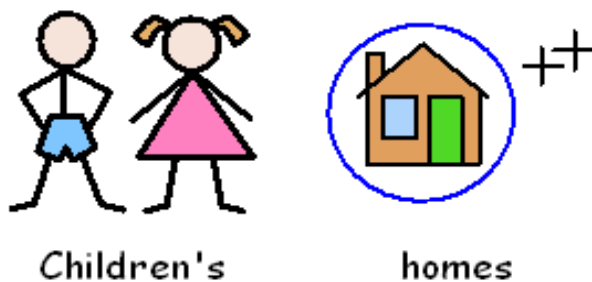


Inspections of children's homes

Evaluation schedule and grade descriptors from 1 April 2014

This evaluation schedule set out the areas that inspectors will make judgements on when they inspect children's homes.

It should be read alongside the framework for the inspection of children's homes.



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Introduction

1. This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and report on when inspecting children's homes under section 148 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.¹ It should be used to inspect children's homes registered by Ofsted under the Care Standards Act 2000,² including:

- refuges under section 51 of the Children Act 1989³
- short breaks services
- boarding schools and residential special schools registered as children's homes under section 1(6) of the Care Standards Act 2000.

How the regulations and national minimum standards inform inspection judgements

2. The evaluation schedule and the judgements made on inspection are underpinned by the regulations and the national minimum standards, and are intended to test compliance and support improvement.

3. Each national minimum standard has a headline statement of the outcome to be achieved by the children's home. Providers will normally show they are meeting the headline statement of the outcome by following the standards that are detailed. However, these do not have to be followed exactly if the provider can demonstrate, and the inspector is satisfied, that the outcomes are being met in a different way.

The exception is any requirement set out in regulations that must be met.

4. Any failures to the regulations or a headline outcome from the national minimum standards will be reported on at full and interim inspections. Inspectors will report on strengths and weaknesses throughout the report to illustrate how they have arrived at their judgement.

5. Any areas for improvement will directly link to the national minimum standards and the outcomes they are intended to achieve (recommendations), or to relevant regulations or legislative requirements (requirements).

¹ The Education and Inspections Act 2006; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/148.

² The Care Standards Act 2000; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents.

³ The Children Act 1989; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/21/section/51.

Making judgements and using the grade descriptors

6. Inspectors are required to weigh up the evidence in a particular area and to consider it against the descriptors for outstanding, good, adequate and inadequate before making a judgement at a full inspection. Examples of practice may be used to support more than one judgement.
7. Judgements are not made on a formulaic approach, but on a carefully balanced consideration of the impact on children and young people.
8. The descriptors are hierarchical; an outstanding service must meet the descriptors for an outstanding, good and an adequate service, and a good service should also meet the descriptors for an adequate service.
9. Children's homes must meet the statutory requirements of the regulations, and must take account of the national minimum standards and statutory guidance.

However, meeting all the requirements will not necessarily result in a judgement of good or outstanding, nor will failure to meet all the requirements in full necessarily result in a judgement of inadequate. The seriousness of any failure and its potential impact on outcomes for children and young people is considered carefully to determine how it should impact on the overall judgement. Inspectors use their professional judgement to assess the impact of any breach against other aspects of the service.

Summary of the evaluation schedule criteria for full inspections

10. The evaluation schedule for full inspections are:
 - Overall effectiveness
 - Outcomes for children and young people
 - Quality of care
 - Safeguarding children and young people
 - Leadership and management.

Overall effectiveness

11. Inspectors will consider evidence and judgements from across the evaluation schedule before arriving at the overall effectiveness judgement.

They will take into account:

- the effectiveness with which the home provides personalised, well planned care, taking full account of the individual needs of each child and young person, and promoting positive outcomes for all children and young people
- the views of the children and young people about the quality of care in the home
- the quality of the relationships between staff and young people in the home
- whether children and young people are safe and feel safe
- how well leaders and managers know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have taken action to secure improvement.

Grade descriptors: Overall effectiveness

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be outstanding where the requirements for good are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <p>The outcomes achieved by children and young people are exceptional and the impact that the home has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced. Children and young people's needs and views are central to all aspects of how the home operates and develops practice. Children and young people have consistently positive views about the quality of their care in the home and their relationships with staff. Leaders and managers routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided, to improve outcomes for children and young people. They are ambitious and energetic for continuous improvement that maximises the progress that children and young people make and the outcomes that they achieve. There are no breaches of regulation identified.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be good where the requirements of adequate are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <p>Children make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development: physical, social, emotional and behavioural. This is underpinned by effective, high quality support from staff. Care planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each child and young person. Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Children and young people confirm that unsafe situations and behaviour are well managed by staff, and boundaries and expectations about group living are consistently followed. Leadership and management arrangements are strong, and leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.</p>
<p>Adequate</p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be adequate where the home provides an adequate quality of care, with individual plans for each child, and the quality of care promotes improved outcomes for children and young people. Most children and young people have positive views about the quality of their care in the home and their relationships with staff. Children are safe and feel safe. Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place. There are no breaches of regulations or failures to meet national minimum standards that impact negatively on the welfare or safety of children and young people.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if leadership and management is inadequate and/or the children's home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and, as a result, the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded and they are at risk of, or suffer from, abuse or neglect.</p>

Outcomes for children and young people

12. To make their judgement, inspectors will evaluate the outcomes achieved by children and young people, taking into account, where appropriate, their starting point in the following areas at the time of placement:

- development of a positive self view, ability to form and sustain attachments, emotional resilience, knowledge and understanding of their background, and confidence in their skills
- health (including physical, emotional, and psychological health)
- attendance at school or other educational provision
- achievement at school or in other educational provision
- making a positive contribution to their home and the wider community
- benefiting from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them
- effective preparation for a successful transition to independence and adult life.

Grade descriptors: Outcomes for children and young people

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies, irrespective of disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people make exceptional progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. ■ Children and young people have exceptionally good attendance at school or other educational provision. ■ The educational achievement of children and young people is exceptional, taking into account both their attainment and their progress from their starting point at the time of placement. ■ Children and young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours that place them at risk of harm, or offending. ■ Risk taking behaviours of children and young people in short term crisis placements are controlled and reducing, and there is a positive and highly effective response to their specific needs. ■ In short breaks services, children and young people are making exceptional progress in developing their skills and confidence and accessing a wide range of experiences.
<p>Good</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for an adequate judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies, irrespective of disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people make good progress in developing a positive self view, are able to make and sustain attachments, are emotionally resilient, and have knowledge and understanding of their background. ■ Children and young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for their own health. ■ Children and young people, including those who do not communicate verbally, are able to actively participate in day to day and more complex decisions about their lives, as appropriate. Independence is maximised and promoted. ■ Children and young people have an understanding of key health risks and, as a consequence, risk taking behaviours such as smoking, drug and/or alcohol use and sexual health risks are decreasing. ■ The educational achievement of children and young people is good, taking into account both their attainment and progress from their starting point at the time of placement. ■ Children and young people are actively and positively involved in activities in the community. ■ Children and young people who receive short breaks are making measureable progress in their development and acquiring skills as a consequence of the quality of the short breaks service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people whose behaviour is unsafe, and puts them at risk of offending or re-offending, show a reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour and offending. ■ Disabled children and young people’s participation is good and there is access to a full range of stimulating and appropriate opportunities. ■ Children and young people are confident, as appropriate to their age and understanding, about their readiness for independence and adult life. ■ In short breaks services, children and young people enjoy relationships with their peers and access a wide range of stimulating opportunities to promote their development that may not otherwise be available to them.
<p>Adequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be adequate if the following applies, irrespective of disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people have, or have made adequate progress to develop, a positive self view, emotional resilience, and knowledge and understanding of their background. ■ Children and young people enjoy good health, including good physical, emotional and psychological health. ■ All children and young people are supported and enabled to share their wishes, views and feelings irrespective of how they communicate. ■ Children and young people receiving short breaks services are confident and secure in their time away from home. ■ Children and young people have good attendance at school or other educational provision, or make good improvement in that regard, and young people aged 16 and over are in education, employment or training. ■ The educational achievement of children and young people is satisfactory, taking into account both their attainment and progress from their starting point at the time of placement. ■ Children and young people make a positive contribution to the home and have some positive engagement with the wider community. ■ Children and young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. ■ Children and young people acquire practical and life skills to prepare them for adult life.
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements. As a result, the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>

Quality of care

13. To make their judgement, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:
- children and young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other, and behave appropriately
 - children and young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home
 - staff help children to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases
 - children understand how to make a complaint
 - children and young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plan/short break care plan, and the contribution of the home to those plans is of high quality, and involves children and young people and people who are significant to them
 - the home provides a healthy environment where children and young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs
 - staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of children and young people, engaging with their schools and successfully promoting their attendance
 - a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities are available to children and young people
 - needs relating to the child's cultural background and personal identity (including disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief and sexual orientation) are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning
 - the home is appropriately located, designed and maintained (including, in the case of a secure children's home, providing appropriate security).

Grade descriptors: Quality of care

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people in the home. ■ Staff consistently and effectively challenge barriers to the full participation of children and young people at school, in their community and wider society. ■ Staff place the well-being of individual children and young people at the centre of their practice in the home, irrespective of the challenges they present, and their achievements are celebrated. ■ Staff are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support children and young people in making progress in every aspect of their lives. ■ Staff build exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and social work services and consistently and effectively challenge any shortfalls in partner organisations' delivery to ensure that children receive the support that they need. ■ In short breaks services, exceptional care adds considerably to children and young people's experiences, progress and development, through provision of a wide range of additional experiences, including peer social interaction and strong community links.
<p>Good</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for an adequate judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people feel that staff are consistently concerned with their welfare. ■ Staff use individualised positive behaviour strategies to support children and young people in developing skills in managing conflict and developing positive relationships, irrespective of the barriers that they experience. ■ The views and wishes of children and young people have significantly influenced the running of the home and the delivery of care. ■ The home has taken account of and acted upon the lessons learnt from complaints from children and young people. ■ The home ensures that its contribution to individual placement plans/short break care plans is tailored to the individual child, focused on clear measurable outcomes, and fully involves children and young people. ■ In short breaks services, high quality planning ensures that children and young people's diverse needs are met in each scheduled care episode, including, for example, how friendships can be supported through planning. ■ Staff positively address challenges and barriers to educational progress and achievement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Equality and diversity issues are clearly identified in care planning and positively addressed in daily living. ■ Staff have the skills and abilities to effectively communicate with all the children and young people living in the home/receiving a short break service. ■ Staff work proactively and positively with other agencies and professionals to secure positive outcomes for children and young people, including education, health and the police, and, in short breaks services, to ensure continuity of care. ■ Children and young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care.
<p>Adequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be adequate if the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with others. ■ Staff set clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries for children and young people and respond appropriately to anti-social behaviour. ■ The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are taken into account in the running of the home and they are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases. ■ Children know how to make a complaint and feel able to do so. ■ Children are cared for in line with their individual placement plan/short break care plan. ■ Staff work proactively and positively with parents and carers to promote positive outcomes and, where appropriate, continuity of care. ■ Children and young people have access to the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. ■ Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. ■ Staff actively promote the education of children and young people through attendance at school, support with homework and regular attendance at parents' evenings. ■ Staff support and encourage children and young people to engage in purposeful and enjoyable leisure activities. ■ Staff in short breaks services support children and young people in accessing a range of activities that meet their needs, aptitudes and interests and promote their development. ■ Staff are able to identify needs relating to the child's cultural background and personal identity (including disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief and sexual orientation). ■ The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained (including, in the case of a secure children's home, providing appropriate security).

Inadequate	The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements. As a result, the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.
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Safeguarding children and young people

14. To make their judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- children and young people are safe and feel safe
 - children and young people feel protected and are protected from harm, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, accidents and bullying
 - children and young people rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly
 - when children do go missing, steps are taken to ensure their safety, and staff try to understand the triggers for their behaviour
 - positive behaviour is promoted, and restraint is only used, if at all, in strict accordance with the legislative framework, including the accurate and clear recording of restraint and the reasons for its use
 - staff and volunteers working with children living in the home are carefully selected and vetted, and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children or place them at risk
 - investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently, and in a way that provides effective protection and support for the children, the person making the allegation, and the person who is the subject of the allegation
 - the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the children and young people
 - children living in secure children's homes or refuges receive positive support and help with their difficulties, as well as security or refuge, and they benefit from the same measures to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare as they would in other children's homes (secure children's homes only).

Grade descriptors: Safeguarding children and young people

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear risk assessment and management protect children and young people, while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. ■ Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including the most vulnerable children, have a strong sense of safety and well-being. ■ Children and young people are not at risk of harm and do not engage in damaging, risk taking behaviours.
<p>Good</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for an adequate judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual children and young people. There are clear plans to address them, and these are regularly monitored and reviewed. ■ There is evidence that the frequency with which children and young people go missing is minimised and, where applicable, has reduced over time. ■ Strong and proactive relationships with the police, where appropriate, support and promote the safety of children. ■ Secure children’s homes have strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Local Authority Designated Officer and there is regular communication regarding key safeguarding issues, for example, any injuries sustained during restraint.
<p>Adequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be adequate if the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and young people report that they generally feel safe in the home and outside it. ■ Children and young people feel that they can identify an adult they would talk to if they felt unsafe. ■ Positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are consistently applied. ■ Staff recognise particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of children and young people, and take appropriate action to address them. ■ Staff are aware of the factors that may trigger children going missing and take action to minimise the risk. The incidences of children missing from the home are minimised. ■ The home has clear practices, and agreed arrangements with the local police, that support effective action when children go missing and ensures that they are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is no or minimum use of physical restraint. Any use of restraint is to prevent injury to people or serious damage to property, it is for the minimum period and uses the minimum force possible. There is no use of restraint as a punishment or solely to enforce compliance with instructions. Any incident of restraint is sensitively and appropriately followed up in discussion and reflection with the child or young person concerned. All incidents of restraint are accurately and clearly recorded. ■ There is a strong, robust and proactive response to any incidence of bullying by all staff supported by leaders and managers. There is evidence that the incidence of bullying is minimised and where applicable has reduced over time. ■ Managers monitor the use and incidence of restraint, and take appropriate action as a result of such monitoring to reduce its use wherever possible. ■ There are suitable and safe arrangements in place for escorting children to and from secure children’s homes. ■ In secure children’s homes, any searches of young people, their rooms and possessions are carried out sensitively by appropriately trained staff with due consideration to their need to feel safe and have their needs respected. All searches are appropriately recorded. ■ All staff and volunteers working with children in the home are carefully selected and vetted and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children. ■ Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. ■ The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the children and young people cared for. ■ Children living in a secure children’s home or refuge experience positive support with their problems as well as security or refuge, and benefit from the same measures to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare as they should in other children’s homes.
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements. As a result, the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>

Leadership and management

15. To make their judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- the home is effectively and efficiently managed, including the permanent employment of a suitable registered manager
 - concerns or complaints have arisen since the last inspection, and whether those complaints and concerns have been addressed and resolved
 - the home can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record, performance since its previous inspection, and evidence of the impact of improvements
 - requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed
 - the provider meets the aims and objectives in the statement of purpose
 - children, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides
 - the registered person actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided, including consultation with children and young people about their welfare
 - leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place
 - leaders and managers can demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on children and young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time
 - the home is adequately resourced
 - managers ensure that the physical environment at the home is maintained to a high standard
 - there is evidence of the financial viability of the provider
 - the home employs a sufficient number of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported
 - the home takes action to chase up overdue reviews or visits from the responsible authority, contributes to those reviews, and assists the child or young person in contributing to their reviews
 - staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up to date with professional and legal developments

- volunteers are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children
- records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life, experiences and plans for the future
- all significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

Grade descriptors: Leadership and management

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement. ■ Leaders and managers stimulate the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts effectively. ■ Leaders and managers routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided and improving outcomes for children and young people. ■ Leaders and managers use the information about the progress that children and young people make, and their outcomes, to secure further development and improvement in the home. ■ Planning is founded on robust evidence tackling key areas of weakness systematically, and building on areas of strength. ■ Targets for the development of the service are realistic and challenging.
<p>Good</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for an adequate judgement are met or exceeded and the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff receive regular supervision of a good quality. ■ Staff's individual training needs are identified and met. ■ Leaders and managers take action to tackle weaknesses and make improvements, and there is evidence of the impact of improvements. ■ Leaders and managers keep up to date with new legislation and practice developments, and share these with staff to improve the quality of service. ■ Leaders and managers monitor the progress that children and young people make, and their outcomes, and can demonstrate the difference the home has made. ■ The home has a good relationship with the local community and neighbours. ■ Recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on.
<p>Adequate</p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be adequate if the following applies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a registered manager in post. If the manager's post is vacant, urgent action is being taken to recruit to it. ■ If a new manager is in post and is not registered, there is an application in progress, received by Ofsted, within 28 days of the appointment. ■ Any concerns about the home arising since the last inspection have been resolved and the home has a good track record in relation to taking action regarding any complaints/concerns. ■ Requirements from the previous inspection have been acted upon.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place. ■ The statement of purpose is clear, accessible and comprehensive. ■ Children, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. ■ The home takes action to chase up any overdue reviews or visits if overdue for the child. ■ The provider meets the aims and objectives in the statement of purpose. ■ Leaders and managers model a commitment to meeting the needs of all children and young people, including those relating to disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief and sexual orientation. ■ There are records of regular visits under Regulation 33 of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2001, and there is evidence that children and young people are consulted during these visits. Reports are returned to Ofsted within the required timescales. ■ The home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the children and young people cared for. ■ The home is well maintained. ■ Managers ensure that health and safety requirements are met. ■ The home employs a sufficient number of staff who receive adequate support to enable them to meet the needs of children and young people. ■ Staff receive sufficient training to enable them to provide good quality and safe care for children and young people. ■ If used, volunteers receive adequate support to meet the needs of children and young people. ■ Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child’s life. ■ Leaders and managers have positive relationships with other agencies, including the police, health services, and placing local authorities. ■ All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities by the registered person. Appropriate action is taken following the incident.
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>The judgement will be inadequate if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and as a result, the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded. <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there has been no registered manager for 26 weeks or more.

Equality and diversity

16. Equality and diversity is a critical aspect across the evaluation schedule, which inspectors take into account across all judgement areas and report on throughout the inspection report.

17. Outcomes for children should not be any poorer as a consequence of disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief or sexual orientation. In all areas of evaluation, the children's home should be able to demonstrate how they promote equality of opportunity, overcoming any barriers, inequalities or discrimination.

Fitness and conditions of registration

18. As well as the areas above, inspectors will consider whether:

- the registered persons remain fit for registration
- the children's home is operating in accordance with any conditions placed on its registration
- there are, or have been, complaints or investigations that raise concerns about the fitness of the registered person/s and/or the viability of the children's home continuing to operate.

19. It is the registered provider's responsibility to have a manager in post, and failure to do so is a breach of regulation.

If there is a manager in post but they are not registered with Ofsted, the inspector will ensure that the individual manager is aware that it is an offence not to be registered.

20. Inspectors will report on any concerns they identify relating to:

- the registered person's 'fitness'
- a manager who is not registered
- whether the conditions of registration are being met.

The inspector will consult the Social Care Compliance team as appropriate.

Making judgements at the interim inspection

21. One inspection per year is likely to be an interim inspection. The inspector will normally be on-site for one day.

22. The focus of this inspection is on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. The judgement will be made on a three-point scale:

- improved effectiveness
- maintained effectiveness
- declined in effectiveness.

23. Interim inspections will focus on the following key areas:

- Evaluating the progress and experiences of children and young people since the last inspection and the difference the home is making - where young people have left the home since the last inspection, inspectors must focus on the reasons the young person has left (well-planned and facilitated move or placement breakdown) and the contribution the manager, keyworkers and staff have made to the plans for their future. Where young people are newly resident in the home, or the service is a short break service, the inspector must assess the quality of the planning and transition work, the knowledge and understanding of the needs of the young person, the arrangements to work directly with children and young people to help them, and the ability of the staff to meet those needs effectively. Inspectors will take into account the views of children and young people.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in monitoring the quality of care and professional practice that children and young people receive, their ability to identify where improvement can and should happen and, where they prioritise areas for development, the effectiveness and impact of their improvements.
- An overview of the experiences of children and young people since the last inspection including significant incidents, notifications, complaints and incidents of restraint - inspectors must assess whether children and young people are protected, how well staff and managers have responded and how well they have used opportunities for learning to improve the experiences for children and young people.
- How well the manager and staff have worked in partnership with others to support the progress of and improve the experiences of children and young people.

- The home's response to the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.
24. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine whether the staff and managers have 'improved effectiveness', 'sustained the effectiveness' or 'declined in effectiveness' since the last inspection.
 25. In arriving at their judgements, inspectors will use their professional judgement to evaluate the evidence across the five key areas, taking into account the nature of the service, the length of time since the last inspection, the outcome of the last inspection and any serious incidents.
 26. Where inspectors judge that the home has declined in effectiveness, whilst there may be evidence of some improvement, the judgement in such a case would be based on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people and the extent to which the staff and managers continue to be effective. Where the post of registered manager has been vacant for more than 26 weeks, this is likely to lead to a judgement that the children's home has declined in its effectiveness.
 27. Where the home has declined in effectiveness, the inspector and a regulatory inspection manager will consider whether to hold a case review to determine next steps based on the seriousness and impact of the concerns identified.

Complaints

28. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during an inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible during the inspection visit. This provides an opportunity to resolve the matter before the inspection is completed. Any concerns about the factual accuracy of the findings in the report can be raised after the inspection.
29. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns through these means, a formal complaint can be raised under Ofsted's complaints procedure:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130128.