricted space available. This helps children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development.

An inspector said: 'The special educational needs coordinator supports children in their transition to their next setting by accompanying them on initial visits to help them settle and to support staff in getting to know the children and their capabilities.' (day nursery)

## Children learn to appreciate diversity

Good settings are organised to ensure adults help children to recognise and take into account others' different needs and backgrounds. Children are routinely offered choices to give them experiences that broaden their understanding of the wider world.

Providers take active steps to learn about the language and culture of the children and their families. Children are helped to feel comfortable in friendly surroundings. Some staff may learn and use everyday phrases and words in the children's home languages, helping children to take part in conversation.

The case study overleaf gives an example of improvement in a day nursery caring for children who speak English as an additional language.

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## Organisation, leadership and management

An inspector said: 'At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve support for children and families for whom English is an additional language. This has considerably improved and is now a key strength.'

The manager ensures her staff understand the needs of the children and families who use the setting and they have appropriate skills to support them. The setting is in a very diverse area. The setting employs a number of staff members from similar cultural backgrounds who present positive role models to the children and help new children to settle quickly.

Several parents speak languages other than English at home and some children begin nursery with very limited knowledge of English. Staff engage with children in their first language to settle and reassure them. Staff members write key words and labels in the child's first language and display these around the setting. They also display lots of positive images of people from different backgrounds in each room to support children's awareness and respect of differences.

Staff act as interpreters when liaising with parents or attending review meetings. This ensures that information is shared clearly with parents. Staff also

help parents translate documents and information, such as children's progress records.

Staff link in very well with the children's home life and ensure a broad range of activities is planned to enable children to enjoy different experiences. These are particularly focused on children's family backgrounds so lots of activities are planned around Muslim, Hindu and Christian faiths. This ensures children and parents feel valued and respected.

Parents stay to help their children settle in, and participate in activities and children's learning. Parents have provided artefacts linked to children's activities; this enables children to share their home life and family culture with others. One parent has provided a children's prayer mat to keep in the home corner.

Support for English as an additional language is now a key strength of the setting. The manager has clear plans of how she will further develop this area. She intends to invite members of extended families to come in to read stories and sing songs to children in different languages so all children benefit from this experience and enjoy being part of the multicultural nursery community.' (day nursery)

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### Parents are active partners

In well-managed settings, communication with parents about their children's development is a key strength. Managers and key staff take time to gather information from parents about their children. Parents feel valued and welcomed. They are consulted and their views are appropriately responded to. Providers work actively to include parents and to encourage them to contribute to their children's learning at the setting. Often parents help with the children, which may also help parents' own understanding and development.

In better settings managers actively encourage key staff to spend time with parents to gather information about their

children. The information about each child can then be used to help plan for each child's particular needs. Parents are informed about the curriculum and changes, such as the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This helps them to understand how changes may affect their children.

Well-organised providers recognise the difficulties some parents have in juggling arrangements for work and childcare. They are flexible and find creative ways to keep parents updated regularly on their children's activities and development. For example, some use a systematic approach to report on progress every six weeks; others find ways to communicate at any time, including the use of email, text messages and dedicated website pages to relay important information quickly. Parents are asked for contributions to themes and topics and become involved in projects. In some settings parents are included on the management committee or work as volunteers within the setting. Some settings promote a supportive parents' network, which helps with issues such as weaning or handling difficult behaviour.

An inspector said: 'Parents complete an "all about me" booklet about their children which shows where children are in their development so that key staff can tailor activities to meet children's individual needs. Parents are given feedback both verbally and through "my story" folders which include photographs to help keep parents fully informed about their children's continued development.' (children's centre)

Other examples include:

- a minibus service run by the provider that ensures parents, children and staff from rural areas can attend
- a parents' forum that enables parents to put issues to the provider collectively
- a translation service available for parents.

### **Adults have a robust approach to keeping children safe**

#### **A systematic approach to safeguarding protects children and reassures parents**

Child safety is a priority in well-organised settings. Policies and procedures are effective, and monitoring of practice is rigorous. Safe recruitment practices include thorough checks on the suitability of new staff. Adults are never left alone with children until these checks are satisfactorily completed. All adults are clear about their roles and responsibilities and confident in carrying them out, including working with other agencies to safeguard children. Concerns and complaints are investigated thoroughly and action is taken where needed to improve children's safety. The certificate of registration is clearly displayed as required, showing parents the setting is registered and working within any conditions that have been set. The setting's safeguarding policy and arrangements are shared with parents, reassuring them that their children are kept safe.

#### **Induction and support of new staff ensures consistent care for children**

New staff are supported to learn about how the setting runs, including a thorough understanding of its policies and procedures. Induction includes time to get to know the children and their individual physical and emotional needs, so children feel safe, comfortable and happy with the adults looking after them. Mentoring arrangements ensure staff are regularly observed in their work with children. Staff receive regular feedback and discuss their development and training needs, and these are acted on.

#### **Active risk management helps children keep themselves safe**

In well-organised settings providers are careful in assessing potential risk and taking effective steps to prevent accidents while allowing children freedom to discover and learn safely. Adults are vigilant in enabling children to learn how to keep themselves safe, on trips and visits outside as well as within the setting.

An inspector said: 'Staff remind children of safety rules and use innovative ways to explain safe practices, such as asking a child to demonstrate how high children may climb up the ladder bars.'  
(pre-school)

Children said:

'You have to wash your hands, 'cos there's germs, if you swallow them they could kill you.'

'You must not play about with the knives and forks at the dinner table, it might poke you in the eye.'

'We don't take our shoes off in case there is any glass.'

'We have to leave all the toys and get out quickly so that the fire does not burn us.' [children learning what to do in case of fire]

'We stay in this playground and can go as far as the grass triangle.'

'You can't go too high on the swing because of the littler ones.'

## Ongoing training and development equips adults to safeguard children well

Well-organised settings have an active training and development programme for all staff, including those that have been in the setting for some time. This ensures adults have the up-to-date qualifications and skills needed to provide for the particular needs of children attending. Often more adults are trained than the minimum required in areas such as child protection, and first aid for babies and young children. The training ensures adults are able to respond with confidence and knowledge to child protection concerns.

## Providers further improve on already outstanding practice

### Adults are highly motivated and committed to improvement

Managers and others overseeing settings are self-motivated, good communicators and able to get the best from those they work with. They regularly review what they do and plan for improvement. All adults share responsibility for continuously improving outcomes for children. In the best-run settings there is an atmosphere of infectious enthusiasm where adults are highly motivated and committed to providing the very best support for children. Adults have extensive knowledge and skills in promoting children's welfare and supporting their learning and development.

Leaders have a clear sense of purpose, an ambition for excellence, and a clear vision for the future of the setting. This is supported by clear plans for its development and improvement for children. The adults are committed to continuous improvement, by further developing their knowledge and skills, reflecting on their practice, and enhancing what they do to promote the best outcomes for children. They test out their own practice against the best that research describes. They welcome advice from their local authority and other support networks, attend training, and apply what they learn.

Childminders are eager to learn about new approaches; very often their enthusiasm leads them to gain a professional childcare qualification. Day-care staff are highly effective as they know their roles and responsibilities and are involved in making decisions. They meet regularly to discuss how to improve their practice; their work is regularly reviewed to identify what they do well and the scope for development; and they regularly take up opportunities for training and development linked to the areas identified.

A provider said: 'We're delighted Ofsted have graded us outstanding. But we're never content to stay as we are – we're always looking forward and moving on. We know what needs improving and we act on it.' (nursery)

## **An active staff development programme improves effectiveness**

In well-organised settings providers and managers plan a 'rolling programme' of high-quality development and training for all staff. Providers make sure that adults have up-to-date training beyond the minimum required and which covers aspects such as developing creative activities, provision for specific age groups such as babies, or meeting specific needs of those attending such as care for bereaved children. Good use is made of outside trainers and training is cascaded effectively to all staff in the setting, improving effectiveness and consistency of provision for children.

Providers are forward-thinking and ensure they and their staff are well prepared for changes in regulations and guidance, for example the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enables them to use the opportunities presented by external changes and developments to further improve outcomes for children. Training opportunities enhance staff morale, effectiveness and retention, improving continuity for the children.

An inspector said: 'The manager recognises the importance of carrying out regular six-monthly reviews on staff. She involves all staff by asking them to complete an anonymous feedback form on their colleagues about their overall practice and performance. The manager collates all the information supplied on the feedback forms and uses this information in the review meeting. This proactive approach, endorsed by all staff, enhances their performance in delivering good quality care for the children.' (day nursery)

## **Improvement is based on self-evaluation**

Self-evaluation underpins settings' ability to improve. In the best-organised settings providers and staff reflect on the quality of their practice, assess what difference it makes to children's welfare, learning and development, and plan accordingly. They know their strengths and build on what works well. They recognise weaker areas and change or adapt what can be better. They monitor the impact of changes made. Taken together these steps ensure continual improvement in the effectiveness of provision and outcomes for children.

In a recent survey 87% of providers responding said they regularly evaluate their service and write down how well they are doing as part of their efforts to improve.<sup>11</sup> Improvements following self-evaluation include recognising and responding better to the child's point of view, better toys and equipment, training focused on areas identified, updating of policies and procedures, and better involvement of staff, parents and children, leading to improved outcomes for children.

Inspectors said:

'The manager has a "hands on" role: she evaluates teaching very effectively through daily observations of the staff team and close monitoring of the activity plans.' (pre-school)

'There is an ethos of reflective practice throughout the nursery. Adults make excellent evaluations, showing for each aspect of what they do, how this helps children, and how it can be made better so children continue to flourish.' (out-of-school scheme)

'The managers have an excellent awareness of the strengths and areas for development within the setting through detailed and ongoing individual and team appraisal and self-evaluation. There is a high level of commitment to improvement, reflected in a strong emphasis on staff development. This has a very positive impact on the quality of children's learning.' (kindergarten)

<sup>11</sup> Results of the survey will be published in *Ofsted news*, autumn 2008.



## Providers use early years guidance as a springboard to improve

Well-organised providers take full advantage of early years guidance and other supporting literature to review, plan and improve their programme.

Well-organised providers are forward-thinking and well prepared for changes in regulation such as the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They introduce changes successfully to safeguard children and promote their welfare, learning and development.

Annex C lists questions to help providers and those who support them use the evidence in *Leading to excellence* to improve their practice and outcomes for children. It also includes some suggested questions for children.

## Providers involve children and parents in improvement

Providers seek children's views when reviewing practice. They ask older children what they think about the setting, the activities, their involvement and what they would like to see improved. They use other ways to identify the views and feelings of younger children, for example by asking them to draw what they like doing best. Providers respect the youngest children's preferences by observing their interest in each activity and adapting or changing those that are less successful. Providers act on children's preferences and opinions, which helps children feel empowered and valued.

Providers actively encourage parents to contribute ideas and opinions on the setting, for example by using questionnaires. Parents' views are then used to inform the provider's plans for improvement. In some cases parents are involved in the management of the setting.

An inspector said: 'The new manager takes parents' concerns seriously. She investigates and acts swiftly to make changes to the way the setting is run so that outcomes for children are improved. She has responded positively to parents' concerns about the variety of the menu recently. Children's dietary needs are now met well and they have a healthy and varied diet so that they will develop good eating habits in the future.' (day nursery)

## Providers learn from inspection, other providers, and external support

Well-organised providers have successfully addressed any recommendations set at their last inspection, improving their support for children to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy themselves, achieve well and make a positive contribution. Improvements include:

- better risk management to improve children's safety
- better understanding and knowledge to improve childcare overall
- better organisation of space to improve activities and experiences for children
- better use of a wide range of toys and equipment, including those to raise children's awareness and appreciation of each other's differences
- better record-keeping to improve children's health and safety, with a focus on administering medication, reporting accidents and referring to parental permissions for medical advice or treatment
- better policies, particularly in responding to allegations about conduct of staff members.

Good providers also learn from others through networks, membership of professional associations, and reading inspection reports on other settings, and national reports. In a recent survey 73% of childcare providers said they have used Ofsted reports on good practice such as *Safe and sound* and *Getting on well* to help them further improve



their service.<sup>12</sup> Providers who run more than one setting share best practice around them, for example through staff exchanges between settings.

Providers seek out and value support given by local authorities, particularly in promoting inclusion, developing self-evaluation, and assessment and planning.

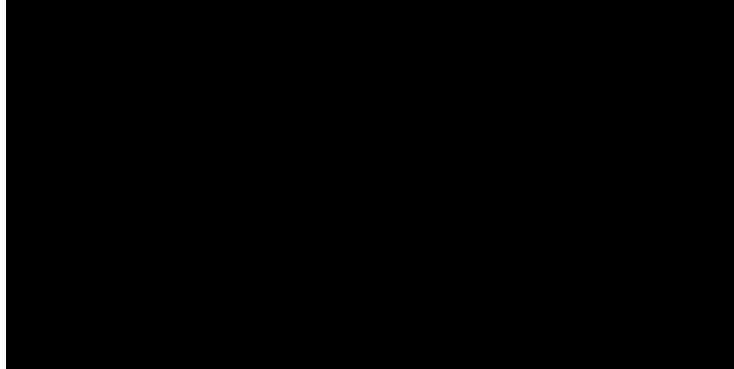
In a recent survey 92% of providers responding said they have taken action on our recommendations; 77% said that inspection had helped them to further improve what they do.<sup>13</sup> Examples of improvements included: better safety and security arrangements; more attention to hand washing; better use of parental consent forms; better play areas, toys and equipment; updating policies; and arranging staff training.

## Stimulating environments enable children to thrive safely

### Good use of space, time and resources promotes children's safe and eager participation

Adults plan the day carefully, tailoring the arrangements to meet each child's welfare and learning needs. They plan the use of space available inside and out to maximise its impact on outcomes for children. The timing of activities and how children move around is well coordinated. Appropriate resources are available and easily accessible to promote children's all-round development. Risks are assessed and managed well, enabling children to freely choose activities, test their skills and make new discoveries within safe boundaries.

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A child said: 'We like all the toys but especially the farm, drawing and interactive white board.'

An inspector said: 'The sensory room is used regularly for babies and the youngest children. Older children with emotional difficulties, physical problems or global developmental delay also access it. The facility is also used by the wider community. The stimulation received from the multi-sensory experiences in this room benefits a range of users with additional needs.'<sup>14</sup>

An inspector said: 'Babies and children can sleep under the vigilant observation of a practitioner as required. Children are individually settled by their key person who usually stays with them. At lunchtime a rota of staff observe sleeping children. When a child wakes, the staff phone the key person to come and collect the child. The sleep room has restful fresh lavender, delicate transparent material is draped from the ceiling, and soft lighting and soothing music add to the tranquil atmosphere. There is a choice of soft toys for children and books for those who want to rest and snuggle up for a story rather than sleep. If parents want their children to be in the fresh air, children sleep in lie-back prams in the garden where they can be observed.' (day nursery)

### Adults work effectively together to encourage children

In well-organised settings, adults work well together as a team to promote children's learning. They are warm and enthusiastic towards children and their high aspirations promote children's achievements. Staff are involved in planning and making decisions about children's welfare, learning and development. Key areas of responsibility are shared effectively. Good adult-to-child ratios enable sustained interactions that help children to flourish. Providers who do not have the appropriate background to manage day-to-day provision for children successfully delegate decisions to a manager with appropriate skills and qualifications and give the manager whole-hearted support.

<sup>12</sup> Results of the survey will be published in *Ofsted news*, autumn 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Results of the survey will be published in *Ofsted news*, autumn 2008.

<sup>14</sup> A sensory room is a room equipped to enable children to discover a range of sensations and become more aware of touch, light, colour, sound and smell in a relaxing environment away from the noisy action of the playroom.

An inspector said: 'The officer in charge spends time with staff and children in every room daily, so she knows how well the setting is doing and where improvements are needed. She shares ideas with colleagues and asks for their suggestions. She makes herself available for staff and parents to talk with her about anything they wish. She supports staff well as she drives forward changes for improvement.' (day nursery)

### Outdoor play is managed well

Outdoor areas are made accessible to all children and are used in all types of weather to promote children's well-being. The specific needs of young toddlers and babies are well addressed by, for example, the use of outdoor floor mats, painting and craft activities, and planning an exclusive area or time to protect them from the boisterous activities of larger children. Where there is no outdoor facility, the provider makes full use of neighbouring facilities such as parks.

An inspector said: 'A lot of children come with challenging behaviour and little experience of outdoor play. The garden has "transition zones" which are made with textured flooring. This causes children to slow down and adjust their behaviour as they move through the garden. Children love the garden; they grow food all year round and harvest and eat it. Multicultural aspects are well promoted outdoors for example by building a sukkah for the Jewish festival of Sukkot. Children have freedom to move in and out of doors when they wish as they use all-weather clothing. Children love to play in the puddles and watch them evaporate. Water and sand play is very creative with various tiers, a small waterfall and a pump. Children gain enormous confidence through their outdoor play.' (nursery school)

### Barriers are addressed and overcome

In well-managed settings adults find ways to overcome problems and even turn them into assets. For example, if a setting has little outdoor space the provider may find space they can use elsewhere such as parks and other public spaces. Some settings have to use shared space and have to unpack and clear away all equipment after each session; good providers have developed routines to do this efficiently and create an environment that does not look or feel makeshift and enhances the range of opportunities for children's all-round development. Children take part in putting out equipment and clearing away, helping them to develop responsibility and learn more about keeping safe. Providers also turn such restrictions into an opportunity to give the setting a different appearance on different days, to better facilitate different activities, something that may not be available in full-time spaces.

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## Records are used extremely well to support children

### Policies, procedures and records support successful management

The best providers use well-documented policies and procedures to monitor, review and improve practice. Recruitment practice includes thorough checks of applicants' backgrounds and references to ensure staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Records of staff performance, training, qualifications and appraisals are used effectively to support staff development and to maintain consistent high-quality provision for children. Providers also use records to demonstrate to parents and carers the quality of the provision they offer and the progress children make. Well-organised storage of records ensures easy access for those who need to use them, while strictly maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

### Records promote children's safety and welfare, learning and development

Children's safety is at the heart of outstanding provision. Clear and detailed records, regularly reviewed and updated, help to monitor this, for example visitor logs and risk assessments. Managers assess safety and health risks frequently and use records effectively to monitor action needed and taken.

In well-organised settings a range of records and charts is kept meticulously and used to monitor children's welfare, development and progress in their learning. Information includes details on the needs of individual children, activities planned for them, key workers, and priorities for the future. Records on babies include details of their growth and development, including sleep times, times of feeding and weaning programmes. Adults use records well to track each child's progress, and to plan and make decisions for children's next steps. They use records to help identify any concerns early, and share them sensitively with parents and with other agencies to ensure each child receives the best possible help where it is needed.

## Records are shared with parents and other providers and agencies

In well-managed settings children's records are shared with parents. This provides further safeguards and reassures parents about their children's welfare and progress. It also helps to include parents in their children's learning and development.

Providers use their records to support effective liaison with other providers: this promotes continuity of provision for children and smooth transition when they move on to another setting. In the best settings children and parents contribute to creating these shared records.

An inspector said: 'The proprietor has developed wonderful systems to record children's progress throughout the child's time at the setting. The records are a compilation of a variety of children's work, pictures and observations which are scanned to a CD, each child having their own CD. The children choose pieces of their work and pictures to store on CD and help scan their work. Headings include the child's likes and dislikes, what they find difficult and how they like to be comforted.

The records are eventually used at the time of transition when children move on to school. There is a section for parents to add their comments and any particular pieces of information they would like the school to know about their child.

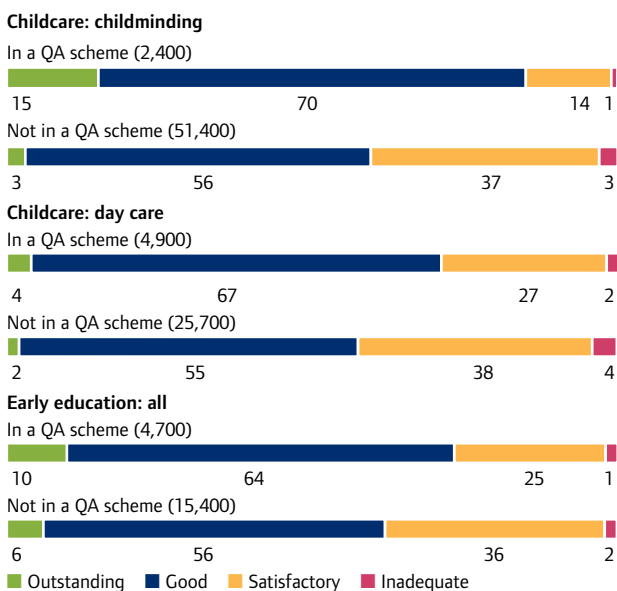
Children feel particular pride and a great sense of achievement as they use their CD confidently with their new reception teacher. This helps in the building of new relationships and provides the teacher with good detailed information about the child.' (day nursery)

## Quality assurance schemes

About 5% of childminders and 16% of day-care providers have told us they are part of a quality assurance scheme. Such schemes help providers to work towards specific principles or standards of quality and improvement. Independent assessors award accreditation on a scheme to providers who demonstrate their achievements against the scheme requirements.

We do not inspect quality assurance schemes. However, we do inspect settings that are involved in a scheme. Inspections show that those who take part in a quality assurance scheme are more likely to provide good or outstanding care and early education. For example, 85% of childminders taking part in a quality assurance scheme provide good or outstanding care for children, compared with 59% of those who are not. Among day-care groups, 74% of those in a quality assurance scheme provide good or outstanding early education, compared with 62% of those that are not.

**Figure 5. Quality of provision taking part in quality assurance (QA) schemes, April 2005 to March 2008**  
Percentage of providers inspected (100% = numbers in brackets)



Note: this chart refers to the most recent inspection for each setting. Total numbers of settings inspected are shown in brackets. The numbers exclude providers with no children on roll. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100.

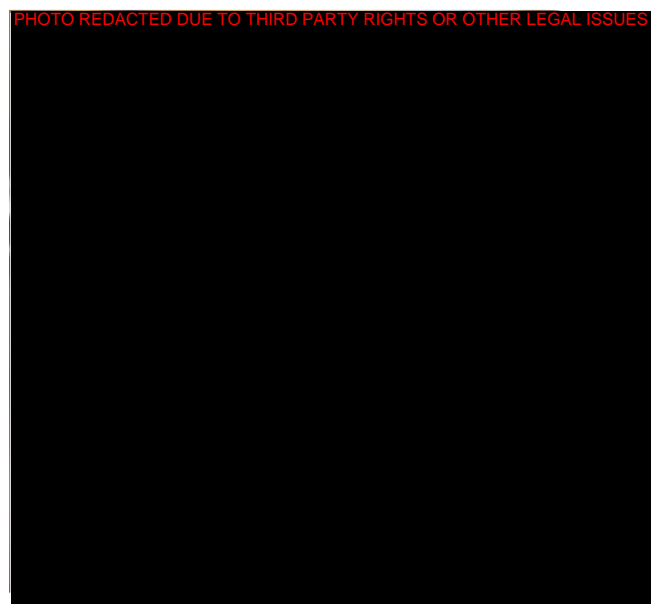
Providers who choose to take part in quality assurance schemes are keen to reflect on and improve their practice and are receptive to outside support. Some providers have found that taking part in a scheme has helped them improve the quality of their provision; others may have achieved good and outstanding provision even without a quality assurance accreditation.

Providers told us that other benefits of taking part in a quality assurance scheme included:

- increased confidence
- an improvement in reflective practice and participation in training
- the opportunity to use portfolios prepared during the quality assurance process to demonstrate the quality of provision to parents and inspectors.

However, for some providers, belonging to a quality assurance scheme made little difference. These providers told us they achieved high quality through being:

- highly motivated and committed to the children
- involved in a continuous programme of training and staff development
- well organised in planning the day to meet the needs of every child attending.



# The journey to excellence

Michael Hart, Director, Children

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I am encouraged because our inspections show not only that most registered settings are providing good or outstanding quality care and early education for children, but also that many are improving.

We have reported before on the key roles of high-quality leadership, evaluation and partnership working to secure improvement. Effective leaders know what they are doing well and what contributes to this. They are frank about their weaknesses and use their self-evaluation to improve.

Pursuing quality involves a journey of continual improvement. The journey requires commitment and good organisation. It starts by reflecting on practice, evaluating current outcomes for children, taking steps to do better, and reviewing the impact of these steps.

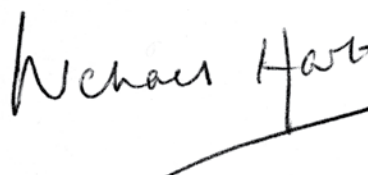
*Leading to excellence* shows that most providers are well on the road. Some are travelling fast, others are moving at a slower pace. But a few have yet to begin. We need to see the improvement of every inadequate setting.

There is too much variation. In particular I am concerned that children in more deprived areas do not, on the whole, have access to as much good provision as others. This cannot help overcome disadvantage. There are exceptions which buck this trend and from which we should learn. We need to ask ourselves how we can work better to close the quality gap.

From September inspections under the Early Years Foundation Stage will continue to focus on what it is like for a child in the setting.<sup>15</sup> They will assess how well the setting meets the needs of every child, including any groups who may be disadvantaged by race, gender or ability. Self-evaluation becomes a central element of inspection.

I hope providers, local authorities and others who promote quality find *Leading to excellence* a helpful guide for the improvement journey, and that in our inspections we will see even more progress, including for disadvantaged children, as a result.

Ofsted is also trying continually to improve. Please tell us how helpful you found *Leading to excellence* in your own journey of improvement, by responding on the website or contacting us for a feedback form.



<sup>15</sup> From September 2008, all providers caring for children from birth to the 31 August after their fifth birthday have to ensure that their provision meets the welfare, learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Further information is available from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/eyfs)

# Annex A: Definitions

## Judgements

### Judgements on outcomes

During the period covered by this report, judgements on outcomes for children were made against a four-point scale:

**Outstanding:** exceptional settings that have excellent outcomes for children.

**Good:** strong settings that are effective for children.

**Satisfactory:** settings that have acceptable outcomes for children but which have scope for improvement.

**Inadequate:** weak settings that have unacceptable outcomes for children.

### Judgements on childcare

During the period covered by this report judgements on the overall quality of childcare were made against a four-point scale:

**Outstanding:** exceptional settings that have excellent outcomes for children. They are outstanding in supporting children to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, and make a positive contribution. They are outstanding in the way they are organised to promote positive outcomes for children. Childcare practice is exemplary – so good that it is worth disseminating beyond the setting. Capacity to improve is strong. A likely feature is that adults always strive for further improvement through evaluative and reflective practice.

**Good:** childcare practice is very effective, worth reinforcing and developing. Capacity to improve is strong.

**Satisfactory:** provision is steady, childcare practice is generally effective, with scope for improvement. Capacity to improve is sound.

**Inadequate category 1:** weak settings where childcare practice is not good enough and one or more of the national standards is not being met. Childcare practice gives cause for concern. It needs attention but the setting has capacity to improve without external help and support.

**Inadequate category 2:** highly ineffective settings where childcare practice is poor and one or more of the national standards is not being met. Childcare practice gives cause for concern. It needs urgent attention and the setting has insufficient capacity to improve. Enforcement action is required.

### Judgements on early education

During the period covered by this report judgements on the quality of early education, funded by the Government for three- and four-year-olds, were made against a four-point scale:<sup>16</sup>

**Outstanding:** exceptional settings of such high quality that three- and four-year-olds are making very rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

**Good:** strong settings where three- and four-year-olds are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

**Satisfactory:** effective settings where three- and four-year-olds are making sound progress towards the early learning goals but there is scope for improvement.

**Inadequate category 1:** weak settings where early education is of an unacceptable standard and three- and four-year-olds are making limited progress towards the early learning goals. Practice gives cause for concern. It needs attention but the setting has capacity to improve without external help and support.

**Inadequate category 2:** weak settings where early education is of an unacceptable standard and three- and four-year-olds are making little or no progress towards the early learning goals. Practice gives cause for concern. It needs urgent attention and the setting has insufficient capacity to improve: external help or support is needed.

<sup>16</sup> Until August 2008, providers had to deliver the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* only if they were providing government-funded nursery education.

### Outcomes

In 2003 the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* identified five outcomes to which all children are entitled. The outcomes are for every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. The outcomes were enshrined in the Children Act 2004. From April 2005 to August 2008 Ofsted inspections included judgements on the first four outcomes, plus a judgement on how well settings are organised to promote outcomes effectively for children.

### Quality assurance schemes

Quality assurance schemes help providers to work towards specific principles or standards of quality and improvement. Accreditation on the scheme is awarded to providers who demonstrate their achievements to an independent assessor.

### Types of care

During the period covered by this report the types of care registered by Ofsted under the national standards were:<sup>17</sup>

#### Childminding

Adults looking after children to whom they are not related on domestic premises for reward and for a total of more than two hours a day, except where the care is only provided between 6pm and 2am.

#### Day care

Childcare groups on non-domestic premises in one of the following categories:

**Full day care**, including nurseries and children's centres, providing care for a continuous period of four hours or more.

**Sessional day care** for children attending part time for no more than five sessions a week, each session being less than a continuous period of four hours in any day.

**Out-of-school care** providing care before or after school or during the school holidays for children aged three and over.

**Crèches** providing occasional care on particular premises for more than two hours a day.

**Multiple day care** where there is more than one type of day care provided on non-domestic premises.

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<sup>17</sup> *National standards for under eights day care and childminding*, Department for Education and Skills, 2003; available from [www.surestart.gov.uk/publications](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/publications).

## Annex B: Quality by type of provision

Numbers refer to the most recent inspections during the period April 2005 to March 2008. They exclude providers with no children on roll. Percentages are rounded and may not always add exactly to 100. Numbers for single years exclude those providers closed during the year. Note that figures in the text of the report have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

	Percentage over three-year period graded as:				Percentage good or outstanding in:		
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
<b>Childminding (53,800)</b>							
Overall care	4	57	36	3	64	58	59
Being healthy	7	55	36	2	66	59	60
Staying safe	6	53	39	2	62	56	59
Enjoying and achieving	11	63	26	0	76	72	73
Making a positive contribution	7	56	36	1	66	59	62
Organisation	6	49	42	3	57	52	56
<b>All day care (30,600)</b>							
Overall care	2	57	37	4	53	55	64
Being healthy	4	56	38	2	54	57	65
Staying safe	4	54	39	3	54	55	62
Enjoying and achieving	7	64	28	1	64	68	75
Making a positive contribution	7	60	32	1	62	62	71
Organisation	3	49	44	4	44	49	58
<b>Full day care (11,000)</b>							
Overall care	3	62	31	3	57	62	69
Being healthy	7	61	31	2	60	63	70
Staying safe	6	59	33	2	60	62	67
Enjoying and achieving	9	63	27	1	60	68	77
Making a positive contribution	9	64	26	1	65	68	76
Organisation	5	55	37	3	51	56	65
<b>Sessional day care (7,300)</b>							
Overall care	2	62	33	3	59	59	68
Being healthy	4	60	34	1	58	61	68
Staying safe	4	60	33	2	61	59	67
Enjoying and achieving	7	64	27	1	63	67	76
Making a positive contribution	7	64	28	1	66	67	74
Organisation	3	53	41	3	47	51	61
<b>Out of school care (7,800)</b>							
Overall care	1	46	47	6	45	44	48
Being healthy	2	46	49	3	46	46	49
Staying safe	2	43	51	4	43	42	45
Enjoying and achieving	6	64	29	1	68	68	71
Making a positive contribution	3	52	43	2	55	51	51
Organisation	2	37	55	6	34	37	42
<b>Crèches (1,100)</b>							
Overall care	2	48	47	4	51	48	43
Being healthy	2	47	49	1	51	45	51
Staying safe	3	47	48	3	52	47	45
Enjoying and achieving	4	64	31	1	69	67	63
Making a positive contribution	3	53	42	1	60	52	51
Organisation	3	41	53	4	45	42	38
<b>Multiple care types (3,400)</b>							
Overall care	3	60	34	2	54	59	67
Being healthy	5	58	36	1	54	61	66
Staying safe	6	56	37	2	54	58	64
Enjoying and achieving	8	65	26	1	63	70	76
Making a positive contribution	8	62	29	1	62	65	73
Organisation	4	52	41	2	45	54	61
<b>All settings (84,400)</b>							
Overall care	3	57	36	3	61	57	61
Being healthy	6	56	37	2	62	58	62
Staying safe	5	53	39	2	59	55	60
Enjoying and achieving	10	63	27	1	73	70	74
Making a positive contribution	7	57	35	1	64	60	66
Organisation	5	49	42	3	53	51	57
<b>Early education (19,400)<sup>18</sup></b>							
Early education	7	58	34	2	54	60	70
Leadership and management	7	57	34	2	53	59	69
Teaching and learning	8	57	34	2	53	70	71
Partnership with parents	11	60	28	1	66	68	74

30 <sup>18</sup> Of these, 100 were stand-alone early education inspections and 19,300 were integrated inspections of early education with childcare.



# Annex C: Twenty questions

## Ten questions for local authorities and others supporting early years and childcare provision

1. How do you propose to improve the quality of provision to help ensure it is all good or outstanding?
2. How do you make sure children's experiences are of a high quality?
3. How do you make use of the best practice to help improve other provision?
4. How well do you support settings in deprived areas to provide high quality against the odds?
5. What are you doing to narrow the gaps in outcomes for children?
6. How do you target training and support to where it counts most, including for childminders and out-of-school schemes?
7. How do you focus support for providers newly registered, and for those registered longer?
8. What do you do to help prevent failure, and where it happens to reverse it quickly in every case?
9. What lasting impact does your follow-up of inadequate provision have?
10. What do you do to increase the pace of continuous improvement?

## Five questions for early years and childcare providers

1. Do all the children you care for have access to all the activities you offer? If not, why? How could you make them accessible?
2. How well do you help children learn about keeping themselves safe?
3. How well do you think about what you do and evaluate how good it is?
4. How well does the way you use space and resources support and extend children's all-round development, in and out of doors?
5. How can you demonstrate what your assessments and plans are for each child?

## Five questions for children

You may find these questions help when you involve children in reviewing your provision for them.

1. What is the best thing about coming here? What is the worst?
2. Do you feel safe here?
3. Is there anything you would like to do but can't do here?
4. How do you know when you've done something well here? Who tells you?
5. Who can you talk to if you feel sad or unhappy when you are here?

## Annex D: Further reading

For direct links to the publications, please visit the *Leading to excellence* website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/leadingtoexcellence](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/leadingtoexcellence)

*The early years foundation stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008; available from: [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs)

*Every child matters* (CM 5860), Department for Education and Skills, 2003; available from [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications)

*Early years: protection through regulation* (HMI 2279), Ofsted, 2004; available from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2279](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2279)  
A report on how Ofsted uses its powers to enforce the law.

*Early years: firm foundations* (HMI 2436), Ofsted, 2005; available from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2436](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2436)  
A report on best childcare practice inspected from 2003 to 2005.

*Early years: safe and sound*, [www.ofsted.gov.uk/safeandsound](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/safeandsound), Ofsted, 2006.  
A website resource on best childcare practice in supporting children to stay safe and be healthy, based on inspections from 2005 to 2006.

*Early years: getting on well*, [www.ofsted.gov.uk/gettingonwell](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/gettingonwell), Ofsted, 2007.  
A website resource on best childcare practice in supporting children to enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution, based on inspections from 2006 to 2007.

*Are you ready for your inspection? A guide to inspections of childcare and nursery education* (reference no. 080023), Ofsted, July 2008; available from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080023](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080023)

*Guidance on completing an effective early years self-evaluation form*, Ofsted, 2008; available in September 2008 from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications)

*Inspecting outcomes for children: guidance for inspectors*, Ofsted, 2008; available in September 2008 from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications)



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