

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 October 2013 under Section 3A of the Childcare Act 2006.

The reporting period covers inspections carried out between 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2013 which covers the new framework inspections to date.

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Key findings

- A new children's centre framework was introduced on 1 April 2013 and this publication reports on the findings from this period. The inspections carried out under this new 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. This new 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 around a third of children's centres have yet to be inspected.
- Between 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2013, there have been 128 inspections of single children's centres and 40 inspections of children's centre groups. These 40 group centres are made up of 107 individual children's centres, which represents 4% of all centres nationally. Of the total 168 inspections, 87 inspections or 52% resulted in a judgement of good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. This is much lower when compared with 65% good or outstanding centres that had been inspected within the last published reporting period of 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013. This reporting period is, however, not directly comparable due to the change in framework in April 2013. This lower grade profile may be an indication that the new framework has raised the bar.
- Of the 128 single centres inspected, 78 centres, or 61%, were judged good or outstanding and 13 centres (10%) were judged inadequate. Of the 40 groups inspected, only nine (23%) were judged good and none were outstanding. Five groups (13%) were judged inadequate.
- While single centres are performing better than children's centre groups, the number of children's centre groups that have been inspected is still fairly small. SureStart_On, the DfE database that local authorities must record their children's centre provision on, shows that over half of all children's centres now work in a group arrangement. We will continue to monitor this lower grade profile and, once the new operating model becomes more established, be better able to evaluate the impact the group initiative has had on the quality of centres across the country.
- The judgement with the highest proportion of good or outstanding is the user's ability to access services. This is particularly the case for group providers, where 33% are graded good or outstanding for access compared to only 23% for leadership, governance and management.
- The new framework identifies centres judged grade 3 to be requiring improvement. This replaces the previous satisfactory judgement. In this seven month reporting period 38% of centres were judged as requiring improvement.
- Inspection evidence shows that good or outstanding centres showed excellent knowledge of their area and are highly effective in joint working with partners to attract and engage their target group; they made the best use of information to plan services to meet local needs; offered high quality, focussed services; had good outreach work and sound systems in place to track targeted groups. Conversely, poor planning, management and a lack of clear understanding of their target groups were common in the weaker centres inspected. Often the range of services offered is limited. Underperforming centres are effected by a lack of drive and accountability at the local authority level; where authorities lack a sharply focused

strategic direction; have weak relationships with stakeholders such as primary schools, health professionals and adult learning providers; and do not include key partners enough in decision making.

- Ofsted began inspecting children's centres in April 2010, and by 31 October 2013 had inspected 1,920 children's centres. This represents 63% of all main children's centres open across England. Of those inspected, 68% were judged good or outstanding, and 2% inadequate at their most recent inspection. This shows a slight drop from 69% at the end of August 2013, with a one percentage point reduction in 'good' 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 October 2013.
2. Statistics relate to inspections undertaken in the seven month reporting period and include inspections where the inspection report was published within one month of the end of the reporting year. Data are final.
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. This affects 22 centres in this release. 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>

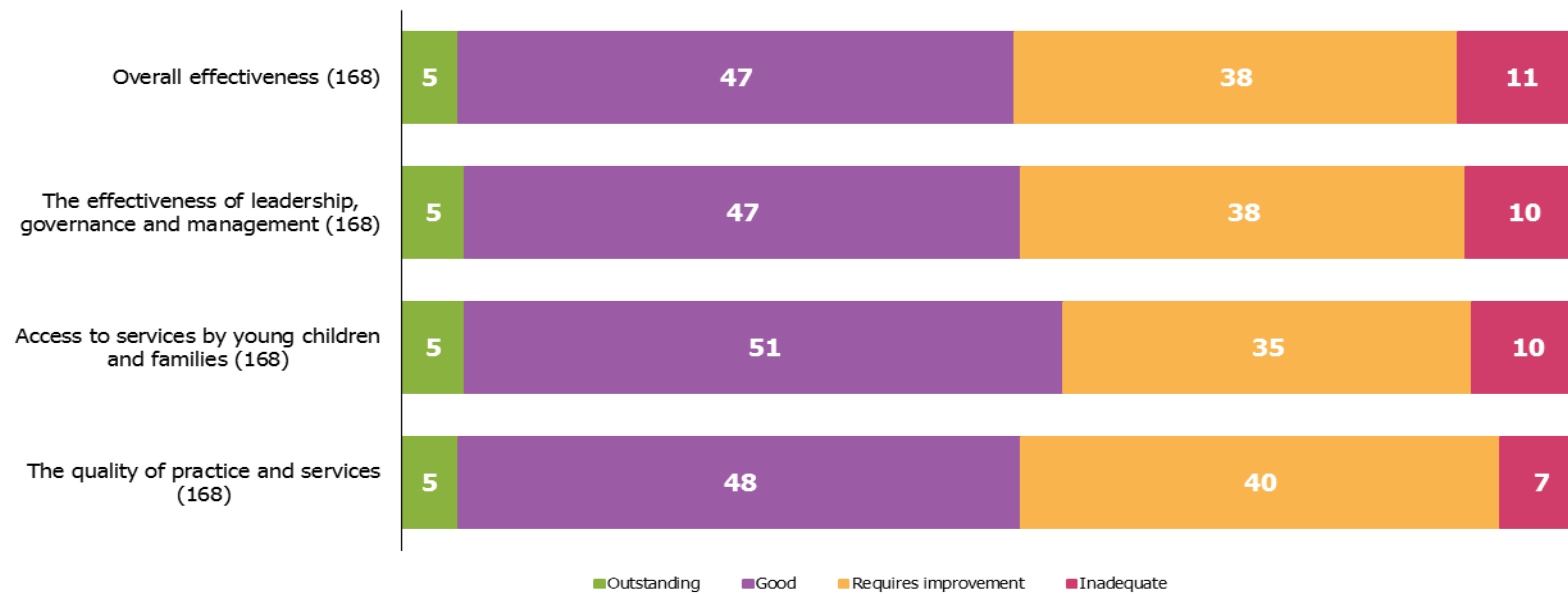
Children's centre handbook:

<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.

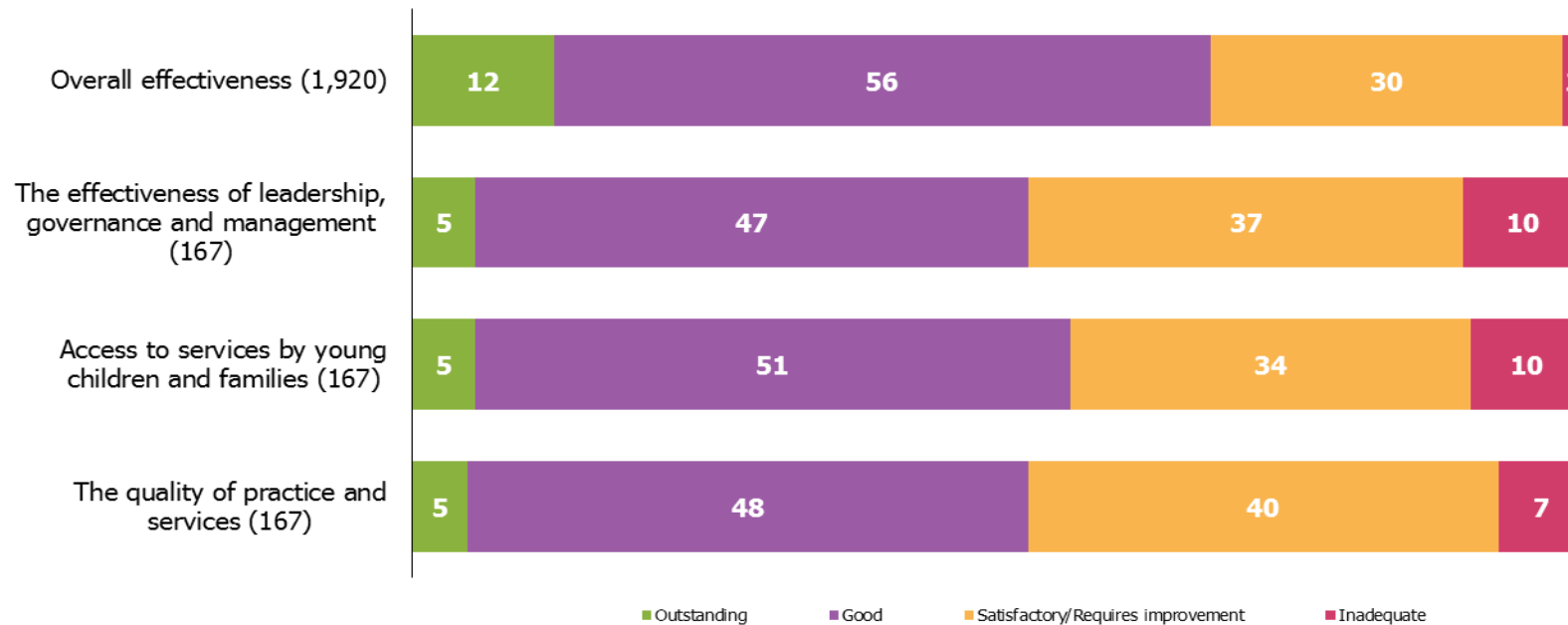
Chart 1: Inspection judgements for children's centres inspected between 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2013 – all judgements (final) ¹²



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 October 2013 (final) ^{1 2 3 4}



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. Includes children's centres open as at 2 January 2014. One group centre, Somerset - Mendip 2 (80396) was inspected in October but has since closed down. This is reflected in the difference by one inspection for the three new framework judgements for the *All* and *Group* numbers in tables 1 and 2 and this chart.

Table 1: Overall effectiveness outcome of children's centres inspected between 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2013 (final) ¹²³

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
All inspections	168	8	79	63	18	5	47	38	11
Single centre provider	128	8	70	37	13	6	55	29	10
Group provider	40	0	9	26	5	0	23	65	13

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 April 2013 and 31 October 2013 (final)¹²³

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	168	8	79	63	18	5	47	38	11
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management	168	9	79	63	17	5	47	38	10
Access to services by young children and their families	168	9	85	58	16	5	51	35	10
The quality of practice and services	168	8	80	68	12	5	48	40	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 October 2013 (final) ¹²³⁴

	Total number inspected	Number of centres				Percentage of centres			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires improvement	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	1,920	233	1077	576	34	12	56	30	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management	167	9	79	62	17	5	47	37	10
Access to services by young children and their families	167	9	85	57	16	5	51	34	10
The quality of practice and services	167	8	80	67	12	5	48	40	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. Includes children's centres open as at 2 January 2014. One group centre, Somerset - Mendip 2 (80396) was inspected in October but has since closed down. This is reflected in the difference by one inspection for the three new framework judgements for the *All* and *Group* numbers in tables 1 and 2 and this table.

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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