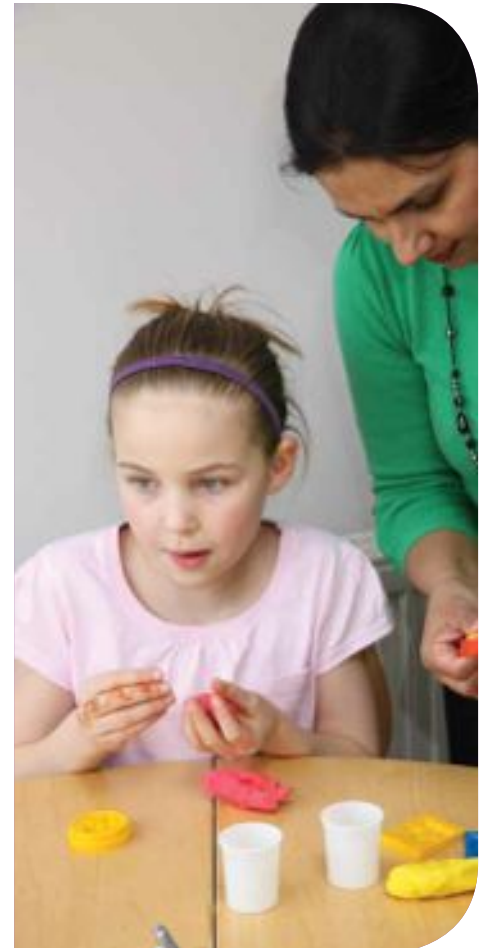


The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11



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Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 121 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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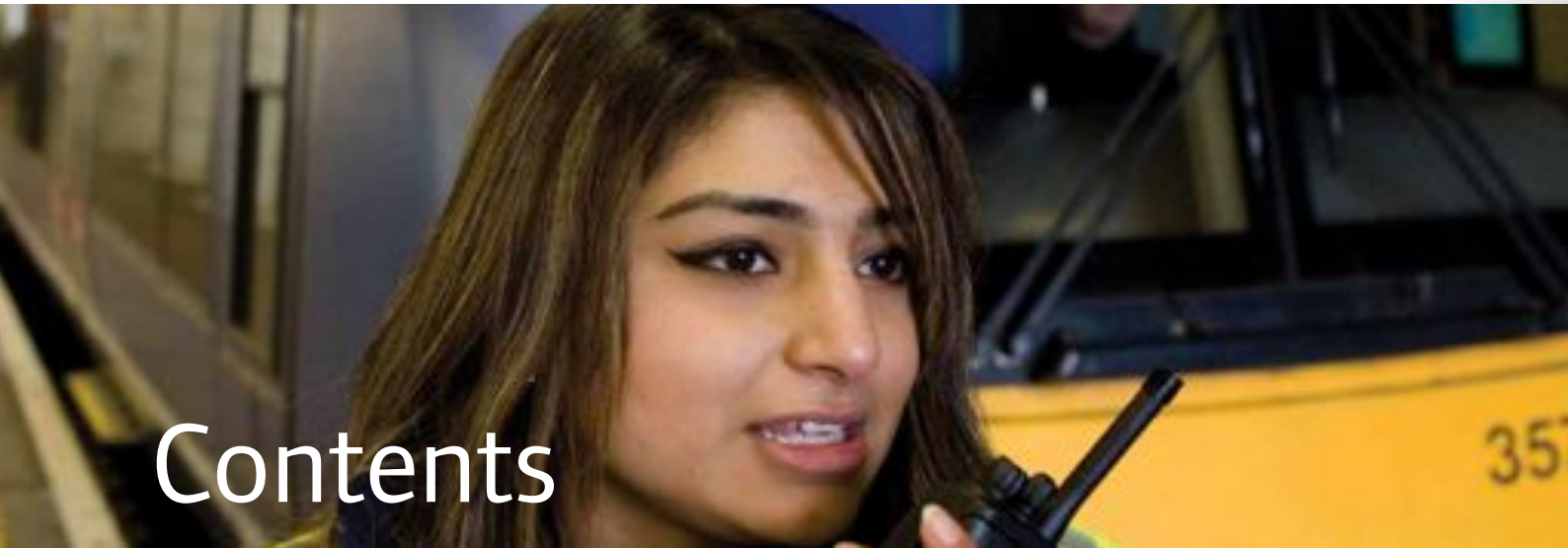
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November 2011

Miriam Rosen
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2010/11

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report to Parliament, as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

My report begins with a commentary on the outcomes from the full range of Ofsted's regulatory and inspection activity in the last academic year. Following this are detailed sections setting out findings and trends in each of the main remit areas that fall within Ofsted's responsibility.

The report is informed by evidence from more than 31,000 inspections carried out during 2010/11 – of early years and childcare, schools, colleges, adult learning and skills, children's social care and local authority services for children. These inspections provide a unique evidence base for our conclusions.

It is my hope that this report and its findings will form a useful contribution to the continuing debate on the quality and standards of care, education and skills in this country, as Ofsted seeks further to raise standards and improve lives.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Rosen

Minam Rosen

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Preface



This Annual Report presents evidence from inspection and regulatory visits undertaken between September 2010 and August 2011 by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). We take evidence from inspection activity across the full range of Ofsted's statutory remit, which includes early years and childcare, provision for education and skills in schools, colleges and adult learning, children's social care and local authority services for children.

The report draws upon the findings of both routine inspection visits and our programme of survey inspections through which we collect information about subjects and specific aspects of provision in children's social care, education and skills.

The report therefore stands as a detailed summary of the findings from our inspection and regulatory activity in 2010/11 in all the areas of our remit, giving a national perspective on provision. For each sector, we set out an overview of the quality of provision and of the progress and experience of the learners and children concerned. Where it is appropriate to do so, comparisons with inspection findings from previous years are included and trends over the lifetime of an inspection cycle are identified. In doing so, we also explore matters of particular national interest at a time of change for providers and in Ofsted's inspection and regulatory frameworks.

As in previous years, Ofsted is pleased to recognise and celebrate the success of those providers that have demonstrated exceptionally high-quality work with children, young people and adult learners. This year's list of outstanding providers is published on Ofsted's website at the same time as this report.

Miriam Rosen, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Commentary

It is my privilege to present Ofsted's Annual Report for 2010/11.

Ofsted inspects and regulates a wide range of services for children and learners. Throughout the year we publish individual inspection reports on our website, and each year in our Annual Report we summarise our findings for Parliament, for the public and for those we inspect. Here we present the outcomes of our work over the year from September 2010 to August 2011, along with insight into some of the key issues arising from inspection over this period.

Our purpose is simple: to raise standards and improve lives. Inspection allows us to report candidly on the quality of services so that informed choices can be made about them, both by those who use them and by those who fund them. Our inspections, and therefore this report, are based on the first-hand evidence and professional judgements of our inspectors. The core of their work is directly observing the quality of provision and evaluating the outcomes for children and learners. Independent inspection helps services to improve by highlighting honestly both where things are going well and where improvements are most needed.

The report covers the whole of our remit, including the early years, schools, learning and skills, children's social care and local authority services for children. In each section we present the main inspection findings from the year and, in particular, the proportions of each service, or aspect of a service, that we have judged to be 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'inadequate'. The analysis draws on evidence from this year's inspections, including our thematic work and good practice studies, and also from previous years to enable a longer view. This commentary picks out a selection of the key findings reported in more detail in the body of the report.

In 2010/11 Ofsted carried out more than 31,000 inspections, including inspections of:

- * more than 21,000 childcare and early education providers
- * nearly 6,000 maintained schools and 314 independent schools
- * around 2,000 children's homes, and 170 adoption agencies and fostering services
- * 133 local authority child protection contact, referral and assessment services and 47 local authority safeguarding and 46 looked after children services
- * 312 colleges and other learning and skills providers
- * 59 prisons, other secure estate settings and probation services.

Challenges

Across the range of this provision, a number of key challenges stand out.

The first challenge is that of tackling failure. One of the most difficult but important tasks that Ofsted performs is judging provision to be inadequate, whether this is in children's homes, schools, colleges, safeguarding or any other part of our remit. Taking this step is an important catalyst to change. This year we saw schools emerging from special measures faster than last year – after an average of 18 rather than 20 months – and over a fifth of them came out not as satisfactory but as good. The total number of schools in categories of concern – that is, judged inadequate and either in special measures or with a notice to improve – reduced from 553 at the end of last year to 451 at the end of August 2011. We are

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also now piloting early visits to inadequate schools after the initial inspection, so they can start the work of improvement more quickly.

Similarly, in our inspections of local authority safeguarding services, we are equally clear about the importance of identifying failure where we find it. We carried out 47 full inspections of safeguarding during the period covered by this Annual Report. In nine local authorities, we judged that the overall effectiveness of safeguarding practice in that area was inadequate. This includes two local authorities for which the judgement was the outcome of a reinspection, following a finding of inadequate overall effectiveness at the first inspection. However, there is also strong evidence in this report of the impact that an Ofsted judgement can have on stimulating improvement. This year we have conducted a second annual cycle of unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements. In the great majority of cases inspectors found that the weaknesses identified in the first inspection, a year earlier, had been effectively addressed.

The second and closely related challenge is raising ambitions, particularly where provision is stubbornly satisfactory. Fourteen per cent of all schools inspected this year, which is nearly 800 schools, have been judged satisfactory for at least their last two inspections and have no better than satisfactory capacity to improve. Of the 40 previously satisfactory colleges inspected this year, 22 continue to be no better than satisfactory and two declined. Sixteen colleges were found to be satisfactory this year at their third inspection in a row. There are similar challenges for social care and childcare providers. Ensuring that there is real change and improvement should be a matter of urgency for these organisations. This is one of the reasons that we have a proportionate approach to the inspection of schools and learning and skills provision that focuses inspection on those organisations that need it most.

The third challenge is to improve the quality of teaching. At the heart of every learning institution is good teaching, with a clear focus by the organisation's leadership on continually improving teaching, which leads in turn to consistently high standards of practice by teachers. However, the quality of teaching in our schools is still too variable: too much is satisfactory and too little outstanding teaching was seen in the schools inspected this year. Satisfactory teaching does not deliver good enough progress for pupils in the most challenging circumstances. Just 3% of secondary schools and 4% of primary schools were judged outstanding for the quality of teaching across the school. Our new school inspection framework will focus more attention on this issue: it is a priority for improvement across the school system. This annual report includes a particular focus in the maintained schools section on good teaching.

Perhaps the most important and difficult message for the learning and skills sector in this report is that the quality of teaching needs to rise across the board. Out of the 312 learning and skills providers we inspected this year, only 15 were judged outstanding for the quality of teaching. All of these were independent learning providers or employer providers. None of the colleges, adult and community learning providers or prisons we inspected received an overall outstanding judgement for the quality of teaching. Part of the problem is the variability of teaching quality within institutions. It is important to remember that we focus inspection in this area on those who need it most, for example we inspected no previously outstanding colleges this year. Nonetheless our findings point to a major issue given that colleges are the largest providers of 16–19 education and given the economic challenges we currently face.

The fourth challenge is to ensure the best services for the children and learners who need them most. Children from deprived backgrounds or who may be vulnerable or are looked after need the best services if they are to make good progress and achieve well. However, this year the fifth of schools serving the most deprived pupils were four times more likely to be found inadequate than the fifth of schools serving the least deprived pupils. Seventy-one per cent of schools serving the least deprived pupils were judged to be good or outstanding this year compared with 48% of schools serving the most deprived. There are also marked differences in the average quality of childcare between more and less affluent areas. We also know that too much of the education provided by children's homes is inadequate, and that too many children are waiting far too long to be adopted.

Yet in every sector we inspect there are organisations delivering outstanding services in deprived areas to disadvantaged young people, proving that it can be done. Indeed, there are not just a few: this year alone we found 85 schools to be outstanding amongst the fifth of schools serving the most deprived pupils. Almost all of these schools are in urban areas and over a third are in London.

Childcare: an improving sector, now starting to grow

We carry out a large number of inspections of childcare: over 11,000 inspections of childminders and over 7,000 inspections of childcare on non-domestic premises such as nurseries took place this year. This was the third year in which we inspected against the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the quality of childcare in England has improved over this period. Three years ago just under two thirds of provision was found to be good or better and 5% was inadequate. This year almost three quarters was good or better and 3% was inadequate. One of the drivers of quality is that childcare providers that have been inspected under the Early Years Foundation Stage and have subsequently left the sector are 10 times as likely to have been found inadequate as those who remained in the sector.

Over the previous two years the number of childcare providers fell steadily. This caused public concern that the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage were driving providers away. However, that trend has stopped during 2010/11. The number of providers in the early years and childcare sector levelled out in the first half of the year and has now begun to increase slightly, reversing the trend seen in recent years of a fall in the numbers of providers.

It is well understood that good-quality childcare can make a big difference to a child's early development. Where it works well, it helps them take the crucial early steps on their journey through achievement at school to security in adulthood. It has therefore been a major concern that in each of the past two years we have found a large difference in the quality of childcare between areas of high and low deprivation. This year, just over three quarters of childminders from the 20% most affluent areas were found to be good or outstanding, but less than two thirds of childminders in the 20% most deprived. The gap is smaller for providers of childcare on non-domestic premises such as nurseries and pre-school provision, where the corresponding figures were 82% and 74%. It is, however, encouraging that this gap has narrowed slightly this year compared with last year, from 19 to 16 percentage points for childminders, and from 12 to eight percentage points for non-domestic settings.

As these figures make clear, nurseries and other providers of childcare on non-domestic premises perform more strongly in terms of their overall inspection results than childminders, and this gap is getting bigger. We can also see from the longer run of inspection results that those providers that are longer established are more likely to be outstanding. For example, those that were registered before September 2007 were more than twice as likely to be outstanding at their most recent inspection as those registered since September 2008.

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Learning and skills: a mixed picture

We inspect education and training for young people who are mostly over the age of 16 and for adults in a wide range of provision including colleges, independent learning providers, employer providers, adult and community learning providers, prisons and young offender institutions. We take a proportionate approach and use risk assessment to focus our inspection activity. All providers have in common the mission to enable learners to develop their skills, especially for employment and for further education and training. The sector is very diverse, and our inspection evidence shows that its performance is very varied as well. As mentioned in the section on challenges earlier, the key message from inspection in this sector this year is the need to focus on raising the quality of teaching across the board.

The most positive aspect this year has been an eight percentage point increase in the proportion of independent learning providers that we found to be good or outstanding. These organisations include large and small private, not for profit and voluntary organisations. They currently deliver the majority of work-based learning, and we inspected 167 of them this year. Over the year they delivered large volumes of both Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes, but in the future will focus more on apprenticeships. Their improved performance is very welcome. Employer providers also produced a strong set of inspection results, as they did last year: 10 of the 16 inspected this year were judged to be outstanding or good and six were judged as satisfactory.

The key message from inspection in learning and skills this year is the need to focus on raising the quality of teaching across the board.

The picture for colleges is more mixed, as the challenges earlier highlighted in relation to the quality of teaching and those institutions stuck at satisfactory. Due to the impact of risk assessment and proportionate inspection, we need to look at the most recent inspection judgements for all colleges to get a representative picture of the 'state of the nation'. On this basis 23% of colleges were judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness as at the end of 31 August 2011, and a further 47% were good. This represents a slight increase in the proportion of all colleges judged outstanding compared with a year earlier, when the figure was 21% at 31 August 2010. Of the colleges we inspected during 2010/11, just over a quarter had improved and just under a quarter had declined from their previous inspection, with the rest achieving the same judgement again.

Last year we highlighted the poor quality of learning and skills provision in prisons and young offender institutions as an area of serious concern. We inspected 24 prisons and young offender institutions this year, and the picture is somewhat more positive, with fewer judged inadequate and more judged good, but it is still not strong. None of this provision was found to be outstanding, and a high proportion – 15 out of 24 – was no better than satisfactory.

The 11 independent specialist colleges we inspected this year resulted in a relatively poor set of inspection results. These colleges provide education and training for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so this is a matter of particular concern. Only three of the 11 independent specialist colleges inspected this year were judged to be good, seven were satisfactory and one was inadequate. None was outstanding. We have evaluated provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities more widely in our thematic survey work this year. Inspectors found that local authorities' arrangements to provide young people with a learning difficulty assessment as the basis for their transition to post-16 provision were not working effectively. The availability of provision at post-16 was also found to vary significantly, and very little provision was available for learners with the highest levels of need.

Social care: progress and challenges

We inspect children's social care providers, including children's homes, adoption and fostering services, and residential special schools. In addition, for the past two years, we have inspected local authority contact, referral and assessment arrangements for child protection without notice, and also inspected local authority arrangements for looked after children and safeguarding. These inspections have provided a new challenge to the sector, and a new source of evidence about this kind of provision. Building on what we have learnt from these inspections, and informed by Professor Eileen Munro's independent review of child protection, we are now revising our local authority inspection arrangements so that they will focus even more on the quality of the work for children and on the outcomes achieved by children.¹

Children's homes have improved steadily over the past four years under the framework that ended in March 2011. We inspect every home every year, so we have an unusually complete picture of this sector. Over that time the proportion of homes which are outstanding has almost trebled to 17% this year, and the proportion which is inadequate has fallen from 11% to 3%.

In April 2011 we introduced a new inspection framework, and between then and the end of August carried out 731 full inspections of homes under the new arrangements. Seventy-seven per cent of these were judged good or outstanding. This maintains the clear trajectory of improvement seen since September 2007 when just 58% were good or outstanding. Over two thirds of homes that were judged satisfactory three years ago were found to be good or better this year in their inspections under the new framework. This is encouraging. The new arrangements are providing richer inspection reports that will be more informative for commissioners of care, managers, staff and the young people living in children's homes themselves. There is, however, a specific issue with education provided through children's homes. There are 327 children's homes that also provide education or are linked to education providers. At their most recent inspection this education was judged good or

outstanding in around half these children's homes. However, in 11% education was inadequate – much too high a proportion.

The picture in relation to local authority safeguarding arrangements is more mixed. Out of the 133 inspections of local authority contact, referral and assessment arrangements carried out without notice, only three identified an area of serious weakness, placing children at risk of inadequate protection. In addition, evidence shows that local authorities are acting on the weaknesses identified at previous inspections of these services. However, as indicated earlier, of the 47 full safeguarding inspections which we undertook this year we judged nine local authorities to be inadequate overall and none was outstanding.

Inspection identified a range of issues that meant these nine local authorities were not effective in keeping children and young people safe. We found problems with delays in responding to the needs of children and families; in poor quality partnership working and a lack of shared understanding of systems, processes and thresholds; and, critically, in the performance management, development and oversight of social workers. We also found that in seven out of nine cases where the services were not effective, challenge and oversight from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board were also weak.

Schools: a focus on standards

Both the schools system and the way in which schools are inspected are undergoing significant change. In September 2009 we introduced an improved school inspection framework, with higher expectations, a more targeted approach to inspection and more inspection time spent in classrooms. The government is taking legislation through Parliament to focus the inspection of maintained schools and academies on four key areas: achievement, teaching, behaviour and safety, and leadership and management. These issues have always been central to our inspections, and the new framework will allow us to focus even more on them. I would like to thank all those who contributed to our consultation on how we will revise our inspection framework, and especially those schools

1. *The Munro review of child protection: final report*, Department for Education, 2011.

Commentary

involved in the pilot inspections we ran in the summer term. The revised school inspection framework will be implemented from January 2012.

Each year at the time of our annual report there is a high level of public interest in the 'state of the nation's schools' as indicated by inspection outcomes. For this reason, we present for the first time in this annual report data on the most recent inspection judgements for all schools that were open on 31 August 2011. These schools have not all been inspected under the same inspection arrangements, but all have had a judgement made on their overall effectiveness on the same four-point scale from outstanding to inadequate. Twenty per cent of all schools at that time had been judged outstanding for their overall effectiveness, and a further 50% were good at their last inspection. Twenty-eight per cent were satisfactory and 2% were inadequate. A comparison with the previous year shows a similar picture, with slightly more schools now outstanding and slightly fewer schools now satisfactory or inadequate, but no major change overall.

Of the schools that were inspected in 2010/11, 57% were found to provide their pupils with a good or outstanding education overall. However, it is important to recognise that because we have not inspected a representative sample of schools, we cannot infer that the same proportion of all schools are good or better. We are increasingly focusing our resources on the schools that are likely to need inspection the most. In the past year we have only inspected outstanding primary and secondary schools where risk assessment identified concerns or because the nature of the schools had fundamentally changed, for example as a result of an amalgamation. The schools we did inspect this year were more likely to have improved than to have declined compared with their previous inspection. Around a third improved, nearly half achieved the same judgement, but nearly a fifth declined.

Few outstanding schools are now inspected: only 3% of the schools we inspected this year were judged at their previous inspection to have been outstanding compared with 8% last year. These schools, with the exception of nursery schools, were all selected on the basis of a risk assessment process or, in a few cases, because the nature of the school had changed. When they were inspected 40% were found to be no longer outstanding. This highlights the need for outstanding schools to focus on maintaining their drive for improvement, and the importance of retaining inspection where concerns arise and there are signs of a decline in performance.

A core aspect of our school inspections is a focus on behaviour. The large majority of schools are orderly places where pupils' behaviour is at least good, and where teaching is good pupils' behaviour is usually at least good as well. Pupils' behaviour was good or outstanding in 87% of all schools inspected this year. However, it was less strong in secondary schools, where 22% were judged to have satisfactory behaviour and 2% were inadequate. Based on a review of the inspection reports of over 100 of these secondary schools, in more than a third inspectors noted that learning in the school was passive because teaching was dull and was not well enough matched to the abilities of pupils. Inspections also identified weaknesses in these schools in applying behaviour policies consistently. Our revised school inspection framework will focus even more sharply on behaviour issues.

This year will be the last year in which most of the academies we inspected were sponsor-led academies, which were often established in the most challenging areas to address longstanding weaknesses in educational provision. From 2011/12 onwards there will be more 'academy converters', many of which are schools we have previously judged to be outstanding along with other schools that have received approval from the Secretary of State to convert to academy status under the Academies Act 2010. Of the 75 academies inspected this year, 40 were judged to be good or outstanding and five inadequate for overall effectiveness. The proportion of academies judged good or outstanding is therefore similar to that for all secondary schools, but the proportion found outstanding was higher at 16 out of 75 compared with 14% for all secondary schools.

This year we inspected the Teach First programme across the country, and the results were impressive. Teach First recruits very skilled and highly qualified participants, almost all of whom have a first class or upper second class degree and many of whom might not otherwise have considered teaching. The programme is very successful in supporting its participants and in addressing educational disadvantage through their placements. We found that, during their first year of training, Teach First trainees have a considerable positive impact on the achievement of the students in their schools. Overall we found the provision to be outstanding.

Our own accountability

This year the Education Select Committee undertook an inquiry into the role and performance of Ofsted. The headlines following the publication of the report focused on its recommendation that Ofsted's work should be carried out by two separate inspectorates, one for care and one for education. Ofsted agreed with the government's response that this kind of re-organisation would be costly and would lose the benefits brought by having a single inspectorate for children and learners. But there was much in the report that we welcomed, in particular its recognition of the value of our work and our impact on raising standards across the sectors we inspect and regulate. The Committee emphasised the importance of independent inspection, and endorsed the direction of travel for inspection being proportionate to risk, based on first hand observation, and focused on what matters most to children and young people.

We also recognise the challenges that the Committee sets out. Over the coming years to 2014 our Spending Review settlement means our resources will reduce by 30% in real terms. Since the creation of the new Ofsted five years ago we have already improved efficiency and reduced costs by a similar amount. We will do so again. However, this will mean being more selective about what we inspect, and it will not be easy to withdraw the reassurance of inspection where the public, and especially those who use the services we inspect, have come to expect it.

One of the key challenges the Committee set us was to improve the way in which we communicate the evidence we generate from inspection. This year we launched a new and more powerful website, with better accessibility and search powers and more options for customisation and feedback for visitors. In response to widespread requests we have launched a Good Practice website to help other providers learn from the best. We have also begun to publish far more detailed inspection data each quarter across the whole of our remit. We will continue to progress down this path of increased transparency: it is absolutely in line with the principles by which we work.

Changes at Ofsted

As well as developments in the way we inspect, this year has seen other significant changes at Ofsted. In March 2011 Baroness Sally Morgan of Huyton joined us as Chair of the Ofsted Board. Later in the year new members further strengthened the board, particularly in terms of social care, learning and skills, finance, organisational change and commercial expertise. The Ofsted Board sets our strategic direction and helps to ensure that we remain focused on encouraging improvement, the needs of those who use our inspections and the effective use of resources by the services in our remit. The Board members bring a great depth of senior skills and experience to our work, and their individual interests cover the whole range of our remit.

In concluding this commentary, I want to take the opportunity to say a brief and personal word about Christine Gilbert, who finished her term as HMCI during the year. Christine brought the new Ofsted together from its predecessor organisations in 2007. She brought extraordinary energy and personal drive to the service of children and learners. She passionately believed not only that everyone deserves the best from the services they use, but that every child can and should achieve and do well. That has been the vision which has animated Ofsted for many years, and it continues to do so today.

Early years and childcare



Key findings

The Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced in September 2008 and Ofsted inspects all early years providers registered to deliver it for children aged from birth to five years. There are just over 26,000 childcare providers on non-domestic premises and just over 57,000 childminders. Overall, however, childcare providers on non-domestic premises offer around four times as many places as childminders.

- ✘ The number of providers in the early years and childcare sector increased in 2010/11, reversing the trend seen in recent years of a fall in the number of providers.
- ✘ The early years and childcare sector continues to perform well. In 2010/11, the third year of inspecting against the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the proportion of early years registered providers judged as good or outstanding for overall effectiveness increased to 74% from 68% in 2009/10.
- ✘ Childcare providers that have been inspected against the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and have subsequently left the sector are 10 times as likely to have been found inadequate than those that remained in the sector. This suggests that inspection against Early Years Foundation Stage requirements has contributed to an overall increase in quality.
- ✘ Childcare on non-domestic premises, for example nurseries and playgroups, continues to outperform childminders in terms of the quality of provision. The difference between the two in the percentage judged good or outstanding has increased for the last two years.
- ✘ Of the providers judged inadequate under the previous framework and that have since been inspected under the Early Years Foundation Stage, 98% are now judged satisfactory or better. Of the providers judged satisfactory under the previous framework, 56% improved at a subsequent Early Years Foundation Stage inspection.
- ✘ Time and experience help childcare providers develop outstanding quality. A childcare provider that has been registered for four or more years is more than twice as likely to be judged outstanding under the Early Years Foundation Stage as a provider that has been registered for a year or less.
- ✘ The difference in the quality of provision between providers in the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas remains too large, particularly for childminders. However, since 2009/10 the gap in the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding between the most and least deprived areas has narrowed slightly, from 19 to 16 percentage points for childminders, and from 12 to eight percentage points for providers of childcare on non-domestic premises.
- ✘ Early years providers perform less well in relation to the effectiveness of their self-evaluation and their engagement with parents than in other aspects of provision inspected. However, in both these aspects of provision the percentage of providers judged good or outstanding has risen since last year. The rise has been particularly pronounced in the effectiveness of self-evaluation, which has increased by nine percentage points.
- ✘ The better providers have a planned and systematic approach to children's learning and development – particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy. In the best settings there is a concerted effort to plan more purposeful activity led by adults to develop children's language and communication, including their emerging skills for early reading and writing. This has a positive impact on their progress.

Introduction

1. Three major reviews carried out this year have had a substantial influence on government policy in relation to early years provision, and are leading to significant changes in the context in which childcare providers operate. In December 2010 Frank Field MP published his review on poverty and life chances;² then, in January 2011, Graham Allen MP published his review of early intervention;³ and finally, in March 2011, Dame Clare Tickell published her review of the Early Years Foundation Stage.⁴ Together these reviews have re-emphasised the critical importance of the early years of a child's development, particularly aged from birth to two, in securing their future good outcomes. The reviews focus on the importance of parenting and getting the right support for parents and families when children are very young. Effective and carefully targeted early intervention is known to benefit a child's long-term education and has the potential to avoid the need for costly intervention at a later stage.

2. The Tickell review is likely to have the most direct impact on how future inspections under the Early Years Foundation Stage are conducted. The review found that the Early Years Foundation Stage had clearly contributed to improvements in quality across the sector and recommended that there should continue to be a framework for all providers working with children in the early years. However, the review also identified areas in which the Early Years Foundation Stage could be improved, including: increasing the involvement of parents and carers in their child's learning; providing earlier assessments of children's development to support good-quality early intervention; and substantially simplifying and streamlining the early learning goals and Early Years Foundation Stage profile. In addition, the review made a number of recommendations for Ofsted that will be addressed through a revised inspection framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Following

consultation with parents, providers and others, Ofsted intends to introduce this new framework alongside the revised Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2012.

3. In response to the Tickell review, the government has recently consulted on the revised Early Years Foundation Stage, and published its vision for the early years.⁵ A number of themes which are central to the government's vision for the early years are highlighted in this Annual Report. A key focus of the government's vision is on children's development so that by the age of five children are ready to take full advantage of the next stage of learning and have laid down foundations for good health in adult life. This year's Annual Report highlights important evidence on how the most effective childcare providers are supporting children's development against two early learning goals: communication, language and literacy; and personal, social and emotional development. These are absolutely fundamental to preparing children for their next steps in learning.

4. *Supporting families in the foundation years* also re-emphasises the need for practitioners to engage parents strongly in their child's learning and welfare, including helping professionals to use all interactions with families as opportunities to identify any additional needs of both parents and other key family members and offer further support. This year's Annual Report draws attention to how the most effective providers are successfully involving parents in their child's learning, and conversely some of the weaknesses in this crucial area in those providers judged no better than satisfactory. This is a particularly important issue for childcare providers working with children from disadvantaged families and communities, where Ofsted's evidence continues to show that there is a persistent difference in quality between childcare offered in the most deprived areas and childcare in the least deprived areas.

2. *The foundation years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults – the report on the independent review of poverty and life chances*, Frank Field, December 2010.

3. *Early Intervention: The next steps – an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*, Graham Allen MP, January 2011.

4. *The Early Years: Foundations for life health and learning – an independent report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty's Government*, Dame Clare Tickell, March 2011.

5. *Supporting families in the foundation years*, Department for Education, 2011; *Families in the Foundation Years*, Department for Education, 2011.

5. In this section of the Annual Report Ofsted summarises the strengths and weaknesses of current early years provision and looks forward to the improvements needed from 2012 onwards. Ofsted is responsible for the regulation and inspection of early years and childcare providers and maintains two registers: the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. The findings in this year's Annual Report include evidence from the regulation and inspection of early years and childcare providers on both these registers. Where registered providers are inspected and found not to be meeting the requirements of the registers, Ofsted takes action as the regulator to bring about improvement.

Size and composition of the childcare sector

6. The Early Years Register is a list of providers that look after children aged from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. Providers on this register must meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ofsted inspects each provider on this register at least once in a defined period laid down by government – currently 47 months – to judge their effectiveness.

7. The Childcare Register has two parts: a compulsory part, on which providers must register if they care for children aged from five to seven; and a voluntary part, on which providers may register if they care for children aged eight and over. A range of other providers, such as nannies, are exempt from compulsory registration. They may choose to register on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. Each year Ofsted inspects a 10% sample of providers that are only on the Childcare Register – including any about which there have been complaints – to make sure that they continue to meet the requirements for registration. The Childcare Register provides only a basic level of assurance that those that register meet the requirements for registration at that point, and that very basic standards for safeguarding children – for example, through a Criminal Records Bureau check – are met as part of the registration process. The government is considering the future of the Childcare Register and is carrying out informal discussions with Ofsted and other interested parties.

Figure 1 Number of registered providers as at 31 August 2011

Provision on:	Providers
All registers	70,771
Early Years Register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register	4,700
Early Years Register and voluntary part of the Childcare Register	152
Early Years Register only	7,738
Compulsory part of the Childcare Register and voluntary part of the Childcare Register	972
Compulsory part of the Childcare Register only	92
Voluntary part of the Childcare Register only	11,748
Total	96,173

8. Figure 1 shows the number of providers on the Early Years Register, and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A large majority of providers are on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. For example, childminders that wish to care for primary school children before and after school, as well as caring for pre-school children, must register on both the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. They may also wish to care for children's older siblings during school holidays, so may choose to join the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. In most cases, providers that meet the requirements for the Early Years Register will be able to meet the requirements of the Childcare Register, which are less stringent.

9. There are four main types of provider in the early years and childcare sector:

- ✦ **Childminders** work with no more than two other adults, such as other childminders or childminder assistants. They care for children on domestic premises, most often in the childminder's home. There are 57,191 childminders on the Early Years Register and a further 855 only on the Childcare Register. Childminders account for around 60% of early years and childcare providers overall and offer around 281,000 childcare places.

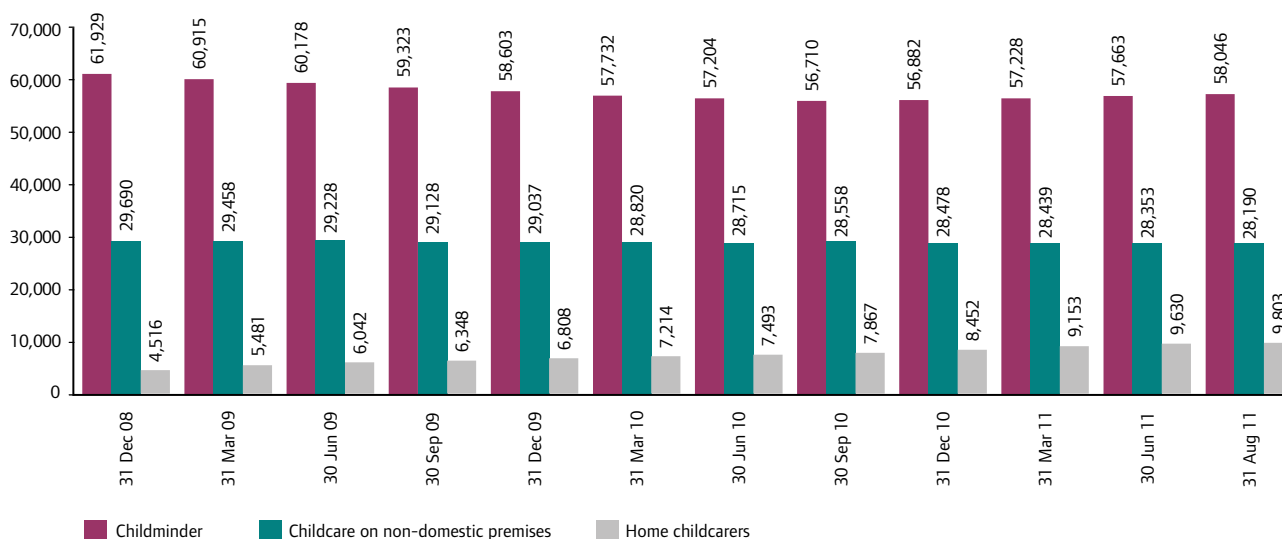
Early years and childcare

- ✦ **Childcare providers on non-domestic premises** include nurseries, playgroups, pre-school provision, crèches, out of school clubs and holiday play schemes. There are 26,041 providers in this group on the Early Years Register and a further 2,149 on the Childcare Register only. Childcare providers in this category account for around 30% of early years and childcare providers and offer around 1,023,000 places.
- ✦ **Childcare on domestic premises** is provided where four or more adults work together on domestic premises to care for children. Most often these providers are groups of childminders and assistants that choose to work together in the home of one of them. There are 129 such providers on the Early Years Register and a further five providers only on the Childcare Register. This very small proportion of providers offers around 2,000 childcare places.
- ✦ **Home childcarers** are mainly nannies who care for children in the children’s own home. They are not required to register but may choose to do so. There are 9,803 home childcarers on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register.

This year there was a net increase of 2,701 providers. This reverses the trend seen in recent years of a falling number of childcare providers.

- 10. Figure 2 shows the quarterly change in numbers of providers by provider type since the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008.
- 11. There is a high level of turnover in providers that offer early years and childcare provision. During the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011, 15,004 new providers joined the registers while 12,303 left. This represents a net increase of 2,701 providers. This reverses the trend seen in recent years of a falling number of childcare providers. This increase is most pronounced for childminders and home childcarers.

Figure 2 Number of providers since September 2008, by provision type



Figures exclude childcare on domestic premises, which comprise less than 1% of all registered provision.

12. Since December 2010 there has also been a slow but steady increase in the number of childcare places, which reverses the previous declining trend. Childminders account for the majority of this increase. For the whole year, from 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011, the number of places covered by Ofsted registration decreased by just under 2,000 compared with the same period last year when it fell by just under 30,000, suggesting that the number of places in the sector is levelling out. A range of factors are likely to be contributing to this, and it is not possible to be definitive about the reasons why. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage has now been in place for three years and providers are likely therefore to be more familiar with its requirements and more confident that they can meet them. This may be one factor contributing to the changes seen this year.

13. Of those providers on the Early Years Register, 8,597 providers, accounting for almost 49,000 vacant childcare places, did not have any children on roll at the time of inspection during this cycle. Consequently, these inspections were deferred and rescheduled to take place at a later date.⁶ From September 2011, powers introduced under the Childcare Act 2006 came into effect that allow Ofsted to cancel the registration of childminders that have not looked after children for a period of more than three years.

Figure 3 Overall effectiveness of early years registered providers that left the sector between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011 compared with the overall effectiveness of those that remained active (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

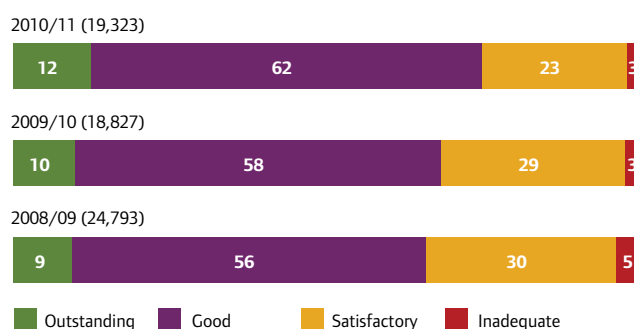
6. The actual number of providers not looking after children will fluctuate over time and is likely to be higher than this figure. For example providers may retain their registration, having already received an Early Years Foundation Stage inspection, but not currently be in operation.

14. Figure 3 shows that 10% of providers that left the sector following an inspection under the Early Years Foundation Stage had been judged inadequate. Around 24,000 providers, in addition, left the sector without receiving an inspection under the Early Years Foundation Stage. In comparison, just 1% of providers that had an Early Years Foundation Stage inspection and remained active were judged inadequate. This continues the trend also observed in last year's Annual Report. This evidence suggests that inspection against the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements has contributed to an overall increase in quality.

15. At their most recent inspection, 934 childcare providers had no children on roll. Of these, 41% left the sector following the inspection. The providers that had no children on roll and left the sector were three times more likely not to meet the requirements for registration than those providers remaining active in the sector, and 4% of them had enforcement action taken against them at the 'no children on roll' inspection.

Overall effectiveness of early years and childcare providers

Figure 4 Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers inspected under the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, by inspection year (percentage of providers)



Annual figures relate to inspections carried out between 1 September and 31 August each year for providers active at the end of each period.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Early years and childcare

16. Figure 4 shows the overall effectiveness of early years registered providers since the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In this third year of inspection, 97% of providers were judged as satisfactory or better, and 74% were judged as good or outstanding, an increase from 68% in 2009/10. This shows a continuing trajectory of improvement in provision, with the proportion of good or outstanding providers increasing in each of the three years since the Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced. This suggests that the providers inspected in this third year have benefited from having more time to embed its requirements into their practice and this is leading to better quality provision among these providers.

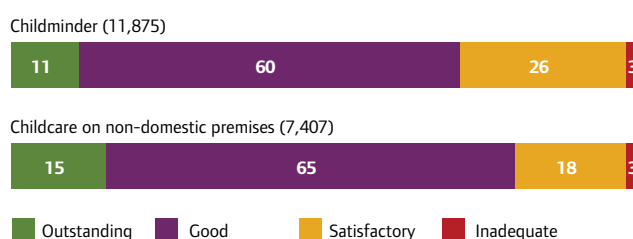
17. The proportion of providers judged to be inadequate has remained the same as last year, at 3%. However, around two thirds of the 577 providers found to be inadequate at their 2009/10 inspection have since been reinspected and 93% of these are now satisfactory or better. The majority of those providers which have not been reinspected have left the sector, and a further 29 received a no children on roll inspection following their inadequate judgement.

18. Where a provider is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Ofsted sets actions that the provider must take to ensure that they meet those requirements within a given timescale. Of those providers inspected this year, Ofsted set one or more actions for 25% of providers on the Early Years Register. A higher proportion of childminders (27%) than providers of childcare on non-domestic premises (22%) were given at least one action to improve. The three most common areas for action were the same as those identified in the last two Annual Reports: safeguarding and welfare; maintaining effective records and documentation; and premises, environment and equipment.

19. Ofsted inspects a sample of providers that are only on the compulsory and/or voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to ensure that they continue to meet requirements. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, Ofsted inspected 1,036 of the 12,812 providers that are active on the Childcare Register but not on the Early Years Register, the majority of which were home childcarers. This represents a sample of 8% of these providers. Ofsted is on track to meet the required sample of 10% by the end of the 2011–12 financial year. Of those inspected, 76% of providers met all the requirements. In the

remaining 24%, Ofsted set actions telling providers what they must do to meet requirements. These proportions were very similar, irrespective of whether the providers were registered on the compulsory or voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Figure 5 Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, by provider type (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

20. As has been the case since the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage, childcare providers on non-domestic premises, which offer over three quarters of the childcare places available overall, performed better than childminders this year. In fact, the difference in the quality of provision has become more marked during the three years of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In 2008/09, the first year of the new framework, the gap between the proportion of childminders judged good or outstanding compared with the proportion of childcare providers on non-domestic premises was two percentage points. This year it is nine percentage points. In general childcare providers on non-domestic premises are increasingly responding more successfully to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage than childminders. Nevertheless, a large majority of childminders are delivering good or outstanding services.

21. Ofsted's survey report on the impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a clear insight into some of the key drivers that support better quality provision, as well as some of the differences in how childcare providers on non-domestic premises and childminders have responded to the Early Years Foundation Stage.⁷

7. *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage (100231)*, Ofsted, 2011.

Drivers of improvement

The survey, based on visits to 20 childminders and 23 childcare providers on non-domestic premises, identified two important drivers for improvement: the commitment of practitioners to professional development and improvement; and external support and challenge for providers.

Good or outstanding practitioners visited for the survey had a strong commitment to professional development and improvement and, in many cases, had used the Early Years Foundation Stage as part of this process. Qualification levels in the childcare providers that had improved exceeded the minimum requirements. Inspectors found that outcomes for children were good or outstanding where practitioners were well-qualified or trained. They used more than intuition; they knew why they were doing what they were doing, and what they needed to do next to promote children's learning. This was particularly important for childminders who were usually working alone.

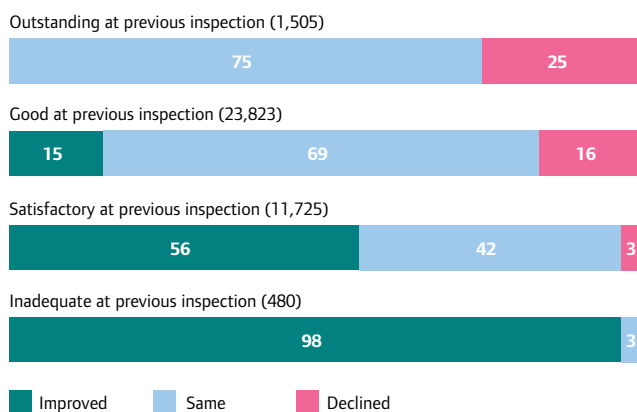
In general, providers visited for the survey were positive about the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the professional development opportunities associated with it. Inspectors found the greatest diversity of views about the Early Years Foundation Stage among childminders. Highly positive views were expressed by good or outstanding childminders. Conversely, negative comments came mainly, but not exclusively, from childminders that had remained satisfactory for their last two inspections and saw their role more as carers than educators. They often felt that the expectations were too much for childminders and that the requirements were more appropriate for children in nurseries and reception classes.

Good-quality external support was also critical to helping childcare providers improve and sustain good-quality provision. Inspectors found that all the improving childcare providers had received some form of training or support from their local authority, a professional association or another external organisation, in implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage, and were able to explain how this had supported their improvement. This support included: initial training to introduce the Early Years Foundation Stage; ongoing training, including targeted national programmes; involvement in specific projects; support through childminder networks and from children's centres; and direct support from local authority advisers and consultants or childminder mentors. However, local authorities contacted as part of the survey suggested that childminders were the least likely to attend their training and inspectors' discussions with childminders showed that some found it difficult to attend training, even when it was arranged in the evening or at weekends, due to the costs or distances involved in travel, or other family or work commitments.

22. In addition to childminders and childcare providers on non-domestic premises, Ofsted inspected 41 active providers of childcare on domestic premises between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011. Of these, eight were judged outstanding for overall effectiveness, 16 were good, 11 were satisfactory and six were inadequate. Childcare providers on domestic premises currently make up less than 1% of all types of provider. This category of childcare provider was introduced primarily to acknowledge and support those providers that wished to offer a nursery-style environment in a home setting; but in practice, this type of childcare is very rare.

Early years and childcare

Figure 6 Change in overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers inspected under the Early Years Foundation Stage framework compared with their inspection under the previous framework (percentage of providers)



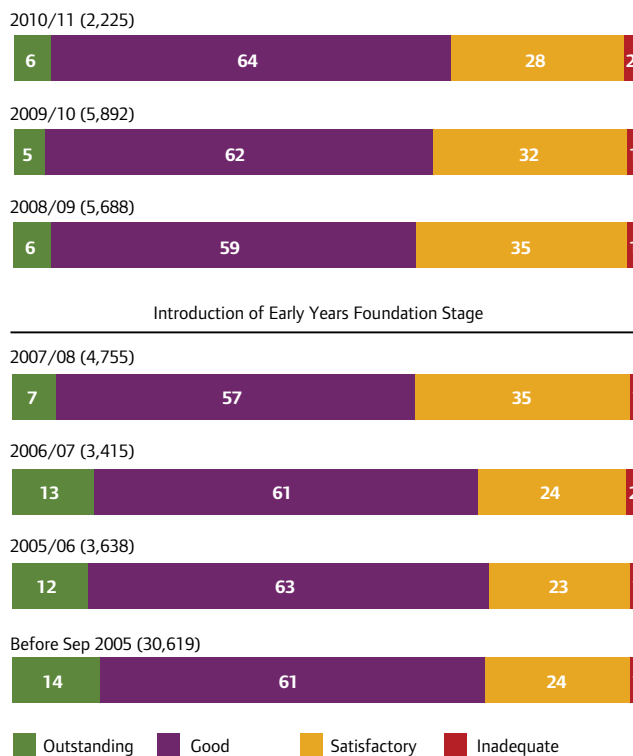
This includes all active early years registered providers inspected since September 2008.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

23. Figure 6 shows that the very large majority of providers judged outstanding or good in their last inspection under the previous framework have either maintained or improved on their high performance in their most recent inspection under the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is also particularly encouraging that of the providers judged inadequate under the previous inspection framework that have remained active, 98% are now satisfactory or better.

24. This year shows better progress being made by those providers previously judged to be satisfactory, with 56% improving since their previous inspection. There is a big difference in this respect between the sectors. Sixty-two per cent of childcare providers on non-domestic premises previously judged satisfactory have now improved compared with 51% of childminders; this demonstrates a stronger improvement trajectory among childcare providers on non-domestic premises.

Figure 7 Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers at their most recent inspection under the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, by registration date (percentage of providers)



Inspection outcomes relate to the most recent inspection of early years registered providers carried out between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

25. Figure 7 shows that childcare providers that registered in 2007/08 and 2008/09 are less likely to have been judged good or outstanding than those which registered either before or after. This finding may be associated with the fact that providers registering in those two years had to manage the transition to the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework when they were themselves new to the sector and relatively inexperienced. Figure 7 also demonstrates that childcare providers that are relatively new to the sector are less likely to be judged outstanding compared with more established providers. A provider that has been registered for four or more years is more than twice as likely to be judged outstanding under the Early Years Foundation Stage as a provider that has been registered for a year or less. This strongly suggests that time and experience are factors which enable childcare providers to develop outstanding quality.

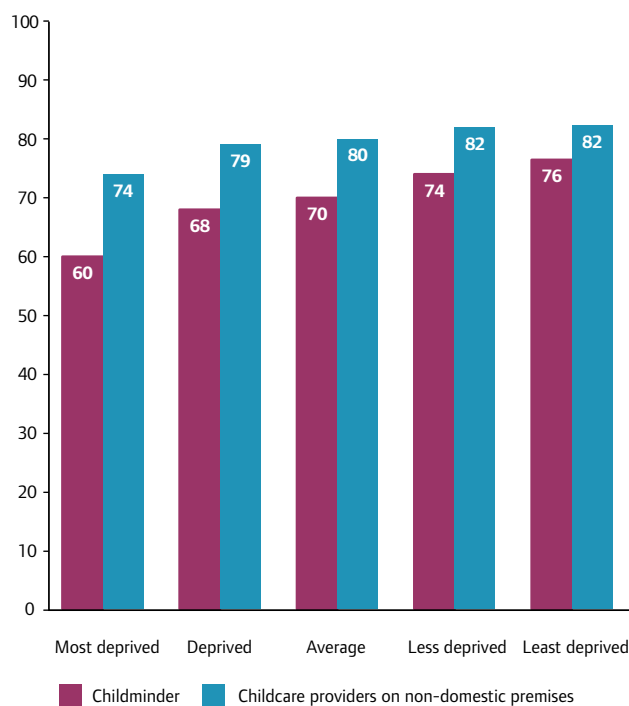
26. This pattern is particularly marked for childminders and rather less pronounced for childcare providers on non-domestic premises. For both types of provider, 14% of those registered before September 2005 were judged outstanding at their most recent inspection. However, only 4% of childminders registered in 2010/11 were judged outstanding compared with 12% of childcare providers on non-domestic premises. Despite the relatively high proportion of childcare providers on non-domestic premises which registered in 2010/11 and were judged outstanding, there was also a relatively high proportion, 4%, which were judged inadequate. In contrast only 1% of childminders registered in 2010/11 and subsequently inspected were judged inadequate.

27. Among those providers judged to be satisfactory at their first inspection, rather than good or outstanding, some common areas for development emerge. Many of those found to be satisfactory are providing warm, safe and caring environments where children's welfare needs are generally well met and children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. However, most of these providers are not supporting all aspects of children's learning and development consistently well and many are still developing or embedding systems designed to evaluate their practice effectively.

28. Three particular areas for improvement are often identified for these providers judged satisfactory at their first inspection. The first relates to more effective observation and assessment of children's individual learning needs in order to plan for their next steps. The second highlights the need to involve parents in their children's learning. The third is to provide better opportunities for children to develop an awareness and understanding of diversity and difference.

It continues to be the case that the quality of all types of childcare is poorer in the most deprived areas than in those with lower levels of deprivation.

Figure 8 Childminders and childcare providers on non-domestic premises judged good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness, by deprivation (percentage of providers)



Inspection outcomes relate to the most recent inspection of early years registered providers carried out between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011.

This chart is based on the location of the provider with deprivation measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2010. The index shows the proportion of the population in each lower super output area (LSOA) who live in households that are income-deprived.

'Most deprived' indicates the providers in the most deprived 20% of areas.

29. As in previous Annual Reports, it continues to be the case that the quality of all types of childcare is poorer in the most deprived areas than in those with lower levels of deprivation. This difference is particularly marked for childminders. In the most deprived areas 74% of childcare on non-domestic premises has been judged good or outstanding compared with 60% of childminders. This represents a difference of 14 percentage points; an increase on last year when the difference was 11 percentage points. The gap in outstanding provision is also particularly marked: the proportion of childcare providers on non-domestic premises in the most deprived areas judged as outstanding (12%) is double that of childminders (6%).

Early years and childcare

30. Although the gap in performance between the most and least deprived areas is still too wide, for both childminders and childcare providers on non-domestic premises, the gap has narrowed since 2009/10 and the quality of provision in areas of high deprivation is showing signs of improvement. This reverses the trend seen in the 2009/10 Annual Report, where, for both types of provision, the gap between the most and least deprived areas had grown since the previous year. For childminders, the difference has decreased from 19 to 16 percentage points while for childcare on non-domestic premises it has fallen from 12 to eight percentage points. For both types of provider the increase in the proportion judged good or outstanding has been greatest for those inspected in the most deprived areas and deprived areas.

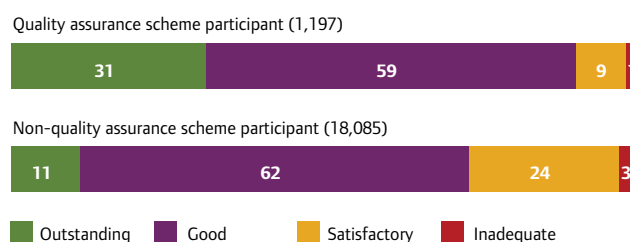
31. Inspection evidence identifies a number of factors that are contributing to the poorer quality of childminding in the most deprived areas. In particular, childminders judged as inadequate in these areas have often not undertaken appropriate training, and are frequently poor at reflecting on their own practice and identifying areas for improvement. In the cases where childminders have recognised the need for improvement, they often lack the capacity or confidence to put appropriate systems or measures in place to bring about that improvement.

32. Inadequate childminders in the most deprived areas tend to show limited understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They struggle to assess children's starting points or observe sensitively what they do, so that their progress can be monitored and activities planned to move them on. They also fail to work effectively with parents and carers in this respect. In these settings, childminders fail to achieve an appropriate balance between adult- and child-led activities. In some cases, there is too much adult direction in the activities so that children do not get a chance to develop independence or extend their own learning. In other cases, children are left to their own devices for long periods of time, often resulting in repetitive and unengaging play for children, who are not sufficiently challenged and quickly become bored.

33. However, the 6% of childminders in the most deprived areas that have been judged outstanding this year show what can be achieved. The most effective childminders in deprived areas recognise that social and economic factors can have a significant effect on educational and other outcomes for young children. These childminders understand that the provision they make can help to narrow the gap between the outcomes achieved by the children in their care and those found nationally, and seize the opportunity to contribute in this way. They demonstrate a commitment to equality and inclusion that is beyond doubt, skilfully adapt activities to ensure that all children are equally involved and make full use of spontaneous opportunities to support children's learning. They understand the importance of child-centred learning and place children at the heart of all that happens.

34. Ensuring that parents and carers are active partners in all aspects of the child's care and learning is critical to the success of these outstanding childminders. They understand that a child's learning and development cannot be separated from other aspects of their lives and what happens to them in their families and communities. They are extremely knowledgeable about the children in their care and, through a culture of reflective practice, ensure that children's needs and the views of parents are at the heart of any improvements made to practice. The most effective providers in deprived areas have a clear focus on supporting children's language development and work with parents to build their skills in supporting children's speech, language and communication in the home.

Figure 9 Overall effectiveness of active childminders and childcare providers on non-domestic premises that take part in quality assurance schemes, inspected between 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

35. This year, 6% of the providers inspected were identified as being part of a quality assurance scheme; this compares with 5% that were part of a scheme last year. Although this remains a very small proportion of the sector, these providers are more likely to be judged outstanding than those that do not participate in such a scheme. The proportion of those providers on a scheme judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness has increased by three percentage points on last year's figures, moving from 87% to 90%. As was observed in last year's Annual Report, childminders that are part of a quality assurance scheme perform particularly strongly, although there are only 365 childminders on such a scheme among those inspected this year. Of these, 94% were judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness compared with 71% of childminders not on a scheme.

36. All three- and four-year-old children are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education a week for a minimum of 38 weeks of the year, with flexible access to meet parents' needs. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). In addition, as part of the 2010 Spending Review, the government announced that the free entitlement to 15 hours of nursery education will be gradually extended to every disadvantaged two-year-old. Inspections carried out this year provide a helpful insight into the quality of childcare offered by those early years registered providers in receipt of government funding for three- and four-year-olds.

Government-funded provision for three- and four-year-olds

Early Years Census data collected by the Department for Education to inform the 2009/2010 Early Years Foundation Stage profile identified over 18,000 registered childcare providers in receipt of government funding to finance free provision for three- and four-year-olds. Of these, 5,776 were inspected in 2010/11, the vast majority of which were childcare providers on non-domestic premises.

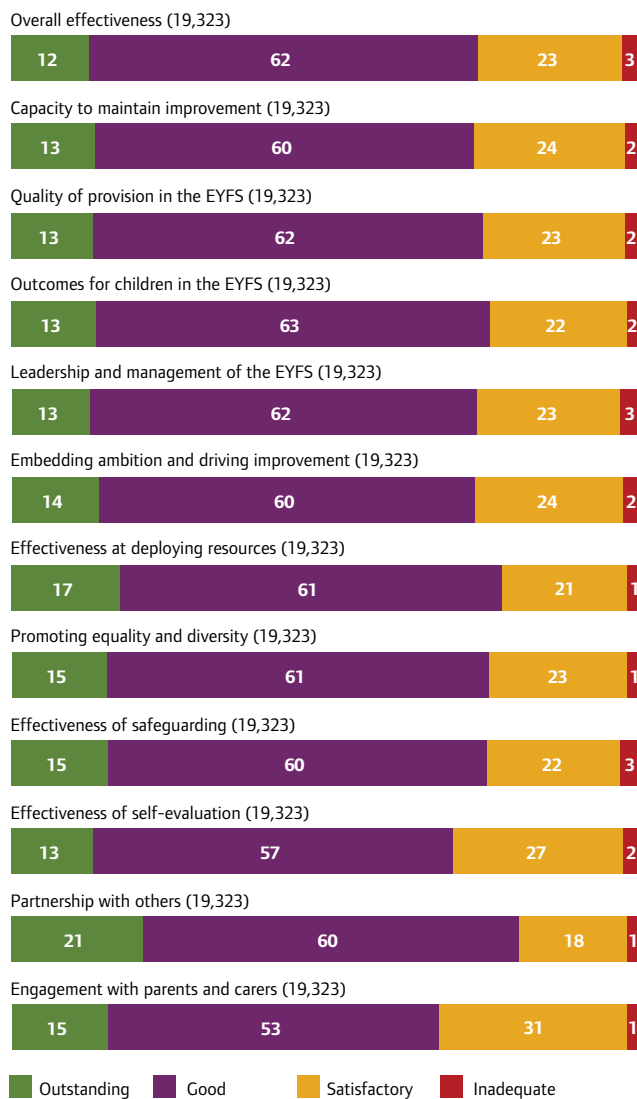
Inspection evidence shows that those childcare providers which received government funding to give the free entitlement were more likely to be judged good or outstanding than those which did not. Of those inspected, 83% of funded providers were judged as good or outstanding for overall effectiveness compared with 70% of providers which did not receive funding. Seventeen per cent of providers in receipt of funding were judged outstanding.

When allocating funding to providers, local authorities are required to follow a statutory code of practice. This states that local authorities should allocate the free entitlement funding to the highest quality providers identified by using their own assessments of quality. Local authorities are encouraged to use the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP) guidance to make this assessment. Ofsted's evidence suggests that local authorities are indeed focusing resources on more successful providers, and that this process may in itself be contributing to the increasing quality in the early years sector.

However, 2% of childcare providers in receipt of government funding for free nursery education were judged inadequate by Ofsted in 2010/11. This represents over 100 providers. Although this is slightly lower than the proportion of providers judged inadequate nationally, it is nonetheless a concern. There may be a number of reasons why a small number of inadequate providers are receiving government funding for three- and four-year-old provision. These providers may have deteriorated since the individual funding decisions were made or they may be in areas where there is a shortage of higher quality provision available. Local authority decisions may also reflect particular local parental preferences. These are issues which local authorities may wish to consider as part of their future decisions about funding.

Strengths and areas for development

Figure 10 Inspection judgements for active early years registered providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

37. The proportion of providers inspected this year judged to be good or outstanding has increased for every judgement. In all but one judgement, the increase on last year is by at least five percentage points. Looking across the full range of judgements, and in common with last year, providers were particularly strong in terms of their arrangements for working in partnership with others, such as other agencies or local schools, and their effectiveness in deploying their resources. Eighty-one per cent and 78%, respectively, were judged good or outstanding for these judgements in comparison with 74% for overall effectiveness. As was the case in 2009/10, engagement with parents or carers, for example involving them in their child’s learning or welfare, and the effectiveness of self-evaluation are the two weakest areas of the childcare provision inspected in 2010/11 in terms of the proportion judged good or outstanding. However, both of these areas have shown improvement since last year, and in fact the greatest increase, of nine percentage points, was seen in the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding for their self-evaluation.

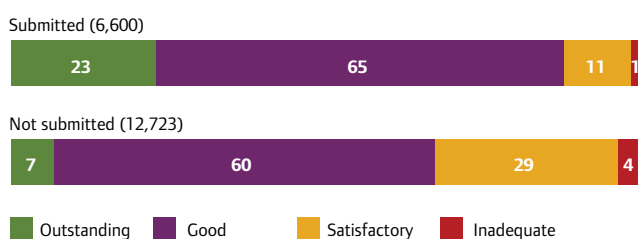
38. The percentage of childcare providers in which engagement with parents and carers was judged good or outstanding has increased from 63% in 2009/10 to 68% in 2010/11. As was the case last year, this aspect of provision is very rarely inadequate, but too often found to be only satisfactory. Ofsted’s report *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage* provides further evidence in relation to this.⁸ All 43 childcare providers visited for the survey were committed to establishing good relationships with parents. However, in the provision where partnership with parents was judged as no better than satisfactory, the focus was often on support for welfare and care, and did not sufficiently include their child’s learning.

8. *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage* (100231), Ofsted, 2011.

39. In contrast, the providers in which partnerships with parents were judged to be good or better communicated effectively with parents to support their child's learning. These providers usually involved parents in initial assessments of their children, regularly gave them information as to how well their child was doing, and offered advice about helping their child at home. Providers judged as satisfactory should focus more carefully on how they ensure that parents are fully involved in exchanges of information about their child's educational progress as well as those aspects of provision that relate to their care.

40. Self-evaluation has typically been a weaker aspect of childcare provision, and that remains the case this year. However, there are encouraging signs of progress. The effectiveness of self-evaluation is the aspect of childcare provision that has seen the most marked improvement, with an increase from 61% of providers judged good or outstanding last year to 70% this year. Good quality self-evaluation is clearly becoming more embedded in providers' practice.

Figure 11 Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers that submitted a self-evaluation form and were inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



This figure includes all providers that submitted a self-evaluation form from 1 June 2008 and completed the section relating to the 12 statutory requirements and evaluated their provision for overall effectiveness.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

The effectiveness of self-evaluation is the aspect of childcare provision that has seen the most marked improvement.

41. A slightly higher proportion of early years registered providers inspected in 2010/11 had submitted a self-evaluation form compared with last year, and Figure 11 shows that those providers that did so were much more likely to be judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness than those that did not (88% and 67%, respectively). Since the Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced, 21,566 active providers have submitted a self-evaluation form to Ofsted.⁹ It is striking that 30% of childcare providers in the least deprived areas submitted a self-evaluation form compared with 19% in the most deprived areas.

42. In 91% of the providers inspected where self-evaluation was judged outstanding, outcomes for children were also outstanding. In the best providers self-evaluation was based on effective assessment of children's needs and helped to target improvements that directly related to children's learning and progress. It was also used effectively to focus training and development activities for staff, which were often designed to improve children's learning and development.

43. A strong link between self-evaluation and outcomes has also been identified in Ofsted's recent survey on the impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In each setting visited where self-evaluation was judged as inadequate, the outcomes for children were judged as no better than satisfactory. These inadequate providers saw self-evaluation as a task that had to be done, rather than a means of reflecting on practice and improving outcomes for children. Self-evaluation was particularly weak for those childminders observed that had been operating for many years and were continuing to do the job as they always had, or simply cared for children in the same way as they had with their own children when they were young. Where self-evaluation was inadequate for the childcare providers on non-domestic premises sampled, the process was either at an early stage of development or was not seen as a high priority.

9. This includes all self-evaluation forms where the sections on the 12 statutory requirements and an evaluation of the provider's overall effectiveness were completed.

Early years and childcare

44. Even where self-evaluation was judged as satisfactory, the survey found that providers had still not fully embraced the practice of review and reflection in terms of the impact on outcomes for children. They often relied on the local authority or inspection itself to help them identify improvements needed, rather than through their own monitoring and assessment of children's needs. It is clear that many providers still have some way to go before they have embedded self-evaluation as a means to reflect on practice; to identify strengths and areas for development; and plan and deliver their provision in the light of this analysis in order to improve outcomes for children.

Supporting progress towards the early learning goals

45. All providers that deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage are required to complete an assessment for each child at the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five, based on the early learning goals and divided between the six areas of learning and development. Early Years Foundation Stage profile results have improved nationally since 2008. The proportion of children working securely in communication, language and literacy rose by nine percentage points to 62% in 2011. In personal, social and emotional development the figure was 79%, a rise of seven percentage points.¹⁰ *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage* focused on the impact of these two early learning goals. Taken together, these form an important foundation from which children learn, develop and make progress in their lives. They were particularly identified in the Tickell review of the Early Years Foundation Stage as being two of the areas that are 'essential foundations for children's learning and success'.¹¹

46. Of the 43 childcare providers visited for the survey, inspectors judged a greater proportion to be good or outstanding for outcomes in personal, social and emotional development than for outcomes in communication, language and literacy. The keys to good outcomes in personal, social and emotional development in the childcare providers surveyed were the routines that practitioners established and the high expectations that they had of children's behaviour. Those providers that achieved good outcomes in communication, language and literacy specifically planned opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening, and early reading and writing skills.

47. Inspectors found that where children made particularly good progress in the two early learning goals, the provider was clear about the stages of learning and development and had often had specific training, for example in the development of children's language skills, or support. In the better providers visited, practitioners referred to the good practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to assess children's developmental level and track their progress. These practitioners planned specific activities to cover all aspects of children's development, making good use of resources including guidance produced by other organisations with expertise in this area.

48. In relation to communication, language and literacy, inspectors found that systematic phonics teaching, adapted to meet the needs and interests of the children, had a particularly positive impact in some of the best childcare providers visited as part of the survey. Where speaking and listening skills were weak it was generally because providers were relying on learning happening incidentally. Furthermore, children's language for thinking, for example their ability to use talk to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking, ideas, feelings and events, was often weaker than their language for communication; this was usually because practitioners missed opportunities to encourage children to explain and extend their thinking, or simply did not allow children time to think. Too often, where this was the case, adults would immediately follow up one question with another, or would answer their own question, limiting opportunities for children to express themselves and develop their own thoughts and ideas. Extending children's speaking skills helps them to develop as thinkers.

10. *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results in England*, Statistical First Release (SFR28/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

11. *The Early Years: Foundations for life health and learning – an independent report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty's Government*, Dame Clare Tickell, March 2011.

Compliance, investigation and enforcement

49. Ofsted takes steps to bring about improvement where childcare providers are failing to meet the requirements for registration laid down by government. In most cases, Ofsted can ensure that providers improve by setting actions that they must take. However, where providers do not take these actions, or where concerns are more serious, Ofsted has a range of legal powers it can use to enforce compliance with the requirements for registration. These range from issuing a Welfare Requirements Notice, where a provider is failing to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to more serious action such as cancelling a provider's registration so they can no longer operate.

50. Concerns about registered providers come from a range of sources, including parents and carers, members of the public, staff working in childcare settings and other professionals. When Ofsted receives such a concern, it determines whether or not the provider is meeting the requirements for registration. This process may take the form of a visit by an inspector to the setting without giving notice or, in less serious cases, by asking the provider to look into the matter and report back to Ofsted. In some cases, a concern may lead Ofsted to bring forward a full inspection of the setting to look at all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For providers only on the Childcare Register, Ofsted always carries out a full inspection of the provider when receiving a concern, as part of the sample selected for inspection.

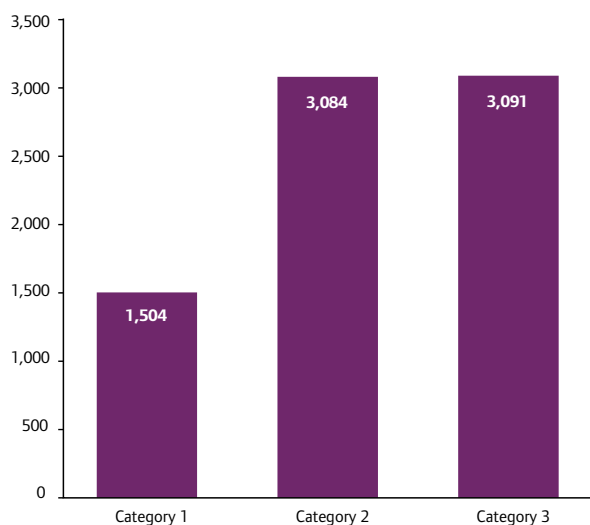
51. On receipt of a concern about a provider on the Early Years Register, Ofsted allocates the concern to one of three categories:

✦ **Category 1: immediate priority** – these are cases which require urgent attention because they raise concerns that a child is or may be at risk of harm. In these cases, Ofsted will refer the child protection issue to the local authority which has statutory responsibility for child protection enquiries, as well as investigate the concern to determine whether or not the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.

✦ **Category 2: high priority** – these cases raise significant concerns about the quality of the provision but do not involve child protection concerns. Ofsted investigates these concerns by conducting a visit to the setting within three working days.

✦ **Category 3: routine matters** – these are lower level concerns which, while they still need investigating to determine whether or not the provider meets requirements, do not raise serious concerns about the quality of the provision. In most of these cases, Ofsted will ask the provider to look into the matter and report back about what they have found and what action they have taken as a result.

Figure 12 The number of compliance cases received by Ofsted between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, categorised by priority



52. During the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011, Ofsted received 7,679 concerns about providers. The highest proportion of these (38%) came from parents, followed by local authorities (12%). Of these concerns, 2,801 related to childminders and 4,878 to childcare providers on non-domestic premises. Concerns were received this year relating to around 6% of registered providers. As shown in Figure 12, just under one fifth of these were categorised as immediate priority and requiring urgent attention. Over 40% were categorised as high priority and were investigated by Ofsted.

Early years and childcare

53. Of the 7,152 investigations concluded between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, the provider was meeting requirements in the majority of cases, and Ofsted needed to take no further action. Around 60% of category 1 and category 2 concerns resulted in no further action. A third of cases overall resulted in actions being agreed with providers and in a few cases enforcement action was taken. During the same period, Ofsted carried out 575 instances of enforcement action, 72% of which were as a result of concerns relating to 380 cases, with the other enforcement action arising for other reasons, such as provision which is judged inadequate on inspection. Enforcement action taken by Ofsted during 2010/11 is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Number of enforcement actions carried out by Ofsted since 1 September 2010

Enforcement type:	Number
Final warning letter	273
Formal caution	5
Notice of intent to cancel registration	33
Notice of intention to refuse registration	23
Notice of intention to vary/remove/impose conditions	38
Prosecution	1
Welfare requirements notice	201
Emergency vary/remove/impose conditions	1
Total	575

Figures show total number of enforcement actions, which may include multiple instances of enforcement carried out during investigations or for providers.

Looking forward

54. The current inspection cycle comes to an end in 2012 and in the coming year Ofsted will be developing a new inspection framework to reflect the changes resulting from the government’s revised Early Years Foundation Stage and the key findings from inspection over the last three years. Ofsted will be evaluating carefully the impact of the current framework and using these findings to inform the development of a new inspection framework for 2012.

55. Ofsted will be consulting on proposals for a new framework early in 2012. It is therefore too early to be specific about the framework content. But it is likely that the new inspection arrangements will give even greater priority to children’s early learning and development and will continue to evaluate providers’ effectiveness in developing the family’s involvement with their child’s learning so that there is good support for learning at home. It will continue to be a priority for Ofsted to provide important information for parents through accessible reports.

56. A considerable challenge for the sector is to close the gaps in achievement that open up in the early years and persist as children start school and progress through their education. Inspection will give particular priority to judging how well provision is enabling early intervention to support children’s identified needs. Our inspection arrangements will continue to focus activity where improvement is needed most and set actions and recommendations to secure improvement. It is crucial to their future success that children’s earliest experiences help to build a secure foundation for learning and give them the best start in life. A high-quality early years experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. Through inspection and regulation Ofsted will continue to contribute to improving outcomes for children by promoting high-quality care, learning and development.

A considerable challenge for the sector is to close the gaps in achievement that open up in the early years and persist as children start school and progress through their education.



ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Children's centres



Key findings

In May 2010 Ofsted began to inspect children's centres, focusing mainly in the first year on the longest established centres in phase one of this relatively new national development. Many of these first phase centres had previously been early excellence centres with a track record of working effectively with their local communities. Phase one centres were developed in the most deprived local areas to support children aged from birth to under five and their families. As the longest established centres, there was high expectation that they could demonstrate good impact on outcomes for the children and families who used their services.

- ✘ In this first full year of children's centre inspections, nearly all the 710 centres inspected have been judged as at least satisfactory, and just less than three quarters were judged as good or outstanding.
- ✘ Just under two thirds of the children's centres inspected this year were the longest established (phase one) centres. A much higher proportion of phase one centres (79%) were judged as good or outstanding than those established in phase two (63%), a difference of 16 percentage points.
- ✘ Children's centres are judged most positively for keeping children safe and protected and providing good-quality care, guidance and support. Three quarters were judged to have good or outstanding leadership and management.
- ✘ While most children's centres were judged as good or outstanding, two important areas which they find challenging are in demonstrating how they match services to the needs of the children and families who use the centre and using evaluation to improve the services they offer. These are key weaknesses which need attention.
- ✘ In the weaker centres in particular there is difficulty in collecting and using data to demonstrate progress against key performance indicators. This is sometimes not helped by the lack of comprehensive data provided by the local authority about the needs of the local population and clear targets for improving outcomes in the local area.
- ✘ Children's centres that are less strong in obtaining and using data, evaluating their services and monitoring take-up are less effective in targeting their services at those in the community who are most in need.

Introduction

57. Children's centres provide access to a range of services for children and their families. Support is available for families during mothers' pregnancy and continues through to when a child goes into Reception Year at primary school. Since 2004, children's centres have been set up across the country in stages, starting with the establishment of centres in the most disadvantaged communities.

58. Children's centres provide families with or make arrangements for them to have access to:

- ✘ early learning and childcare
- ✘ family support
- ✘ health services
- ✘ support into employment
- ✘ other specialist services.

59. Ofsted has been inspecting children's centres since May 2010, and is required to inspect all children's centres in England by 2015. Children's centre inspections evaluate each centre's effectiveness and what it should do to improve. Inspection reports give a written summary of outcomes for young children and their families, the quality of a centre's provision, the effectiveness of leadership and management and the centre's capacity to improve. Some children's centres also offer childcare and early education and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. These children's centres are either registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register or offer maintained education because they are also a school. The quality of their early years provision is reported in either the early years and childcare section of this report or the section relating to maintained schools.

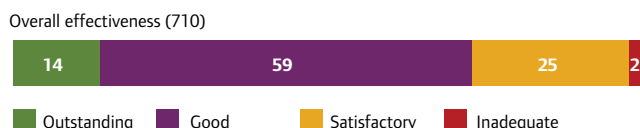
60. Inspections focus on how well the centre's leadership and management:

- ✘ identify the needs of young children, parents and prospective parents in the centre's reach area, especially those in most need of targeted intervention and support
- ✘ deliver early childhood services to meet those needs
- ✘ identify and encourage young children, parents and prospective parents to take advantage of the early childhood services in the area
- ✘ improve outcomes for young children and their families, including providing support for parents to access employment.

Children’s centres

Overall effectiveness

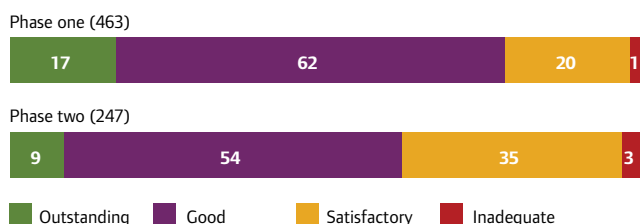
Figure 14 Overall effectiveness of all children’s centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of centres)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

61. Of the 710 children’s centres inspected this year, nearly all were judged as at least satisfactory for overall effectiveness, and 73% were judged as good or outstanding. Only 2% were inadequate. However, just under two thirds of the 710 centres inspected were those which have been established the longest and are therefore not representative of the sector overall. Where a children’s centre has been judged as inadequate at inspection, Ofsted carries out another full inspection of the centre within one year.

Figure 15 Overall effectiveness of children’s centres by the phase in which they were established (percentages of centres)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Children’s centres that are less strong at obtaining and using data, evaluating their services and monitoring take-up are less effective in targeting their services at those in the community who are most in need.

62. Children’s centres have been established in three phases. Phase one children’s centres were set up between 2004 and 2006 to provide full coverage of the 20% most deprived areas in England. Phase two children’s centres, established between 2006 and 2008, extended coverage to the 30% most deprived areas. Phase three children’s centres, set up between 2008 and 2010, then covered the remaining 70% of the country. Ofsted inspections to date have focused on children’s centres established during either phase one or phase two. Figure 15 shows the overall effectiveness of children’s centres by the phases in which they were established. The large majority of centres inspected were phase one children’s centres. Of the centres inspected a much higher proportion of phase one providers (79%) were judged good or outstanding than phase two providers (63%), a difference of 16 percentage points. The difference in the percentage judged to be outstanding is particularly striking. This may in part reflect these centres gaining experience over time.

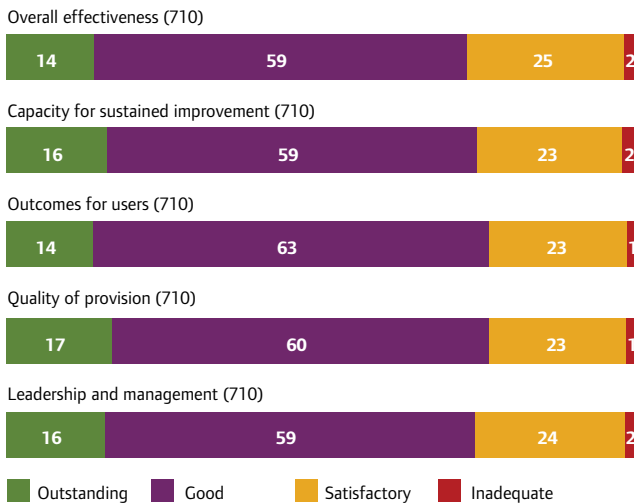
63. Children’s centres have been set up to provide universal services but also to target and support disadvantaged children and their families, therefore the impact they are having on ‘closing the gap’ in terms of deprivation is central to their success. Inspections suggest that in general leaders and staff in children’s centres are committed to closing the gap and see a focus on the most disadvantaged as being central to their contribution.

64. Some children’s centres are having success targeting specific groups and using outreach activity to draw in families from these groups. For example, some good or outstanding children’s centres are having particular success targeting fathers. But many children’s centres are also aware of groups with whom they are having less success, such as families suffering from domestic violence, or lone parents and teenage parents. Centres can often give anecdotal evidence of lives that have been transformed, but data showing improved outcomes for the target groups, including the difference the centre has made, are less common. This is a weakness even in some children’s centres otherwise judged to be good. Children’s centres that are less strong at obtaining and using data, evaluating their services and monitoring take-up are less effective in targeting their services at those in the community who are most in need.



Effective practice and areas for development

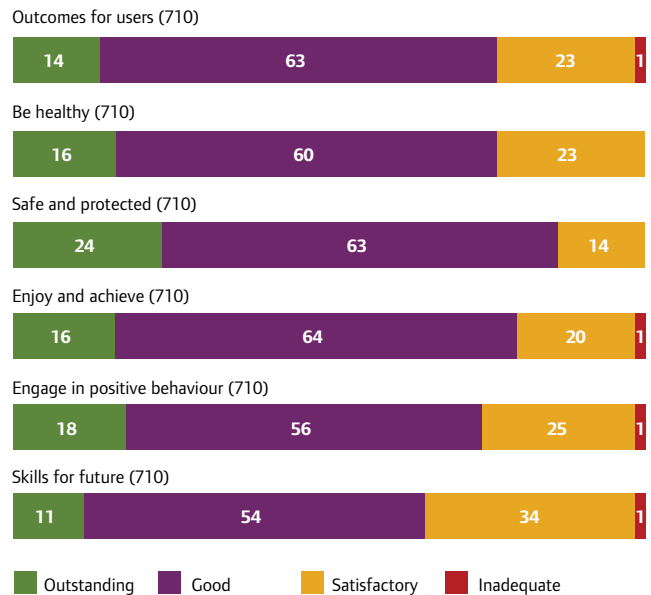
Figure 16 Key inspection judgements for children's centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of centres)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

65. There are no substantial differences in quality between the key inspection judgements for children's centres as illustrated in Figure 16. However, this masks a level of variation between performance in the different outcomes for the children and adults who use the service, as illustrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17 Outcomes for users: sub-judgements of children's centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of centres)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

66. By far the strongest area is how centres ensure that children who benefit from their services feel safe and are protected, where 87% of children's centres were judged as good or outstanding. Most children's centres are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and are able to ensure that they embed practice which supports this. Children's outcomes in relation to being healthy and enjoying and achieving were also relative strengths in the children's centres inspected this year. Activities focusing on health, such as baby massage, baby health clinics and healthy eating are often areas of particular strength that attract and retain families. Links with health services are in place at most centres but there is room for improvement in weaker centres in using and sharing data effectively to assess the impact of activities on children's and families' health.

67. Findings from inspection show that some effective children's centres are focusing on preparing children to be successful learners by concentrating on their personal, social and emotional development and their communication and language skills. Some of the most effective centres are achieving some success in bringing otherwise disadvantaged children up to a level to match their peers.

Children's centres



68. In contrast, centres find it more difficult to provide or direct users towards services that will enable them to develop skills beyond their immediate needs. The weakest area inspected in children's centres was developing skills for the future. This relates not only to the support that children's centres provide to develop the skills of children, but also their important role in helping parents to achieve economic stability and independence. In this area only 65% of children's centres were judged as good or outstanding. These are important aspects of the work of children's centres and are central to their ability to improve outcomes for the whole family.

69. Children's centres that are stronger in these respects have more effective partnerships in place to provide a range of information and support for parents that meets their needs and improves their chances of entering training or employment, such as partnerships with Jobcentre Plus, Citizen's Advice Bureaux and adult learning providers. Often the starting point is in encouraging parents to volunteer, helping them to gain additional skills which will be useful in improving their confidence. Good centres help parents to access a range of basic courses designed to help them develop and support their family life, such as literacy or information and communication technology. They also provide help for those for whom English is an additional language to develop their reading and speaking skills. High participation rates in further education courses, and other opportunities such as volunteering, are features of centres that offer good

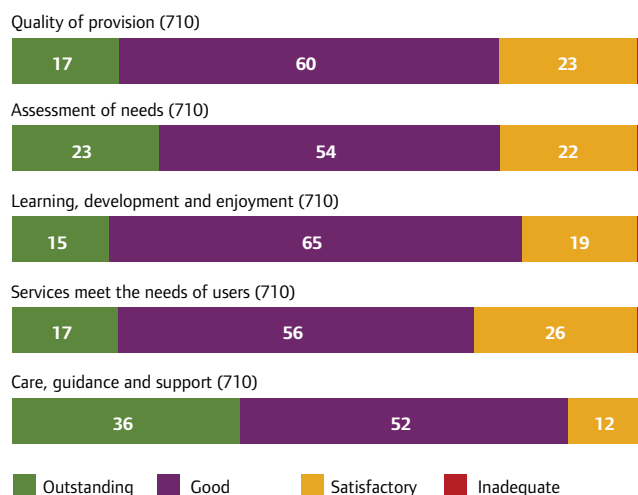
support. Adults comment positively about the impact that such services have on their confidence and self-esteem.

70. Effective children’s centres provide, or signpost parents to, good-quality childcare provision, so that they can access opportunities for training and employment in the knowledge that their children are safe and well cared for. These centres also aim to help children to progress in their own learning, often by employing highly qualified professionals such as teachers. Good or outstanding centres make effective use of resources to help children develop communication and social skills, for example through links with other children’s groups. Children’s centres which are effective in building families’ skills also provide courses and information to new parents to develop good parenting skills; these help them to understand and deal with issues such as how to manage children’s sleeping patterns and behaviour.

71. Children’s centres that do less well in this area have limited systems in place to identify the services that children and families need, to secure early intervention for children who need the most support or to assess the impact that these services have on improving outcomes for the family. These centres may offer only a limited range of training and learning opportunities, and do not match these to the skills that parents need in order to secure economic improvement for their families. There is a lack of information in these settings to help parents secure financial stability, with weak signposting to other services that can help them.

Inspection suggests that a key weakness is the lack of rigour with which the impact of actions and services is monitored and evaluated.

Figure 18 Quality of provision sub-judgements for children’s centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of centres)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

72. The inspections carried out this year shed light on what children’s centres need to do in order to improve the quality of provision further and deliver better outcomes for children and their families. Figure 18 shows that children’s centres are more effective in providing care, guidance and support, but less effective in delivering services that meet the needs of users, or ensuring that these services are available and can be accessed. Inspection suggests that a key weakness is the lack of rigour with which the impact of actions and services is monitored and evaluated. The use of evaluation to improve services was the weakest of all the inspection sub-judgements in children’s centres inspected this year, being no better than satisfactory in 39% of providers. In order to improve quality, better meet the needs of their users and become more effective, children’s centres need to become far more rigorous in the way they use data to identify and assess the needs of the children and families in the local area who are most in need of support; target that support well enough to improve their outcomes; and more systematically evaluate the quality and impact of the services they deliver.

Maintained schools



Key findings

In 2009 Ofsted introduced a revised inspection framework for the inspection of maintained schools and academies and a more risk-based approach to inspection in which good and outstanding schools are inspected less frequently. In 2010/11 outstanding schools, with the exception of nursery schools, were not inspected if the annual risk assessment showed no evidence of a decline in performance and the fundamental nature of the school was unchanged. As a result, the schools inspected in any one year are now not representative of the whole population of schools.

- ✦ Fifty-seven per cent of the 5,727 schools inspected in the past year were found to provide their pupils with a good or outstanding education. This is a similar proportion to that found last year.
- ✦ A more representative picture of the 'state of the nation' is given by looking at the most recent inspection judgement for all schools in England. This shows that 70% of schools were found to have been delivering a good or better standard of education.
- ✦ Six per cent of schools inspected this year were judged inadequate. This is a decrease from the 8% of schools inspected last year. However, this masks differences between types of school. Secondary schools were most likely to be judged inadequate, at 8%.
- ✦ Schools are more likely to improve than decline between inspections. However, the proportion that decline is a concern. Around a third of all schools inspected during 2010/11 improved their performance compared with their previous inspection and nearly half maintained their performance. Nearly a fifth received a lower overall effectiveness grade. This is a slightly more positive picture than in 2009/10.
- ✦ Forty per cent of schools previously judged to be outstanding that were inspected this year declined. These schools, with the exception of nursery schools, were selected for inspection following a risk assessment or because the nature of the school had changed. The majority had experienced a decline in standards over time and a marked change in terms of senior leadership, staff turnover or the profile of their pupils. Three previously outstanding schools declined to inadequate.
- ✦ The proportion of previously satisfactory schools which improved increased from 42% last year to 46% this year. However, the slow progress of satisfactory or 'stuck' schools continues to be a cause for concern. Fourteen per cent of all schools inspected this year, which is nearly 800 schools, have been judged satisfactory for at least their last two inspections and have no better than satisfactory capacity to improve.
- ✦ There are now fewer schools in categories of concern than last year and the pace of their improvement has increased: schools took on average 18 months to be removed from special measures this year in comparison with 20 months last year. It is encouraging that over a fifth of schools judged inadequate at their previous inspection had achieved substantial improvement and were found to be good or better when inspected again this year.
- ✦ There remains a strong relationship between deprivation and weaker provision and the gap in the quality of schools between socially deprived areas and more advantaged areas is a continuing concern. Seventy-one per cent of schools serving the least deprived pupils were judged to be good or outstanding compared with 48% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. However, of the schools serving the most deprived pupils, 7% were judged to be outstanding, showing that it is possible to buck this trend.
- ✦ The quality of teaching is still too variable and too much is satisfactory. Teaching was found to be good or outstanding in only 60% of schools overall. However, this is a slight increase from 2009/10. The quality of teaching in secondary schools has also improved slightly from 51% good or outstanding last year to 54% this year.
- ✦ A key requirement of schools is that they teach pupils to read. Ofsted's survey evidence shows that primary schools that were most successful in teaching children to read by six had a very rigorous, systematic approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. This laid the foundations for successful reading, writing and spelling. The approach was applied with a high degree of consistency and was sustained.

Maintained schools

- ✘ The very large majority of schools are orderly places where pupils' behaviour is judged to be at least good: where teaching is good pupils' behaviour is usually at least good as well. Pupils' behaviour was good or outstanding in 87% of schools inspected this year compared with 86% last year. However, it was less strong in secondary schools, with 22% judged to have satisfactory behaviour and 2% inadequate behaviour.
- ✘ Leadership and management are good or outstanding in 67% of schools inspected this year, which is similar to the previous year. Given the importance of leadership and management in securing school improvement, there is an urgent need to build more capacity among school leaders in those schools that are not making enough progress, and particularly to tackle the variability in teaching within them.
- ✘ An important trend in education policy has been the increasing role that successful schools have played in supporting and working in partnership with less successful schools. Ofsted visited 10 federations of high-performing schools with weaker schools for a survey carried out this year. In all 10 such federations teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour had improved in the weaker schools and good outcomes had been maintained in the high-performing school.
- ✘ In 79% of all schools inspected this year safeguarding procedures were judged to be good or outstanding. It is now rare for inadequate procedures to be identified. This indicates that schools have considerably improved this area of their work and take their responsibilities in this area very seriously.
- ✘ Most of the academies inspected this year were sponsored academies where previously the school had experienced a history of failure or low performance. Of the 75 academies inspected this year, 40 were judged to be providing a good or outstanding education for their pupils and five were inadequate. The proportion of academies judged good or outstanding is similar to that for all secondary schools, although within this the proportion judged outstanding was higher at just over a fifth.

Introduction

73. This has been a year of considerable change for the maintained schools sector, with further government policy developments designed to tackle underperforming schools, lever up standards and improve the quality of teaching. The publication of the White Paper in November 2010 highlighted more than ever the importance of good teaching if pupils are to make good progress and schools are to close the significant gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils.¹² This theme reflects a key message in last year's Annual Report, and is repeated again this year: that the quality of teaching is too variable and too much is no better than satisfactory.

74. The context in which inspections of schools take place is evolving. A major strand of the government's education strategy has been to increase the number of academies and to open up the possibility of becoming an academy to a wider spectrum of schools. In May 2010, the government invited all outstanding schools to consider the option of converting to academy status, and in November 2010 extended that invitation to good schools to become academies as part of a partnership of schools. This is leading to a rapid expansion of the number of academies in existence, and is beginning to change their nature. They are no longer exclusively schools in deprived areas with a history of underperformance. The number of academies inspected by Ofsted has increased to 75 this year from 43 in 2009/10 and this rise is set to continue. Eleven of the academy inspections carried out this year were of the new 'converter' academies.

75. A further theme of the White Paper is the role of highly effective schools in leading improvement and, in particular, supporting other less successful schools. Included in this Annual Report is some of Ofsted's emerging evidence on how school to school support is driving improvement in a small number of 'support federations' and the leadership implications for headteachers who are leading more than one school. It is likely that, as the number of academies grows and the role of local authorities in directly providing school improvement services diminishes, these school-to-

12. *The importance of teaching: schools White Paper*, Department for Education, 2010.

school support structures will become increasingly common and their effectiveness will be a critical determinant of school improvement.

76. The education system faces considerable challenges: to tackle the wide variability in teaching and in outcomes for all groups of pupils within and between schools; to sustain good performance; and to build capacity where provision is no better than satisfactory. Much of this variability is persistent and slow to change. For many years Ofsted has reported that the quality of education offered by schools serving the most deprived communities tends to be poorer, on average, than those schools serving the least deprived communities. This has serious implications for social equity and mobility and remains a key issue identified by inspections carried out this year.

77. From April 2011 schools have received the new pupil premium, which is additional funding provided to schools specifically to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals. It is too early to tell, from inspection, what the impact of this additional funding will be. However, inspection has identified a wealth of evidence about those schools that offer consistently outstanding education in very challenging circumstances, that are absolutely committed to supporting every individual pupil to succeed, and that, as a result, achieve outstanding progress for their pupils and weaken the link between deprivation and underachievement. The lessons from these outstanding schools may help to inform how schools choose to direct the additional funding from the pupil premium.

78. Inspection continues to evolve to meet these challenges and they are given even more priority and emphasis in the new inspection framework to be introduced in January 2012. Within this changing landscape Ofsted's inspections offer a critical insight on what matters most in schools – the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. In the following section the key features and differences of school performance are highlighted. Ofsted's increasingly proportionate approach to inspection over recent years has reduced the number of higher performing schools that are inspected each year and that therefore contribute to the inspection evidence used for the Annual Report. As a result, the schools inspected in any one year are now not representative of the whole population of schools, and comparisons with previous years are not straightforward.

Overall effectiveness

79. This more proportionate approach to inspection introduced in the 2009/10 framework means that for the last two years less successful schools have been prioritised for inspection. Ofsted now carries out a risk assessment of all schools, apart from nursery schools, previously judged to be outstanding or good starting three years from the end of the academic year in which they had their previous inspection.¹³ The risk assessment for primary and secondary schools takes into account pupils' attainment, progress and attendance over three years; the findings from any survey visit carried out by Ofsted since the last inspection; and any significant issues brought to Ofsted's attention, including safeguarding concerns and qualifying complaints.¹⁴

80. Since 1 September 2010 previously outstanding primary and secondary schools have only been selected for inspection if concerns are identified through this risk assessment process, and good schools are only inspected once in a five-year cycle unless such concerns are identified.¹⁵ This year Ofsted carried out 2,772 risk assessments of primary and secondary schools previously judged to be good or outstanding. In 2,659 of these there was no evidence to suggest that performance had deteriorated and Ofsted published an interim assessment confirming this. Following the publication of an interim assessment, outstanding schools were informed that Ofsted would not be inspecting them but would continue to carry out annual risk assessments and good schools were informed that they would not be inspected for at least a year. Interim assessments of 47 special schools and pupil referral units previously judged to be outstanding were also published and the schools were informed that they would not be inspected in the next academic year.

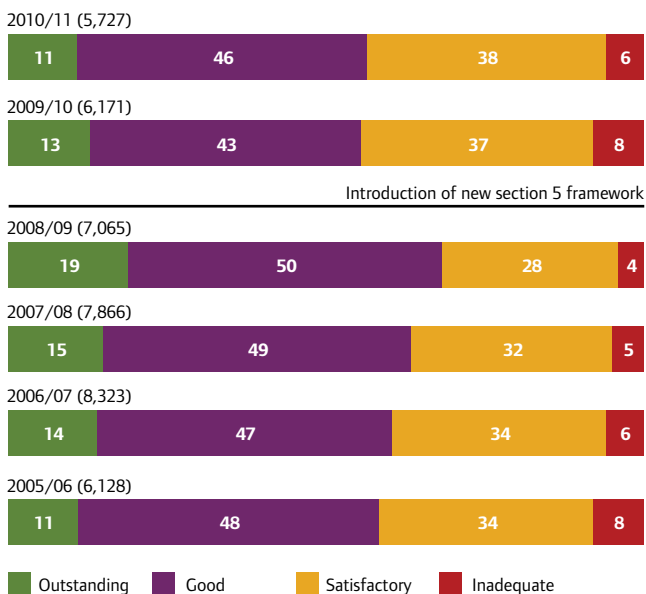
13. Schools that have experienced a fundamental change to their nature, such as an amalgamation, are selected for inspection prior to the risk assessment process taking place.

14. Ofsted has specific powers (under section 11A-C of the Education Act 2005, as amended) to investigate certain complaints, known as qualifying complaints.

15. Ofsted also inspects a random sample of previously good schools in order to check that the risk assessment process is working effectively. In 2010/11 Ofsted inspected 59 schools for this purpose. Where there has been a fundamental change in the nature of the school inspection may also be brought forward.

Maintained schools

Figure 19 The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)¹⁶



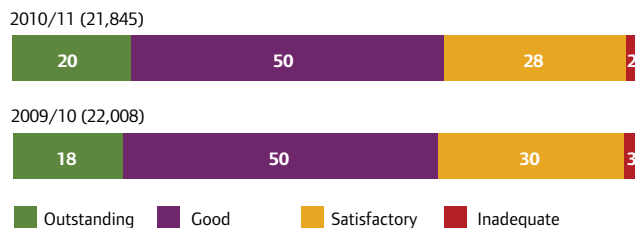
Figures in 2010/11 include pilot inspection outcomes.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

81. This was the second full year of inspections using the school inspection framework introduced in 2009/10. Figure 19 shows that the percentage of schools judged good or outstanding this year is similar to last year. There has been a fall of two percentage points in the proportion of schools judged to be outstanding, which has been offset by a three percentage point increase in the proportion of schools judged to be good. The fall in outstanding provision will have been influenced by the increasingly proportionate approach to inspection. This year only 3% of the schools selected for inspection had previously been judged to be outstanding compared with 8% last year. Six per cent of the schools inspected this year were found to be inadequate. The two percentage point fall compared with last year is encouraging.

82. The impact of risk assessments on the sample of schools inspected in any one year is that many fewer previously outstanding and good schools are inspected than would be the case if a proportionate approach to inspection were not employed. The sample is therefore not representative of the performance of all schools in the country. A more representative picture is given by looking at the most recent inspection results of all schools. Although in some cases these inspections took place a number of years ago, this nonetheless provides an indication of the overall performance of schools, as well as trends over time. Figure 20 shows the most recent inspection result for all schools open on 31 August 2011 compared with all schools open on 31 August 2010.

Figure 20 The most recent overall effectiveness judgements for all schools open on 31 August 2011 compared with the most recent inspection judgement for all schools open on 31 August 2010 (percentage of schools)



Figures in 2010/11 include pilot inspection outcomes.

Data include inspection outcomes for predecessor schools that have converted to academy status in 2010/11.

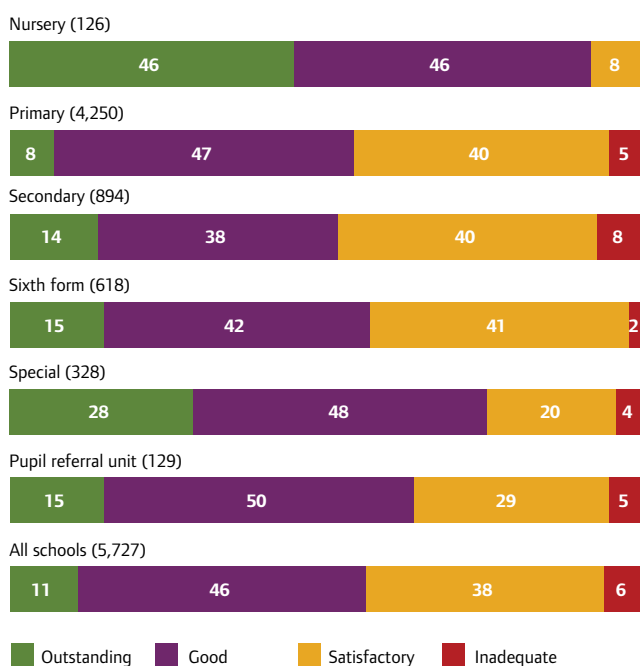
Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Six per cent of the schools inspected this year were found to be inadequate. The two percentage point fall compared with last year is encouraging.

16. This year Ofsted also conducted 145 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other judgements are excluded.

83. Figure 20 illustrates two important features. First, it shows that 70% of schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is a considerably higher proportion than the 57% of schools judged good or outstanding this year (see Figure 19) and provides an indication of the impact of the risk-assessment process on the sample of schools inspected. Second, it shows that the profile of performance for schools in their most recent inspection changed little between 31 August 2010 and 31 August 2011, although there was a slight increase in the proportion judged outstanding and a slight decrease in the proportion judged satisfactory or inadequate. It is also a similar profile of performance to inspection judgements for those schools inspected in 2008/09, the final year of the previous inspection framework. In other words, the quality of schools overall has remained relatively stable over the last three years. However, it must be recognised that this analysis includes the outcomes of inspection undertaken several years ago and against the criteria set out in previous inspection frameworks and that the majority of schools would not have been inspected between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Figure 21 The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures include pilot inspection outcomes.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

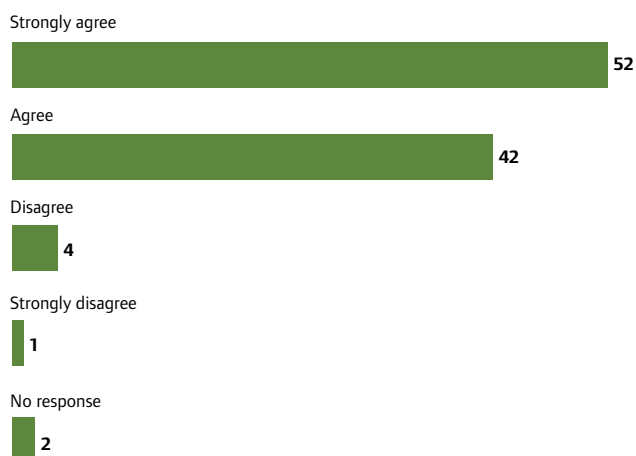
84. Figure 21 sets out the overall effectiveness of the sample of schools inspected during 2010/11, in which weaker schools were deliberately targeted for inspection. The inspection framework introduced in 2009 also sets a higher bar for performance than the previous inspection framework. The inspections undertaken this year continue to show considerable differences in overall effectiveness between different types of school. In particular Figure 21 shows the following.

- ✦ The very high proportion of nursery schools being judged outstanding or good continues to be a strong feature. Unlike other types of school, nursery schools are not subject to risk assessment.
- ✦ The lowest proportion of outstanding provision was once again in the primary phase. This year there was a one percentage point fall in the proportion of primary schools judged outstanding compared with 2009/10. The proportion of provision judged no better than satisfactory for this phase remained similar to last year.
- ✦ The performance of secondary schools is more polarised than that of primary schools, with both a higher proportion of outstanding provision and a higher proportion of inadequate provision.
- ✦ Secondary schools are still more likely to be judged inadequate than any other type of school. However, the proportion of inadequate secondary schools fell from 11% last year to 8% this year.
- ✦ Only 2% of sixth forms are judged inadequate, but a large proportion of provision is only satisfactory.
- ✦ Special schools and pupil referral units performed well overall, with 76% and 65%, respectively, being judged good and outstanding, although in both sectors the proportion of outstanding provision dropped sharply in comparison with last year – by seven and six percentage points, respectively. This is likely to be influenced by the fact that 2010/11 was the first year in which risk assessments were carried out for special schools and pupil referral units and previously outstanding providers were selected on the basis of risk.

Maintained schools

85. As part of each inspection, parents are asked to inform the inspection team of their views about the school. They can inform inspectors through a variety of methods, including the use of a confidential parents' and carers' questionnaire. Inspectors take these comments and responses into account as they carry out the inspection. In 2010/11 Ofsted received responses from parents or carers of over one-quarter of the pupils in the schools inspected.

Figure 22 Parents' responses to the statement 'Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school' (percentage of parents responding)



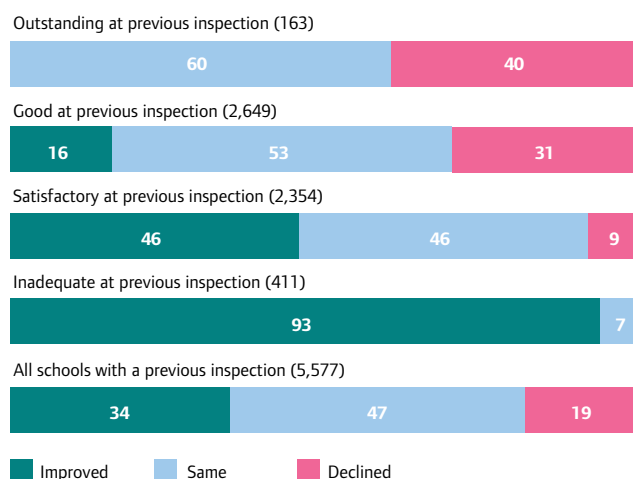
Based on proportion of parental questionnaire returns (315,182).

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

86. Overall, parents remain very positive about the quality of education that their child receives. An analysis of 315,182 parental questionnaires returned from 3,679 inspections shows that 94% of the parents who responded were positive overall about their child's schooling. These results are consistent with the previous year, when 93% expressed a positive opinion overall. The lowest proportion of strongly positive comments came in response to the question, 'The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns', but even here 85% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

87. Through the questionnaires parents are also asked how able they feel to support their child's learning. Although parents who respond are generally very positive about this, 8% of parents disagreed with the statement 'The school helps me to support my child's learning'. However, parents' dissatisfaction with other aspects of the same schools, such as behaviour, tended also to be high and many of the schools with these issues were found to be inadequate overall at their inspection.

Figure 23 Change in overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 compared with their previous inspection (percentage of schools)



This figure includes the 5,577 schools with a previous section 5 inspection judgement.

Schools that were previously outstanding and inspected this year include nursery schools, which are subject to routine inspection; primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units that have been selected on the basis of risk; and schools selected because of a change in their fundamental nature.

Data exclude 10 academy converters.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

88. Figure 23 compares schools' overall effectiveness this year with their previous inspection. Overall around a third of schools inspected this year had improved since their previous inspection, under half had maintained their performance and just under one fifth had declined. This represents slightly better performance than last year when 29% of schools improved and 23% declined.

89. Nearly a third of those previously good or outstanding schools inspected were unable to sustain their performance. This figure reflects Ofsted's policy of selecting good and outstanding schools in which performance is less secure for inspection on the basis of risk assessment.

90. Of the 40% of outstanding schools which had declined since their previous inspection, the large majority are now judged to be good. However, 11 schools declined to satisfactory and three were judged inadequate. In the three schools that declined to inadequate, pupils' achievement had fallen substantially, the quality of teaching was no better than satisfactory and inspectors identified major weaknesses in both governance and safeguarding procedures. In 59% of the schools which declined this year from outstanding to good or satisfactory, standards of attainment had also declined. The majority had experienced a significant change in terms of senior leadership, the stability of their staffing, or the profile of their pupils. As a result, priority had been given to stabilising management or teaching, so that the drive for continuous high quality had faltered. In most cases inspectors made recommendations to refocus energies on key processes such as monitoring and evaluation, or ensuring the consistency of assessment in order to improve teaching. This underlines the fact that a previous track record of success is no guarantee that schools will continue to flourish. For all outstanding schools the challenge is to sustain their high levels of performance.

91. In a sector with a generally high level of performance and stability, 12 nursery schools declined from outstanding to good at this year's inspection. In many cases, this coincided with additional pressures on the senior leaders such as building works, sharing in the leadership of another centre or uncertainties over the school's future. Governing bodies sometimes failed to recognise the impact of such pressures on the normal delivery of high-quality practice, and a lack of rigour in school monitoring and self-evaluation then allowed decline to set in – for example when the extent of lesson observation fell so that a decline in the quality of teaching was not noticed. In these schools, senior leaders tended to be having only a limited impact on teaching so that weaknesses in planning and assessment were beginning to emerge. In some cases these weaknesses were leading to less effective development of pupils' language and communication skills.

92. This year the quality of a small but notable number of successful special schools also declined, including 10 which declined from outstanding and 35 from good. Most of these schools declined to good or satisfactory, but six were judged inadequate. The schools which declined from outstanding were varied in nature, including some serving pupils with severe and multiple learning difficulties and others where pupils had behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. In approximately a third of these schools there had been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection and in many cases a lack of precision about the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders was also a factor contributing to the deterioration in quality. Several of these schools were not well enough informed about the quality of teaching and did not address emerging weaknesses with anything like enough urgency. Most commonly, the governing body knew too little about the school because monitoring was not rigorous or because overgenerous self-review judgements were accepted without sufficient challenge; at times of change and in an inherently challenging sector, they accepted too much on trust.

93. The challenge for all schools is to either improve their performance or maintain it at a high level over a sustained period of time. It is therefore encouraging that the proportion of satisfactory and inadequate schools that have improved is slightly higher, in both cases, than last year. Not only have more inadequate schools improved, but they have done so faster than last year; the average time taken for schools to be removed from special measures was 18 months this year compared with 20 months last year. This corresponds to a substantial increase in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures after two Ofsted monitoring inspections and a substantial decrease in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures in four or more monitoring inspections.

94. Nonetheless, it remains a serious concern that over half the schools previously judged satisfactory and inspected this year remain stuck at satisfactory or have declined. This represents over 1,250 schools. In just over three quarters of these schools their capacity to improve is also judged no better than satisfactory.

Maintained schools

95. Under the inspection arrangements introduced in 2009, Ofsted carries out monitoring of satisfactory schools which provides critical evidence of what these schools need to do to improve. Schools may receive a monitoring visit if the capacity to improve judgement at their previous inspection was only satisfactory, if an element of their provision was judged inadequate, or if pupils' standards or progress are significantly below average. There were 770 schools previously judged to be satisfactory which received a monitoring visit this year to evaluate their progress in making improvements and demonstrating a better capacity to improve.

96. Last year's Annual Report found that the progress being made by satisfactory schools that had received a monitoring visit was too slow. This year the picture is slightly better, but not good enough overall: in 40% of these visits schools' progress was judged to be good compared with less than a third of schools visited last year. However, only five schools were making outstanding progress and in 64 schools, just over 8%, progress was judged to be inadequate. Therefore, although the picture is better this year, there still remains considerable scope for improvement, as teaching is not being improved sufficiently to drive pupils' progress.

97. In schools where progress was judged good, there had been a substantial shift in the rate of pupils' progress. This was typically due to improved teaching. Teachers were expecting more from the pupils; they were engaging more effectively with them and greater attention was being given to carefully assessing and then meeting their learning needs.

98. The leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team was also crucial in securing improved outcomes for pupils at schools that had been stuck at satisfactory. In previously stuck schools making good progress there had been a transformation in their approach to professional development and their drive for consistency, especially in teaching. These schools had created an environment where key leaders focused relentlessly on improving the consistency and quality of teaching and ensured that staff learnt continually from the influence of the best practice in and beyond the school. There was a clear understanding among staff that the senior leaders saw teaching, and its impact on learning, as the major business of the school.

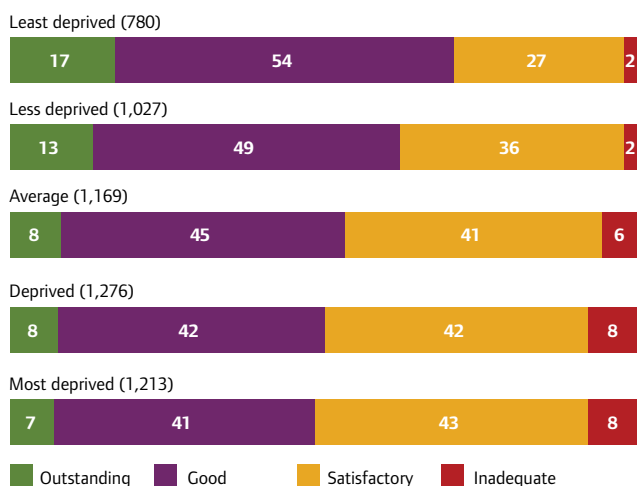
99. In the schools where progress was only satisfactory, while there may have been some improvements in pupils' achievement, these were not found consistently across the school. Some attention had been given to improving the quality of teaching and some teachers had benefited greatly from these approaches. In other cases, the efforts to improve teaching had not brought about the desired results. This was often due to schools not being sufficiently clear about what needed to be improved and trying to make too many changes without the necessary consideration and prioritisation.

100. In the schools judged to be inadequate in making improvements, there remained significant difficulties in improving standards. In primary and secondary schools the efforts of senior managers to improve the quality of teaching were taking too long to have a positive impact. Frequently these schools had an insecure understanding of what constituted effective teaching and this created difficulties when monitoring was undertaken by senior staff. In addition, weaknesses which are common in many schools making satisfactory progress, such as in assessing pupils' progress and planning carefully for individual needs, were more significant and more deeply rooted in schools in which progress was inadequate. These problems were sometimes exacerbated by local factors such as the absence of the headteacher or an inability to appoint enough highly skilled and experienced staff.

Last year's Annual Report found that the progress being made by satisfactory schools that had received a monitoring visit was too slow. This year the picture is slightly better, but not good enough overall.

The relationship between deprivation and the quality of schools

Figure 24 Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 by deprivation (percentage of schools)



This chart is based on the deprivation of pupils on the school roll in January 2011 as measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2010. The chart groups schools by quintiles of deprivation. 'Most deprived' indicates the 20% of schools with the most deprived pupils.

Nurseries, pupil referral units and hospital schools are excluded from this analysis because the IDACI measure is not available for these schools.

Figures are rounded and may not add exactly to 100.

101. Deprivation continues to be a significant factor influencing the quality of schools. Figure 24 shows that the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding declines steeply as the proportion of deprived pupils at the school increases. A school serving the most deprived pupils in the country is four times more likely to be inadequate than a school serving the least deprived. At the other end of the spectrum 17% of the schools serving the least deprived pupils were outstanding compared with 7% of schools serving the most deprived communities. This variation in performance continues to have a significant impact on the life chances of many pupils, reinforcing inequality and reducing social mobility. Addressing this is one of the key challenges for the education system.

102. However, the 7% of schools serving the most deprived pupils that were judged outstanding demonstrate that it is clearly possible to buck the trend. Almost all of these outstanding schools serving deprived communities were from urban areas and over a third were located in the London area.

103. A complex range of factors contributes to the difference in the quality of schools according to deprivation. However, Ofsted inspection and survey evidence has consistently shown that sustained and committed ambition on the part of school leaders and governors, with high levels of expectation for pupils irrespective of low prior attainment and a determination to deliver good teaching for all, are critical factors in breaking down barriers to achievement. These schools achieve very high levels of consistency in teaching and learning, and have excellent professional development in place for their staff. Where senior leaders lack this commitment and ambition, or have limited capacity to drive up standards, schools serving deprived pupils struggle to make sustained progress.

The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

104. Schools which have children below the age of five currently receive a separate overall effectiveness judgement for their provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This judgement contributes to the grade awarded for the overall effectiveness of the school. Provision for the early years was judged to be good or outstanding in 75% of primary schools inspected and in 92% of nursery schools.

Maintained schools

105. Despite these particularly strong outcomes there was a substantial difference in the percentage of different types of school being judged as outstanding for the Early Years Foundation Stage. In nursery schools, which form a relatively small and specialist sector and are not subject to risk assessment, 47% of foundation stage provision was judged to be outstanding compared with 9% in primary schools. The quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage in nursery schools was considerably better than that found in primary schools. Where leaders have been most effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they have focused on developing a common approach to promoting children’s early learning and development that has been articulated clearly and implemented consistently throughout the school. This tends to lead to more effective teaching and results in better rates of progress by the children.

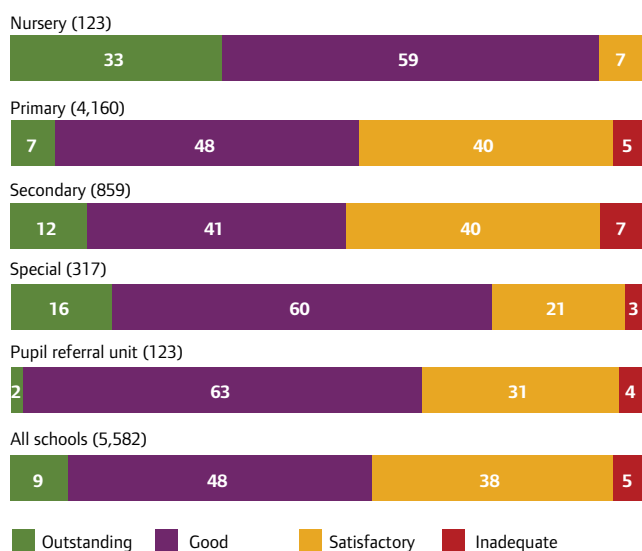
106. Inspectors make judgements about pupils’ achievement by combining their evaluation of the progress made by pupils with an assessment of their standards of attainment. This is a key judgement and in most schools it correlates with the judgement made about the overall effectiveness of the school. While inspectors’ judgements on pupils’ attainment form an important part of the overall judgement on achievement, the rates of progress that pupils make from their starting points are often more significant and reflect the impact of what the school does. Attainment judgements are based on how well pupils perform in national tests and examinations over a three-year period as well as the attainment levels observed by inspectors in lessons and in their scrutiny of the pupils’ work. The historical data are considered alongside what the school is currently achieving for its pupils. Progress is also looked at over time so that inspectors can consider the school’s track record as well as the progress achieved for the pupils currently being educated by the school.

107. A judgement that pupils’ progress is good will often lead to a similar judgement about achievement, even where standards of attainment are below average or low. In these cases the schools are making a significant difference for their pupils and good and improving rates of progress are reflected in an improving trend in attainment, with ambitious and convincing improvement targets for the future. Of the schools inspected this year, 57% were judged to be good or outstanding for pupils’ achievement, a similar figure to last year. However, in too many schools the attainment and the progress of pupils are not good enough.

108. The close correlation between the judgement made for pupils’ achievement and that for the overall effectiveness of the school identified in the 2009/10 Annual Report has continued this year. In over 94% of inspections the same judgements were made for both aspects of a school’s performance. However, the correlation between the grades awarded for pupils’ attainment and schools’ overall effectiveness continues to be much less strong. The same judgement was made for attainment and overall effectiveness in just 56% of schools. In comparison, in 38% of schools the judgement for overall effectiveness was higher than that for attainment. In the large majority of these schools both pupils’ progress and their achievement were good or outstanding.

Pupils’ achievement

Figure 25 Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

109. In 130 schools inspected this year attainment was judged to be above average or high, but overall effectiveness was judged to be either satisfactory or inadequate and pupils' progress was not good enough. The key factor in many of these schools was that there was a level of complacency about the standards attained by pupils, who were not achieving their potential. Their above-average attainment did not reflect good enough progress and many pupils were consequently not achieving the higher standards of which they were capable.

110. In June 2011 the government announced its intention to set more challenging 'floor standards' or minimum performance expectations for schools. In 2010/11 the expected floor standard for secondary schools was 35% of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. This floor standard is rising to 40% in 2011/12 and then to 50% in 2015. The government has also introduced a progress measure so that schools will be considered to have not met the floor standard if a lower proportion of pupils than the national average make the expected amount of progress in mathematics and English from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, and the school is performing below the minimum expectations of attainment.

111. Of the 894 secondary schools inspected this year, 96 fell below the 35% floor standard. The new floor standards set for 2011/12 and 2015 will present a challenge and a further impetus for improvement for many secondary schools. For example, 38% of the sample of secondary schools inspected this year were performing below the 2015 floor standard, in the context of a proportionate approach to inspection in which weaker schools were selected for inspection.

112. The large majority of secondary schools inspected this year and not achieving the 40% floor standard are judged to be no better than satisfactory, and nearly a quarter of these are inadequate. These schools need to make significant improvements and accelerate their rate of progress. However, a very small minority of schools which fell below the 40% floor standard were judged to be good or outstanding. Most of these schools were on a rapidly improving trajectory in terms of both pupils' attainment and progress, in many cases as a result of strengthened leadership or governance arrangements, or structural changes such as federation. In these rapidly improving schools evidence from lesson observations and the school's own data indicated that pupils were beginning to make more rapid progress from previously low starting points. Four of these schools were academies that had just received their first full inspection and one had recently emerged from special measures.

113. Inspectors draw on a wide range of evidence when evaluating the achievement of pupils and consider whether all are making the best progress possible. This includes identifying whether there is significant variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils, for example: pupils with special educational needs; those from minority ethnic backgrounds; boys and girls; gifted and talented pupils; pupils from low income backgrounds; or pupils speaking English as an additional language. Overall, the quality of pupils' learning and their progress were judged to be good or outstanding in 58% of schools inspected this year.

114. There continues to be much discussion about how schools can help to 'close the gaps' by ensuring that pupils with low prior attainment make accelerated progress. Secondary schools which receive pupils with low prior attainment who then make very rapid progress have a number of common characteristics.

The close correlation between the judgement made for pupils' achievement and that for the overall effectiveness of the school identified in the 2009/10 Annual Report has continued this year.

Maintained schools

Secondary schools that wish to 'close the gaps' by ensuring accelerated progress for all need to consider:

- ✧ senior leadership that is ambitious, relentless and openly articulates a philosophy of excellence for all pupils irrespective of their starting points
- ✧ middle leaders who fully sign up to the vision of their leaders and who transmit this to all colleagues and ensure that it is reflected in the quality of teaching
- ✧ a governing body that knows the school well and continues to challenge the senior leaders to improve
- ✧ systems for monitoring and evaluation that identify any emerging areas of underperformance so that they can be tackled, and that also link seamlessly into high-profile staff development programmes
- ✧ the involvement of groups of staff in planning and taking responsibility for improvements
- ✧ sophisticated systems to ensure that the issues facing every pupil are known, tailor-made support is provided and failure is never seen as an option
- ✧ a high-profile approach to promoting better attendance and setting high standards of behaviour, consistently followed by all staff at the school
- ✧ investment in developing partnerships with parents that enhance parents' ability to support their children's learning
- ✧ a challenging but flexible curriculum, which provides stimulating and relevant learning and genuine and worthwhile choices in learning pathways; in many schools, the specialisms add a distinctive extra flavour to the options available
- ✧ a sharp focus in the younger year groups, in particular on basic skills, especially literacy, with targeted intervention for those students with low levels of attainment in reading and writing
- ✧ a rich diet of extra-curricula activities to engage students' wider interests

- ✧ teaching that is of consistently high quality because of teachers' own enthusiasm, deep subject knowledge, ability to use effective learning activities and adroit use of assessment techniques to ensure constant challenge for all students
- ✧ well-planned transition and induction arrangements for students with effective partnerships underpinning students' transition into further education, training and employment.

115. A specific judgement is also made for the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress. This forms an important aspect of inspectors' overall judgement on achievement, and was judged good or outstanding in 63% of schools inspected this year. This is a slight fall compared with last year, when 65% of schools were good or outstanding.

116. Despite the fact that in the majority of schools inspected this year progress made by pupils with special educational needs was judged to be good or outstanding, inspections revealed substantial variations in how well schools supported pupils with special educational needs. In those schools which were least effective teachers lacked clarity about why pupils were underachieving and, although interventions and 'catch up' were used effectively in Year 6, day-to-day provision and intervention in other years were not good enough and as a result pupils were making insufficient progress. In these schools poor achievement was related to teachers' low expectations of what pupils could do, weak ongoing assessment of their progress and, in some, a lack of differentiation in teaching. These weaknesses mirror some of the concerns set out in Ofsted's *Special educational needs and disability review* published last year.¹⁷

17. *The special educational needs and disability review* (090221), Ofsted, 2010.

117. In contrast, in the most effective schools teachers had high expectations of what all pupils, including those with special educational needs, could do and achieve. Specifically, teachers understood what ‘high expectations’ should look like for pupils progressing from different starting points. Careful assessment and tracking of pupils’ progress meant that schools could respond quickly with targeted interventions if there was any indication of underachievement. These schools tended to have strong links with parents and carers about learning as well as pastoral issues. In outstanding secondary schools, in particular, the curriculum had been effectively designed and developed to match the needs of pupils and, where an alternative curriculum was in place, this was rigorously quality assured to ensure effectiveness.

118. Although teaching has been judged to be inadequate this year in just 3% of schools, it is a serious concern that teaching in over 40% of primary and secondary schools is no better than satisfactory and is only outstanding in around 4%. The quality of teaching is a key focus of the inspection framework, and these figures show little improvement on the outcomes from inspections last year. Ofsted inspections and surveys provide a clear insight into what constitutes good or outstanding teaching and, conversely, the key weaknesses that contribute to teaching which is no better than satisfactory or inadequate. These characteristics differ very little between different types of school.

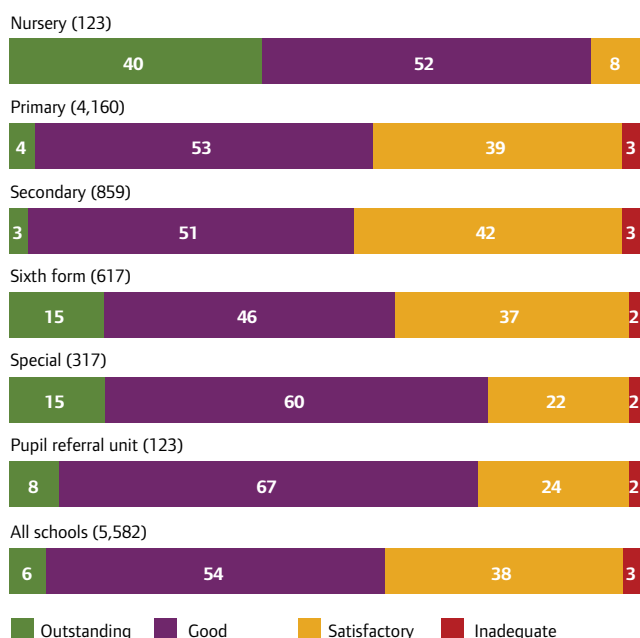
119. The following paragraphs focus on three different dimensions of outstanding teaching. The first dimension explored in this section is the effectiveness with which lessons are planned, structured and executed, and how this process is informed by high expectations. The second is the quality of interaction and dialogue that takes place in the lesson. The final dimension examined here is how teachers make very good use of assessment to understand pupils’ learning needs and starting points, to make adjustments to teaching and learning during lessons and over time, and provide ongoing feedback to pupils to guide them in the next steps in their learning.

120. Good-quality teaching depends on effectively planned lessons, the right mix of activities chosen to sustain pupils’ concentration and develop their understanding and the way in which lesson planning and execution are consistently informed by high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. In schools where teaching is outstanding:

- ✦ teachers have high expectations of all pupils’ learning and seek to ensure that the strengths and needs of pupils of all abilities are given appropriate support and challenge
- ✦ the pace of learning is well-judged and there is no wasted time in lessons
- ✦ the sequence of lessons and activities is well planned, and teachers use a good range of resources to ensure secure progress in learning and acquisition of the skills required for mastery of the subject

The quality of teaching

Figure 26 The quality of teaching in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



There is no individual judgement on the quality of teaching in sixth forms. This chart shows the judgements on the quality of provision in the sixth form for which the evaluation of teaching is a key element.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Maintained schools

- ✧ lessons are interesting, may deal with contemporary issues and developments of relevance to the pupils, and include a range of activities, including practical sessions and out-of-classroom activities, which help to motivate pupils and maximise learning
- ✧ imaginative and effective use is made of the internet, interactive whiteboards and other technical resources to bring variety to lessons and to gain access to a wealth of resources.

121. In contrast, where teaching is no better than satisfactory, planning tends to be too focused on covering content during lessons rather than being clear what the pupils should learn and how the lesson fits into a sequence of work. Activities tend to be insufficiently challenging, are not well matched to the needs of the pupils and often based on procedural and descriptive work. The level of challenge for more able pupils is a particular issue. Lessons and learning are not well-paced, with time lost on unproductive activities such as copying out the objectives for the lesson, completing exercises without sufficient reason, or simply spending too long on one activity. Pupils' work often shows that, although there are episodes of effective learning, there is an emphasis on low-level tasks which do not develop their knowledge and understanding systematically.

122. Where teaching is least successful, the tasks set occupy pupils rather than engage and challenge them and develop understanding. This is particularly the case in some schools where there is an over-use of worksheets and an over-reliance on a narrow range of textbooks. There are times when it is difficult to assess, from watching and listening to them, what the pupils really know and understand because the teaching does not give them an opportunity to show it.

123. The next key characteristic which distinguishes effective from poor teaching is the quality of dialogue and interaction that takes place in the classroom. Where teaching is outstanding:

- ✧ based on good subject knowledge, teachers explain things clearly, anticipate pupils' misconceptions, select their teaching strategies judiciously, and target the use of high-quality questioning so that all pupils are involved and understanding is developed

- ✧ there is a creative and appropriate balance between teacher-directed learning, which sets the framework in which the learning takes place, and independent learning, which allows pupils to explore questions and solve problems in more depth

- ✧ where appropriate, there are good opportunities for pupils to make choices, ask questions, find answers, collaborate, listen, discuss, and debate and present their work to their peers so that others can comment. This adds depth to pupils' understanding and develops confidence and communication skills

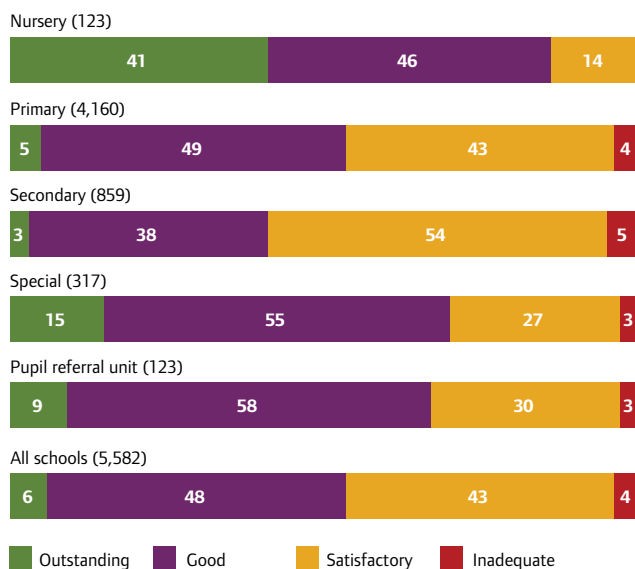
- ✧ the interaction between the teacher and the pupils is positive but challenging and relationships are well managed: teachers take care to build up pupils' confidence and encourage them to take on new challenges in their learning

- ✧ support staff, where available, are well directed, have clear roles and provide good support for individuals and groups, which deepens their understanding.

124. Lively interaction tends to be lacking where teaching is no better than satisfactory. In these lessons pupils listen to the teacher for too long, and there is not enough emphasis on getting pupils to speak and participate meaningfully. Too often teachers' weak subject knowledge is reflected in explanations and responses to pupils that add little to their understanding. There are not enough opportunities for enquiry through research, discussion, collaboration and allowing pupils to use their initiative. In the weaker lessons observed, a tendency to ask closed questions means that pupils give simply factual low-level responses. In these cases the teachers themselves elaborate on a pupil's initial response rather than probing them to explore the ideas more deeply, and debate or share views. Teachers' questions can often be focused on low-level cognitive activity and not sufficiently on extending or reinforcing pupils' understanding.

125. The final element of good or outstanding teaching is the quality of assessment and the way in which teachers use assessment to differentiate their teaching to the needs of the individual pupils in their lessons. Assessment that clearly identifies pupils' starting points and understanding, checks progress, establishes what has been learnt and can inform the next steps in learning is at the core of good and outstanding teaching. Effective assessment within lessons enables pupils to demonstrate their understanding and ensures that teachers can adapt their teaching 'in real time' to the needs of the pupils. Where assessment is good pupils receive clear feedback and understand what they need to do to improve. Assessment has long been reported by Ofsted as one of the weakest elements of teaching and this remains the case in inspections conducted this year.

Figure 27 The use of assessment to support learning in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

126. As Figure 27 shows, assessment was judged to be good or outstanding in just 54% of schools inspected this year, which is similar to last year. There is a very strong link to the judgement for teaching, and the highly effective use of assessment by teachers is at the heart of the best teaching observed by inspectors. Where it is used well, teachers:

- ✦ monitor pupils' progress carefully during lessons and regular assessment, which may include peer- and self-assessment, enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve
- ✦ make very effective use of activities to bring the whole class together to test learning, monitor progress and redirect the lesson if necessary
- ✦ have the ability to adjust the direction or pace of learning within a lesson and for particular individuals, based on the feedback they have received from pupils about the lesson, together with an accurate assessment of their learning.

127. However, this is too rarely the case. In schools where assessment, and consequently often the quality of teaching overall, is only satisfactory, there is poor monitoring of progress during lessons, including teachers' readiness to assume that because one pupil has answered a question successfully, the rest of the class is ready to move on. In addition, assessment is insufficiently focused on subject-specific objectives, especially in relation to progression in skills and understanding. In some cases, particularly in the primary sector, teachers' own weaknesses in subject knowledge mean that they are not able to assess pupils' progress accurately. At secondary level, poor assessment is often compounded by the imprecise marking of written work, lacking subject-specific comments to help pupils to improve. Where assessment is not effective, it directly affects the quality of teaching. A weak understanding of pupils' different levels of progress means that work is generally pitched only towards the average level of the class.

128. Ofsted's survey of excellence in English provides an insight into how schools can struggle with using assessment effectively to structure learning.¹⁸ The survey notes that differentiation is a challenging but essential task for teachers. It points out that some teachers struggle to ensure that individual lessons and schemes of work meet the very different needs and interests of all pupils, with continuous assessment in the classroom leading to adjustments in teaching so that all pupils make progress. The most common practice noted in inspections of English, particularly in secondary schools, is that teachers identify the

18. *Excellence in English – what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011.

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progress to be made by different ability groups of pupils at the planning stage but then do nothing different for these groups and simply rely on students to make the expected progress, based on their prior attainment.

129. Some distinctive features set apart good-quality teaching in the early years and for older students in sixth forms. The highest proportion of outstanding teaching observed this year is in nursery schools, where it is judged to be outstanding in 40% of schools. The high quality of teaching in nursery schools has been identified in previous Annual Reports. Key strengths continue to be based on well-informed and planned questioning, and imaginative approaches to learning that capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. In recent years, significant improvements have been made to outside environments. Outstanding teaching often capitalises on these improvements in an imaginative and exciting way and takes every opportunity to maximise learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

130. Importantly, in the most successful nursery schools, teachers and teaching assistants provide a supportive environment for parents and carers to meet and discuss particular issues at the beginning and end of each day. Furthermore, the approaches to learning adopted by the staff and the way they communicate with the children can provide a helpful model for some parents and carers; they regularly report to inspectors that they have learned a great deal about how to help their children develop from just watching the adults in the classroom.

131. A key requirement of education is to teach pupils to read. The success of the 12 schools featured in the report *Reading by six – how the best schools do it* was based on their determination that every child would learn to read.¹⁹ High-quality provision for speaking and listening underpinned reading and writing, especially in the early years. The schools had a very rigorous, systematic approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. This laid the foundations for successful reading, writing and spelling. The approach was applied with a high degree of consistency and was sustained. Pupils were given opportunities to apply what they were learning to their reading and writing and practised their decoding skills by reading aloud to adults.

132. At the other end of the age range, in 15% of school sixth forms teaching is outstanding and in 46% it is good.²⁰ However, this general picture does not describe the considerable difference in quality that can be found across subjects and courses in single institutions. When teaching is outstanding, it is often characterised by teachers sharing a genuine love of and interest in their subject. Students respond positively because they feel that there is much that they can gain from listening to and engaging with their teacher. The tasks set by teachers flow smoothly from the introductory stage of the lesson and build up knowledge and understanding sufficiently to ensure that students are confident of the subject matter when homework is set. Such lessons do not always have a rigid structure, which instead is tailored to the material being taught and kept interesting for the students.

133. Weaker teaching in school sixth forms is too often based on the teacher talking for too long and not checking students' understanding regularly. Insufficient attention is given to the balance and appropriateness of activities and tasks expected of students during lessons. This approach does not support students' specific learning needs and can result in some wanting to work hard but not being sufficiently advanced in some core skills to succeed.

134. The variability of the quality of teaching within schools, as well as between schools, remains a persistent issue. Lesson observations carried out by inspectors this year, for example, demonstrate the considerable variability in the quality of teaching between year groups. Inspectors do not observe a random sample of lessons, and therefore these findings may not be representative of all teaching nationally. Nonetheless, it is particularly striking that in primary schools the greatest proportion of good and outstanding teaching was observed in the Nursery and Reception years, and in Years 2, 5 and 6, indicating a tendency for schools to focus strongly on positioning the best teaching at the end of each key stage. This approach runs the risk that progress can dip in the intervening years, with too much satisfactory or inadequate teaching in Years 1, 3 and 4 in particular. In secondary schools, the best teaching in lessons was seen in Years 11, 12 and 13 with the weakest in Years 8 and 9. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 28.

19. *Reading by six – how the best schools do it* (100197), Ofsted, 2010.

20. There is no individual judgement on the quality of teaching in sixth forms. Data are based on judgements on the quality of provision for which the evaluation of teaching is a key element.

Figure 28 Quality of teaching in lesson observations by year group, between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Data are based on primary (53,978) and secondary (26,678) schools lesson observations.

Based on 4,155 primary and 871 secondary school inspections.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

135. Achieving consistently outstanding or good-quality teaching across year groups and across subjects remains a challenge for schools. Getting this right requires the attention and focus of the whole school. Senior leaders and managers play a central role in creating this environment. The most successful demonstrate a genuine interest in the work of pupils and teachers and promote professional dialogue that is focused fully on pupils' learning and progress. They encourage teaching staff to consider different teaching approaches that extend the repertoire of teaching techniques that can be deployed effectively. Classroom observation and discussion of practice are seen as important elements of professional development. In some of these successful schools staff observe each other's lessons, which are planned together and sometimes taught together. Meetings focus on pedagogy rather than administration. In one outstanding school, for example, the headteacher spoke of the:

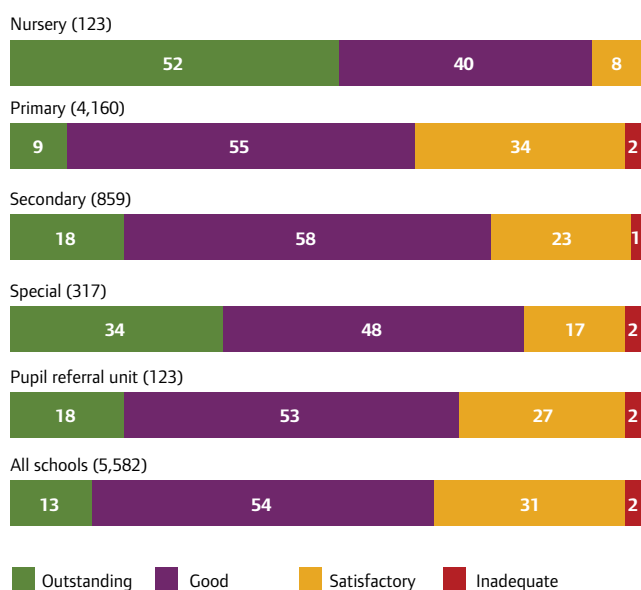
'...relentless focus on the quality of teaching and learning and how to raise standards further. All action plans and meetings are tightly focused on this agenda, resulting in meetings and discussions being characterised by high-quality teacher talk. Dialogue is focused on pedagogic practice. Peripheral issues are sidelined.'

Achieving consistently outstanding or good-quality teaching across year groups and across subjects remains a challenge for schools. Getting this right requires the attention and focus of the whole school.

Maintained schools

Curriculum

Figure 29 The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships, in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

136. In just over two thirds of schools inspected this year, the curriculum is good or outstanding at meeting the needs of pupils. The impact of an effective, flexible and relevant curriculum in schools can be seen in improving attainment and progress made by pupils, supporting good standards of behaviour, attendance and punctuality and developing pupils' willingness to work hard and persevere. In the 13% of schools where the curriculum was judged to be outstanding there was a clear drive for improvement with headteachers and staff articulating their ambition that the curriculum should flexibly respond to the needs of all pupils. The same judgement was made for the quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum in 75% of schools inspected this year.

137. Ofsted published a number of detailed triennial subject surveys in 2010/11. These highlight common features of effective and less effective provision in both primary and secondary schools in science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, and design and technology. They consider the challenges in ensuring sufficient curriculum time for all these subjects, especially in secondary schools, to allow all pupils access to a range of opportunities. Ofsted also published a survey of good practice in English which focused in detail on a smaller number of schools. The following section identifies some key messages from a selection of these surveys.

English

In the 12 schools visited for the Excellence in English survey each school had identified what was needed to engage their own pupils, constructed a distinctive and original curriculum that met their needs, and then worked hard to keep the curriculum fresh as pupils' needs changed.²¹

All the schools stressed the need to engage and motivate pupils. This did not mean that the curriculum in these schools was 'dumbed-down' to keep pupils interested. They successfully engaged all their pupils without losing rigour and challenge. This meant that the schools were highly successful at developing the knowledge, skills and understanding in English that pupils need. They achieved this in different ways.

In one school a central principle of the English curriculum was that all pupils should experience classic texts from the literary tradition, even though many of the pupils had severe special needs. Another school emphasised visual literacy, which is the ability to 'read' and derive meaning from pictures and images, and independent learning as ways of meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. In a third school staff had come to understand the significant role that speaking and listening could play in 'giving pupils a voice', thereby developing their confidence and raising their aspirations.

21. *Excellence in English – what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011.

Science

Ofsted's three-year evaluation of science education has identified a number of changing trends in how the science curriculum is structured in schools.²² In the very large majority of the primary schools visited, science was taught regularly each week. This regular exposure to, and consideration of, phenomena through scientific enquiry was important in building pupils' skills and confidence. Where the curriculum was outstanding the activities that were planned supported pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding of science, and allowed them to develop their science skills in increasingly demanding situations. This concern for progression was not so evident in the less effective schools, and pupils had fewer opportunities to plan and carry out investigative activities.

An increasing number of secondary schools have adopted a two-year Key Stage 3. An important benefit of this is that it provides an extended period of time, up to three years, to teach GCSE sciences in a more enriched way. Schools making the most of this opportunity were able to ensure greater engagement and relevance to pupils. They planned to ensure that the pupils experienced 'how science works'.

Over the last three years there has also been a dramatic increase in the proportion of students studying triple science at GCSE. In many cases, particularly where students studying triple science were allocated time for three subjects in the curriculum, inspectors found this was leading to higher levels of interest and motivation. Double award science can equip pupils with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to study science at A level. However, data from the Department for Education and qualitative evidence from inspection visits suggest that students who study three separate sciences are much more likely to choose to study science at A level and beyond.

Modern languages

Ofsted's recent report on modern languages looked at the provision for modern languages in schools over the last three years.²³ The survey found that take-up in Key Stage 4 was much improved in the schools visited when pupils had enjoyed purposeful experiences in Key Stage 3. These included being able to say what they wanted to say and opportunities to talk to or work with native speakers. However, too often, the teaching was not inspiring and did not bring the language to life for pupils. The key barriers observed to further improvement in Key Stages 3 and 4 were teachers' lack of use of the language being taught to support their pupils' routine use of the language in lessons and providing opportunities for them to talk spontaneously and to develop their reading.

At primary level, characteristics of an outstanding modern language curriculum included all Key Stage 2 pupils learning a language; a clear focus on one main language (or even two) but frequent, planned, references to other languages, especially to those used by the schools' pupils; and integration of languages with other subjects. The most successful schools ensured that pupils received discrete language teaching once each week and short daily integrated sessions of language learning. These schools planned for progressive skills development focused on listening and speaking, with reading and writing underpinning these skills. They also provided opportunities for pupils who spoke other languages to demonstrate and/or teach these to other children.

22. *Successful science* (100034), Ofsted, 2011.

23. *Modern languages, achievement and challenge 2007–10* (100042), Ofsted, 2011.

Maintained schools

History

Ofsted's recent survey of history teaching in primary and secondary schools found that most pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 with detailed knowledge derived from well-taught studies of individual topics.²⁴ However, some pupils found it difficult to place the historical episodes they had studied within any coherent, long-term narrative. They knew about particular events, characters and periods but did not have an overview. The survey identified a pressing need for the curriculum in primary schools to ensure that pupils study an overview as well as in-depth topics, so that they can develop a coherent chronological framework for the separate periods and events that they study.

In the secondary schools visited, effective teaching helped students to develop their ability to support, evaluate and challenge their own views and to challenge the views of others. In these ways the teaching of history is helping pupils to develop important and broadly applicable skills. However, decisions about curriculum structures within schools have placed constraints on history and other foundation subjects at Key Stage 3. In 14 of the 58 secondary schools visited between 2008 and 2010, whole-school curriculum changes were reducing the curriculum time for history teaching. Furthermore, although history has been one of the most popular optional GCSE and A level subjects, in some of the schools visited the students had been steered towards subjects at GCSE which were perceived to be less demanding than history.

Geography

In the primary schools visited for Ofsted's recent survey most of the teachers surveyed were not sufficiently secure about geography to be able to interpret effectively an outline curriculum, and to ensure that high-quality experiences for learning geography were interwoven into the topics they were teaching.²⁵ As a result, many of the teaching units did not provide a clear and sequential structure that would enable pupils to develop and improve their geographical knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, in many primary schools the focus on a curriculum that integrated subjects through topic-based work did not generally promote good progress in pupils' geographical learning. Often geography was peripheral within a topic, or there was too great a focus on skills, rather than on knowledge and understanding.

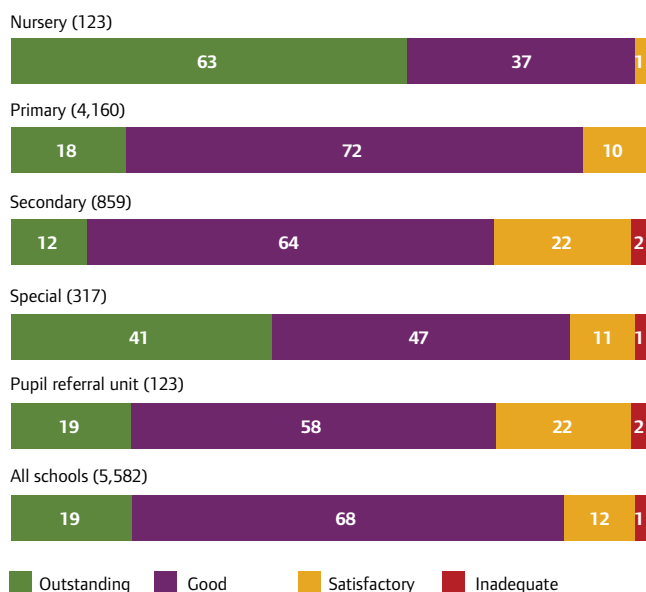
At secondary level the most successful schools had thought carefully about creating a more relevant curriculum at Key Stage 3, with a greater emphasis on topical concerns such as sustainability, globalisation, interdependence, poverty and wealth, as well as a fieldwork programme which showed clearly how students should progress in terms of their geographical skills. However, in less successful schools schemes of work emphasised geographical content too much and lacked relevance to modern geography. In just over half the schools visited there were insufficient opportunities for enquiry-based work.

24. *History for all: history in English schools 2007–10* (090223), Ofsted, 2011.

25. *Geography – learning to make a world of difference* (090224), Ofsted, 2011.

Behaviour and attendance

Figure 30 Pupils' behaviour in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

138. Pupils' behaviour is good or outstanding in 87% of schools inspected this year compared with 86% last year. Overall, this remains one of the most positively judged aspects of provision, although the proportion of schools in which behaviour was judged outstanding fell to 19% this year from 24% last year. Behaviour is not as good in secondary schools as in other types of school, apart from pupil referral units. It is good or outstanding in over three quarters of secondary schools, but over a fifth of secondary schools are judged to have only satisfactory behaviour and in 2% behaviour is inadequate. This is a better profile of performance than last year when behaviour was judged no better than satisfactory in 30% of secondary schools, but improvement is still needed in these schools.

139. Inspection shows a critical link between poor behaviour and weak teaching. In all the schools in which behaviour was judged to be inadequate, teaching was no better than satisfactory, and in two thirds, it was inadequate. Similarly in 94% of schools where behaviour was judged to be only satisfactory, the quality of teaching was also no better than satisfactory. Where behaviour is poor, the quality of teaching is also likely to be poor. Where teaching does not meet pupils' needs or does not engage pupils sufficiently they can lose attention, demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and eventually interrupt the learning of others. In these cases teaching can then focus too much on continually managing low-level disruption at the expense of providing interesting and relevant opportunities for pupils to learn. Poor behaviour also makes it more difficult to teach well. However, it is also the case that in just under three quarters of schools where teaching is only satisfactory behaviour is judged to be good or better. This indicates that in the majority of schools pupils behave relatively well, even when teaching is less than inspiring.

140. In schools where behaviour is good or outstanding, expectations of pupils' behaviour are made clear and behaviour across the school is managed in a consistent fashion. Leaders and managers ensure there is a positive ethos of achievement and support for pupils, consistent application of agreed policies and procedures and an appropriate balance of rewards and sanctions which are applied in a constructive way to support improvement. Pupils themselves understand the system of rewards and sanctions and feel safe from bullying and harassment. Teachers have a clear understanding of individual pupils' needs and provide interesting activities that are carefully tailored to engage and challenge them. This helps to ensure that pupils do not become restless and disruptive. Data about behaviour are analysed carefully so that well targeted actions can be taken. Careful intervention, often involving individual mentoring and adaptations to the curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils with challenging behaviour have their needs addressed and steadily improve.

Maintained schools

141. In most schools, pupils generally say that they feel safe and that bullying is not common; they believe that teachers deal promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying that occur. In a minority of the schools where behaviour is satisfactory or inadequate, parents and pupils expressed concern to inspectors about the school's failure to address incidents of bullying. In many cases where behaviour is inadequate, an element of bullying contributes to this judgement, and forms part of the poor behaviour.

142. In 22% of the secondary schools inspected this year, behaviour in the school and the attitudes to learning demonstrated by pupils were only satisfactory. Based on a review of the inspection reports of over 100 of these secondary schools, in more than a third inspectors noted that learning in the school was passive because teaching was not interesting and engaging enough and was not matched to the abilities of pupils. Inspections also identified weaknesses in these schools in applying behaviour policies consistently. Parents and pupils raised concerns about bullying in around a tenth of these schools. Very occasionally, boisterous behaviour outside the classroom when adult supervision was absent intimidated some pupils.

For the most part, parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out as part of the inspection are positive about how schools manage behaviour.

143. Behaviour was outstanding in 32% of schools serving the least deprived pupils compared with 11% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. This pattern of better behaviour in schools serving less deprived pupils was also observed in last year's Annual Report. The quality of teaching is also less likely to be judged good or outstanding in schools serving the most deprived pupils. However, behaviour was judged good or outstanding in 82% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. The success of these schools effectively demonstrates that deprivation and disadvantage need not be a barrier to good behaviour.

144. For the most part, parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out as part of the inspection are positive about how schools manage behaviour. However, 13% of parents of students in secondary schools and 9% of parents of pupils in primary schools either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement; 'The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.' As one might expect, this figure varies considerably in line with the overall quality of behaviour at the school. Parents in schools where behaviour was judged inadequate or satisfactory are three times more likely to think that the school does not deal effectively with poor behaviour than parents in schools where behaviour was judged outstanding.

145. The percentage of pupils subject to either a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion has fallen each year for the last four years. In 2006/07 5.7% of pupils were excluded for a fixed period compared with 4.5% in 2009/10.²⁶ This year Ofsted carried out a survey of the use made by schools and pupil referral units of alternative provision.²⁷ For the purpose of this survey, alternative provision was defined as something in which a young person participates as part of their regular timetable, away from the site of the school or the pupil referral unit and not led by school staff. Schools can use such provision to try to prevent exclusions, or to re-engage students in their education.

26. *Permanent and fixed period exclusions from schools in England 2009/10*, Statistical First Release (SFR17/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

27. *Alternative provision* (100233), Ofsted 2011.

Alternative provision

Between September and December 2010, inspectors visited 23 schools and academies and 16 pupil referral units to explore their use of alternative provision. The survey visit was followed up with visits to 61 alternative provision placements that were being attended by students from the schools or units surveyed. The students' placements were varied and included practical courses in motor mechanics or hairdressing, work placements in shops and old people's homes, and experiences in music studios and on farms. The students surveyed spent between half a day and five days out of school each week attending such provision.

Alternative provision is a largely uninspected and unregulated sector. Beyond pupil referral units and other full-time provision, there is no requirement for the majority of alternative providers to register with any official body and no consistent arrangements to evaluate their quality. Of the 61 providers visited for the survey, only 17 were subject to any inspection regime.

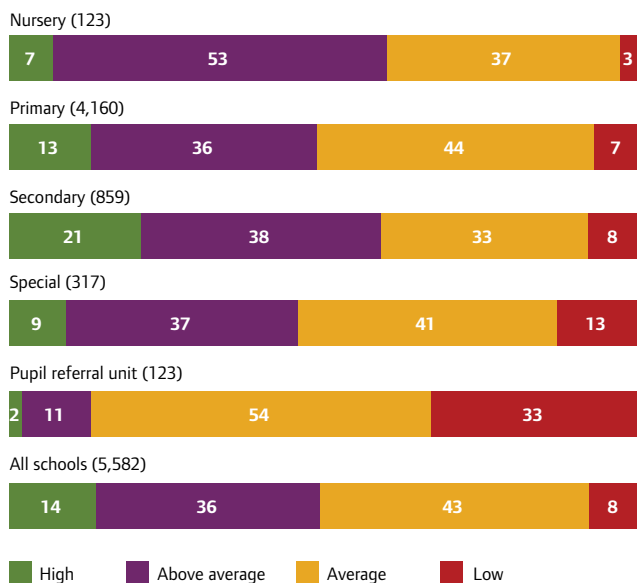
Despite this lack of regulation and accountability, some students spend a significant proportion of their week away from their school or unit attending an alternative provision. It can be the case that the school's or unit's staff visit infrequently or not at all. In this survey 11 of the providers had never received a visit from a member of staff from the school or unit. Across the 39 schools and units surveyed, over 10% of students in Years 9–11 were attending alternative provision away from the site of their school or unit for at least part of each week. Occasionally, students were placed with an alternative provider full time and played no part in school life.

The survey found that at its best, alternative provision was selected carefully by schools and units, was used well to support learners as part of their whole curriculum, and was valued by the students. Such placements helped to re-engage students in learning. Where communication was good, the school or unit shared relevant information with the provider and agreed what information the provider would collect to show a student's progress. The school or unit then used this information well to celebrate success or intervene when things were not going well. Staff in these schools and units visited students at their provision regularly. Students' timetables at school were planned carefully so that they did not miss key lessons when they were out at their placement, or at least they were given good-quality additional teaching to keep up. In these conditions, students were usually motivated by their placement and started to see the point of their work in school; many gained appropriate qualifications.

However, this was not always the case. Some of the schools and pupil referral units visited, saw alternative provision as very separate from their own work and as a 'last resort' for a challenging student. These schools and units were less effective at fitting placements into the rest of their students' timetables, and made poor arrangements for them to catch up with work they had missed from their core subjects. In too many cases there was no transfer of written information about the students' needs from the schools to the providers. Where communication between schools and alternative providers was weak, the providers lacked the information that they needed to work effectively with the student, and the schools did not know enough about their student's progress. For the student, this meant that there was sometimes little coherence between their time at the placement and their time back at school. Opportunities were missed to capitalise on the new skills, confidence, and sometimes the qualifications, they were gaining.

Maintained schools

Figure 31 Pupils' attendance in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

146. Attendance for all schools is judged in relation to national averages and the grades awarded are high, above average, average and low. Ofsted's assessment of how well schools are promoting attendance makes an important contribution to the judgement for the quality of the school's care, guidance and support.

147. Overall, the judgements made by inspectors for attendance are more positive than those made last year. However, this more positive picture is not true for all types of schools. In nursery schools and special schools in particular the proportion judged to have low attendance has increased.

148. As with behaviour, there is a strong correlation between deprivation and poor attendance. In 17% of schools serving the most deprived pupils attendance was judged to be low compared with just 1% of schools serving the least deprived pupils. Similarly, attendance was more than three times as likely to be high or above average in schools with the least deprived pupils compared with schools with the most deprived pupils. Nonetheless, 20% of these schools achieved attendance that was judged high or above average.

149. In last year's Annual Report particular attention was drawn to the importance of a number of additional factors that support good attendance. These included a curriculum that interests and excites pupils, opportunities to undertake work outside the classroom and excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, in which caring adults in school show an interest in the issues in pupils' lives. These important aspects remain key to a school's success in ensuring that pupils attend regularly, combined with rigorous monitoring of patterns of attendance, clearly explaining the link between achievement and attendance to pupils and parents, immediate follow-up to absence and targeted approaches to supporting the attendance of individual pupils, such as:

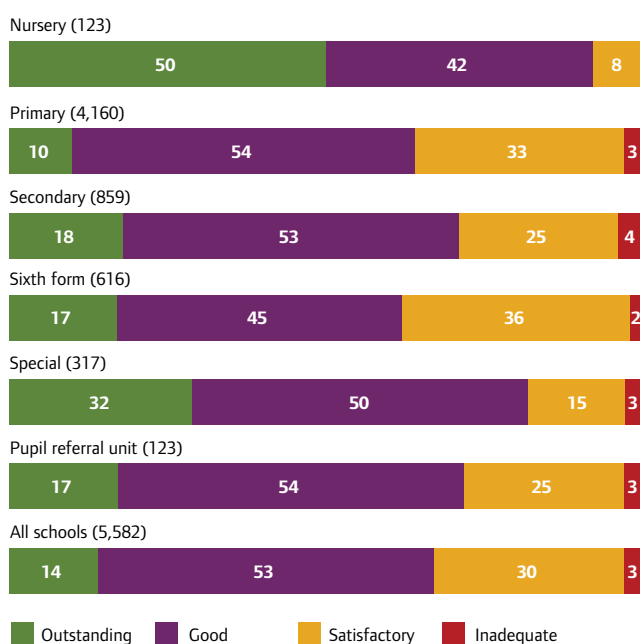
- ✘ prevention of the problem by ensuring that the quality of teaching is focused on the individual's needs
- ✘ identifying quickly a trend in poor attendance
- ✘ early notification of the problem to parents and carers
- ✘ reinforcing the importance of the issue to parents and carers
- ✘ close liaison with local agencies, including the education welfare service and police.

150. Data show around two-thirds of pupils' absence overall is due to illness or medical or dental appointments. However, the taking of term-time holiday accounts for around 12% of total pupil absence in primary schools and 5% in secondary schools.²⁸ This is despite schools' clear messages to parents that this is not in the best interests of pupils and that parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends.

28. *Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn term 2010 and spring term 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR25/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Leadership and management

Figure 32 The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

151. The quality of leadership and management for schools inspected this year was similar to those inspected last year. In 67% of schools inspected this year it was judged to be good or outstanding compared with 65% of schools last year. Just under 90% of parents and staff who returned questionnaires to Ofsted from the schools inspected this year agreed or strongly agreed that their school was well led and managed. It is striking that the leadership in secondary schools was almost twice as likely to be judged outstanding this year as leadership in primary schools. This difference has been observable for a number of years, but has become particularly marked this year. It is also apparent that leadership and management in school sixth forms was no better than satisfactory in well over one third of those inspected and was graded lower than leadership and management in the school as a whole in 28% of those inspected.

152. In 82% of schools inspected this year the same judgement was given for the quality of leadership and management and the school's overall effectiveness. However, in a small number of schools leadership and management were judged to be weaker than their overall effectiveness. Many of these were schools of below average size, typically having gone through a period of significant staff change including the appointment of a new headteacher. Nonetheless, a number of these schools had features that were clearly holding them back, or were starting to put their continued good performance at risk, so their capacity to improve was also graded below their overall effectiveness. Typical weaknesses were in the monitoring and evaluation of performance leading to internal judgements of teaching being too generous; the limited role of the governing body in self-evaluation; and inconsistent school systems for making use of assessment to accelerate learning. The lack of leadership from middle managers, for example in improving the quality of teaching or ensuring the systematic monitoring of pupils' progress, was also a common weakness, although this was sometimes due to the failure of senior leaders to delegate responsibility or ensure that middle management was effective.

153. The quality of leadership and management makes a critical contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The same judgements for the quality of leadership and the quality of teaching were made in 80% of schools inspected this year.



Maintained schools

154. On the surface, processes for leading and managing teaching and learning are broadly similar between those schools judged satisfactory and those judged outstanding. Lesson observations take place on a regular cycle and the attainment of learners is also monitored regularly. However, it is the effectiveness with which these processes are implemented that makes the difference. In the satisfactory schools, the evaluation of teaching is often over-generous, and places too little emphasis on exploring what pupils are actually learning and the progress that they are making, focusing rather on the activity of the teacher. The overall quality of teaching varies widely and best practice is not shared effectively. Weaknesses that emerge in the monitoring are not pursued, and whole-school professional development programmes are sometimes not based on the insights gained in the monitoring. The systems for collecting data on pupils' progress mean that all schools are now data-rich, but in the schools judged satisfactory this is not always used efficiently to intervene and support pupils who are falling behind. Middle leaders are often unclear about their role or are ineffective.

In the schools where the leadership and management of teaching and learning are judged outstanding, self-evaluation is sharp and accurate.

155. By contrast, in the schools where the leadership and management of teaching and learning are judged outstanding, self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. Senior leaders draw on a range of evidence to arrive at this understanding, probably the most significant of which is their own direct observation of teaching and learning. Where weaknesses are found in teaching, they are dealt with rigorously and effectively: outstanding school leaders can provide examples of teachers whose performance has improved enormously. All available data are analysed carefully and this analysis provides a good basis for early intervention with pupils and for planning individual and whole-school programmes to improve teaching. In these schools middle leaders are often a significant strength and have a strong sense of their accountability for the progress of pupils. These are schools where the curriculum is exciting, where learning is active and enjoyable, and above all where there is a strong and widely shared ethos that every pupil can succeed and a determination to make this happen.

156. An important trend in education policy over the last five years has been the increasing role that successful schools have played in supporting and working in partnership with less successful schools. This year Ofsted published two reports which examined different aspects of this trend. The first report identified the strategies used in 24 successful schools, deemed National Support Schools, to develop effective leadership skills and build capacity to sustain excellence.²⁹ The second report looked at the implications for leadership and improvement in schools which have federated, including 10 federations between a high-performing school and a school causing concern.³⁰

29. *Developing leadership: National Support Schools* (090232), Ofsted, 2011.

30. *Leadership of more than one school* (100234), Ofsted, 2011.

National Support Schools

The report found that the National Support Schools gave their staff a wealth of opportunities to take on leadership roles and provided them with high-quality support and training.³¹ The highly effective leaders understood the changing needs of their schools and their staff. They planned ahead to sustain excellence, ensuring that leaders at all levels developed the skills to meet those needs. They recruited and retained high-quality staff and focused very specifically on professional development, in particular on developing and training their own leaders. Teaching and support staff were given opportunities to undertake new leadership responsibilities in areas that were relevant to them. These opportunities developed their leadership skills systematically. The staff were supported by good-quality mentoring and coaching to ensure that they reflected on and learned from their experiences. Typically, all this was underpinned by good leadership training programmes, tailored for staff at different stages of leadership development.

There were mutual benefits for both National Support Schools and the schools they were supporting, including opportunities to reflect and challenge across the partnership and to observe and adapt good practice. In particular, partnerships provided the National Leaders of Education with good opportunities to share and refine their own skills.³² Their staff gained additional and valuable experiences of leadership through working in another school, often in a very different context.

31. National Support Schools are selected by the National College for School Leadership. In order to become a National Support School, a school must have been judged outstanding for overall effectiveness and other sub-judgements at their most recent inspection, its performance data must show a clear upward trend or consistently high levels of attainment, and it must have outstanding senior and middle leaders who have demonstrated the capacity to provide significant and successful support to underperforming schools within a school-to-school partnership, federation or chain.

32. National Leaders of Education are designated by the National College for School Leadership. Designation requires evidence of successful school leadership, sustained high standards, significant added value, a record of effective support to other schools and strong leadership at school, senior and middle leadership levels.

The leadership and the capacity to improve in schools which were receiving support also typically got stronger as a result of working with leaders, at all levels, from a successful school. Senior leaders in client schools were supported to:

- ✧ develop their organisational skills
- ✧ distribute leadership roles and responsibilities more widely
- ✧ build leadership capacity at all levels.

Federations to support school improvement

Ofsted has also identified benefits to schools causing concern which are federated with high performing schools. In all 10 such federations visited as part of a recent survey, teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour had improved in the weaker schools and good outcomes had been maintained in the high-performing school. These improvements were, in all cases, being driven by the executive headteacher of the successful school, and involved a number of common strategies including:

- ✧ implementing extremely rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
- ✧ successfully dealing with behaviour problems in the early stages of federation
- ✧ introducing targeted training to improve teaching
- ✧ eradicating inadequate teaching swiftly, often resulting in some teachers leaving the school
- ✧ strengthening procedures to assess pupils' progress.

In all the federations visited, effective leadership was critical to their success in building good capacity for sustained improvement. Federation leaders were very aware that there was a danger that staff morale in the weaker school would be undermined and took care to raise staff confidence.

For example, in two federations headteachers made sure that the strengths in the weaker schools were identified and built upon and the good practice adopted by the stronger schools. However, they did not shirk from their responsibility to eradicate weak teaching. In all cases, teachers in the weaker schools were involved in professional development.

Maintained schools

Staff from the successful schools shared good practice and senior and middle leaders had the role of coaching staff. Professional development was mandatory and closely linked to the individual development needs of teachers and performance management procedures that held them to account for improvements.

However, despite the clear benefits of partnership and federation both reports acknowledged that creating a strong and effective partnership is not straightforward and requires careful planning and preparation. The surveys also found that there was less evidence that the leadership skills and effectiveness of governors were being developed as thoroughly through these partnerships, for example by providing them with opportunities to work together directly and share effective practice.

157. Inspections this year identified considerable variations in the quality of governance across different types of school. Governance was judged good or outstanding in 58% of schools inspected this year overall, but this varied between 53% in pupil referral units and 55% in primary schools, to 64% in secondary schools and 71% in special schools. Although in the majority of schools the governing body acts as a critical friend, inspection findings show that where governance is less effective a lack of transparency and accurate information restricts the ability of the governing body to monitor the work of the school systematically.

158. In 2011 Ofsted published a survey which identified the key features of outstanding governing bodies.³³ These included the following.

- ✦ Positive relationships between governors and school leaders are based on trust, openness and transparency. Information about what is going well and why, and what is not going well and why, is shared. Governors consistently ask for more information, explanation or clarification. This makes a strong contribution to robust planning for improvement.
- ✦ Governance supports honest, perceptive self-evaluation by the school, recognising problems and supporting the steps needed to address them.

- ✦ Absolute clarity about the different roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and governors underpins the most effective governance.
- ✦ Effective governing bodies are driven by a core of key governors such as the chair and chairs of committees. They see themselves as part of a team and build strong relationships with the headteacher, senior leaders and other governors.
- ✦ School leaders and governors behave with integrity and are mutually supportive; school leaders recognise that governors provide them with a different perspective that contributes to strengthening leadership; the questions they ask challenge assumptions and support effective decision-making.
- ✦ Governors are able to take and support hard decisions in the interests of pupils; to back the headteacher when they need to change staff, or to change the headteacher when absolutely necessary.

159. In 79% of schools inspected the safeguarding procedures were found to be either good or outstanding. Furthermore, safeguarding was judged to be at least satisfactory in 99% of schools. Nearly all schools now give priority to this area of their work and meet safeguarding requirements. The survey *Safeguarding in schools: best practice* highlighted some of the key features of outstanding practice, most of which are found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all effective schools with outstanding safeguarding arrangements.³⁴ The common features of these schools include:

- ✦ high-quality leadership and management that make safeguarding a priority across all aspects of a school's work, including a strong focus on training in safeguarding
- ✦ stringent vetting procedures in place for staff and other adults and robust site security
- ✦ rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures and child protection arrangements in place which are clear, coherent and accessible; pupils and families, as well as adults in the school, know who they can talk to if they are worried
- ✦ a curriculum that is used to promote safeguarding, not least through teaching pupils how to stay safe, how to protect themselves from harm and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety.

33. *School governance: learning from the best* (100238), Ofsted, 2011.

34. *Safeguarding in schools: best practice* (100240), Ofsted, 2011.

160. In 45 schools, less than 1% of those inspected, the safeguarding procedures were judged to be inadequate. All of these schools were placed in a formal category of concern. In 35 of these 45 schools, the effectiveness of leadership and the governing body was also judged to be inadequate, weaknesses were not tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities were not met; in over two thirds of these schools pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning were also inadequate. Only seven schools were judged inadequate solely on the basis of weaknesses in their safeguarding.³⁵

Academies

161. As more schools change to academy status, the range and types of schools that fall within the 'academy family' are shifting to include more good and outstanding schools. Initially sponsor-led academies were set up to replace schools that had a history of failure or low performance, and these schools make up the large majority of the sample of academies inspected this year.

162. Forty academies inspected this year were judged to be good or outstanding and five inadequate for overall effectiveness. The proportion of academies judged good or outstanding is similar to that for all secondary schools, although within this the percentage of outstanding judgements is higher. A slightly higher proportion of academies inspected this year have been judged good or outstanding than academies inspected last year.

35. In these seven schools weaknesses in safeguarding led to inadequate judgements for safeguarding, care, guidance and support, and governance and they were given a notice to improve. No other sub-judgements were graded inadequate.

163. Of the 75 academies inspected this year, 11 are schools which have converted to academy status. The predecessor schools of 10 of these were judged good or outstanding. All of these academies except one continued to be judged good or outstanding this year. One academy had declined to satisfactory. One of the converter academies inspected was an amalgamation of two schools judged satisfactory and inadequate, respectively. This academy has now been judged inadequate.

164. Forty-five of the academies inspected were linked to other academies. In every case this was through an overarching multi-academy trust providing shared governance or management. Of the 45 academies in a multi-academy trust, 23 were judged good or outstanding.

165. Fifteen of the sponsor-led academies inspected this year have previously been inspected by Ofsted. In general these demonstrate a strongly improving trend: 10 of these academies improved and three maintained their good performance. However, two academies have declined since their previous inspection – one from good to satisfactory and one from satisfactory to inadequate.

166. The pupil populations of almost three quarters of academies inspected this year are more deprived than the national average, based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). However, the 19 academies serving pupils that are less deprived than average, have very different characteristics. Figure 34 shows that more than half of the academies judged to be outstanding served pupils with lower than average levels of deprivation. Some of these academies also had very high levels of attainment on entry.

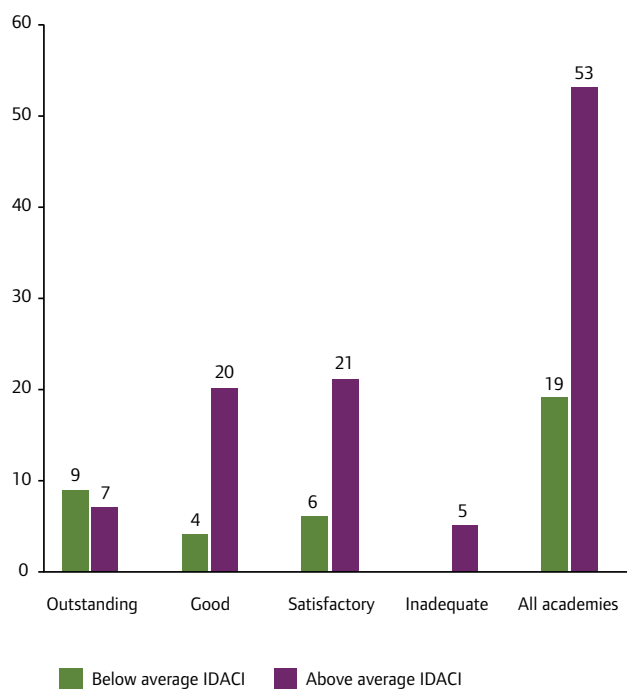
Figure 33 Overall effectiveness of academies inspected between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2011 (number of academies)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	1	3	5	11	16
Good	1	5	12	9	24
Satisfactory	6	2	8	20	30
Inadequate	0	0	5	3	5
Total	8	10	30	43	75

Figures in 2010/11 include 11 academy converters.

Maintained schools

Figure 34 Academies above and below the national average for deprivation, based on IDACI, grouped by overall effectiveness, inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of academies)



Data include both academy converters and sponsor-led academies.

Data exclude three satisfactory academies that have IDACI values that match the national average.

167. Around half the academies inspected this year that have above-average levels of pupils from a deprived background have been judged good or better. There is some evidence that these schools are successfully weakening the link between deprivation and poorer outcomes. One academy serving a deprived community made extremely swift progress from special measures to being judged outstanding. The inspection noted that 'This remarkably rapid turnaround has been achieved by exceptional leadership, robust support from external partners and an almost obsessive desire on the behalf of all staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning.' Like other good or outstanding schools in deprived areas the academies that are successfully 'closing the gap' between their students' performance and national averages show several common features; of these, the most notable is the unflinching commitment to ensuring the academic and personal achievement of every individual pupil. Reports have noted the improved attendance in these schools as aspirations

rise, underpinned by rigorous monitoring, leading to much improved progression into further and higher education.

168. In the best academies the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high because, as stated elsewhere in this Annual Report, teachers work relentlessly to implement agreed strategies for behaviour management, lesson planning and assessment. Assessment information is used effectively to pitch work at the correct level for nearly all pupils. As a consequence, learning is sharply focused, skilfully managed, well paced and free from disruption. New technologies are used well in lesson planning and delivery. In the best lessons, questioning is used effectively to test understanding, to challenge thinking and to focus pupils' thinking. Regular checks are made throughout the lessons to make sure that all students understand the work and are making good progress. Specialist reading support programmes and other literacy initiatives have been very effective at ensuring that lower attaining students have the necessary skills to succeed in other subjects.

169. The staff in the best academies are well led and have a clear and accurate understanding of where things work well and where they need improving. Self-evaluation is based upon comprehensive data about every student's progress and current levels of attainment. Detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning is gathered frequently through a searching process of observations, monitoring and discussions. Subsequent analysis is rigorous and leads directly to carefully planned and usually successful actions. In particular, the plans support individual students who appear to be making less progress than might be expected of them and support subject areas in which performance appears to be less successful than for other subjects.

170. The commitment to 'closing the gap' in successful academies is always underpinned by curriculum planning that is both committed to the basics – literacy and numeracy are always prioritised – but also creative and flexible. For example, many of these schools make very effective use of partnership arrangements often linked to the academy's trustees or sponsors, and put in place enrichment programmes which widen horizons and develop confidence in pupils. Managers ensure that assessment and tracking

of progress are constant and accurate, while trustees articulate the vision through promoting strong partnerships with the community and employers.

171. However, not all academies have made as rapid progress in overcoming barriers to learning and turning around a history of poor achievement. In 25 academies inspected this year, the learning and progress of pupils was only judged to be satisfactory. Many of these schools were on an upward trajectory in terms of pupil attainment, and some were moving out of categories of concern. There was evidence from inspection that the quality of teaching was becoming more consistent, and most of these schools could demonstrate pockets of good and outstanding practice. However, there was still too much teaching that was not good enough. In these lessons activities were often not tailored sufficiently to provide challenge or support for all students; opportunities were missed to use assessment strategies to check progress and adapt activities to enable learning to proceed briskly; and teachers tended to spend too much time talking, allowing insufficient time for students to develop their speaking skills or explore issues for themselves and consolidate their understanding. Consequently, the pace of the lesson slowed, and at times students' interest waned and they became distracted.

Schools causing concern

172. Schools judged to be inadequate overall are either given a notice to improve or are deemed to require special measures. There were 321 schools judged inadequate this year, which represents 6% of all schools inspected. Of these, 165 schools required special measures to secure further improvement and one school remained in special measures. Schools serving deprived communities continue to be more likely to be placed in a category of concern. Of the schools requiring special measures, 6% were serving the least deprived communities whereas 29% were serving the most deprived communities.³⁶

173. It is encouraging that the percentage of schools inspected during the year and judged inadequate has reduced from 8% last year to 6% this year. Furthermore, the total number of schools in categories of concern has also decreased from 553 as at 31 August 2010 to 451 as at 31 August 2011. This reduction includes 12 previously inadequate schools which have now closed. Of the 384 schools which were removed from categories of concern this year, 90 schools made exceptional progress and were judged good or outstanding rather than satisfactory.³⁷

174. In schools judged inadequate the progress that pupils make is too slow, and in many cases attainment has been too low for several years. Inadequate progress is the result of teaching that is not good or consistent enough in its quality. In many of these schools there are pockets of good teaching, but this is let down by inadequate teaching in other years or subjects, or by satisfactory teaching that is not good enough to raise low attainment quickly. The weaknesses observed in teaching are usually very clear. Teachers have low expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and they do not make use of assessment information, so that work is not well-matched to pupils' abilities. In secondary schools, especially those going into special measures, this is often accompanied by widespread but low-level disruptive behaviour on the part of students during lessons, and this depresses learning further. Sometimes poor behaviour is also evident around the school.

In schools judged inadequate the progress that pupils make is too slow, and in many cases attainment has been too low for several years.

36. Data exclude three pupil referral units as they do not have an associated deprivation figure.

37. Three schools in notice to improve were given another notice to improve and one further school in special measures remained in special measures upon reinspection this academic year. These schools are not deemed to have been removed from a category of concern.

Maintained schools

Figure 35 Number of schools placed in, and removed from, each of the categories of concern in inspections between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011; and those that closed while in these categories at 31 August 2011

Special measures	In	Out	Closed	Average months in SM of those removed
Nursery	0	0	0	-
Primary	124	119	3	18
Secondary	30	31	2	19
Special	8	7	0	20
Pupil referral units	3	8	2	19
All schools	165	165	7	18

Notice to improve	In	Out	Closed	Average months in Ntl of those removed
Nursery	0	2	0	13
Primary	104	169	1	13
Secondary	38	56	2	13
Special	6	12	1	13
Pupil referral units	4	3	1	13
All schools	152	242	5	13

The definition of categories of concern is set out in the Glossary.

Data exclude one school that remained in special measures after reinspection and three schools that remained in notice to improve after reinspection.

School closing information based on Edubase as at 31 August 2011.

175. Weaknesses in leadership and management also contribute to the inadequate progress that pupils make. Leaders lack drive and ambition, undertake self-evaluation that is too generous and fail to analyse the wealth of information potentially available. Day-to-day 'fire-fighting' replaces effective strategic plans to raise attainment. Middle and senior leaders are ineffective in their roles. Inadequate teaching is not tackled. Governing bodies do not have an accurate view of the school and fail to hold the school leaders to account. However, schools given a notice to improve often had a new or restructured leadership team, and had been able to demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve. In some schools deemed to require special measures there had been several recent changes in headteacher due either to school reorganisation or interventions by local authorities, but these had not had time to effect material improvement by the time of the inspection.

176. It is very encouraging that the average time taken for schools to be removed from special measures has fallen from 20 months last year to 18 months this year. This corresponds to a substantial increase in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures after two Ofsted monitoring inspections and a substantial decrease in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures in four or more monitoring inspections. However, these averages mask a wide range of performance. Seventeen schools ranging from those in the least deprived to the most deprived communities were removed from special measures after 12 months or fewer. For nine schools, almost all in the north of England, it took between 26 and 28 months to be removed from special measures. This is far too long, and is likely to have had a very considerable impact on the progress made by pupils at those schools.

177. Eight academies have been removed from a category of concern this year – five from notice to improve and three from special measures – all of which served pupils from areas of above-average deprivation. Of the three academies which were removed from special measures, one was removed after just 10 months, which represents very swift progress. The other two academies took 20 months and 23 months, respectively, to be removed, which is longer than the national average for secondary schools.

178. In schools where improvement from special measures was most rapid, the school quickly accepted the judgement and put into place a rigorous and robust improvement plan. A number of common features explain the often dramatic improvements in these schools. Where the leaders remained in post, they responded positively to the challenge of being in special measures. More often there were changes in leadership. In some cases this was achieved through the appointment of a new headteacher or other senior leaders. In other cases an executive headteacher was appointed as a result of collaboration or federation with another school. Alongside these changes in senior leadership there were often changes to the composition of the governing body, occasionally through the appointment of an Interim Executive Board. Many schools which made rapid improvement had received support from a partner school or through intervention from their local authority. The strengthening of leadership across the schools then secured:

- ✦ raised expectations, greater ambition and a clear vision for improvement
- ✦ better monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by senior staff
- ✦ actions to develop teachers' skills and challenge any underperformance
- ✦ rigorous self-evaluation and ambitious target-setting at the heart of development planning.

179. In schools where progress out of special measures was slower, a major weakness was the inconsistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Too often pupils were experiencing teaching that was uninspiring and lessons which were poorly planned and delivered. A key weakness was the inaccurate and often uncommitted approach to assessment. This resulted in work being set for pupils that they found too difficult, too easy or repeated their previous learning. In these schools senior leaders were not fully focused on responding to the weaknesses that had been identified and did not provide clear guidance and support for teachers to enable them to improve the quality of teaching. Often these schools moved too slowly from being reactive to strategically addressing the priorities for improvement. The impact of these deficiencies was that pupils underachieved.

Warning notices

180. Local authorities have the power to issue a warning notice to a school because standards at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so; because there has been a serious breakdown in management or governance which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, standards of performance; or because the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown in discipline or otherwise).

181. From April 2007 to 31 August 2011, 64 local authorities issued a total of 144 warning notices. The majority of these notices (85) were issued because of local authority concerns about standards. Of these, 20 also included concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school; two of these were issued because of concerns about standards, leadership and management, and the safety of pupils or staff at the school. Ofsted has received a total of 23 appeals against warning notices, of which just three have been upheld. This shows that when local authorities do use warning notices most are using the power appropriately.

Maintained schools

182. During this year, 41 warning notices have been issued by 28 different local authorities. This is an average of over three warning notices each month. Warning notices averaged one each month in 2007/08, three each month in 2008/09, and four each month in 2009/10. Although there has been an increase since 2007, use of the power to issue warning notices remains variable. There are still 88 local authorities which have never made use of warning notices, while one local authority had issued eight by the end of August 2011. Just over one quarter of the local authorities that have never issued a warning notice have had 10 or more schools judged to be inadequate during the same period (April 2007 to August 2011).

183. There are 52 schools in total that have been issued a warning notice on the basis of low standards and that have subsequently been inspected by Ofsted. In 32 cases the inspection took place within nine months of the warning notice being issued. In 22 of these schools, the large majority, their overall effectiveness was found to be inadequate. In the remaining schools overall effectiveness was satisfactory apart from one in which it was good. In this school the inspection report commented on the very rapid progress that had been made and how the leadership of the school had embraced the challenge of improvement. In contrast the performance profile of schools where the inspection took place more than nine months after the warning notice was issued was much more positive. Seventeen of these 20 schools were judged either satisfactory or good and only three were inadequate. This evidence suggests that warning notices, where used well and given time to take effect, can make a contribution to stimulating improvement in schools and preventing failure. It is therefore of some concern that warning notices are so seldom used by some local authorities when a school is in decline.

Looking forward

184. Many of the themes for improvement in this Annual Report are picked up and given even greater priority in the new school inspection framework published in draft on 30 September 2011, which will be implemented, subject to Royal Assent being granted, from January 2012. It builds on the strengths of the existing inspection framework and will continue to involve senior leaders in the inspection process, for

example in joint lesson observations with inspectors and in attending the inspection team meetings. There is also a commitment to take even more account of the views of pupils, parents and staff.

185. Under the new framework, inspectors will concentrate on four key areas: the achievement of pupils; the quality of teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leadership and management; and standards of behaviour and safety in schools. This slimmer framework and sharper focus will enable inspectors to look more closely at what matters most in schools, spending even more time observing lessons, including listening to children reading in primary schools, assessing the progress of pupils and taking a closer look at behaviour.

186. There will be greater focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Schools will be held even more to account for the rates of progress achieved for all groups of pupils and whether they are succeeding in narrowing gaps in attainment. The new framework will be more demanding of schools in ensuring that variability is addressed in outcomes for pupils and in the consistency of teaching. There will be higher expectations that teaching and other support for pupils will be effective in accelerating progress for those who need it most and ensure that pupils with special educational needs in particular make good progress. Inspectors will also focus on whether schools are meeting, or exceeding, the government's revised floor standards.³⁸

187. The new framework will consider even more carefully the capacity of leadership and management to bring about the necessary improvements, especially in teaching and learning. Inspectors will consider how relentlessly the leaders, managers and governors pursue a vision for excellence, and how well they evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their findings to promote improvement. Inspectors will look for evidence that the behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of the school at all times and that pupils do not have their learning disrupted and are free from bullying and harassment.

38. Floor standards refer to the expected levels of performance set by the government in relation to standards of attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4; and the proportion of pupils exceeding the threshold for the number of National Curriculum levels of progress made in English and mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2 or between Key Stages 2 and 4.



188. Ofsted will continue to focus inspection on weaker schools where improvement is needed most. Inadequate schools will be visited sooner by inspectors to help to speed up the pace of recovery. Evidence shows that monitoring visits to inadequate schools have a good impact on their improvement. Satisfactory schools that have only satisfactory leadership and management or have been satisfactory for more than one inspection will be monitored more frequently, and where progress is limited they will be identified for an earlier inspection.

189. National expectations for our education system are rightly increasing and inspection has an important role to play in challenging schools to improve further, recognising their success, holding them to account, and aiding their improvement by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. A majority of schools inspected this year improved or sustained their performance since their previous inspection. There remain, however, major challenges to sustain outstanding performance and secure greater improvement in good and satisfactory schools, address persistent low performance and reduce the wide variation in the quality of teaching. Ofsted will continue to focus on these priorities.

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Initial teacher education



Key findings

Ofsted has now completed the latest inspection cycle for initial teacher education. The findings in this Annual Report reflect the quality of provision in all providers in the sector inspected between September 2008 and August 2011.

- ✘ Most initial teacher education inspected by Ofsted has been judged to be good or outstanding, although this varies between phases. There is very little inadequate provision.
- ✘ There is more outstanding provision in primary and secondary partnerships led by higher education institutions than in school-centred partnerships or employment-based routes. Around 80% of trainees follow training programmes offered by a higher education institution.
- ✘ There continues to be a higher proportion of provision that is no better than satisfactory in the further education and skills sector than in primary and secondary initial teacher education.
- ✘ Primary trainees do not always have sufficient, well-timed opportunities to teach early reading using a systematic phonics approach.
- ✘ Not all trainees on secondary initial teacher education programmes have sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge of teaching students from a wide ability range, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- ✘ Seventeen per cent of primary providers, 16% of secondary providers, 20% of employment-based providers and 30% of providers of initial teacher education in the further education sector self-evaluated the overall effectiveness of their provision and capacity to improve higher than inspectors. This discrepancy is largely attributable to providers not assessing rigorously enough the impact of their training on trainees' outcomes.
- ✘ Teach First recruits highly qualified trainees who, during their first year of training, have a considerable impact on the achievement of their students in schools in challenging circumstances.

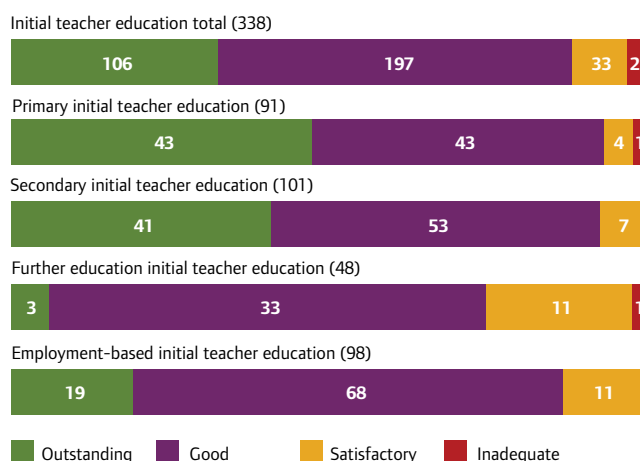
Introduction

190. This is the last year of the current three-year inspection cycle of initial teacher education. Between 2008 and 2011, all providers of initial teacher education have been inspected under the same inspection framework, including: providers offering employment-based routes into teaching in the maintained sector; all higher education institution (HEI)-led partnerships offering initial teacher education in the further education and lifelong learning sector; school-centred initial teacher training partnerships (SCITTs); and the Teach First programme.

191. Approximately 18% of trainees follow employment-based routes into teaching, including those on HEI-led employment-based provision, and around 4% train in SCITTs. The remaining 78% of trainees follow other training programmes offered by a higher education institution.³⁹ Teach First is an employment-based route, which started in 2002 and attracts graduates who commit to a two-year leadership and development programme teaching in challenging secondary schools. It has expanded year on year and, at the time of the inspection, there were 512 trainees in their first year of the programme. Teach First works in collaboration with a number of universities in four regions.⁴⁰

Overall effectiveness

Figure 36 Overall effectiveness of all initial teacher education provision inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

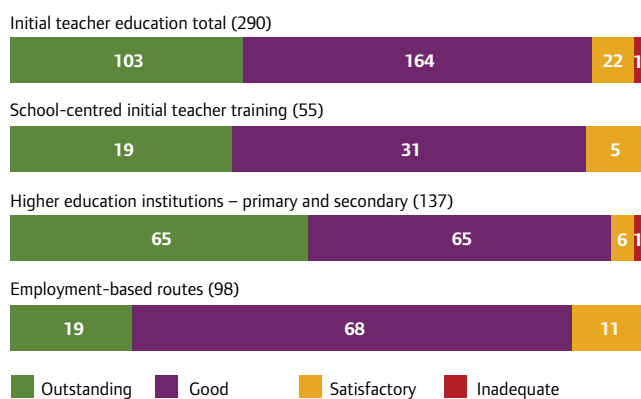
39. *The Good Teacher Training guide 2010*, Centre for Education and Employment Research, University of Buckingham. Data refer to 2008/09.

40. *Teach First: Initial teacher education inspection report*, Ofsted, 2010.

Initial teacher education

192. Figure 36 shows the overall effectiveness of all initial teacher education providers inspected over the three-year period that the current framework has been in operation. It shows that almost 90% of providers inspected are offering good or outstanding provision. However, this varies considerably between phases. Nearly half (43) of the providers offering training for the primary phase have been judged outstanding compared with just 3 providers offering training for teaching in further education.

Figure 37 Overall effectiveness of primary and secondary initial teacher education provision by training provider type inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

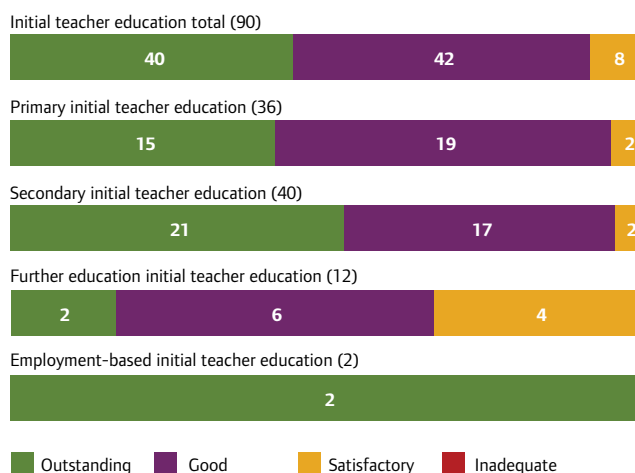


Data exclude further education initial teacher education provision as this is only delivered through higher education institutions.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

193. Figure 37 shows the distribution of inspection judgements for primary and secondary initial teacher education training by type of provider over the three years of the inspection framework. It shows that there is proportionately less outstanding provision in employment-based routes than in HEI-led partnerships and SCITTs. Nineteen employment-based routes were judged to be outstanding compared with 65 HEI-led partnerships and 19 SCITTs. Ensuring consistently high-quality school-based training and mentoring, including the provision of well-focused subject feedback, is a common area for development in providers offering employment-based routes.

Figure 38 Overall effectiveness of all initial teacher education provision inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (numbers of providers)



Under the current inspection framework employment-based initial teacher education inspections have one set of grades rather than separate grades for primary and secondary provision.

194. In the inspections carried out in 2010/11 the very large majority of providers were judged good or outstanding. However, the performance of initial teacher training in the further education and lifelong learning sectors still lags behind that in primary and secondary initial teacher education. Just over two-fifths of primary providers and nearly half of secondary providers were judged to be outstanding for both overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. This reflects a steady improvement in quality since the inspection of primary and secondary initial teacher training began in the mid 1990s. Evidence from provider evaluations received since September 2009 to date indicates that 88% of providers believe that inspection helps them to improve their provision.

The performance of initial teacher training in the further education and lifelong learning sectors still lags behind that in primary and secondary initial teacher education.

Strengths and areas for development

195. Providers have responded well to an inspection framework that is focused upon trainees' outcomes. These include achievement, successful completion of the course and employability. Most primary and secondary providers have sharpened and improved their systems for monitoring trainees' progress and for self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, good practice in analysing data on trainees' progress is often not used sufficiently well to inform self-evaluation and to set measurable targets based on improving trainees' outcomes. In the further education sector, providers make insufficient use of data on trainees' progress to inform their self-evaluation and improvement planning.

196. The recruitment and selection of high-quality trainees with the potential to become excellent teachers in primary and secondary schools is a key strength. Retention, especially on secondary training programmes, has improved as a result of high-quality personal support for trainees' professional development. However, the proportion of those who start a teacher training programme and subsequently go on to enter the teaching profession is still too low at 71%.⁴¹

197. Trainees are well-equipped with the professional attributes and skills to enter the profession as confident and proficient teachers. The ability of trainees to reflect critically on their practice is a significant factor in promoting their progress, particularly in HEI-led partnerships where staff use their own research activity to promote critical thinking and link the development of subject knowledge with underpinning theory of how children learn. However, trainees' attainment at the end of their training is not always as high as it could be given their starting points. Since September 2008 to date, the attainment of trainees was judged to be outstanding in 20% of providers inspected and good in 72%. The attainment of trainees in 8% of providers was judged satisfactory.

198. A key factor in supporting good trainees to become outstanding practitioners on qualification is the setting of challenging targets. Too often, targets lack focus and are task-driven. There is more scope for setting developmental targets, particularly in relation to subject knowledge for teaching, which identify clearly the steps that trainees need to take to progress from good to outstanding.

199. The very large majority of providers are fully aware of the national priorities for initial teacher education. Training in behaviour management and teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is covered well in primary training programmes. For secondary trainees, there is variation in how well they are prepared to plan for individual students, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, and to promote good behaviour. This is because secondary trainees do not always gain first-hand experience of working with a diverse range of students or make sufficient use of assessment information when planning their lessons.

200. Preparing primary trainees for the systematic teaching of phonics and early reading is very important. Inspectors focused particularly on how well providers have responded to this national initiative and found that those providers who received poor response rates to the question on the quality of phonics and early language training in the Training and Development Agency's newly qualified teacher survey had made good progress in improving the quality of their provision.⁴² Most trainees possess a good theoretical grounding in phonics. However, sometimes there is too long a period between theoretical input and opportunities for trainees to put their knowledge and skills into practice. This was highlighted in the 2009/10 Annual Report and remains an issue.

41. *The Good Teacher Training Guide 2010*, Centre for Education and Employment Research, University of Buckingham.

42. *Results of the newly qualified teacher survey*, Training and Development Agency, 2010.

Initial teacher education



201. Over the three-year cycle of initial teacher education inspections, 17% of primary providers, 16% of secondary providers, 20% of employment-based providers and 30% of providers of initial teacher education in the further education sector evaluated the overall effectiveness of their provision and capacity to improve higher than inspectors. This discrepancy is largely attributable to providers not assessing rigorously enough the impact of their training on trainees' outcomes. In these instances, self-evaluation is often restricted to evaluating the implementation of systems and processes instead of their impact. In 2010/11, 58 providers evaluated their own overall effectiveness as outstanding whereas inspectors only graded 40 as outstanding.

202. This is the first year that the Teach First programme has been inspected under the current inspection cycle. It was inspected in all four regions and the outcomes were published in a single report. The inspection found that Teach First offers a much higher than usual level of support for participants and is able to draw upon extensive high-quality resources matched precisely to individual needs. In addition to school-based subject and professional mentors, participants are also visited and observed frequently by Teach First university-based regional subject and professional tutors.

203. The Teach First programme is very successful in meeting its commitment to address educational disadvantage by placing high-quality graduates into schools in challenging circumstances and working closely with the schools to improve students' aspirations, experiences and achievement. Teach First recruits very skilled and highly qualified participants, almost all of whom have a first class or upper second class degree, and many of whom might not otherwise have considered teaching. During their first year of training, Teach First trainees have a considerable positive impact on the achievement of the students in their schools. Overall the provision is outstanding.

204. The proportion of good or outstanding initial teacher education provision in the further education/lifelong learning sector is still not as high as in the maintained schools sector. However, in the inspections carried out in 2010/11, eight out of 12 providers were judged to be good or better, of which two were judged to be outstanding. One provider has inadequate capacity to improve because of weaknesses in self-evaluation and in taking actions to secure improvement. Key strengths in the good and better provision include the high levels of personal and professional support for trainees, which have a direct impact on their achievement. The main areas for further development lie in the monitoring and assessment of trainees' progress and achievement, and the need for better analysis of data on trainees' outcomes to inform ongoing monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels.

During their first year of training, Teach First trainees have a considerable positive impact on the achievement of the students in their schools. Overall the provision is outstanding.

Independent schools, non-maintained special schools and boarding schools



Key findings

- ✦ Since 2005/06, there has been a continual improvement in the proportion of non-association independent schools which meet all or almost all of the regulations, so that the very large majority of schools now meet at least 90% of them. This is the final year of the second cycle of inspections in non-association independent schools.
- ✦ There has been a strong rise in the proportion of schools meeting all the regulations for independent schools. This has increased from 36% in 2009/10 to 45% in 2010/11.
- ✦ One in eight schools still does not make adequate arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety. This remains a serious concern.
- ✦ This year the quality of education in non-association independent schools is broadly similar to last year, with 67% of schools judged good or outstanding. The proportion of schools providing an inadequate quality of education has remained at 4%.
- ✦ In over two thirds of schools pupils make good progress. This outcome is particularly supported by effective teachers who know their subject well.
- ✦ Most non-association independent schools emphasise the acquisition of basic skills well and provide an orderly and purposeful environment in which teaching is effective and pupils learn and make progress. However, while teaching was at least good in two thirds of the schools, it was outstanding in only 7% – an indication that in these schools teaching is often well planned but seldom inspiring.
- ✦ Pupils' behaviour is a major strength. Non-association independent special schools are often effective in helping pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to manage and improve their behaviour.
- ✦ This year Ofsted inspected 29 non-maintained special schools. In the large majority of schools the overall effectiveness was at least good, with over a quarter outstanding. One school was judged to be inadequate.

Non-association independent schools

205. There are around 2,400 independent schools in England educating roughly 7% of all children. Just over half of these schools are members of independent schools associations and are inspected by independent inspectorates which are approved by the Department for Education for this purpose.

206. Ofsted monitors the work of the independent inspectorates (the Independent Schools Inspectorate, the Schools Inspection Service and the Bridge Schools Inspectorate) to ensure that their judgements are fair and consistent with those of Ofsted. This monitoring shows that independent inspectorates provide good support and training for their inspectors. All the inspections monitored this year met the required standard and the very large majority were of good quality and reached reliable and consistent judgements. Inspection reports that Ofsted reviewed were generally clear and well written.

207. The remaining independent schools are referred to as the 'non-association independent schools', and they are inspected by Ofsted. They are diverse in size and character, and include some preparatory and pre-preparatory schools, faith schools such as Jewish, Muslim or evangelical Christian schools, and those set up for a particular purpose, such as stage schools, tutorial colleges and foreign schools catering for expatriate communities in the UK. Although most of the independent schools that Ofsted inspects are smaller than the average maintained school, they range in size from a school with over 3,800 pupils on several sites to a small children's home providing education for just one young person. Around 40% of the schools cater wholly or mainly for vulnerable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are in public care. Just over half of these special schools make residential provision for their pupils. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 Ofsted inspected 314 non-association independent schools.

208. This is the final year of the second cycle of inspections in non-association independent schools. The inspection has two purposes. The first is to report on the school's compliance with the regulatory standards for independent schools.⁴³ This information is needed by the registering authority, the Department for Education. The second purpose is to provide an evaluative assessment of the school's performance,

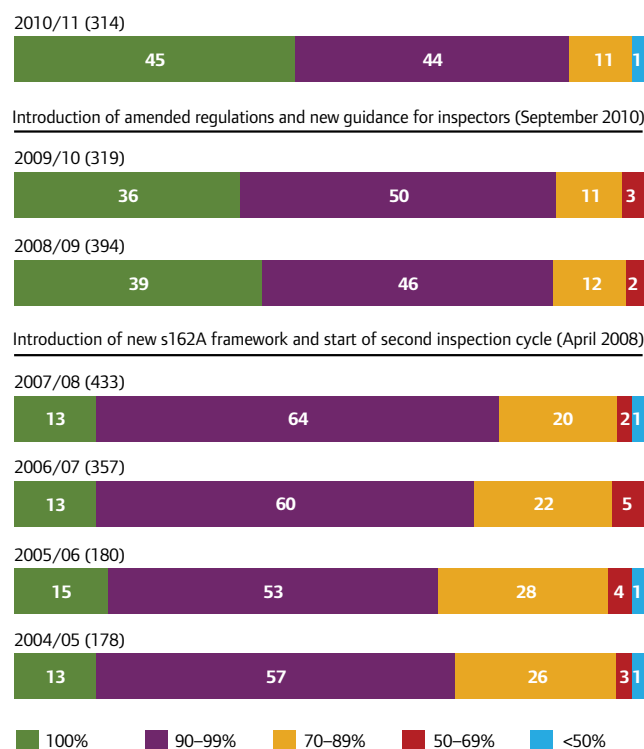
43. These are set out in the 2010 Statutory Instrument No.1997: The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. Standards regulations for independent schools were first introduced in September 2003.

Independent schools, non-maintained special schools and boarding schools

resulting in a published report. The registering authority is responsible for following up schools which do not meet the regulatory requirements, seeking from them an action plan which sets out how they intend to rectify the weaknesses or provide evidence of improvement. The Department asks Ofsted to monitor the progress of schools where inspection has identified serious weaknesses. This year 113 such monitoring inspections were undertaken, including 20 schools with residential accommodation.

Meeting the standards

Figure 39 Overall performance in meeting regulations for independent schools by non-association independent schools inspected between 1 September 2004 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

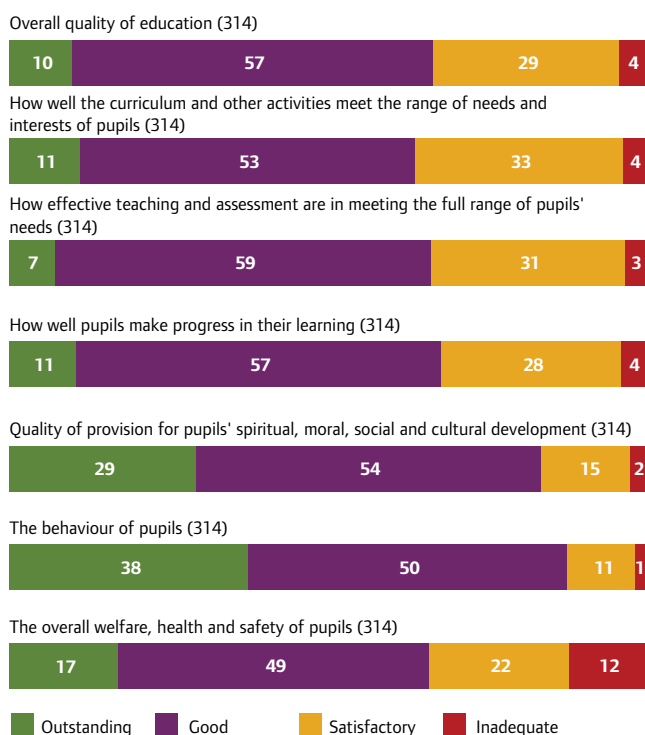
209. Since the introduction of the regulatory standards for independent schools, there has been substantial improvement in the proportion of non-association schools which meet all or almost all of the requirements. Since 2005/06 non-association independent schools have got progressively better at meeting the regulations, so that the very large majority of schools now meet at least 90% of them.

210. There was a particularly marked increase in the percentage of schools meeting all regulations between 2007/08 and 2008/09. This increase coincided with the start of the second inspection cycle and demonstrated both the improvement that established schools had made between their first and second inspections in meeting regulations and the impact of Ofsted's inspections in the sector. In 2010/11 there has been a further increase in the proportion of schools meeting all regulations, resulting in a rise of nine percentage points. Importantly, there is also an increase in the percentage of schools meeting all the safeguarding regulations. Schools are paying closer attention to children's safety by introducing more robust procedures for child protection and staff recruitment.

211. Nonetheless, it is a serious concern that 12% of schools inspected this year had inadequate safeguarding procedures. This rate of failure is still too high and reflects the fact that some schools are too lax in running pre-appointment checks on staff or others who work with children. In some cases they have not checked fully previous employment history; in the worst case, some appointments were confirmed without running a Criminal Records Bureau check. Other weaknesses included procedures for responding to potential allegations of abuse or neglect which were not sufficiently clear or understood by staff and lack of training for staff in child protection issues. Furthermore, 12% of schools are still meeting less than 90% of the regulations overall. The vast majority of these must rectify serious weaknesses in their provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. This remains an area for urgent attention.

Inspection judgements

Figure 40 Inspection outcomes for non-association independent schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

212. This year the quality of education in non-association independent schools is broadly similar to last year, with 67% of schools judged good or outstanding. The proportion of schools providing an inadequate quality of education has remained at 4%. The quality of the curriculum was at least good in nearly two thirds of the schools. Most independent schools emphasise the acquisition of basic skills well and provide an orderly and purposeful environment in which teaching is effective and pupils learn and make progress. However, while teaching was good in two thirds of the schools, it was outstanding in only 7%: an indication that in these schools teaching is often well planned but seldom inspiring.

213. Pupils' behaviour is a major strength: in 88% of schools pupils' behaviour was rated good or outstanding. Good levels of supervision and effective systems for managing behaviour, tackling bullying and providing individual support ensure that pupils behave very well, feel safe at school and develop confidence and self-esteem. This is a considerable achievement, since around 40% of non-association independent schools cater for vulnerable pupils who may be disaffected, have special educational needs and/or disabilities or be looked after by the local authority. Many of these young people have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, yet the large majority of non-association independent special schools are effective in helping them to manage and improve their behaviour.

214. The proportion of schools that make at least good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety has increased by five percentage points this year. Similarly, there has been a four percentage point reduction in the proportion of schools that make inadequate provision for some aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety. However, inspectors still found that nearly one school in eight had some aspects of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils which were inadequate. The inadequacies ranged from policies and procedures which lacked the required detail, to more serious issues such as not tackling bullying well enough, which can seriously affect pupils' well-being and development. In a minority of these schools, the procedures for carrying out pre-appointment checks on staff were insufficiently robust and important evidence was missing concerning whether the school had checked the suitability of staff to work with children.

It is a serious concern that 12% of non-association independent schools inspected this year had inadequate safeguarding procedures.

Independent schools, non-maintained special schools and boarding schools

Regulation and registration

215. When inspection identifies regulatory failures and serious weaknesses, the Department for Education, as the registering authority, asks the school to draw up a plan of action and tasks Ofsted with monitoring and reporting on the progress that the school makes. This year Ofsted has made 113 visits to schools to monitor their progress. Fifty-six per cent of them had made satisfactory or good progress. The Department for Education follows up all schools that have not made adequate progress against their action plans. The action taken by the Department for Education could lead to a school's deletion from the register, forcing it to close.

216. Ofsted also visits new schools which apply for registration. New schools must meet the regulatory requirements before they can accept pupils, and are inspected in the first year of operation. Since September 2010, there have been 123 pre-registration visits to 107 schools and registration was recommended for 67 of these. Those schools in which registration was not recommended are not allowed to open and admit pupils until they meet the regulations. They are able to re-apply for registration and will be recommended only if they have rectified the weaknesses identified. Most of the new schools intend to cater either for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties or provide an alternative education for disaffected young people.

Non-maintained special schools

217. Non-maintained special schools are non-profit making independent schools that are controlled by a governing body, approved by the Secretary of State and registered by the Department for Education. They provide specialist education for children with a broad range of needs such as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, sensory impairment, complex medical needs or learning difficulties. All these schools cater for a wide age range covering at least two key stages. There are 75 non-maintained special schools, of which 61 take residential pupils. Ten of these schools are registered as children's homes because they are open for more than 295 days per

year.⁴⁴ To retain their non-maintained status the schools must comply with the non-maintained special school regulations.⁴⁵ Their educational provision is inspected every three years under the same inspection framework as maintained schools, so from January 2012 they will be inspected under the new inspection framework.

Education provision

Figure 41 Overall effectiveness of non-maintained special schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011 (numbers of schools)

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	11	3	8
Good	14	9	14
Satisfactory	5	3	6
Inadequate	2	0	1
Total	32	15	29

218. During 2010/11 Ofsted inspected 29 non-maintained special schools. In the large majority of schools the overall effectiveness was at least good, with over a quarter outstanding. One school was judged to be inadequate. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils was judged outstanding in over half of the schools inspected this year, while the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures was outstanding in 14 of the 29 schools, but inadequate in one. This is of particular importance in schools which cater for vulnerable young people. The extent to which pupils felt safe and adopted healthy lifestyles was also outstanding in over half the schools.

44. Two hundred and ninety-five days is the threshold above which a residential special school must be registered as a children's home.

45. The Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 1999 and The Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

219. The large majority of the schools benefit from good-quality specialist teaching which focuses well on helping pupils to overcome their individual barriers to learning. As a result, pupils learn effectively, make good progress and achieve well. Behaviour is good or outstanding in a very large majority of those inspected. Well-planned teaching enables pupils to acquire and develop skills which will contribute to their future economic well-being. However, schools are not always making best use of assessment data to raise standards further. Governors are generally supportive of their schools, but they do not always challenge them rigorously in relation to pupils' achievements. Attendance was low in four of the schools.

220. Sixth-form provision was inspected in just under two thirds of the schools and in the very large majority the provision is good or outstanding. In these schools students are taught well and can follow their chosen programme of study, which includes a wide range of accredited courses in preparation for further or higher education.

Welfare provision

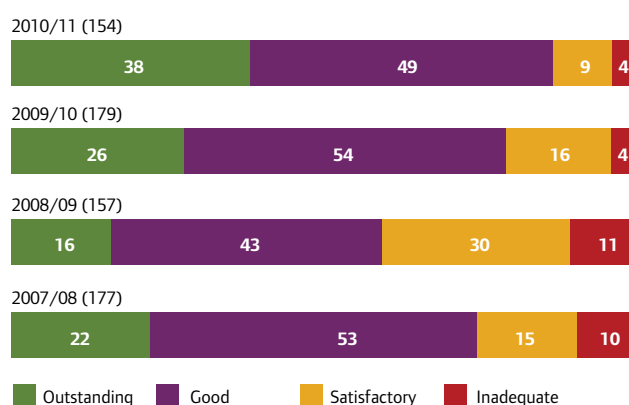
221. The welfare of residential pupils was inspected in 49 of the schools and judged outstanding in 27 of them. In these schools, the protection and safeguarding of each individual are accorded the highest priority. Young people receive outstanding care from experienced and well-trained staff supported by therapists and other professionals.

Boarding schools

222. There are 533 boarding schools in England. The very large majority of these are independent and belong to associations which are members of the Independent Schools Council. This is the last year in which Ofsted will inspect the welfare provision for boarders in these schools. From January 2012 this duty will pass to the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which also inspects the schools' educational provision. Welfare inspections occur on a three-year cycle.

223. Of these 533 there are 32 maintained boarding schools in which Ofsted inspects both education and the welfare of boarders. Where it is sensible and practical to do so, Ofsted integrates the inspection of boarders' welfare in maintained boarding schools with the education inspection.

Figure 42 Quality of care in boarding schools inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

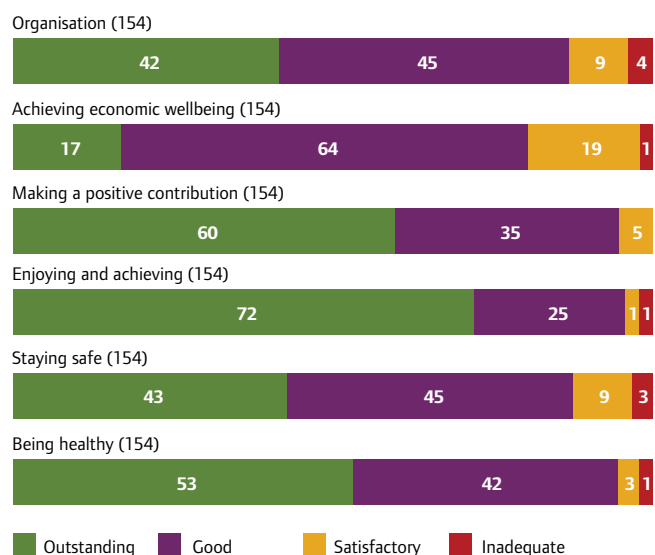
224. In 2010/11 Ofsted inspected boarders' welfare in 154 boarding schools, of which 141 were association independent schools, six were non-association independent schools and seven were maintained schools. Overall, these schools make very good provision for boarders in their care. This year there has been a substantial increase in the proportion judged outstanding while the proportion judged inadequate has remained the same. Of the seven maintained boarding schools inspected by Ofsted, boarders' welfare was outstanding in two schools, good in three schools and inadequate in two.

The large majority of non-maintained special schools benefit from good-quality specialist teaching which focuses well on helping pupils to overcome their individual barriers to learning.

Independent schools, non-maintained special schools and boarding schools

225. Four per cent of schools were judged to be making inadequate provision. Here, important weaknesses were identified in the schools' organisation and systems for safeguarding pupils from harm. While they all had policies for checking staff who have contact with the boarders, the schools had not implemented them sufficiently rigorously. Other shortcomings were found in staff training, lack of staff supervision and poor record-keeping. All schools where inadequate practice was found were issued with a notice to improve. Two maintained boarding schools were issued with a notice to improve as a result of inadequate safeguarding arrangements. In one, weaknesses were found in child protection procedures, particularly in referring concerns to the relevant authorities. In the other, serious safeguarding concerns were identified relating to recruitment procedures, a lack of staff training, low levels of staffing and inadequate healthcare arrangements.

Figure 43 Key welfare inspection judgements for boarding schools inspected by Ofsted between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

226. The very large majority of boarding schools inspected by Ofsted provide very well for boarders. Almost all of the schools enable boarders to derive a good deal of enjoyment from their education, achieve well as a result, and make a positive contribution to life in school and wider society. The very large majority provide very good healthcare: for many of the larger full-boarding schools this includes 24-hour on-site medical care. Nutritious meals, regular exercise, well-organised healthcare arrangements and comprehensive programmes of personal, social and health education ensure that boarders are well cared for and understand how to stay fit and healthy.

227. The best schools exhibit a number of common strengths. They provide excellent pastoral care to support boarders' personal and academic development. Boarders are very well known both by the staff who teach them and those who care for them, and there is strong and effective liaison between both sets of staff. This means that boarders are treated well as individuals: the guidance and support they require is tailored to their needs and monitored effectively for its impact. Relationships are excellent. A wide range of challenging, interesting and age-appropriate leisure activities adds greatly to boarders' enjoyment of their education, enabling them to acquire new knowledge and skills or just to make friends and have fun.

228. Most schools make every effort to help boarders feel 'at home'. This extends from providing clean and comfortable accommodation which boarders are encouraged to personalise attractively with their own belongings, to the care and thought put into an induction programme to welcome pupils who are new or away from home for the first time. The vigilance of staff and other boarders ensures that signs of unhappiness are picked up quickly and that support is on hand. Most boarders say that there is a range of adults to whom they can go for support or to raise concerns. Good schools recognise that bullying can occur in the best of them, and thus have strong systems to identify it quickly and deal with it effectively, with the result that, generally, their boarders report that bullying is rare and that they feel safe at school. To reinforce this, good schools also have robust policies for child protection, good partnership working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards when issues arise, and staff who are



well-trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding children. They also have rigorous procedures for recruiting and vetting staff.

229. Nine per cent of boarding schools were judged to be providing only satisfactory care for boarders. Such schools were meeting most of the national minimum standards and keeping boarders safe and generally well cared for, but they did not distinguish themselves by good practice.

Education in maintained boarding schools

230. Ofsted also inspected education in three maintained boarding schools this year. This was judged to be outstanding in one school, good in one school and satisfactory in one school.

231. All three maintained boarding schools cared for and supported their pupils well. Pupils made at least satisfactory progress in all of the schools. However, in the two schools where progress was judged good or better this was as a result of consistently good teaching and effective monitoring by senior staff, which played a decisive part in raising standards. In the outstanding school there was a clear drive for constant improvement. Managers had ensured that teaching was of consistently high quality and, as a result, pupils of all abilities worked hard and made outstanding progress.

Learning and skills



Key findings

A proportionate approach has been taken to inspections carried out since September 2009. This means that the sample of providers selected for inspection this year contained both a greater percentage of previously satisfactory or inadequate providers, and a greater percentage of good or outstanding providers that are believed to be at risk of declining than would be found in the population of providers as a whole. As a result, learning and skills providers inspected in any one year are not representative of the whole population of providers and comparisons between years are not straightforward.

- ✘ There is too little outstanding teaching in learning and skills providers inspected this year. Only 13 independent learning providers and two employer providers were judged outstanding for the quality of teaching. No colleges, adult and community learning providers or prisons received an overall outstanding judgement for the quality of teaching.
- ✘ Less than half the colleges inspected this year were judged to be good or outstanding. However, this is in the context of a risk-based approach to inspection. A more representative and more positive picture of the 'state of the nation' is given by looking at the most recent inspection judgement for all colleges, rather than just those inspected this year. This shows that 70% of colleges were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- ✘ A high proportion of previously good colleges, selected for inspection on the basis of Ofsted's risk assessment, have declined in their performance this year. In 2009/10 around a quarter of colleges previously judged to be good declined compared with over two fifths this year.
- ✘ The slow progress of colleges that were previously found to be satisfactory remains a concern. Of the 40 previously satisfactory colleges inspected in 2010/11, 22 continue to be no better than satisfactory and two declined. Sixteen colleges remain satisfactory on their third inspection.
- ✘ Only three of the 11 independent specialist colleges inspected this year were judged to be good, seven were satisfactory and one was inadequate.
- ✘ Independent learning providers deliver the majority of work-based learning, including apprenticeships. Within the context of a more risk-based approach to inspection, there has been a substantial increase this year in the percentage of independent learning providers judged good or outstanding; from 47% in 2009/10 to 55% in 2010/11. The percentage judged to be outstanding has increased from 4% last year to 10% this year.
- ✘ Strong leadership, a readiness to respond to the recommendations of previous inspections, effective self-assessment and use of feedback from learners were the hallmarks of those independent learning providers that improved to become outstanding this year.
- ✘ Ten of the 16 employer providers inspected this year were judged to be outstanding or good, and six were judged as satisfactory. These are similar proportions to last year. Employer providers are on the whole good at ensuring that learning programmes are well planned and support learners to gain the skills they need to do their jobs.
- ✘ Although 33 of the 45 adult and community learning providers inspected this year were judged to be good, only one provider was judged to be outstanding overall and no providers were judged outstanding for the quality of teaching for the second year running. However, the sector performed strongly in terms of including and engaging hard to reach and vulnerable learners.
- ✘ The high proportion of provision that is no better than satisfactory in prisons and young offender institutions is a concern. Leadership and management and the extent to which provision meets the needs and interests of learners are key factors limiting improvement.

Introduction

232. The economic climate in which providers of further education, training and adult learning operate remains challenging. The rate of unemployment for the quarter June to August 2011 is 8.1%, and of the total 2.57 million unemployed over a third have not been in work for more than a year. The impact of the economic downturn continues to be particularly hard on young people: currently, 991,000 16–24-year-olds are unemployed.⁴⁶ At the end of June 2011, 9.8% of 16–18-year-olds were not in education, employment or training.⁴⁷ While this is a slight improvement on the figure for the same period last year, it remains too high. The learning and skills sector has a critical part to play, both in working with young people who are currently disengaged from education, or at risk of becoming so, and in supporting adults with low skill levels to achieve their ambitions in life, work and learning.

233. The policy context for learning and skills is changing too. The government has accepted the Wolf report recommendations that all young people should continue to pursue mathematics and English post-16 and that more work experience should be offered to learners to better prepare them for entry to the labour market.⁴⁸ This will require considerable effort, given the evidence in this year's Annual Report about the challenges in providing effective support to learners with specific numeracy and literacy needs.

One of the key findings in last year's Annual Report was that, across the learning and skills sector as a whole, there was too little outstanding teaching. This remains a concern this year.

234. The government sees apprenticeships as the key work-based learning option for vocational training and is investing significantly in them. Continued growth in apprenticeships is planned, with an extra 75,000 apprenticeship places by 2014. *Skills for sustainable growth*, the government's skills strategy for the further education and skills sector, stresses the importance of securing progression to successive levels of apprenticeships, from level 2 to level 4 provision.⁴⁹ Level 2 qualifications constitute by far the greatest number of qualifications currently undertaken. This year Ofsted inspected apprenticeship programmes that involved around 65,000 learners in 2009/10. The large majority of inspections found that learners were gaining a broad range of both practical and theoretical skills that were directly applicable to their work and the needs of their employers.

235. One of the key findings in last year's Annual Report was that, across the learning and skills sector as a whole, there was too little outstanding teaching. This remains a concern this year. The challenge for providers is to put in place the rigorous systems and processes of observing teaching, critically reflecting on practice, and supporting targeted professional development, that will enable outstanding teaching and learning to be more widely replicated. Inspection also shows that achieving good-quality teaching and learning depends on bringing industry expertise and workplace contexts to the fore. Where work-based learning is most effective the industry experience of tutors, the high quality of the learning environments and the chance to apply learning directly in the workplace all combine to motivate and enthuse learners.

46. Labour market statistics: October 2011, Office of National Statistics.

47. *NEET Statistics – Quarterly Brief – Quarter 2 2011*, Department for Education, 2011.

48. *Review of vocational education – the Wolf report*, Alison Wolf, 2011.

49. *Skills for sustainable growth: strategy document*, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010.

Overall performance of the learning and skills sector

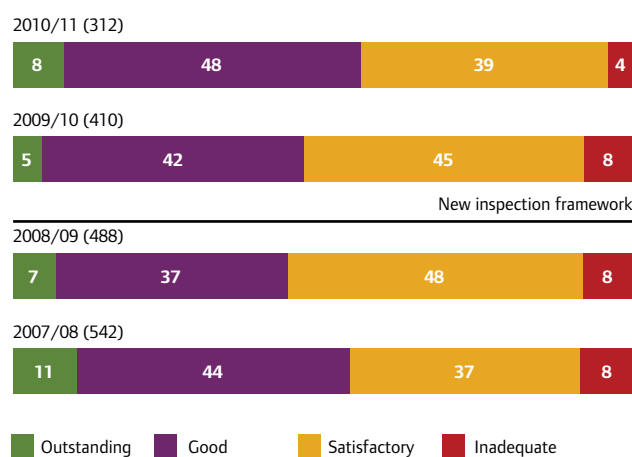
236. Around 1,300 different providers operate in the learning and skills sector and they vary considerably in scale. The smallest organisations provide education and training to fewer than 10 learners, whereas the largest cater for more than 160,000. Learning and skills providers cater primarily for young people aged over 16 and adults, but some also offer education and training for young people aged 14 to 16. In 2010/11 Ofsted inspected 312 learning and skills providers including 84 colleges; 167 independent learning providers; 16 employer-based providers; and 45 adult and community learning providers. Ofsted also inspected 24 prisons and young offender institutions, three establishments providing secure accommodation for young people aged 15–17, 11 probation trusts, one immigration removal centre, 11 dance and drama colleges and 10 Armed Forces training providers. Ofsted did not inspect any Next Step provision in 2010/11 as no providers were due an inspection.

237. Ofsted introduced the current framework for inspecting learning and skills providers in September 2009. The framework takes a more proportionate approach to inspection based on risk assessment. Under this framework, inadequate providers are reinspected within 15 months, satisfactory providers are inspected every four years, and good and outstanding providers are inspected every six years. The exceptions to this are outstanding colleges and private training organisations which, from September 2010, have been subject to inspection every eight years. This is pending changes to primary legislation which will allow the government to exempt outstanding colleges from inspection ‘unless their performance drops’. However, all further education colleges, providers of work-based learning and adult and community learning providers are subject to an annual risk assessment to determine whether they should be inspected sooner.

238. This proportionate approach to inspection effectively means that the sample of providers selected for inspection in any single year will contain both a greater percentage of previously satisfactory or inadequate providers and a greater percentage of good or outstanding providers that are believed to be at risk of declining than would be found in the population of providers as a whole. As a result, learning and skills providers inspected in any one year are not representative of all providers and comparisons between years are not straightforward. This is partially offset by the fact that the selection process ensures that a random sample of one-sixth of good providers is inspected in each year in order to ensure a more balanced cohort.

239. This year 42 colleges, 41 independent learning providers, four adult and community learning providers and two employer providers had their inspection brought forward because, on the basis of the risk assessment, Ofsted deemed that their performance may have declined from their previous inspection.

Figure 44 Overall effectiveness of all learning and skills providers inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



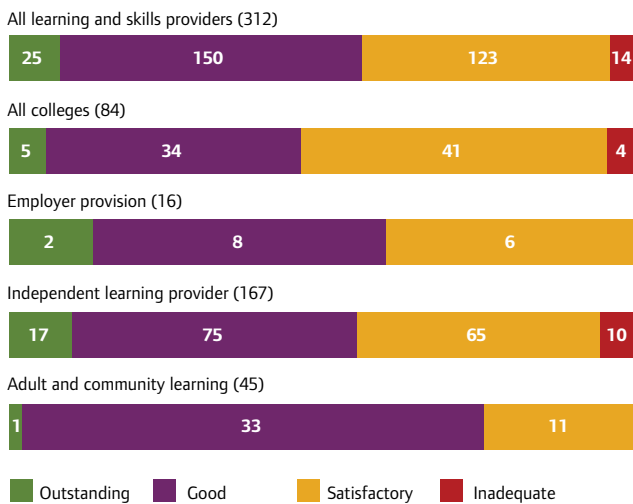
Data exclude Armed Forces and joint inspectorate inspections, including prisons, probation and immigration removal centres.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Learning and skills

240. The proportionate approach to inspection used during 2010/11 is similar to that used in 2009/10, although no previously outstanding colleges and only two previously outstanding independent learning providers have been inspected this year. It is therefore encouraging that across the sector as a whole there has been an increase in the percentage judged good or outstanding and a considerable decrease in the proportion judged inadequate. However, this overall trend masks substantial variations both in quality and progress between different types of provider, as illustrated in Figure 45. As was the case last year, the strongest progress is being seen among independent learning providers that are delivering work-based learning. However, across the sector, and particularly among colleges, the percentage of providers judged no better than satisfactory remains a cause for concern. The performance of different types of provider is explored in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 45 The overall effectiveness of all learning and skills providers by remit areas inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



Colleges includes: general further education/tertiary colleges; independent specialist colleges; special further education colleges; and sixth form colleges. Dance and drama colleges are not included.

Colleges

Overall effectiveness

241. The college sector includes general further education and tertiary colleges, sixth form colleges and specialist further education colleges such as land-based colleges, dance and drama colleges and independent specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.⁵⁰ The recent changes in the way in which Ofsted selects providers for inspection affect the way in which comparisons can be made with previous years. Of the 84 colleges selected for inspection this year, 42 were prioritised on the basis of risk. No colleges which were previously judged outstanding were inspected this year and, in future, subject to changes to primary legislation, outstanding colleges will no longer be subject to an inspection unless the risk assessment indicates that there is cause for concern.

A smaller proportion of the colleges inspected during 2010/11 were judged to be good and a larger proportion judged satisfactory compared with 2009/10.

50. Dance and drama schools and colleges are excluded from the data and analysis provided in this section, as they provide a unique and distinct offer in one subject area at levels 5 and 6 (first degree level) and, as such, are not comparable with the other further education colleges for which data are presented here. The performance of dance and drama schools and colleges inspected this year is reported on separately at the end of the colleges section of this report.

Figure 46 Overall effectiveness of colleges inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2011 (number of colleges)

	Introduction of new framework					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	11	20	37	18	9	5
Good	44	49	54	40	43	34
Satisfactory	37	42	32	32	35	41
Inadequate	8	9	10	4	5	4
Total	100	120	133	94	92	84

Number of inspections differ from those reported in previous Annual Reports as independent specialist colleges are now included.

242. Figure 46 shows the overall effectiveness of colleges inspected in each year from 2005/06 to 2010/11. The impact of the more proportionate approach to inspection can clearly be seen in the profile of judgements for the last two years compared with inspections carried out before the introduction of the new framework. A smaller proportion of the colleges inspected during 2010/11 were judged to be good and a larger proportion judged satisfactory compared with 2009/10. This year half the colleges inspected were selected on the basis of risk compared with around a quarter last year.

Figure 47 Most recent overall effectiveness judgement for colleges as at 31 August 2010 and as at 31 August 2011 (percentage of colleges)⁵¹



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

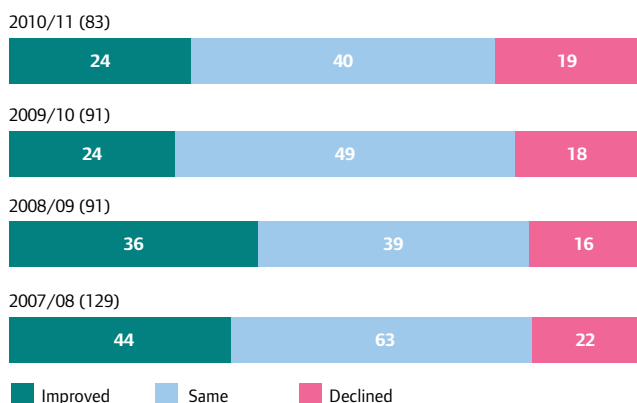
243. Given the changes in the way in which Ofsted selects colleges for inspection, the most complete view of the performance of the sector is provided by looking at the most recent overall effectiveness inspection judgement for every college, shown in Figure 47. This chart demonstrates that there is much outstanding and good provision in the sector as a whole, with 23% of all colleges judged outstanding at their most recent inspection and 47% of all colleges judged good. But it also shows that around a third of colleges were judged satisfactory or inadequate. However, it must be recognised that this analysis includes the outcomes of inspection undertaken several years ago against the criteria set out in previous inspection frameworks and that the majority of colleges would not have been reinspected between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

244. This comparison shows that the proportion of colleges which are outstanding has increased slightly this year. Four colleges that were previously good improved to become outstanding and no previously outstanding colleges were inspected, leading to an increase overall. There has been no change in the overall percentage of colleges judged inadequate, despite the fact that all of the colleges previously judged inadequate inspected this year had improved. This is because the improvement in these colleges was offset by previously good and satisfactory colleges declining to inadequate this year. Despite these changes, the proportion of colleges judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection is almost the same this year as at the end of the 2009/10 inspection year. The apparent stability of the sector masks a degree of turbulence in the performance of individual colleges.

51. In inspections undertaken prior to 2005 no overall effectiveness judgement was awarded. This chart therefore uses a modelling procedure to establish a proxy for overall effectiveness in inspections carried out before 2005.

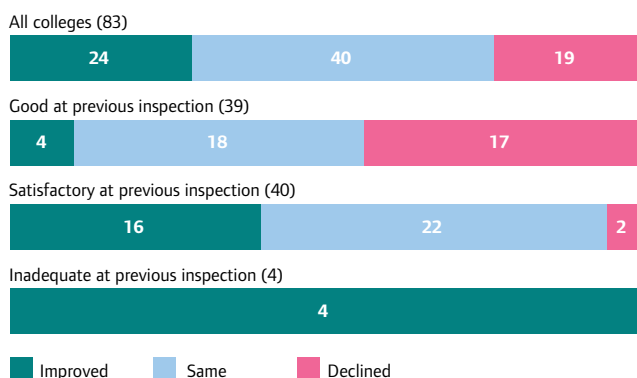
Learning and skills

Figure 48 Changes in the overall effectiveness of colleges compared with their previous inspection, by year (number of colleges)



245. Figure 48 shows that for the last two years the number of colleges that have improved since their last inspection has been only slightly larger than the number which have declined. This is in marked contrast to 2007/08 and 2008/09 in which many more colleges improved than declined. This partly reflects the impact of the risk assessment process in selecting colleges for inspection whose performance is less secure. In comparison with last year the performance of colleges selected for inspection this year has also been slightly more volatile – a greater proportion have improved and more have declined. Changes since the previous inspection are shown in greater detail in Figure 49.

Figure 49 Changes in the overall effectiveness of colleges inspected in 2010/11 compared with their previous inspection (number of colleges)



246. The analysis of changes in the overall effectiveness of colleges inspected this year compared with their previous inspection highlights two key features. The first is the high proportion of previously good colleges in which performance has declined this year, and the second is the high proportion of previously satisfactory colleges in which performance has not improved.

247. The proportion of previously good colleges that have declined in their performance in 2010/11 is striking, even in comparison with last year when a similar approach to risk assessment was used for good colleges. In part this reflects the fact that colleges selected on the basis of risk formed a larger proportion of the sample inspected this year than last year. In 2009/10 around a quarter of colleges previously judged to be good declined compared with this year when over two fifths declined. Inspection has identified a number of common and systemic weaknesses in these colleges. In the two colleges that were previously judged good, but are now judged inadequate, weaknesses in leadership and management were the primary reasons for a sharp decline in standards. Self-assessment in these colleges was too shallow and failed to acknowledge the significance of key areas for improvement, and leaders, managers and governors had not taken sufficient action to halt a decline in performance.

248. In fact, there were weaknesses in leadership and management in almost all the colleges that declined from good to satisfactory. In the majority of these colleges, self-assessment was too positive, especially in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. In these colleges lesson observations did not systematically provide managers with an accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses, which in turn hindered the pace and consistency of improvement. In addition, over half of these colleges had experienced significant changes to their senior management team since their last inspection. Whether it was a new principal, a recent merger, several re-organisations or too many managers on temporary contracts, the resultant instability had a negative impact on learners' achievements. At each college, the proportion of learners who successfully completed their courses had either declined since the last inspection or failed to improve at a sufficiently fast pace to keep up with national averages.

249. A further cause for concern is the large number of satisfactory colleges in which improvement is too slow. This has been highlighted in Ofsted's last two Annual Reports as an area for improvement. Of the 40 colleges inspected this year that were previously judged to be satisfactory, 22 remained satisfactory and two declined. Nineteen of the colleges which remained satisfactory were deemed to have only satisfactory capacity to improve. Sixteen colleges inspected this year have now been judged satisfactory in their last three inspections.⁵²

250. Several of the colleges found to be satisfactory for three consecutive inspections had new leaders or management structures in place at their latest inspection, but these had not yet demonstrated sufficient evidence of improvement. In most of these persistently satisfactory colleges, leaders were ill-informed because effective systems to monitor and quality assure provision were not securely in place. Particularly evident were weaknesses in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning: for example inspectors frequently found that senior leaders were over-generous in lesson observations and did not challenge the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently, leading to poorly focused action plans.

251. The poor assessment of students was at the heart of why many of these colleges had failed to improve. Students' progress was not closely monitored by their teachers, leading to declining achievement, and managers were typically too slow to spot these problems. Errors in initial assessments led to students taking unsuitable courses. Once on the courses, teachers' use of assessment was not sharp enough to ensure appropriate challenge and progress. Too often teachers neither identified nor responded to students' literacy needs. Planning was not consistent or effective enough to ensure interesting and varied learning, with attendance levels then often declining in the weakest lessons. Use of information technology to enhance learning was also often weak. Because of their inability to monitor and respond effectively to students' learning needs, colleges became locked into stagnation or decline.

252. However, 16 colleges that were previously satisfactory have improved their performance since their previous inspection. In these colleges, most learners now achieve high standards and make good progress, regardless of their backgrounds, gender, ethnicity or disability. Support is effective, especially for the vulnerable and traditionally hard to reach learners. Leaders and managers demonstrate an eager determination to bring about improvement and promote a culture that is based on a relentless desire to improve. Learners benefit from good and sometimes outstanding teaching; their views are listened to and acted upon. Additional courses are chosen carefully to widen skills and improve learners' chances of employment. Inspectors judged that progression between levels of courses and to employment and higher education was good in many of these colleges.

253. During an inspection Ofsted seeks the views of learners and employers (where appropriate) and their views contribute significantly to inspection judgements. In the best colleges, learners told inspectors that staff were passionate about their subjects, supportive, helpful and caring. Learners enjoyed classroom activities, particularly debate and challenge during lessons; the college listened to their views and appropriate actions were taken as a result. They said that the college environment was safe. In colleges judged satisfactory and inadequate, on the other hand, frequent weaknesses highlighted by learners included uninspiring lessons, lack of clarity about tasks during lessons, dull teaching and poor accommodation.

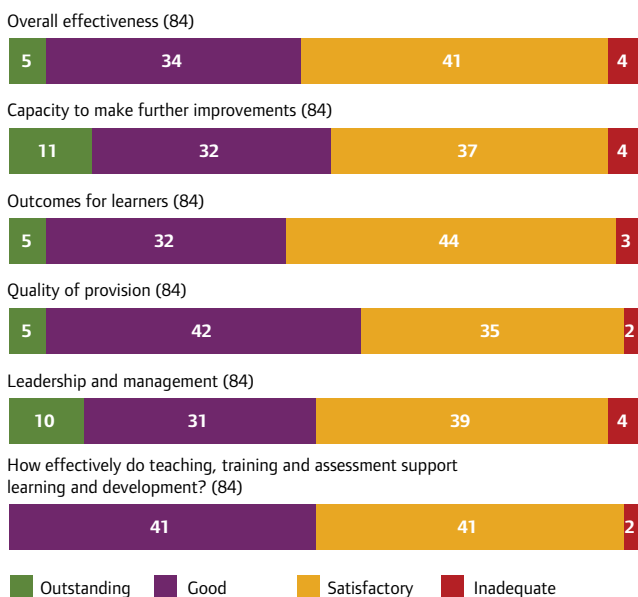
254. In the best colleges, employers told inspectors that communication was good and that managers were highly flexible and responsive to their needs. Employers were impressed by the strong collaborative approach and the willingness of the college to share staff's expertise and industry standard resources. The excellent customer service and speed of response to resolve issues and provide information and support were strong features. In the weaker colleges, employers reported that poor communication about learners' progress, insufficient detail about learner programmes and lack of clarity about the purpose of off-the-job training and its relevance to learning at work were all significant areas of concern. Some wanted more involvement in reviewing and being informed about learners' progress.

52. In inspections undertaken prior to 2005 no overall effectiveness judgement was awarded. These data therefore use a modelling procedure to establish a proxy for overall effectiveness in inspections carried out before 2005.

Learning and skills

Key inspection judgements

Figure 50 Key inspection judgements for all colleges inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of colleges)



Outcomes for learners

255. Outcomes for all learners were graded good or outstanding in less than half the colleges inspected this year. This is clearly an area for improvement. Ofsted considers both the progress made by learners and their attainment in judging learners' outcomes. In general the progress made by learners was judged more positively than their attainment. It was judged good or outstanding in 38 of the colleges inspected this year, compared with 34 where attainment was good or outstanding.

256. In six colleges inspected this year the attainment of learners was judged inadequate, and this is a concern. In these colleges success rates achieved by learners were very inconsistent across subjects, the age of learners or the type of qualification being studied. Although some learners were achieving well on particular courses this was not replicated in the majority of courses and programmes offered, where success rates were below average and in many cases declining. In the majority of these colleges poor retention of learners was contributing to the low attainment.

257. Outcomes for learners aged 16 to 18 were judged no better than satisfactory in 49 colleges inspected this year. However, in five colleges outcomes for learners aged 16 to 18 were outstanding, and in three of these outcomes had improved considerably. Those colleges which had succeeded in improving their outcomes for learners had a clear strategic focus on improving success rates including for learners from different social backgrounds, gender and abilities and had put in place decisive actions to remedy failings. These included greater attention to learners' starting points and what they need to do to achieve, clear target-setting combined with regular reviews, and celebrating learners' achievements.

258. Just over three quarters of colleges were judged good or outstanding for outcomes for 14–16-year-olds; of these colleges 13 were outstanding. Provision for 14–16-year-olds is now firmly established in many colleges, as schools are making use of curriculum flexibility to place some of their pupils on mainly part-time, but occasionally full-time, specialist vocational courses in colleges.

259. Many colleges speak highly of the quality of partnerships with schools in their work with 14–16-year-olds, and the level of support that schools offer. However, a few feel that some schools are slow to provide important information and do not always fulfil their responsibility to monitor the quality of courses, in some cases trusting in the college to do this. Where the relationship is managed most effectively, schools ensure that there is a suitable entry procedure to the college courses, including the sharing of information, taster sessions and interviews. This is then supported by immediate response to any absences and regular visits by school managers, who observe and talk with students about their courses.

The quality of teaching and learning

260. Inspections this year have found that there is far too little outstanding teaching in colleges. No colleges achieved an overall outstanding grade for teaching and learning and only 11% of the lessons observed were judged outstanding. Within a single college, the variations in the standards of teaching and their impact on learning can be very wide, especially between subject areas. Even in colleges where teaching and learning were judged to be good, 27% of lessons observed were satisfactory and 2% were inadequate.

261. Outstanding teaching and learning are characterised by highly skilled and enthusiastic teachers who use their extensive expertise to inspire a culture of learning and challenge. Very effective planning leads to brisk, lively and imaginative teaching that ensures that learners' differing needs are met. Teachers' expectations of their learners are high, checks on learning are frequent, questions are probing and work is appropriately challenging. Learners are fully involved in evaluating and reflecting on their own learning and they learn quickly and make good progress. Learners needing additional help are identified early and effective support is provided promptly.

262. In the least successful lessons, teachers talk too much, suppressing learners' contributions, and deliver content that is unimaginative. Questioning is rarely sufficiently penetrating to make learners think hard enough to develop their ideas, or to research, explore or communicate their ideas independently. Too many learners remain unchallenged and their own expectations of what they might achieve are not extended sufficiently. Teaching is dull and uninspiring, so learners find it hard to maintain their interest and make progress.

263. In the best colleges, procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning are detailed and thorough and findings inform staff development. Observations of teaching and learning are used extensively and effectively to improve teachers' skills and are a key part of the college's quality assurance system. Good opportunities exist for sharing best practice. Peer observations of each other's lessons and coaching from advanced practitioners improve staff confidence. In the less effective colleges, observation records are descriptive rather than evaluative and take too little account of learning and progress, resulting in sessions being graded too highly by senior leaders.

In the best colleges observations of teaching and learning are used extensively and effectively to improve teachers' skills and are a key part of the college's quality assurance system.

264. The 2009/10 Annual Report drew attention to the challenges faced by colleges and other providers of learning and skills in improving learners' literacy and numeracy. Ofsted has undertaken two surveys this year which looked specifically at how well learning and skills providers – as well as other providers – were developing young people's and adults' literacy and numeracy skills.⁵³

53. *Removing barriers to literacy* (090237), Ofsted, 2011; *Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults* (100225), Ofsted, 2011.

Learning and skills

Literacy and numeracy

Overall, the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support relies too much on teachers and assessors who lack the specialist expertise to make a significant improvement in learners' understanding and skills development. In vocational provision, learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are not being adequately identified or supported. Too often, literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently assessed on entry or met as an integral part of the main learning that students undertake. Weak target-setting remains a significant area for improvement in all types of provision.

Ofsted found that providers were most effective in meeting learners' development needs in numeracy when they had a clear management strategy to ensure that numeracy was a compulsory component in all vocational courses up to and including level 2. In the most successful provision, learners developed their understanding of underlying mathematical concepts through practical and vocational applications; they said that they could see how numeracy related to their careers or everyday lives and were motivated to put in the effort needed to become more adept at tasks they had previously preferred to avoid. In contrast, in the majority of the provision judged to be no better than satisfactory, classroom practice and resources focused primarily on disparate topics that were required for external tests. Individual learning plans failed to identify clear learning goals that related to the learners' personal aims and career or employment goals.

In literacy, Ofsted found that the most successful sessions were those where teachers drew on learners' experiences and ensured that learning activities were closely related to language used in everyday work and social settings. For learners with foundation language development needs, there were few instances of systematic phonics teaching in colleges and work-based learning providers, despite the fact that, for learners without a grasp of the link between sounds and letters, this knowledge is necessary to develop their literacy.

Learners were motivated by working towards qualifications in literacy. However, the National Tests of Literacy at levels 1 and 2, the nationally recognised assessments for adult literacy learning, did not assess writing skills sufficiently. In five of the 22 colleges or other providers of adult education and training visited learners were working towards outcomes that did not provide a suitable level of challenge. In these cases qualifications were being worked for at the same level as, or lower than, qualifications which learners had already achieved, often in response to the entry requirements of further education programmes.

Leadership and management

265. Leadership and management were judged to be good or outstanding in 41 of the 84 colleges inspected this year. The 10 colleges judged to have outstanding leadership and management all had outstanding capacity to improve. Seven had improved their overall effectiveness grades from their previous inspection. One college improved significantly from satisfactory to outstanding. Characteristics of the colleges in which leadership and management were outstanding include:

- ✦ a strong commitment to meeting the needs of learners and achieving excellence
- ✦ a supportive but self-critical culture that promotes high standards and delivers a curriculum responsive to local and national priorities
- ✦ governors who assume a central and highly effective role in setting the educational character of the college while at the same time carefully monitoring ambitious targets
- ✦ robust quality assurance of all aspects of the provision and staff development linked to areas for improvement and strategic targets.

266. An ongoing feature of the college sector is the number of colleges that have either merged with another college in recent years or are actively considering whether to do so. Mergers of colleges present a new and specific set of leadership challenges.

College mergers

Since 2005, 17 newly merged colleges have been inspected. In their first inspections after the merger took place, six received a satisfactory grade and two an inadequate grade for overall effectiveness, six were good and three were outstanding. In four of the 11 mergers where direct comparisons are possible, the merged college has shown an improvement on the inspection grade for one or both of the colleges who were part of the merger; in three cases performance of the merged college is the same for one of the colleges but worse for the other; and in one case the performance of the merged college is worse than the previous judgements for both of the colleges involved. In the other three mergers performance remained largely the same.⁵⁴

These results for merged colleges – both for overall effectiveness and for the changes between inspections – are similar to those for colleges as a whole. This suggests that mergers do not universally drive up quality and there is no automatic equation to link ‘big’ with being ‘better’. Successful mergers depend on the quality of leadership and management and governance. The ingredients of the successful leadership and management of mergers are similar to the characteristics of successful leadership and management in the sector as a whole. They include not just the ambition to succeed but the relentless focus on performance to ensure that this happens. In many examples of successful mergers, intervention to address areas of underperforming provision was rapid, followed by effective actions to secure improvement. This included the sharing of best practice across the college. In those colleges where the merger had not been successful, systems to assure quality were insufficiently robust. In some cases the self-assessment analysis was too descriptive, in others the timescale for improvement was too relaxed.

Ensuring that staff are on board and well prepared for the challenges they will face during the merger are also key responsibilities of leaders and managers. In successful mergers staff were well prepared prior to the merger and were absolutely clear about their new roles and responsibilities. Effective support was provided to ensure that their performance met high professional standards. Good practice was shared across the larger institution to help raise standards and the curriculum was often revised to ensure that it properly responded to local priorities. In those colleges where mergers were not successful, this was due in large part to shortcomings in leadership and management. In one merged college, for example, curriculum management was weak and there was an over-reliance on agency staff and too little emphasis on raising standards. In another the ‘complex line management arrangements’ had resulted in a slow response to weak areas of performance; and in a final example senior leaders were not sufficiently clear about the causes of underperformance to provide direction and support for middle managers.

Governors also have a critical role in ensuring the success of a merger. There needs to be a compelling rationale for the merger and clear strategic direction for the new college. Governors need to be confident that the senior leadership team has the vision and capability to effect the merger successfully. In one example of an unsuccessful merger governors acknowledged that the merger had not been well planned; there was a lack of continuity in governance and only an interim principal was in post at the time of the merger.

267. The effectiveness with which colleges promote equality and diversity and the strength of safeguarding arrangements both form key components of the overall judgement on leadership and management. These are the two key judgements for which colleges have been judged most positively this year.

54. In inspections undertaken prior to 2005 no overall effectiveness judgement was awarded. These data therefore use a modelling procedure to establish a proxy for overall effectiveness in inspections carried out before 2005.

Learning and skills

268. In the 48 colleges in which equality and diversity were judged to be good or outstanding, the performance of different groups of learners was carefully monitored and effective action was taken to close gaps in achievement. The curriculum was designed carefully with equalities in mind and every effort was made to ensure that the staff profile reflected the student population. Diversity was celebrated throughout the year through events and other activities; collectively they formed an established part of the life of the college. Outside lessons, well-focused activities encouraged learners to acquire greater cultural awareness through trips, visits and community events. In the weaker colleges, insufficient attention was given to the needs of different groups of learners. Curriculum leaders did not analyse their performance with sufficient rigour and opportunities were missed to develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity in lessons and in reviews of learners' progress in the workplace.

269. When inspecting safety and care in colleges, Ofsted considers both how safe learners feel and also how well providers promote the safeguarding of learners. This judgement, if inadequate, can limit the judgement on the college's overall effectiveness and in one case did so. In the main, colleges have continued to respond well to the government's requirements for safeguarding learners. This aspect was judged to be good or outstanding in 66 of the 84 colleges inspected. Ofsted's survey *Best practice in safeguarding in colleges* highlights a number of consistent key features that contribute to outstanding provision in safeguarding.⁵⁵ All the colleges visited had given high priority to their approach to safeguarding. Good-quality training resulted in a workforce that was confident and well equipped to promote safeguarding in a sensible and proportionate way. The curriculum was used well to promote safety, in part by exposing learners to the risks that they were likely to encounter in their working lives and educating them about how to deal with them. Site security arrangements at all the colleges had received careful consideration and were effective, while maintaining an open and friendly environment.

270. Residential accommodation is provided by 42 further education and independent specialist colleges. In 2010/11, Ofsted social care inspectors carried out 12 inspections to ensure that care for learners aged under 18 met the national minimum standards.⁵⁶ Of these, two were coordinated with a full inspection. The overall standard of care was high, with four colleges judged to be outstanding and eight judged to be good. The best colleges enhance the learning experience and independence of their learners by providing a wide range of outstanding support services. For example, a number of colleges with residential care provided one-to-one support by personal tutors, student services coordinators, student wardens and careers advisers. In many of these colleges students' views are actively sought and help to shape the residential provision and wider college community. In general, partnership working with other professionals and with parents was highly effective in these colleges.

Sixth form colleges

Figure 51 Overall effectiveness of sixth form colleges inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (number of colleges)

	Introduction of new framework			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	18	6	2	0
Good	12	13	8	5
Satisfactory	3	8	8	5
Inadequate	0	0	2	0
Total	33	27	20	10

271. Sixth form colleges have traditionally been one of the most successful parts of the college sector. In the previous inspection cycle over three quarters of sixth form colleges were judged good or outstanding. Many of the good and all of the outstanding colleges were outside the scope of inspections this year as a result of the proportional approach taken to inspection. Three of the sixth form colleges inspected

55. *Best practice in safeguarding in colleges* (100239), Ofsted, 2011.

56. Accommodation of students under 18 by further education colleges: national minimum standards, inspection regulations, Department of Health, 2002.

this year had improved since their previous inspection and all of these had clearly refocused the college's aspirations on learning.

272. Leadership and management overall were judged to be good in five sixth form colleges inspected this year and satisfactory in a further five. However, the effectiveness with which leaders and managers raised expectations and ambition was a particular strength. Seven of the 10 colleges inspected were good or outstanding for this judgement. In these colleges, governors make good use of their expertise and local knowledge and senior managers are highly effective at communicating, contributing towards the friendly but purposeful atmosphere. The colleges are also very active in local partnerships and partner organisations hold them in high regard.

273. Outcomes for learners were judged to be good in five sixth form colleges inspected this year. Students achieve well in these colleges, and there are no major differences between the success rates of different groups of students. Most lessons are planned well and provide a good variety of activities.

274. However, outcomes for learners were judged to be satisfactory in five sixth form colleges. In these colleges, although teaching was mostly good, standards varied widely across the college, and within subject areas. In some of these colleges, despite many level 3 learners entering the college with good GCSE passes, a low number achieved high grades and their progress was below the national norm.

275. Most qualifications offered by sixth form colleges are at level 3, but some colleges have a student profile closer to general further education colleges, with more level 2 provision. For students who were not studying A-level or AS-level qualifications, the range of alternative employment-related qualifications on offer was often too limited. Even where sixth form colleges had diversified their offer to include a broader range of qualifications and to cater for different types of students, the low proportion of adults who achieved qualifications and low success rates on foundation and intermediate level courses were weaknesses in some sixth form colleges judged no better than satisfactory.

276. Safeguarding was good in six of the 10 sixth form colleges inspected and satisfactory in the other four. Where there were weaknesses they often related to not having the systems in place to be sure that students knew what to do if they suffered abuse or neglect, and poor monitoring of health and safety risk assessments.

Independent specialist colleges

277. Independent specialist colleges provide education and training for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision is wide ranging and includes learners with very high levels of need on discrete programmes, as well as those supported by the independent specialist college to attend provision in further education colleges on mainstream courses at levels 2 and 3. There are 58 independent specialist colleges with over 3,500 learners in total, the majority of whom are in residence. Most of the provision in the colleges inspected during this period was for learners with moderate or severe learning needs.

Figure 52 Overall effectiveness of independent specialist colleges between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2011 (number of colleges)

	Introduction of new framework		
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	0	3	0
Good	2	5	3
Satisfactory	3	4	7
Inadequate	0	1	1
Total	5	13	11

278. The number of independent specialist colleges inspected this year which were judged to be no better than satisfactory is too high, with seven of the 11 providers judged satisfactory and one inadequate. These colleges did not always have a clear sense of purpose and programmes of learning were not sufficiently planned to meet individual needs. The implementation of quality improvement arrangements was often an area for development, as was the promotion of equality and diversity. Most of the colleges were beginning to focus on preparing learners for further learning, employment or greater independence. However, too often managers could not demonstrate adequately the gains made by learners across all aspects of their provision since they had started at the college.

Learning and skills

279. Learning was most effective when it used practical and vocational work to motivate learners and develop their skills in realistic settings. However, too often teaching and learning did not meet individual needs well enough. Teaching and assessment were judged to be good in just four of the independent specialist colleges inspected this year and were inadequate in one. Poor-quality teaching was of particular concern where, although learners had high levels of individual support in the classroom, opportunities for learning were missed and teachers lacked expertise in providing activities to stimulate learners with the most profound learning needs.

280. In contrast, the colleges which were judged good for overall effectiveness prepared learners well for the next stages in their lives and learning. There was a strong emphasis in the curriculum on the development of skills needed to help them through this transition, including the use of community-based work placements. If appropriate, learners were successfully entered for those qualifications that would be useful for them in meeting their goals. Managers had a good understanding of how well learners were making progress. They focused further development activities on where they would have most effect in improving learners' progress.

281. Ofsted carried out a survey this year which evaluated the arrangements for transition from school and the provision in post-16 settings for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25. The survey found that the availability of specialist post-16 provision varied considerably. Insufficient provision was available locally for learners with the very highest levels of need, and varied locally for specialist needs such as sensory impairment and behavioural difficulties. The current local authority placement process resulted in significant inequities in types of provision offered to learners with similar needs. Both the independent specialist colleges included in the survey were involved with training locally, using their specialist knowledge to train staff working in other settings. Further findings from this survey are reported at page 111.⁵⁷

Dance and drama schools and colleges

Figure 53 Overall effectiveness of dance and drama courses inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	2010/11
Outstanding	4
Good	6
Satisfactory	1
Inadequate	0
Total	11

282. Ofsted inspects those private schools and colleges that offer courses supported by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) at first degree level, in training for professional work in acting, musical theatre, contemporary dance, classical ballet and theatre production. The 11 courses inspected this year performed strongly overall, with all but one judged good or outstanding. Of the 11 courses inspected this year, nine had been inspected previously. Of these, five had maintained their performance since their previous inspection, one had improved and three declined.

283. Teaching is often inspirational in dance and drama schools. Students are highly motivated to succeed in a fiercely competitive profession and skilled teachers and tutors engage, develop and refine students' raw personal drive and creative talent. Students' technical ability is taken to very high levels, and their imagination and creative flair are nurtured and extended. The courses reflect the intense demands of the industry. However, a few schools fail to give their students sufficient opportunities to develop their critical skills. The dance and drama schools are very well led and managed. The best are exceptionally aware of their own strengths and relative weaknesses. A few, however, lack a sharply objective critical perspective. Almost all students complete their courses successfully, and a large majority of them secure professional work in their chosen industry shortly after leaving their school.

57. *Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (100232), Ofsted, 2011.

Independent learning providers

284. Independent learning providers are private, not-for-profit or voluntary sector organisations delivering work-based learning for apprenticeship programmes, Train to Gain and other provision. This year 167 inspections were undertaken of independent learning providers whose programmes involved around 78,000 learners in 2009/10, the latest year for which data are available. Learners were mainly on apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes, with a relatively small number of learners on Entry to Employment and foundation learning programmes. This is the last year in which Train to Gain programmes will be funded. There is a wide range of large and small providers in this part of the sector, with around 30% of independent learning providers inspected this year having fewer than 100 learners on both apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes.

285. As was the case across the learning and skills sector, a proportionate approach was taken to the selection of independent learning providers for inspection, based on an annual risk assessment. Of the 167 independent learning providers inspected this year, 41 had their inspections brought forward on the basis of Ofsted's risk assessment, two of which were previously outstanding.

Overall effectiveness

Figure 54 Overall effectiveness of independent learning providers (including Train to Gain) inspected between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

286. The proportion of independent learning providers judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness has increased considerably compared with last year. Of the 167 independent learning providers inspected this year, 55% were good or outstanding compared with 47% in 2009/10, despite the fact that risk assessment ensures that weaker providers continue to be prioritised for inspection. In 2010/11, although the majority of independent learning providers offered both apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes, Ofsted carried out 46 inspections of providers that only provided Train to Gain programmes. In 20 of these providers overall effectiveness was good or outstanding. Five providers were judged to be inadequate; in four cases these were relatively new providers being inspected for the first time.⁵⁸

287. The increase in the percentage of independent learning providers judged to be outstanding, from 4% last year to 10% this year, is particularly striking. The outstanding providers inspected this year predominantly offered relatively large-scale, mainstream programmes. This is unlike last year when most outstanding providers were specialist providers.

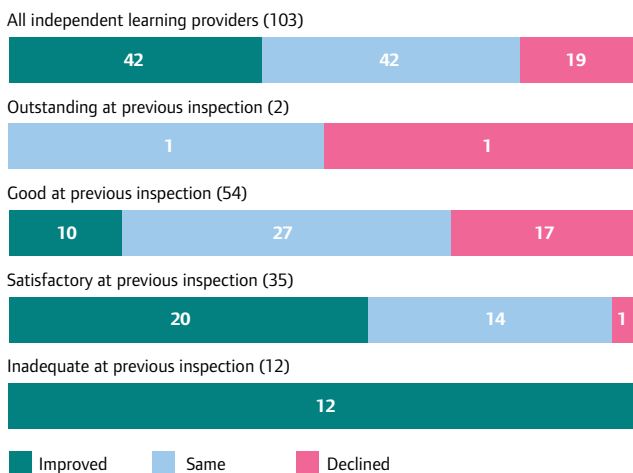
288. Independent learning providers new to the sector have, overall, performed well this year. This sector has traditionally been relatively volatile, with a high turnover in providers, and this year has been no exception. Sixty-four of the providers inspected this year had not received an inspection before, but of these 31 received a good or outstanding judgement, suggesting that these new entrants have started well and contributed to the improved performance of the sector. In 2009/10, by comparison, 14 new independent learning providers were inspected, of which none was outstanding and just four were good.



58. To allow for meaningful comparisons only the providers currently described as independent learning providers are included in all historic data used in this section.

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Figure 55 Overall effectiveness of independent learning providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 compared with their previous inspection (number of providers)



Sixty-four providers had not been inspected previously.

289. As illustrated by Figure 55 of the 103 providers inspected this year which have previously been inspected, 42 have improved and a further 28 have maintained either good or outstanding performance. Three providers made very rapid progress between inspections, one moving from satisfactory to outstanding, and two moving from inadequate to good. Nineteen providers that had been inspected before deteriorated between inspections.

290. A number of common factors help to explain the performance of those independent learning providers which improved to become outstanding. Almost all had exceptionally high success rates, well above the national average, and many had shown sustained improvement in success rates over time. There was very little variation in overall and timely success rates in these providers, or between subject areas and different levels of courses. A high degree of consistency in outcomes achieved by all learners was a key part of their success.

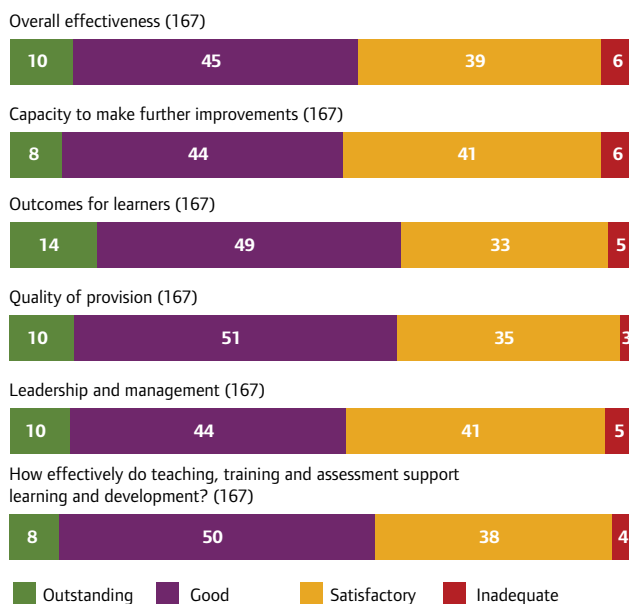
291. These providers were challenged and supported by effective leaders at the top of the organisation, and had staff who were quick to address areas for improvement identified by previous inspections or by internal self-assessment. In a number of providers this ethos and drive for improvement came from the wider organisation and employers with whom they worked. Leadership and management in these organisations were focused, strong and supportive and set a clear direction to bring about improvements.

292. Self-assessment and quality assurance systems in many providers had been strengthened, and this helped to drive improvement. The self-assessment process tended to be accurate, evaluative and highly inclusive, with good participation by staff and good use of learner and employer feedback to inform the provider's evaluative judgements. In one provider, for example, elected learner representatives chaired a number of different groups which met to feed back learners' views on all aspects of training.

293. Significant progress had been made in a number of these providers that had improved to outstanding in safeguarding and provision of equality and diversity. In one provider which had made exceptional improvements in safeguarding, the changes introduced by the provider had influenced company-wide developments and developments at local hotels used during residential training. The same provider was also piloting new recruitment initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeship programmes and on work-experience placements.

Key inspection judgements

Figure 56 Key inspection judgements for independent learning providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching

294. In the context of a risk-based approach to inspection, outcomes for learners were judged to be good or outstanding in 63% of the independent learning providers inspected this year. This shows a marked increase from 2009/10 when it was 48%. Although improved, outcomes for learners are no better than satisfactory in 38% of providers this year. In these providers some learners take longer to achieve their outcomes than expected and a considerable proportion of learners do not achieve what they set out to achieve.

295. The better outcomes for learners may in part be explained by the increase in the proportion of providers where teaching, training and assessment were good or outstanding. This rose from 47% last year to 58% this year. In those providers in which teaching, training and assessment are outstanding, tutors are very experienced in the industry sector and highly regarded by learners and employers. Learners benefit from excellent resources during their training. Good use is made of information technology to improve learning and manage learning programmes. Assessment practices are very good and ensure that learners' progress is monitored well and on a very regular basis.

296. Many of these outstanding providers have also developed strong links with industry and employers which ensure that programmes match the requirements of employers and learners very well. Partnerships with employers are extremely productive and employers feel very well informed about their employees' progress.

297. However, teaching, training and assessment are no better than satisfactory in 42% of providers inspected. In less successful independent learning providers, trainers do not always link practical training to theory sessions adequately and too many do not use initial assessment sufficiently to plan learning. The weaker lessons rely heavily on the teacher's input, teaching is dull and learners make slow progress.

298. The principal subject areas offered by independent learning providers inspected this year are health, public services and care; business administration and law; engineering and manufacturing technologies; retail and commercial enterprise (particularly hairdressing and beauty therapy); and preparation for life and work. As last year, some of the best training is seen in engineering. Teaching and training in this subject area are mostly good, with knowledgeable and experienced teachers providing stimulating and effective sessions. Practical training is often good, with most learners working in well-equipped engineering workshops with high-quality equipment. Many apprentices achieve additional qualifications during their apprenticeship, which is highly motivating. As well as developing specialist skills required by their employers, these apprentices acquire a wide range of general engineering skills and knowledge. Most develop self-confidence and good analytical and independent thinking skills.

299. Unlike last year, when engineering stood out on its own, other subject areas inspected are also performing highly among the providers inspected this year. For example, the majority of health, public services and care provision inspected this year was good or outstanding. In the most effective providers in this subject area there is a strong focus on narrowing achievement gaps between different groups, and learners work towards detailed and challenging targets. In the outstanding providers, assessors play a critical role in supporting learners' success. They have long and relevant industry experience and outstanding knowledge and sector skills. However, even in some good providers the targets set for individual improvement are not always sufficiently specific to plan and monitor subsequent progress. Across this subject area as a whole, literacy and numeracy skills are too often not sufficiently screened for, or learners' needs in these skills are not met. There are also too few links with outside agencies to support skills for life development.

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300. In retail and commercial enterprise all the outstanding provision inspected this year was for hairdressing apprenticeships. In these providers learners developed good commercial skills in hairdressing, with an increasing emphasis on improving customer service skills. Teaching staff were well qualified and experienced, and many of them continued to work in salons for one or more days each week to keep their skills current.

301. Apprenticeships will be an increasingly important element of provision for independent learning providers, colleges and employer providers given the government's commitment to increasing apprenticeships and the end of Train to Gain. Although overall success rates are improving, a number of challenges still need to be addressed.

Apprenticeships

This year Ofsted inspected apprenticeship programmes that involved around 65,000 learners in 2009/10. Success rate data show that apprenticeship provision across the learning and skills sector has been improving. The overall success rate for levels 2 and 3 apprenticeships increased considerably, from 66% in 2007/08 to 74% in 2009/10. Structured pathways to enable learners to progress are being developed actively and successfully in most provider types, particularly in colleges, providing good progression routes for learners from foundation and pre-entry programmes through to higher levels of training and education.

The most positive features of apprenticeship programmes across the sector are the very high standard of work produced by learners, the acquisition and application of theoretical and practical skills, and the range of skills that learners gain which are specific and applicable to their employers' needs. In apprenticeship programmes delivered by employers themselves apprenticeships are often tightly tailored to meet business needs, producing apprentices who are job-ready from early on in their programmes.

However, the success with which providers deliver apprenticeships is variable. In good and outstanding provision the delivery of on- and off-the-job training is highly individualised by trainers, assessors and employers, with each learner receiving close attention and support which takes good account of her or his individual needs. Less successful aspects of apprenticeship provision, particularly in providers judged satisfactory, include imprecise target-setting and insufficient identification of or support for learners' literacy and numeracy development. Resources are generally good and in specialist employer providers they are often excellent. Partnership working with employers is usually productive, but in the weaker providers it is not always close enough to ensure that learning is planned effectively. However, most employers provide very good support for their apprentices.

Leadership and management

302. In 54% of the independent learning providers inspected this year leadership and management were judged good or outstanding. This has increased from 48% of those inspected in 2009/10. However, leadership and management remain weaker aspects of provision and continue to show some room for improvement. In particular, the contribution that self-assessment makes to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners is not strong; it was judged inadequate in 15% of those providers inspected this year. This was also a key weakness identified in inspections last year.

303. The poor quality of self-assessment is a common feature for those where capacity to improve is not good. Too often, the self-assessment does not clearly identify the weaknesses in provision and strengths are overstated. Self-assessment does not always take sufficient account of the views of learners and employers and in the worst cases does not involve routine observation of key activities. Where lesson observations do take place, findings often do not link with meaningful individual or group staff development and there is no systematic follow-up or support for areas of development. Records of observations of training are often insufficiently critical.

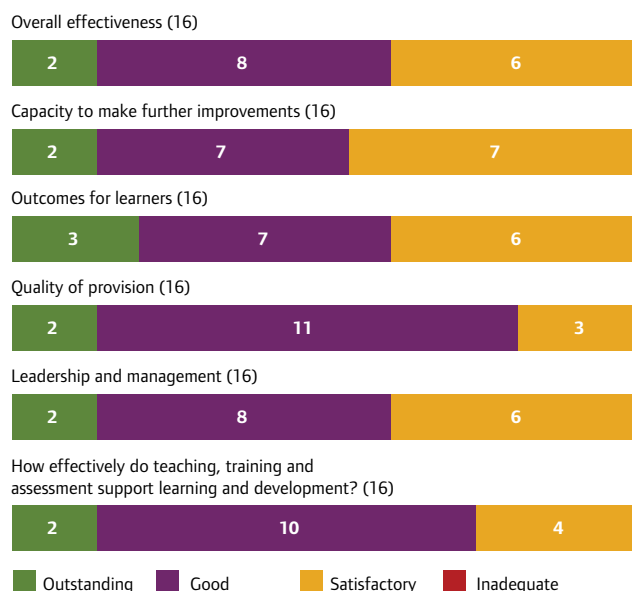
304. The grade profile for equality and diversity has improved, with 42% of providers judged good or outstanding this year compared with 33% last year. Although most providers work hard to counteract gender stereotyping or recruit under-represented groups, in the main strategies to do so remain ineffective.

305. The majority of providers remain only satisfactory for safeguarding, although the proportion judged to be good increased from 29% in 2009/10 to 34% in 2010/11. All but four providers inspected were judged to be at least satisfactory for safeguarding, indicating that nearly all were meeting the statutory requirements. In providers where arrangements for safeguarding were good or outstanding there was a clear focus on the impact of these arrangements, rather than simply conforming to statutory requirements. Highly effective training in, and regular promotion of, aspects of safeguarding for staff, learners and employers were notable features, as were active risk assessment and monitoring of learners. In satisfactory providers, safeguarding was often insufficiently embedded in the working culture; key elements were missing, such as routine reports to boards or governing bodies, or employers' understanding was incomplete. Inadequate provision either failed to meet government requirements or arrangements were substantially incomplete.

Employer providers

306. Employer providers are those employers who run and manage their own government-funded work-based learning programmes, such as apprenticeships, rather than contracting these out in their entirety to a provider of work-based learning. Employers may choose to run and manage their own apprenticeship programmes to ensure that training schedules match their business needs and that apprentices develop the required job-specific skills in specialist areas. In 2010/11, Ofsted inspected 16 employer providers of which nine were large national employers. Employer providers are selected for inspection using the same risk-based assessment methodology as for other learning and skills providers.

Figure 57 Key inspection judgements for employer providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



Overall effectiveness

307. Of the 16 employer providers inspected in 2010/11, 10 were outstanding or good, and the remainder were satisfactory. These are similar proportions to last year. Nine employer providers had not been inspected before and although none was outstanding, six were found to be good. Of the seven which had been inspected previously, three improved and one declined from good to satisfactory. One employer provider which was reinspected made exceptionally rapid improvement from inadequate to outstanding.

Key inspection judgements

308. Outcomes for learners were judged to be good or outstanding in 10 of the 16 employer providers inspected this year. In these providers, learners successfully developed skills and knowledge that were intrinsically linked to their jobs. The experience and understanding they gained directly contributed to better performance at work, as well as leading to improvements in their economic and social well-being. Managers within the business told inspectors how they benefited from reduced turnover of staff, increased productivity and well-defined career development routes for staff. In some satisfactory providers, however, the proportion of learners taking longer than

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expected to complete their qualifications was often too high because business priorities frequently took precedence over the completion of training.

309. The quality of teaching, training and assessment was outstanding in two employer providers and good in a further 10. Practical training in the workplace is often of a very high standard and usually carried out by very knowledgeable trainers or experienced coaches. Learners particularly enjoy and value the fact that training is directly applicable to their jobs and that they are learning in industry-standard environments. Most employer providers make good use of mentors, who act as role models and provide additional support to learners. However, in half of the employer providers inspected this year the initial assessments of learners' starting points were not used effectively to plan individual learning targets and goals or address potential barriers to learning. This is an area for development.

310. Employer providers generally make effective use of company-wide training and development opportunities to enhance and supplement learners' experience and progression opportunities. A particular strength of employer providers is the way they link the business-related training to the content of the qualification being undertaken. Seven employer providers have matched their own in-house training to the requirements of the qualifications offered. Front-line managers welcome the fact that the government-funded programmes are strongly aligned with in-house training and that together these lead to better business performance. In at least five employer providers, interactive online learning packages have been specifically designed to support apprenticeship programmes. However, not all employer providers ensure that learners have adequate access to web-based training packages.

Employer providers generally make effective use of company-wide training and development opportunities to enhance and supplement learners' experience and progression opportunities.

311. In the most effective employer providers, managers are very committed to work-based learning programmes. They ensure that training and workforce development are regular features of these organisations' business plans even though training is not their primary business. Frequently, these employers make their own financial contribution to government-funded programmes by funding additional learners. Eleven out of the 16 employer providers are considered to provide good or outstanding value for money. However, self-assessment is an area for improvement: it was satisfactory in nine of the 16 providers and only one was outstanding. Although employer providers are generally good at quality assuring their main business products and services, not all have developed sufficiently robust systems to quality assure and improve the training offered. In order to do so, employer providers need to make better use of the views of learners, supervisors, trainers and assessors and undertake formal observations of all aspects of the training provided.

312. The promotion of equality and diversity to learners in employer providers continues to be an area of concern despite some evidence of improvement. Equality and diversity were judged to be good or outstanding in only six of the 16 providers inspected this year, although this is a slightly higher proportion than last year. Trainers, supervisors and mentors often lack the confidence to be able to challenge learners' views and opinions. They do not routinely use everyday workplace situations to reinforce equality and diversity during training, assessment and progress reviews. Employer providers do not always analyse and research any differences in the performance of groups of learners.

313. Almost all employer providers inspected placed great emphasis on the health, safety and well-being of their employees, resulting in seven being judged outstanding and eight good for ensuring that learners feel safe. Employer providers usually have strong business-related policies and procedures for health and safety and employees' well-being, and appropriate arrangements for those under 18 years of age. However, management arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups are not always sufficiently clear and remain an area for improvement.

Adult and community learning

314. Adult and community learning covers a wide range of education and training, mainly for post-16 learners, and is provided by a variety of organisations: local authorities, voluntary and community organisations, general further education colleges and specialist designated institutions. In 2010/11 Ofsted inspected 45 providers of adult and community learning, most of which were local authorities. In 2009/10, the latest year for which figures are available, the approximate total number of learners with these providers was 230,000, mostly studying part-time. Of these, 78% were adults whose main aim was to learn for social and personal development; 19% aimed to achieve an academic or vocational qualification (including around 1% aged 14–18); and 3% to achieve an occupational qualification in the workplace.

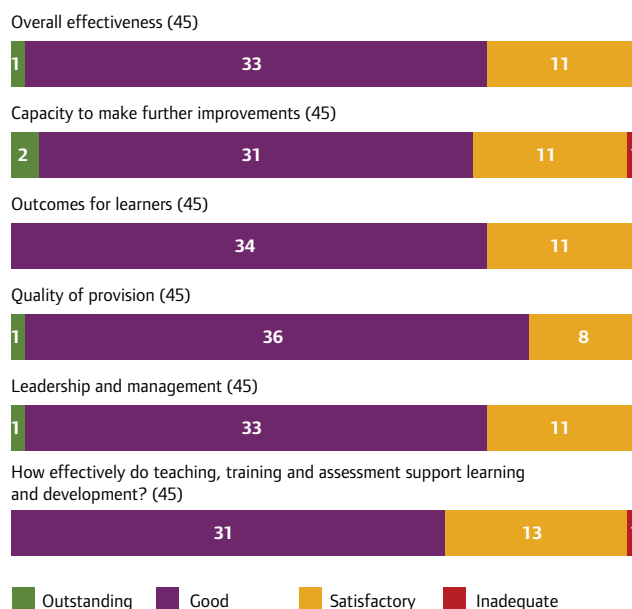
Overall effectiveness

Figure 58 Overall effectiveness of adult and community learning providers inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Introduction of new framework			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	3	4	0	1
Good	17	30	30	33
Satisfactory	22	32	10	11
Inadequate	7	2	3	0
Total	49	68	43	45

315. The performance of providers of adult and community learning inspected this year is very similar to last year. It is encouraging that no providers were judged inadequate this year, although the very small proportion of outstanding provision remains a concern. Forty-one providers inspected in 2010/11 had been inspected previously, of which 23 improved and only two declined.

Figure 59 Key inspection judgements for adult and community learning inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



Key inspection judgements

316. Outcomes for learners in providers of adult and community learning inspected this year are generally good. The social and economic benefits gained by learners included better communication, literacy and numeracy skills, new work contacts and improved employability. Learners also increased in confidence and self-esteem, for example through learning to take on volunteering roles. Providers cited many anecdotal examples of the progression of learners into employment and other learning, and a few could demonstrate this systematically. However, improvement is needed in recording and providing more accurate information about progression into employment and further learning and in the advice and guidance given to learners about progression opportunities.

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317. The quality of provision was also predominantly good. However, the quality of teaching, training and assessment, which forms a key component of the judgement on the quality of provision, was less positively judged, with 13 of the 45 providers judged satisfactory and one inadequate. As was the case last year, no provider was judged to have outstanding teaching overall; nevertheless, teaching was judged outstanding in 10% of lessons observed. This suggests that although some outstanding teaching is taking place, quality is not consistent across different subject areas or courses within a single institution. In previous years, inspections have identified the need for providers to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning to drive up quality and this remains an issue.

318. In those lessons where teaching was outstanding, tutors were highly skilled at providing examples and breaking down complex technical processes for learners; tutors' enthusiasm was inspiring. They got the best out of learners and made learning relevant to them at a personal level. They were often industry or ex-industry practitioners who brought recent and relevant practice into the classroom. The most successfully taught subject areas inspected this year were arts, media and publishing and preparation for life and work. In these sessions, tutors posed challenging questions, thoroughly checked learners' understanding and made learning fun. They enlivened sessions by their skilful use of technology and provided excellent examples, explanations and demonstrations.

319. Improving teaching and learning featured as an important recommendation for many providers. Key issues included insufficient focus on learning or assessing learning needs; unimaginative use of technology; and a lack of clarity in what tutors expected learners to do or achieve. Some sessions were let down through tutors' lack of expertise in the subject. These issues are similar to those identified in 2009/10.

320. Leadership and management were generally good as many leaders provided clear strategic direction and promoted ambition well. Value for money was good or outstanding in 32 providers, of which five were outstanding, even where there were funding reductions. In order to improve leadership and management further, providers need to sharpen their self-assessment and the quality of monitoring of dispersed provision that is subcontracted or delivered through partnerships.

321. Promoting equality and diversity is a particular strength of this sector. Twenty-nine providers received good or outstanding grades for equality and diversity. Adult and community learning providers generally excelled at including and engaging vulnerable and hard to reach learners through outstanding partnerships. Fifteen providers received outstanding grades for their work with a range of community organisations that impacted positively on the lives of learners with extreme barriers to learning such as mental health difficulties or a history of substance abuse. No adult and community learning provider was judged inadequate for safeguarding.

322. Partnership working also helped to support learners with learning difficulties. Many adult and community learning providers worked effectively with partners to provide these learners with excellent resources and a range of programmes to fit their different learning needs. They also supported volunteers who acted successfully as learning champions. In addition, family learning partnerships engaged many hard to reach learners through effective engagement with local schools.

Promoting equality and diversity is a particular strength of the adult and community learning sector. Twenty-nine providers received good or outstanding grades for equality and diversity.

323. Although adult and community learning providers inspected this year generally excelled at including and engaging vulnerable learners and were using partnerships to good effect to support learners with learning difficulties, Ofsted's recent survey of the arrangements for the transition of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from school to post-16 provision shows that there are a number of weaknesses in this area across the learning and skills sector as a whole.⁵⁹

59. *Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (100232), Ofsted, 2011.

Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Since 2008, local authorities have been required to carry out multi-agency assessments for pupils with statements of need. Inspectors found that local authorities' arrangements to provide young people with a learning difficulty assessment as the basis for their transition to post-16 provision were not working effectively. Providers had received a completed learning difficulty assessment in only a third of cases where it should have been made available to them.

The availability of provision at post-16 was also found to vary significantly, and very little provision was available for learners with the highest levels of need. The criteria used for placement decisions were not always clear. This resulted in significant inequities in the types of programmes provided for learners with similar needs. The transition directly from school to a post-16 setting was most effective when learners had opportunities to become familiar at an early stage with their next placement. The post-16 providers visited, particularly independent providers of foundation learning and apprenticeships, were effective at engaging and accommodating those young people who had been disengaged from education and training for some time.

Learners on discrete foundation programmes were generally successful in achieving units of qualifications at entry levels and in preparing for progression to further study. However, the programmes reviewed by inspectors were too narrowly focused on accreditation and were not effective in enabling learners to progress to open or supported employment, independent living or community engagement. Too few practical, real work opportunities were available to learners on foundation programmes. The most effective provision, such as social enterprises and internships supported by job coaches, could not be funded under the foundation learning arrangements. The most successful provision seen was typically funded separately as part of specific projects or as provision funded at a higher level, which enabled learners to engage in activities for five days a week.

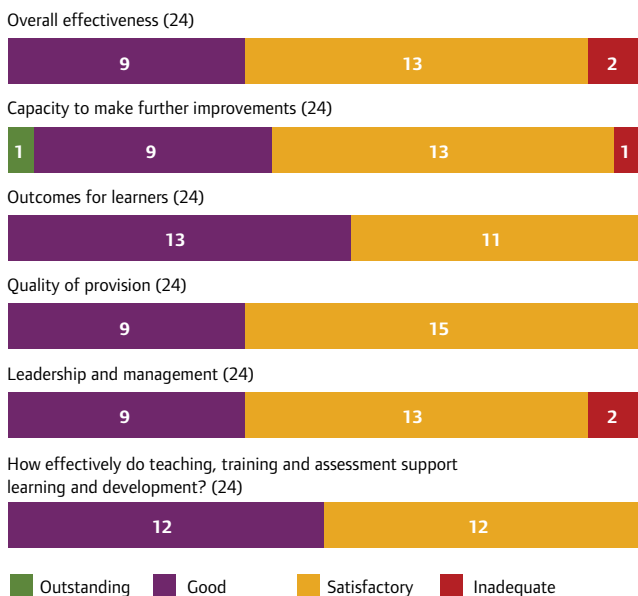
Prisons and young offender institutions

324. The prison service provides secure prison accommodation for adults aged over 21 and young offenders aged between 18 and 21. The learning and skills provision for these groups of prisoners are assessed using the same framework which focuses on developing skills for employment. The prison service also provides secure accommodation for young people (formerly known as juvenile offenders) aged 15 to 17 in young offender institutions. Ofsted inspects against expectations set out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and which have been jointly produced. These expectations include a strong emphasis on education and vocational training. Ofsted collaborates with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons to inspect learning and skills provision in adult and young offender establishments.

325. In 2010/11, inspectors completed 24 full inspections of custodial settings housing predominantly adults and young people aged mainly but not exclusively between 18 and 21. In addition to full announced and full unannounced inspections of prisons, Ofsted monitors progress in implementing recommendations made at full inspections through unannounced follow-up inspections. In 2010/11 Ofsted carried out 16 follow-up inspections of prisons and young offender institutions and monitored the progress made on recommendations relating to learning and skills activities, Entry to Employment, work, resettlement, libraries and physical education. Overall, for the 16 follow-up inspections 58% of recommendations were fully achieved, 26% were partially achieved and 16% were not achieved.

Learning and skills

Figure 60 Key inspection judgements for learning and skills in full inspections carried out in prisons and young offender institutions inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



326. Last year the poor quality of learning and skills provision in prisons was highlighted as a serious concern. The overall profile of prisons inspected this year is slightly more positive than last year, but it is still not strong. Fewer prisons were judged inadequate for their learning and skills provision and a greater proportion were judged to be good, but substantially less than half of the provision inspected was good overall and none was outstanding. Of the 21 prisons inspected this year that had received a previous inspection, 10 improved while only three declined.

327. Outcomes for learners is the most positively judged key aspect of provision this year. Many of the prison workshops that produce work for external companies are providing good opportunities for prisoners to develop skills for employment and a good work ethic. However, there remains room for improvement. In many cases prisoners' skills are not sufficiently recognised or recorded to provide evidence to prospective employers on release, particularly where formal accreditation is not in place.

328. The quality of initial assessments is still largely only satisfactory, although there have been some improvements in the way that this information is shared between different establishments, significantly reducing the need to repeat assessments. The use of individual learning plans has improved, with the best examples providing clear objectives for learners to help them progress. But learning plans are not always shared with other staff within the prison and frequently not used across all areas of the prison. Too often information on individual learning plans does not help inform sentence planning.

329. The quality of teaching and learning was good in 12 of the 24 prisons inspected. Where good teaching and learning were observed, this was often linked to improvements in vocational training. However, the impact of teaching was often limited by other weaknesses. In too many instances other prison regime activities took priority over scheduled learning and skills activities, resulting in poor punctuality and attendance, with frequent disruption to teaching and learning. Furthermore, in around a third of those inspected, weaknesses in quality assurance arrangements were evident, leading to insufficient focus on constantly improving teaching and learning. In too many cases there were also weaknesses in setting individual targets for learners and planning to meet their needs. Other shortcomings included unsuitable accommodation, including difficulties in accessing the library, in a few prisons inspected and variable access to information and communication technology equipment. However, in a minority of prisons formal teaching was very effectively supported by wider access to computers to support learning.

330. Inspection shows that the extent to which provision meets the interests and needs of users is the most significant limiting factor to the quality of provision overall. Nine of the 24 prisons inspected this year were judged inadequate in this area, which is a serious concern. Key weaknesses included a narrow range of courses within each level, insufficient literacy and vocational courses and a lack of provision at and above level 2. Inspectors also found that about a third of prison services lacked a sufficient focus on employability while in other cases not enough attention was paid to meeting additional learning needs. In many prisons courses provided were not well matched to the changing needs of prisoners, while difficulties in retaining staff limited what could be offered. Staff shortages and turnover were problems

in nearly one third of the prisons inspected. The most effective service met prisoners' future employability needs through very close partnerships with local trainers and employers.

331. In prisons in which learning and skills were judged to be inadequate or only satisfactory, weaknesses in leadership and management were having a detrimental impact on the quality of learning being offered. In many of these prisons weak planning by managers meant that not enough places were available on programmes which best met the needs and interests of learners, with long waiting lists in place for the most popular programmes. In one inadequate prison the processes used to allocate work and activities were particularly poor, and were perceived to be unfair by prisoners.

332. In around half the prisons data were not being used effectively to evaluate the quality of provision or to improve teaching and learning and in a few prisons managers were not systematically observing teaching and learning. In a minority of prisons there were also weaknesses in promoting equality and diversity, and addressing differences in achievement between different minority ethnic groups.

333. Programmes to help prisoners resettle into the community continue to be underdeveloped. Information, advice and guidance do not provide enough support to help prisoners find employment or training on release, and frequently prisons do not develop prisoners' jobsearch skills effectively. In around a quarter of prisons, prisoners' achievements in some aspects of their education and training were not being accredited in a way that would effectively improve their employment prospects. Links with employers to help inform curriculum development and provide opportunities for employment on release continue to be variable. The use of release on temporary licence for eligible prisoners is not used enough to provide good opportunities for prisoners to attend training courses or obtain employment to help better reintegration into the community. In only seven prisons inspected were partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others judged good or better.

334. In order to improve the resettlement of prisoners into the community some key priorities emerge from inspection: the need to record evidence of prisoners' skills for employment better so that these can be demonstrated to prospective employers; a greater focus on developing prisoners' jobsearch skills; and strengthening links with employers and providers offering support after release.

Secure accommodation for young people aged 15–17 in young offender institutions

335. The prison service also provides secure accommodation for young people (formerly known as juvenile offenders) aged 15 to 17. Of the seven young offender institutions inspected that accommodated young people below the age of 18, four were follow-up inspections and three were full inspections.

336. Five young offender institutions inspected this year for their provision for 15–17-year-olds were judged good, one satisfactory and one inadequate. Outcomes for learners were judged to be good in five establishments, satisfactory in one and inadequate in one. A particular strength was the good practical work skills that young people gained in the vocational workshops and in which the standards achieved were high. Establishments are increasingly offering a range of national qualifications to young people, and many provide good support to those young people who were taking GCSEs prior to their arrival in custody. However, the range of subjects offered is still too narrow. One establishment had successfully introduced a range of higher-level qualifications to cater for the needs of more able young women, but provision for more able learners was insufficient in two other establishments.

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337. Much of the teaching observed during inspections of these establishments was good, as was initial assessment. Young people are generally benefiting from good individual learning support during their time in custody, particularly additional support in literary or numeracy. Attendance and punctuality in the establishments inspected have both significantly improved, although the reasons for young people’s absence were not always known. Behaviour has also improved and was good, although this was noticeably better in the practical workshops where young people enjoyed their learning and the challenges presented to them. Staff training in managing behaviour has been successful in reducing the number of young people being removed from lessons and returned to the residential units.

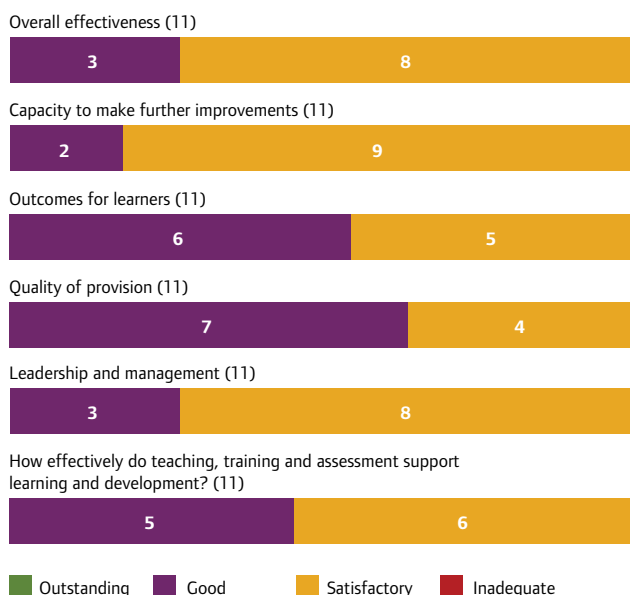
338. In the establishment judged inadequate inspectors reported that too much teaching was unsatisfactory and failed to stimulate or engage young people. Outcomes for learners were also poor. A high number of young people required additional learning support in order to succeed on their courses and their needs were not being met. While volunteers made a valuable contribution to supporting young people, this was not sufficient and the overall quality of educational support was inadequate. Provision for young people whose first language was not English was also poor.

339. Educational programmes are generally well planned and enable most young people to gain experience and qualifications in vocational subjects that are of interest to them and will be of benefit in their future careers. However, individual learning plans remain poor with insufficient attention given to specific learning objectives and inaccurate recording of progress. In terms of preparing young people to settle back into the community, these establishments generally used release on temporary licence well to enable young people to gain work experience or to visit colleges. However, partnerships with employers remain underdeveloped, as in much of the secure learning sector, and should be a focus for improvement in the future.

Probation Trusts

340. Ofsted collaborates with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation to inspect learning and skills for offenders under supervision in the community. England is divided into 35 Probation Trusts. Offender managers play a key role in referring offenders to education, training and employment interventions aimed at helping them tackle their offending behaviour. Probation Trusts work with a variety of learning and skills providers that help offenders in the community and after release from custody to develop skills and qualifications that should increase their opportunities for employment and help them reintegrate more successfully into the community. Probation staff also provide reports to courts prior to sentencing, advising where education and training may form part of the order of the court. Most offenders attending learning and skills provision do so voluntarily.

Figure 61 Key inspection judgements for Probation Trusts inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)



341. In 2010/11, Ofsted undertook 11 inspections as part of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation’s Offender Management Inspection programme. As was the case last year, no outstanding provision was seen; however, no providers were judged inadequate this year, compared with three last year.

342. Capacity to improve was judged to be the weakest area and was deemed no better than satisfactory in all but two of the Trusts. To a considerable degree this is driven by the poor quality of self-evaluation, which is not developed enough in most Probation Trusts inspected to act as a tool for improvement. Data are not used sufficiently well to identify trends and set targets for improvement. This means that consistently good standards are rarely found across a Probation Trust, which leads to offenders receiving an uneven quality of service.

343. Judgements for outcomes for learners show a more positive picture, with six of the 11 Probation Trusts being graded good. Inspections found that achievement of accredited qualifications has improved, with more learners being successful in meeting their learning goals. Many offenders are also developing good employability skills on community payback projects, but these frequently remain unrecorded. It is also encouraging that seven of the 11 Probation Trusts were judged good for their quality of provision. Inspections show that the range of provision on offer to help offenders gain the skills to achieve employment is improving. Furthermore, Trusts have adapted well to the changes in the funding of offender learning in the community and have formed good partnership links with providers to expand and increase the training for offenders.

344. However, there remain concerns which relate to how the progress of offenders in learning is supported. Individual learning plans are not being used well to plan learning and the assessment of literacy and numeracy needs is often insufficient. Moreover, while the number of referrals is generally high, too few offenders attend or continue with their planned intervention to completion.

Inspections show that the range of provision on offer to help offenders gain the skills to achieve employment is improving.

Immigration removal centres

345. Immigration removal centres are required to provide a secure environment for people subject to immigration control. Ofsted collaborates with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons to inspect education and training in immigration removal centres. Between September 2010 and 31 August 2011 Ofsted undertook four inspections of immigration removal centres, of which one was a full announced inspection and three were follow-up inspections.

346. In all four immigration removal centres there had been some improvements since their last inspection, particularly in the planning and management of the education provision. However, not enough detainees participated in education and there were shortcomings in three out of the four centres in either the range of educational activities on offer or the times at which they were provided.

347. The quality of the teaching and learning, and the learning environments, had improved in two of the centres inspected. This was underpinned by better assessment of individuals' learning needs and curricula that were more appropriately focused on the provision of short, accredited learning programmes which were achievable for the majority of learners and better met the needs of detainees held for short periods of time. However, in the two centres in which the quality of teaching and learning had not improved, systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching were poorly developed and this impeded improvement. Professional development for staff was also insufficient.



348. Work opportunities have been increased, or were being more effectively managed at three centres and were generally well promoted. However, the quality and range of work opportunities and training places continues to require improvement. Access to higher level qualifications for longer-stay detainees was limited. Library and physical education facilities were generally satisfactory, both being reasonably well used. Physical education provision has improved, although areas for development remain particularly for older detainees. In two centres improvements were needed in allowing detainees access to computers and the internet. More work is also needed to improve attendance at learning sessions and participation rates across learning and skills provision.

Armed Forces training

349. Earlier this year Ofsted published its third report into welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training, the first being in 2009.⁶⁰ Ofsted inspects welfare and duty of care in phase one and phase two training. Phase one training is the general introduction to military life. Phase two covers the more technical and professional training skills required to become a member of the Armed Forces.

^{60.} *Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training* (110037), Ofsted, 2011.

350. Ofsted inspected 10 establishments between September 2010 and August 2011. No training establishment was judged to be inadequate in the 2010/11 inspection cycle. For the first time since the inspection of welfare and duty of care began in 2004, one establishment was judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness in welfare and duty of care. Of the remaining establishments three were judged to be good and six were satisfactory.

351. Of the eight establishments that were inspected previously in the last two and a half years, three were awarded a higher grade for their overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care in their most recent inspection and five were awarded the same grade. The two establishments judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness in 2009/10 are now at least satisfactory. This demonstrates an improving profile of performance.

352. Recruits and trainees report that they feel safe, are motivated by the training and that their welfare needs are met effectively. All establishments inspected this year have clear systems for recording the welfare concerns of individual recruits and trainees. However, in three establishments inspected, the information is not consistently well-coordinated, with the result that information on vulnerable trainees and recruits is not always accessible to those who should have access to it. Overall pass rates are high, and the proportion of trainees who do not complete their course has reduced in all but two establishments inspected, where it remains very high. This is in contrast to those establishments inspected last year in which the proportion of trainees who failed to complete their course was generally high.

Looking forward

353. The learning and skills sector will continue to have a critical role in developing the skills and capabilities of the current and future workforce to deliver the government's growth strategy; delivering the ambition of full participation in learning up to the age of 18; and continuing to focus on the wider benefits of learning for individuals and for communities so that colleges and other providers can become strategic leaders in the economic and social development of localities.

354. To support this improvement journey, Ofsted published proposals for consultation on a new common inspection framework for learning and skills providers in September 2011. The intention of the new framework is to concentrate on the aspects of provision that have most impact on improving outcomes for learners. The changes that are proposed will focus more sharply on the core purpose of the provider, with an even closer examination of teaching, learning and assessment, together with an evaluation of the impact of leadership and management. The proposals for the new framework draw on what Ofsted has learnt from inspection and from some of the key findings of previous Annual Reports.

355. The learning and skills sector has a central role in supporting equality, fairness and social mobility in an economic period where the vulnerability of the most disadvantaged individuals, families and groups in society could be further exacerbated. In particular, the sector has a key role in enabling people to become engaged in education, training and work, and opening up access to higher education and the benefits that it yields. The overall performance of colleges is therefore a concern, and particularly the number of colleges that remain stuck at satisfactory. Excellent teaching and learning are the keys to success, and too little outstanding teaching was seen in colleges, adult and community learning providers and prisons inspected this year.

356. It is clear from this year's evidence, and from previous Annual Reports, that the capacity to improve and quality of provision are very closely linked to leadership and management. Ofsted will continue to ask how inspection can drive and support improvement in a changing sector and challenging economic climate, and what areas should be given greatest weight in our inspection judgements to ensure that the focus on improving outcomes for learners is maintained across the sector.

Children's social care



Key findings

- * Ofsted introduced a new framework for the inspection of children's homes in April 2011. Of the 731 homes receiving a full inspection under the new framework, 77% were judged good or outstanding. This maintains the clear trajectory of improvement seen since September 2007 when just 58% were good or outstanding.
- * There are 327 children's homes that also provide education or are linked to education providers. At their most recent inspection the education provided was judged good or outstanding in around half of these children's homes. However, in 11% education was inadequate. This is a serious concern given the very low attainment of many children in care and the outstanding support they need to overcome barriers to learning.
- * The quality of care this year in the four secure training centres inspected by Ofsted was outstanding in three centres and inadequate in one. A downward trend in the use of restraint in secure training centres has been observed over the last two years.
- * Of the 102 fostering agencies and services inspected this year, 79% were providing good or better services. These services were characterised by their commitment to continual improvement and learning from the views of children and young people, foster carers and social workers. However, 21% of these services were no better than satisfactory, leaving no room for complacency.
- * All but seven of the 68 adoption agencies inspected were found to be good or outstanding in terms of their overall effectiveness. However, too many children are waiting far too long to be adopted.
- * Unannounced inspections of 133 local authorities' contact, referral and assessment arrangements have been carried out, and in the vast majority of them appropriate actions have been taken to improve the arrangements for children at risk since their previous inspection between June 2009 and August 2010. Only three local authorities received a priority action which identifies a serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection and of significant harm.
- * Forty-seven local authorities received a full safeguarding inspection, which looks at a wider range of cases and services than an unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements. In around one fifth of the local authorities inspected this year services to keep children and young people safe were inadequate. This is a serious concern. All the inadequate authorities were judged to be placing children at risk of significant harm, with delays in responding to children and families noted in every inspection.
- * Of the 46 looked after children services inspected, 26 were adequate, 19 were good and one was inadequate. It is a concern that in no local authorities inspected this year were such services found to be outstanding overall. Looked after children need outstanding services if they are to be supported to reach their potential.
- * Three Cafcass service areas received unannounced inspections of progress. In two of these progress was good, but in one it was inadequate.

Introduction

357. In last year's Annual Report Ofsted described children's social care as a 'system under pressure'. The pressure has not abated. Demand continues to increase, and the rise in the numbers of both children who are looked after and children on child protection plans has continued. At the same time, local authorities have made significant cuts to their budgets for the financial year 2011–12 and, while many have sought to protect children's social care services, the financial pressures have been powerful. It is too early, based on inspections carried out in the first year of a four-year spending review programme, to make firm statements based on inspection evidence about the impact of these pressures on services and outcomes for the most vulnerable children. Ofsted expects to be able to report on this more clearly in the 2012 Annual Report.

Children's social care

358. The evidence continues to be clear, however, that it is not variations in the level of demand or the intensity of financial pressures that distinguish between those authorities that are performing well and those authorities that are performing poorly: overwhelmingly it is the quality of leadership, management and partnership working that makes the difference. Although the continuing upward trend in referrals, for example, is a general one, it is not universal. There are authorities that have reversed it. In these authorities the effective commissioning of early intervention and preventive services and embedded partnership working at the front line have ensured that only those children who require targeted support or intervention from social care are referred to those services. There are dramatic differences in the outcomes that authorities deliver for children and young people. For example, in the year ending 31 March 2011, nationally 6% of care leavers aged 19 were in higher education. However, for individual local authorities this figure ranged between 0% and 39%.⁶¹

359. Given the strong evidence that effective leadership, management and partnership working can make a transformational difference, it is a cause for serious concern that children were still inadequately safeguarded in around one fifth of the authorities inspected this year. Conversely, it is encouraging that, in almost all cases, in conducting a second unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services in local authorities, inspectors have so far found that areas of weakness identified in the first inspection have generally been robustly addressed. This is an important indication both of the value of inspection in supporting improvement and of the readiness of local authorities to learn from evidence-based feedback. However, this must not overshadow the more pervasive issue that there is still far too much avoidable variation in the effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding.

360. In May 2011 Professor Eileen Munro published the final report of her independent review of child protection in England.⁶² She called for a rebalancing of the child protection system so that it focuses less on procedures and process and more on the quality of the front line and ultimately on the effectiveness of the help provided. In July the government announced that it had accepted the great majority of Professor Munro's recommendations, and an implementation plan is now being delivered.

361. During the course of her review, Professor Munro made three recommendations specifically relating to inspection: that announced inspection should end and be replaced with broader unannounced inspections for child protection; that it should examine the effectiveness of the contributions of all local services, including health, education, police, probation and the justice system to the protection of children; and that it should 'examine the child's journey from needing to receiving help, explore how the rights, wishes, feelings and experiences of children and young people inform and shape the provision of services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided to children, young people and their families'. Between July and the end of September Ofsted consulted on a set of proposals for the inspection of local authority and partnership services for children in need of care or protection which sought to translate the Munro principles into a framework for robust inspection practice. The new framework will be published by the end of January 2012, and inspections against the new framework will begin in May 2012.

It is a cause for serious concern that children were still inadequately safeguarded in around one fifth of the authorities inspected this year.

61. *Children looked after by local authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) – year ending 31 March 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR21/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Data on the percentage of care leavers in higher education were suppressed in 111 local authorities in order to protect the confidentiality of the very small numbers of looked after children in the cohort.

62. *The Munro review of child protection: final report*; Department for Education, 2011.

362. Ofsted also has a major programme for the review of its inspection frameworks across all those social care areas in which it acts as a regulator. The common aim of all these reviews is to ensure that inspection, as well as continuing to perform its essential function of ensuring regulatory compliance, also has a clear focus on quality, on the things that matter most to children, and ultimately on the outcomes achieved by children and young people. In April 2011, following extensive consultation and testing, Ofsted introduced a new framework for the inspection of children's homes. The section that follows presents some of the evidence to date of the impact that the framework has had on the outcomes of 731 full inspections carried out this year. Between June and August this year Ofsted consulted on new inspection frameworks for the inspection of adoption and fostering services, based on the same principles of a focus on quality as well as compliance, on what matters most to children, and on outcomes. Ofsted will shortly publish the final version of the new frameworks, for implementation in April 2012.

363. Whether Ofsted writes about the effectiveness of the help provided, or whether Ofsted writes about outcomes, the common theme in everything that follows is the importance of focusing on one underlying question: what difference are these services making to the lives, the experiences and the life chances of the most vulnerable children and young people? Across the board, there is a trend of improvement, but in critical areas it is too gradual. Those services which are struggling to deliver the outcomes that children deserve are not yet learning quickly enough and effectively enough from the best. There is outstanding practice in this sector, but until it is consistent and universal there is no scope for complacency.

Children's homes

364. As at 31 August 2011, there were 2,091 children's homes in England, providing care and accommodation for 12,086 children and young people, mostly under the age of 18. The number of children's homes has increased over the past three years, with 110 more children's homes registered now than at 31 August 2008, providing 159 more places. Of these, approximately 27% are run by local authorities and approximately 73% are run by private or voluntary sector organisations.

365. Children's homes are diverse in type and generally accommodate children who are looked after by a local authority. They provide a range of care including short-term placements, long-term placements and respite care. They may care for children and young people with physical or learning disabilities, emotional or behavioural difficulties, a mental health condition, a drug or alcohol addiction or none of these. Each children's home is required to set out the categories of care it provides, and the age range of children and young people it accommodates, in a statement of purpose. There are currently 16 secure children's homes approved by the Secretary of State to restrict the liberty of children and young people. This is the same number as last year. These homes provided 292 places in England in the year ending 31 March 2011.⁶³ Ofsted's most recent published data show that on 31 August 2011 there were 281 places. Residential special schools and boarding schools that provide accommodation for pupils for more than 295 days each year must also register as children's homes.

63. *Children accommodated in secure children's homes at 31 March 2011: England and Wales*, Statistical First Release (SFR20/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Children's social care

The new inspection framework

366. Ofsted carries out inspections of all children's homes at least twice each year. All inspections, except survey inspections, are unannounced. During inspection Ofsted takes account of the regulations and national minimum standards for children's homes, which were revised in April 2011. Ofsted's primary concern is the effectiveness and impact of a provider's practice on the outcomes for children and young people.

367. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 March 2011, Ofsted continued to use the same approach to inspecting children's homes that had been used since April 2007. Inspectors made judgements about the overall effectiveness of the children's home, the quality of its organisation and any areas for development. Inspectors also made judgements on the Every Child Matters outcomes: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being.

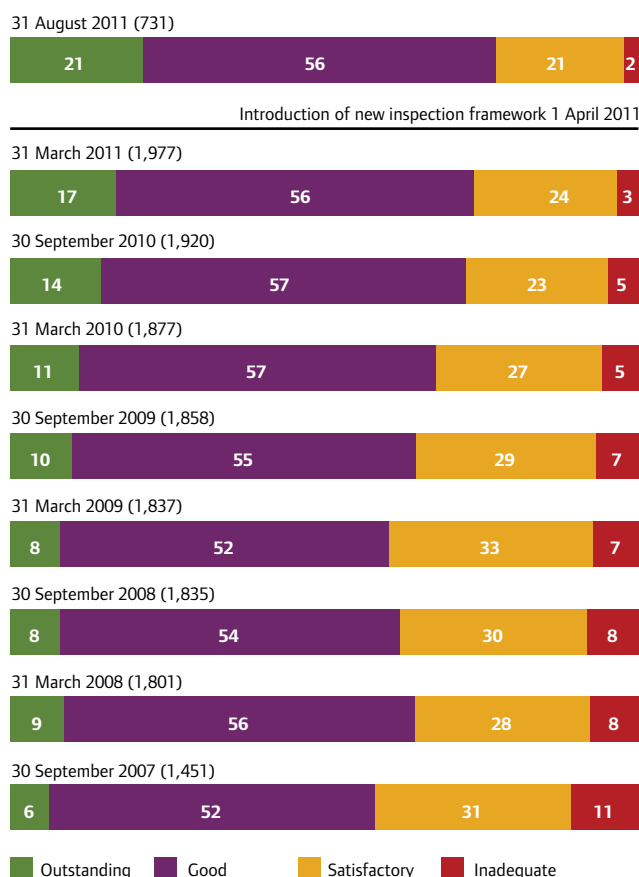
368. In April 2011, Ofsted introduced a new framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes. It has a strong emphasis on the experience of and outcomes for children and young people in the home. Inspectors focus on gaining the views of children and young people and observing their interactions with staff.

369. Under the new framework, every children's home has a full inspection at least once annually. At this inspection Ofsted inspects against the full evaluation schedule and makes a set of graded judgements, which are based on a careful consideration of the impact of the home on outcomes for children and young people. Inspectors make judgements on: overall effectiveness; outcomes for children and young people; quality of care; safeguarding children and young people; leadership and management; and equality and diversity. They also identify areas for development.

370. The second inspection in the year is usually an interim inspection; this focuses on the progress the home has made in improving the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people since the most recent full inspection. It includes consideration of progress made in addressing any requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. The judgement is made on a three-point scale: good progress; satisfactory progress; or inadequate progress.

Overall performance

Figure 62 Overall care judgement of all children's homes at their most recent inspection between 1 April 2007 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



Data exclude interim inspections carried out since 1 April 2011.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

371. Figure 62 shows a clear trend of improvement in the overall effectiveness of children’s homes since 2007 when Ofsted began to inspect children’s social care. It is encouraging to see that the proportion of outstanding homes has increased, and the proportion of inadequate homes has steadily decreased over this period.

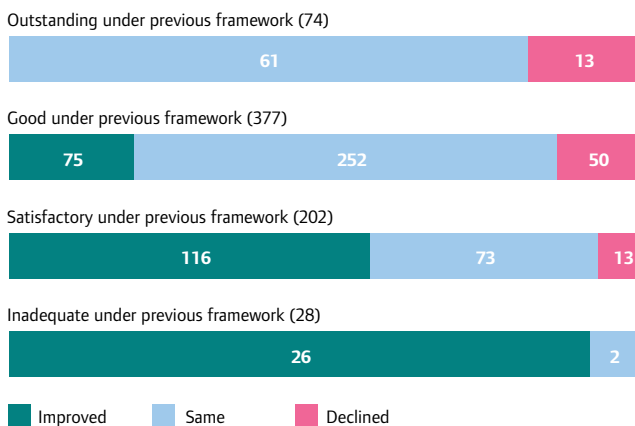
372. Since 1 April 2011, 731 full inspections of children’s homes have been completed under the new inspection framework. The performance to date appears slightly more positive than that achieved by children’s homes inspected during the last six months of the previous framework. Under the new framework, 21% of homes were judged outstanding, 56% good, 21% satisfactory and 2% inadequate.

373. The purpose of the new framework is twofold: to focus even more sharply on the quality of children and young people’s experience of living in the home, and to be more precise and robust about how Ofsted addresses inadequacy in the small proportion of homes which are failing. The greater focus on the quality of children’s lives and the outcomes they achieve under the new framework is leading to much richer inspection reports in which the voices of children can clearly be heard. These will be more informative for commissioners of care, managers, staff and young people themselves.

374. Of those homes which were judged good or outstanding in their last inspection under the old framework and have been inspected again under the new framework, 88% continue to be good or outstanding. Those homes that have historically been successful at meeting the national minimum standards for children’s homes are also shown by the new framework to be delivering high-quality outcomes for children in care. There were 50 children’s homes that were newly registered and received their first inspection under the new framework. Of these, four were judged to be outstanding, 26 were good, 19 satisfactory and one inadequate. It is encouraging that three fifths of children’s homes that have newly entered the system and have been inspected under the new framework are providing at least good-quality care from the outset.

375. There were 14 children’s homes which were judged good or satisfactory under the old inspection framework and were subsequently judged inadequate under the new framework. In these homes the loss of a registered manager, lack of effective leadership, staffing difficulties and poor levels of support and training for staff were typically having a negative effect on children’s experiences and outcomes. There was insufficient attention to issues of equality, diversity and inclusive practice. Quality assurance systems were not being used effectively to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of these homes and generate improvement where necessary. These weaknesses had led to a deterioration in underlying quality since the previous inspection or resulted in poor progress being made in addressing persistent shortcomings that had been previously identified.

Figure 63 Changes in inspection outcomes for children’s homes between their last inspection under the previous framework and their first inspection under the new framework (number of providers)



Those homes that have historically been successful at meeting the national minimum standards for children’s homes are also shown by the new framework to be delivering high-quality outcomes for children in care.

Children's social care

376. Ofsted has inspected more than 1,400 children's homes at least six times over three consecutive years, of which only 19 have been judged outstanding at every inspection. These homes differ considerably in terms of their size, the groups of children they work with and whether they are managed in the private sector, public sector or third sector, but their key success factors show remarkable similarities. This year Ofsted carried out a survey to analyse the key factors which contributed to success in 12 children's homes which sustained their outstanding performance over a three-year period. Perhaps unsurprisingly the survey found that leadership was critical to the quality of these children's homes. In many ways, the characteristics of a good leader in a children's home are similar to those of a good leader anywhere. Yet there are also particular pressures and challenges associated with working in a children's home that demand specific leadership qualities.

Leadership in 12 consistently outstanding children's homes

The first, and perhaps most striking, characteristic was the visibility of the managers of these children's homes. They were not shut away in an office, inaccessible to staff and young people and detached from the day-to-day running of the home. Instead, they interacted frequently with young people and staff alike.

Leaders in these homes set the vision and the priorities for improvement. They spoke clearly about the need to create a vision and a set of expectations to which staff could aspire. There was a very high degree of consistency between how managers described the vision and purpose of the children's home and how it was described by members of staff. This strong sense of common purpose was achieved not just through the clear articulation of a set of goals and aspirations, but also through the conscious efforts managers made to include staff in the improvement process; by inviting ideas, discussing developments and respecting their professional contribution.

In these highly successful homes, managers were typically characterised by the openness and honesty of their leadership style. This openness manifested itself in a number of ways. Managers were extremely clear about what they expected from staff, and established a culture in which staff could expect frequent and honest feedback about their performance. In doing so, managers recognised the need to support staff in what could often be an emotionally and physically demanding job, while never compromising on the standards of care for children.

The transparency of the leadership also extended to how problems were identified and issues tackled. The children's homes in this survey were highly committed to learning from their mistakes and had developed a strong 'no-blame' culture in which staff could reflect on their practice and that of others, solve problems and develop joint strategies to overcome the challenges that arose. This reflective culture was combined with a very clear expectation that issues would be dealt with quickly, professionally and effectively.

The personal drive, presence and commitment of the manager of the home were key ingredients of success, but in these outstanding homes, leadership was, in fact, distributed across the staff. Staff who had leadership potential were identified and took on positions of responsibility. The strong commitment to sharing leadership and responsibility helped to ensure the consistency of performance in these homes. Routines, policies, quality assurance and excellent practice did not depend on the oversight and leadership of just one person. They were part of the fabric of the home, and were reinforced by all those in a position of leadership or wider responsibility.

377. Twenty-one per cent of children's homes inspected since April this year and 17% of homes inspected in the last six months of the previous framework were judged to be outstanding. These children's homes have a clear vision, which is strongly focused on the experience of children and young people and uncompromising in its ambition. They demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement, always being willing to learn. They have effective

recruitment, training and management systems which identify staff who are deeply committed to their work and support them to grow and develop.

378. The best homes have a committed, caring and effective staff team that provides a nurturing, supportive environment with clear and consistent boundaries. Staff work with each child or young person to build their emotional resilience and self-confidence, to prepare them for independence and to enable them to withstand difficulties and setbacks in the future. They manage behaviour consistently so that young people understand and respect the boundaries that are set and respond positively to encouragement, rewards and meaningful sanctions. From their first contact with the young person they create the conditions most likely to make the placement a success. Young people are empowered and supported to fully participate in the planning and review of their care, so that it is personalised to meet their needs. One parent commented that the home ‘is passionate about the needs and best possible outcomes for children’.

379. A feature of many good and outstanding homes is their excellent partnership working with a wide range of services and agencies. Where liaison with external agencies is effective, children and young people receive good levels of support in key aspects of their lives, including their education. The best homes are fully part of their communities. For example, the young people in the home are involved in the local community in positive ways, such as through participation in charity fund-raising events.

380. In the majority of outstanding homes robust procedures are in place to address unauthorised absence and staff consistently put these into practice in the event of any young person going missing from home. Where strong links have been established with the local police this often contributes to a significant reduction in young people going missing.

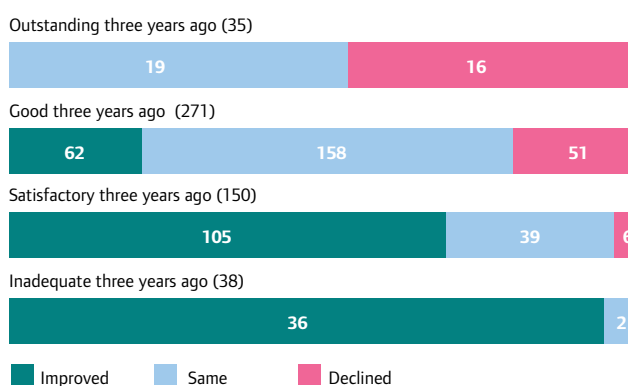
381. In contrast to the outstanding homes described above, 2% of children’s homes were judged inadequate in their inspections under the new framework. In the homes judged inadequate, children are not sufficiently supported to engage in educational activities, regularly attend school, training or employment, or maintain a routine. They are not adequately provided with boundaries or encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

382. In homes judged inadequate, staff are inadequately trained and supported. Systems for monitoring and reviewing the quality of care are not sufficiently robust. In homes that have not implemented a missing from home procedure that includes agreed protocols with the local police, as required by the Children’s Homes regulations, children are more likely to be at risk of going missing and less likely to receive appropriate support on their return.⁶⁴

383. When a children’s home is judged to be inadequate, Ofsted sets actions to promote improvement and uses its regulatory powers to enforce compliance with legal requirements. Ofsted monitors these homes closely to check that actions are completed within the required timescales and that there is a satisfactory level of improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people.

Quality of children’s homes over time

Figure 64 Overall effectiveness of children’s homes at their most recent inspection under the new framework compared with their inspection three years ago (number of providers)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

64. The Children’s Homes Regulations 2001 as amended by the Children’s Homes (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (the 2011 Regulations).

Children’s social care

384. It is positive that, of children’s homes that have been registered for three years or longer and received an inspection under the new framework, almost three times as many have improved as have declined. The large majority of children’s homes previously judged inadequate or satisfactory have improved over the three-year period. It is also encouraging that, of the 38 children’s homes judged inadequate three years ago and inspected under the new framework, 36 have now improved. However, as Ofsted inspects children’s homes twice every year, these figures may mask considerable variation in performance of individual homes within the three years and not all those which have improved will have made steady progress over the period.

385. Of the 151 children’s homes judged inadequate three years ago, over a third are now no longer in operation, either because their registration was cancelled by Ofsted or because they closed voluntarily. Of the remaining 100 active homes that were inadequate three years ago, 95 have improved in their inspections this year under either the new framework or the previous framework. In their most recent inspection nine of these had improved to be judged outstanding, 54 were good, and 32 were satisfactory. However, five homes were again judged inadequate at their most recent inspection.

386. The 2009/10 Annual Report drew attention to the fact that the quality of individual children’s homes has tended to fluctuate too much and that improvements made can be insecure. It is encouraging, therefore, that inspections carried out in the first half of this year, under the previous inspection framework, show a further drop in the percentage of children’s homes in which provision has varied in quality over the last three inspections, from 10% to 7% as shown in Figure 65. This, together with the fact that the number of good and outstanding homes continues to increase (see Figure 62), is an encouraging indicator of sustained improvement. The increase in variability since April 2011, back to the level seen at 31 August 2010, is likely to reflect the impact of the introduction of a new inspection framework, new regulations and new national minimum standards.

387. Inspections this year indicate that, in common with last year, the performance of children’s homes in the private or voluntary sector is higher on average in those homes which form part of a larger group. This may indicate that there can be benefits in terms of management, sharing good practice, systems and processes associated with being part of a larger group of homes. However, this relationship is not clear for children’s homes run by local authorities.

Figure 65 Percentage of children’s homes in which the quality of care has varied at each inspection over the last three inspections⁶⁵

As at:	31 Aug 2008	31 Aug 2009	31 Aug 2010	31 Mar 2011	31 Aug 2011
Percentage in which the quality of care has fluctuated	12%	11%	10%	7%	10%

It is positive that, of children’s homes that have been registered for three years or longer and received an inspection under the new framework, almost three times as many have improved as have declined.

65. The quality of children’s homes is judged to have varied if inspection results moved both up and down over their last three inspections.

Education in children's homes

388. Overall, 11.6% of looked after children achieved five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2010. This figure is improving over time, for example by two percentage points since the previous year, but remains far too low.⁶⁶ Moreover, there are likely to be variations in the outcomes achieved by looked after children in different types of placement. Often children accommodated in children's homes have greater levels of need and potential barriers to learning than many children accommodated in other types of placement, such as foster care.

389. Some children's homes have dedicated education provision for the children in their care and some residential special schools are registered as children's homes because they provide care for more than 295 days a year. As at 31 August 2011, there were 327 such providers – children's homes which also provide education or are linked to education providers – all of which are inspected for both the quality of their care and the education they provide. There is not a strong relationship between the judgements made for care and education. In only 38% of children's homes were the same judgements made for both the quality of care and the quality of education; in 48% of these homes care was judged more positively than education.⁶⁷

390. The education inspection outcomes for children's homes with dedicated education provision are not as good as those for all non-association independent schools. In 53% of children's homes the linked education provision was judged good or outstanding and in 11% it was inadequate at the most recent inspection between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011. In contrast, two thirds of all non-association independent schools inspected during 2010/11 were judged good or outstanding and just 4% were inadequate.

391. Over the last four years education has been judged inadequate in 32 children's homes, including six in the last year.⁶⁸ The numbers of children being educated tend to be very small – typically between two and five. Of those judged inadequate this year, all had serious failings in their curriculum and planning for the education of children was ineffective. These shortcomings, combined with serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching, often led to a poor response from the children.

392. It is encouraging, however, that in 16 children's homes inspected this year their linked education provision was judged to be outstanding; all but two of these were judged at least good for their social care as well. Of those judged outstanding for their education, all except two had an outstanding curriculum and all except five were also outstanding for teaching and assessment. The majority of homes providing outstanding education had fewer than 10 pupils on roll, showing that a successful curriculum is not dependent on extensive resources. Only four of these schools had been inspected before, of which one had been judged outstanding previously. The other three had improved since their last inspection through the energy and passion of their leaders.

393. Most children in children's homes attend mainstream schools. For these children, their home has a crucial role in supporting their education and working with the school, local authority and other education support services. The most effective children's homes ensure that staff have close working relationships with schools and colleges in order to support children and young people's attendance and achievement. The staff in these homes recognise the importance of attending school events such as parents' evenings and personal educational planning meetings in order to maintain a consistent and coherent approach to the education of children and young people. This also provides an opportunity for staff to advocate on behalf of children and young people when necessary.

66. *Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, as at 31 March 2010*, Statistical First Release (SFR38/2010), Department for Education, 2010.

67. These percentages are based on the children's homes' and schools' last inspection, which, in the case of children's homes, was between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 and in the case of schools was between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011.

68. This relates to 26 school inspections, as some schools are linked to more than one children's home.

Children's social care

394. Evidence from inspections suggests that effective two-way communication between schools, colleges and children's homes helps to facilitate children's regular attendance. It also ensures that any changes in the care and support of children are communicated to schools and colleges in a timely manner. Effective communication is also a characteristic of the best respite care provision. These homes routinely provide information to teaching staff about children's behaviour and emotional well-being and thereby ensure continuity and consistency for children.

395. Staff in the most effective children's homes demonstrate a proactive approach to children and young people's education and the evidence shows that this makes a real difference to outcomes. For example, staff engage in discussions with children and young people about their aspirations and academic strengths, ensuring that they see education as a way to improve their life chances. Staff in these homes are often actively involved in homework projects: for example one children's home had facilitated community police input to support a young person's school project. Educational attainment and attendance is encouraged and celebrated by staff in children's homes that achieve good outcomes. Placement plans include clear objectives for these children and young people in relation to educational achievement and identify how they will be supported to achieve their potential. These children's homes are also well resourced to support children's learning outside of school hours. Children and young people are provided with facilities that are conducive to study.

Staff in the most effective children's homes demonstrate a proactive approach to children and young people's education and the evidence shows that this makes a real difference to outcomes.

396. In homes that are less effective in supporting the educational achievement of children and young people there are some clear priorities for improvement. Staff need to monitor the educational progress of children and young people between reviews more effectively by maintaining regular contact with schools and colleges. The homes need to provide children and young people with a range of educational resources to support their learning, including internet access to educational sites and the provision of quiet areas within the home where children and young people can study. In addition staff need to support children and young people in addressing any challenges and barriers to their educational progress by having clear strategies in place to support children and young people who have a record of poor school attendance. Examples of good practice include establishing routines in the day, assisting with transport to and from school and making sure that those children and young people who are not attending school have access to appropriate learning programmes so that they are supported to resume full-time education.

Children's views – what children say about the provision

397. In a recent report by the Children's Rights Director, 82% of children living in children's homes rated their care as good or very good compared with 95% of children living in foster care.⁶⁹ These percentages are exactly the same as in 2009.

398. Children who have lived at different times in both children's homes and foster homes say that each has its advantages and disadvantages, and that it is a matter of individual preference. For example, one young person living in a children's home said: 'You can mix with people your own age. There are more opportunities to have fun. It feels more comfortable. You get a bit more privacy and can be yourself.'⁷⁰ Other young people made the point that living with others who are in care means you don't stand out as being different.

69. *Children's care monitor 2010*, (090160), Ofsted, 2011. This was the third in an annual series of surveys carried out by the Children's Rights Director. It reflects responses received from over 1,100 children, young people and care leavers.

70. *Having corporate parents*, (090119), Ofsted, 2011.

399. On the other hand, according to the *Children's care monitor 2010*, children living in children's homes were much less likely than children in foster care to say they were in the right placement. This year 89% of children in foster care thought they were in the right placement compared with 66% of children in children's homes.

400. Just under a third of children living in children's homes said that they worried 'a little or a lot' about their safety. This is less than in previous years and is slightly lower than other types of provision such as foster care. Children living in children's homes said that they were most likely to go to a telephone helpline, staff looking after them in the home, their social worker or police if they felt unsafe. They were less likely than children in other types of provision to approach their teacher or a friend.

401. The proportion of children in care reporting to the Children's Rights Director that they are in full-time education has risen overall. However, the percentage continues to be higher for children in foster care (96%) than for children in children's homes (84%). National data on looked after children show that 4.5% of looked after children are classed as persistent absentees and 79% of young people in care are in full-time education or training following the completion of year 11.⁷¹

402. Children living in children's homes were less likely to rate their education highly or think that they were doing well at school than looked after children living in other types of placement, according to the *Children's care monitor 2010*. Of those who responded to the survey, 78% of children living in children's homes rated their education as good or very good compared with 89% of those living in foster care. Seventy-two per cent of children living in children's homes thought they were doing well or very well at school, but, again, this was a smaller proportion than for children living in other types of care or placement.

Secure children's homes

403. Secure children's homes accommodate children and young people who are remanded or have been sentenced for committing a criminal offence. They also accommodate children and young people who are placed there by a court because they have a history of absconding and if they were to abscond this would present a significant threat to their safety, or because they are likely to injure themselves or others.

404. There are currently 16 secure children's homes in England, the same number as in 2010. The lack of secure children's homes in some parts of England, including Greater London, means it can be difficult to place children and young people near their homes, and more challenging for the secure children's home to support young people making the transition when they return home or move to a new placement. This is a concern, as children and young people in care feel strongly that help and support need to carry on for both children and parents after a child returns home from care.⁷²

405. In the year ending 31 March 2011, the average occupancy of secure children's homes was 69% of potential places available. This represents a large decrease from 2010 when the average occupancy was 80%. In fact, the 202 children accommodated in secure children's homes in England as at 31 March 2011 was the lowest number for five years. At 31 March 2011, 30% of young people in such homes (in England) were placed by the local authority on welfare grounds, nine percentage points fewer than in the previous year. These are young people who are placed in secure accommodation for their own protection or for the protection of others in the community.⁷³

71. *Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, as at 31 March 2010*, Statistical First Release (SFR38/2010), Department for Education, 2010.

72. *Children on the edge of care* (100210), Ofsted, 2011.

73. *Children accommodated in secure children's homes at 31 March 2011: England and Wales*, Statistical First Release (SFR20/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Children’s social care

Figure 66 Quality of care and quality of education at the most recent inspection of secure children’s homes inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Quality of care	Quality of education
Outstanding	2	0
Good	11	4
Satisfactory	3	1
Inadequate	0	0
Total	16	5

406. In good and outstanding secure children’s homes young people receive highly individualised care and support. Young people report that they are getting help to understand the issues that brought them into secure care, whether for offence-related or welfare reasons. They are fully involved in discussions about their future, with resettlement and transition planning initiated shortly after their admission to the home. Staff help young people to prepare for adulthood and develop their confidence and self-esteem.

407. There has been a considerable reduction in the use of restraint over the past year, as young people are supported to manage conflict and maintain relationships. Young people report that they are seldom restrained, and when this does need to happen they are treated with respect and kept safe. Increasingly, homes use creative strategies such as restorative justice to manage behaviour and young people respond well. One young person said of the progress they had made: ‘Now, I listen more, I get on with people better, particularly adults.’ In good and outstanding secure children’s homes young people feel that their cultural and religious needs are being met. Staff work proactively with young people in relation to their identity and culture, helping them to develop a positive view of themselves.

408. In satisfactory secure children’s homes staffing difficulties and weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation limit the extent to which services develop and improve. Where staff do not themselves receive consistent support and supervision, they in turn are less well-equipped to plan and provide individualised support for the young people in the home. In addition one secure children’s home previously judged to be good was deemed to be making inadequate progress in its most recent inspection under the new framework. Although the overall quality of care was still judged to be good, not all recommendations made at the previous inspection had been addressed. In particular the children and young people at the home did not fully understand the procedures for evacuating the home in the event of an emergency.

Education in secure children’s homes

409. Children and young people who are accommodated in secure children’s homes have been sentenced for committing a criminal offence, are on remand, or present a significant threat to their own safety or the safety of others. Many of these children have been excluded from mainstream school or have not previously attended school on a regular basis. In addition many have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a high proportion experience behavioural difficulties. Secure children’s homes provide a curriculum which seeks to enable children to continue their studies within the National Curriculum on their return to mainstream education.

410. The education in five secure children’s homes has been inspected during this period, of which four were judged to be good and one satisfactory. The number of young people in classes is often very small, on occasions as few as two or three. This presents a significant challenge to tutors in designing appropriate active learning sessions. Teaching is generally good and children benefit from effective individual learning support. Many lessons include a range of interesting and challenging activities. In a few lessons tasks are too simplistic and rely heavily on the completion of printed worksheets.

411. Initial assessment of children’s individual learning needs is generally good and secure children’s homes have improved how they measure children’s progress. Many children make good progress in the key areas of reading and spelling but less good progress in writing and in numeracy during their time in the children’s home. Too often, however, targets are vague and individual learning plans contribute little to children’s learning. Self-evaluation and self-assessment reports continue to improve although a few remain too descriptive. Many children leave custody with an education or training place arranged. However, it is unclear as to whether these are always taken up and, when they are, whether children remain in these places for a substantial period of time, as too little tracking and monitoring is carried out.

Secure training centres

412. Ofsted inspects both the care and educational provision for children in four secure training centres. They accommodate young people aged 12–17 who have been remanded or sentenced by the courts. The centres are under contract to the Youth Justice Board, which monitors their compliance with requirements. Ofsted does not regulate secure training centres but has an agreement with the Youth Justice Board to inspect care twice a year and education once a year.

413. Some concern has been expressed that Ofsted’s inspection of secure training centres has been complacent about the use of physical restraint on children. Ofsted believes this concern is unfounded. In all inspections of secure training centres inspectors pay particular attention to this issue and review individual incidents and talk to young people to get a thorough understanding of their experiences.

Overall effectiveness

Figure 67 Quality of care and quality of education at the most recent inspection of secure training centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Quality of care	Quality of education
Outstanding	3	3
Good	0	1
Satisfactory	0	0
Inadequate	1	0
Total	4	4

414. Three of the four secure training centres continue to perform well and improve the care and education that they provide for young people. In 2010/11, the overall performance of three secure training centres was judged to be outstanding; however, the performance of the fourth secure training centre fell this year from satisfactory to inadequate. In this secure training centre, despite very good outcomes for young people across a range of indicators, a recent breach of security and the subsequent failure to follow procedures were significant lapses in the provision of safe and secure care. Performance this year is more polarised than last year, when two centres were outstanding, one was good and one was satisfactory.

415. Following the tragic deaths of two young people following restraint in secure training centres in 2004 and the subsequent independent review into the use of restraint in juvenile settings, its use has been the subject of critical review both nationally and within the secure training centres themselves.⁷⁴ Several restraint holds have been withdrawn from use and the management of challenging behaviour reviewed in all of the centres. They have sought to minimise the use of restraint through the development of more positive professional relationships between staff and young people, an increased use of mediation, and individual work with young people to resolve issues. These approaches have enabled staff to manage challenging behaviour more successfully overall.

74. *Independent review into the use of restraint in juvenile settings*, Peter Smallridge and Andrew Williamson, 2008.

Children's social care

416. Across the four secure training centres, the use of restraint has been gradually declining over the last two inspection years. In one centre, there has been a significant reduction in the use of restraint and single separation of young people during the last 12 months.⁷⁵ Young people at each of the centres commented upon their relationships with individual staff members and how helpful they found them.

417. Three of the four secure training centres were judged to have outstanding arrangements in place to protect and safely manage the young people placed. However, in one centre inspected this year overall quality was judged inadequate because arrangements to keep children safe were inadequate. Some security arrangements at the centre were not sufficiently robust, and a recent breach of security at the centre, compounded by deficiencies in the emergency response plan and a failure to follow those procedures set out, led to a significant lapse in the provision of safe and secure care. In this centre management oversight of the understanding of staff in relation to some procedures and their ability to carry out what is required of them was unsatisfactory.

418. Nonetheless, each centre has close professional relationships with the local authority designated officer and local child protection services. Any use of restraint that results in an injury to a young person and all allegations or complaints that might suggest abusive treatment of young people are routinely discussed with the local authority designated officer. The directors of each of the secure training centres sit on their Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

419. Young people have easy access to the complaints procedures and complaints are taken seriously in each of the centres. They are also well supported through regular access to independent advocates and external childcare agencies.

420. Young people are encouraged and supported to retain contact with families. However, arrangements to enable young people to have telephone contact with their families and others outside of the centre were not adequate to meet the demand in two centres, and some callers had to wait for long periods to get through.

421. The quality of education provided is critical for the future success of young people placed at the centres. Many young people placed in these centres have had severely disrupted education throughout their childhoods. Education was judged to be outstanding in three centres and good in the other one.

422. Young people's educational achievements and progress were judged as good or better in all four secure training centres, and the educational curriculum in each centre met young people's needs well. Most young people made good progress at the centres and were well supported by teachers, care staff and learning support assistants. Teaching and care staff worked very effectively together to prepare young people for education, training or employment once they were discharged. Their collaborative approach resulted in an integrated and inclusive learning environment and mutual trust derived from good working relationships. Each centre offered a range of vocational activities to support the resettlement of the young people, for example the opportunity to engage in voluntary work in the community or practical trade training on site.

423. Three of the centres were judged to have outstanding arrangements in place to support young people to return to the community or transfer to other establishments. However, as noted in last year's Annual Report, a survey carried out by Ofsted in 2010 found that young people who were placed in a secure setting a long way from home were unlikely to have the same level of support as those who were placed locally, on either admission or discharge from the secure setting. This adversely affected plans for successful transfer and reintegration into the community.⁷⁶ In one centre inspected this year, inspectors judged that there were insufficient recreational and vocational activities routinely available for young people to equip them sufficiently well for discharge. In this centre, there were fewer opportunities for young people to have visits outside of the centre to assist young people's resettlement into the community, which hindered effective preparation for release and orientation visits to their home area prior to discharge.

75. Single separation is used for young people whose behaviour requires them to be temporarily removed from association with others.

76. *Admission and discharge from secure accommodation* (090228), Ofsted, 2010.

Fostering services

424. Ofsted is responsible for the registration, regulation and inspection of independent fostering agencies and for the inspection of local authority fostering services. Ofsted takes account of the national minimum standards for fostering services which were revised in April 2011.

425. There are currently 288 independent fostering agencies and 149 local authority fostering services. They recruit, prepare, assess, support and train foster carers in order to place children and young people with foster families who can meet their needs. As at 31 March 2011, 48,530 looked after children were placed in foster care, representing 74% of all looked after children.⁷⁷

Figure 68 Overall effectiveness of fostering services inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Local authority fostering services	Independent fostering agencies	All fostering services and agencies
Outstanding	7	23	30
Good	24	27	51
Satisfactory	3	17	20
Inadequate	0	1	1
Total	34	68	102

426. Overall, 81 of the fostering services inspected this year provided services that were judged to be good or outstanding. This represents 79% of the provision inspected. Despite the good and outstanding performance of many fostering services, around one in five of the 102 services inspected are providing only a satisfactory service and one fostering agency was judged inadequate. Fostering services work with some of the most vulnerable children in the country and the quality of the services they provide is therefore of paramount importance.

427. Independent fostering agencies inspected were more likely to be outstanding than those services provided by local authorities, but also more likely to be no better than satisfactory. This more polarised performance found in the independent sector is often linked to the effectiveness of managers and their ability to ensure a constant focus on quality; in the weaker providers, a lack of rigour is evident. For example, in some agencies foster care agreements are missing significant details. This means that children and their carers do not receive as good a service as they should.

428. Inspection findings this year demonstrate that a key factor which distinguishes good and outstanding fostering services from the rest is their capacity and commitment to learn from their experience and translate this into more effective practice. In the best services, monitoring processes are rigorous and, crucially, services use the information to improve continually. When placements break down or complaints are made, these services have exemplary procedures to make sure that lessons are learnt. These services listen to young people and learn from their feedback.

429. This commitment to learning is less evident in weaker services where, for example, some services do not always record actions following a complaint. Moreover, the monitoring processes they do have in place often have too little connection to driving improvement. In particular, the views of social workers who make the placements, foster carers and children and young people are not always taken into account. However, even the better services could improve the way in which they use data to evaluate their performance compared with their peers.

77. *Children looked after by local authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) – year ending 31 March 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR21/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Children's social care

430. The most effective services have a highly successful track record in matching young people to appropriate carers who can meet the full range of their needs, so that they are trusted by other agencies and their own carers. For carers, the provision of high-quality information is vital so that they can consider their own capabilities and their family's needs alongside the needs of the child. In strong services any gaps in the carer's capacity to meet a child's needs are identified and addressed. One report commented on this as a particular strength and stated, 'Where children and young people have very specific needs in relation to disability, ethnicity or culture, foster carers are provided with additional training and support to meet these needs.' In other less successful services gaps in matching appropriate carers who can meet the needs of the children placed with them, in this or any other domain, are recognised, but not fully dealt with.

431. Good-quality recruitment and training are also consistent features of strong services. The best independent agencies work closely with local authorities to recruit according to need. For example, in one effective agency inspectors found that staff were sensitive to changes in referral patterns and the types of carers being sought. Services often make effective use of their most experienced carers in training and mentoring new carers. Whereas the best services exceed requirements in arranging regular supervisory and unannounced visits to carers, these are not always sufficiently frequent in less successful services, nor are supervision agreements always clear.

432. A commitment to promoting good educational outcomes is also a feature of effective services. These services ensure that carers work in close partnership with schools so that carers are equipped to provide appropriate support and encouragement to the children in their care to help them achieve better at school; the agency monitors outcomes, exclusions and attendance to help prevent disruption to children's education. Effective local authorities make good use of tutors to help young people catch up. One report noted: 'In some cases young people have achieved a level of success, both personally and academically, which written records prior to placement indicated was impossible.'

Local authority private fostering services

433. A private fostering arrangement is one where a child is placed by their parents with another carer, but not a close relative, without the involvement of a public agency. The inspection of a local authority private fostering service looks at how the local authority promotes public awareness of the notification requirements for private fostering arrangements, identifies those arrangements and ensures that the safety and well-being of children and young people subject to a private fostering arrangement are promoted. These children can be very vulnerable, especially if the arrangement is not notified to the local authority. As at 31 March 2011, 1,649 children were reported by local authorities as being cared for and accommodated in private fostering arrangements.⁷⁸

434. Ofsted's previous three-year cycle of private fostering inspections came to an end in 2008/09, and no inspections were carried out in 2009/10. In only 5% of these previous inspections were local authority private fostering services found to be outstanding, and in nearly a fifth they were inadequate. In 2010/11 Ofsted was asked by the Secretary of State to conduct a small number of new inspections to evaluate progress in this area. Ofsted has agreed with the Secretary of State that it will inspect a further 12 local authority private fostering services in 2012/13 to validate or otherwise the general picture of improvement shown in this year's inspections.

The most effective fostering services have a highly successful track record in matching young people to appropriate carers who can meet the full range of their needs.

78. *Private fostering arrangements in England: year ending 31 March 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR16/2011) Department for Education, 2011.

Figure 69 Overall effectiveness of local authority private fostering services inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

Private fostering arrangements	
Outstanding	0
Good	4
Satisfactory	1
Inadequate	1
Total	6

435. The six local authorities involved in this year's inspections volunteered to undergo an inspection. Three of these had improved in their overall effectiveness since their last inspection, and one remained inadequate.

436. The previous inspections raised serious concerns that local authorities had not done enough to raise public awareness of the requirement to notify them of private fostering arrangements; these six inspections found that there had been progress on this issue and considerable efforts had been made to ensure that universal services, for example schools, were aware of private fostering and of their own responsibilities to report arrangements. Even the service found to be inadequate had made progress in this respect. However, that service was not sufficiently robust in ensuring that arrangements involving older children were safe and effective, as they failed to assess the needs and placements of young people approaching 16 years of age. While much had been done to improve public awareness, all services needed to improve their links with faith and community groups in order to increase the likelihood of notifications. Despite some good work by local authorities the numbers of notifications from members of the public are still low.

437. Where managers monitored private fostering arrangements they ensured that children and young people received a prompt and effective service, through which their needs were assessed and private foster carers were subject to thorough checks. However, in two local authorities, a lack of monitoring following an initial assessment led to delays where private fostering arrangements were not fully assessed in the required timescales and, therefore, children's needs were not adequately addressed.

Adoption agencies

438. Ofsted is responsible for the registration, regulation and inspection of voluntary adoption agencies and for the inspection of local authority adoption agency functions. Inspection takes account of the national minimum standards for adoption, which were revised in April 2011.

439. There are currently 150 local authority adoption agencies and 27 voluntary adoption agencies which operate through a total of 48 local branches. Their focus is on placing looked after children successfully into adoptive families who will meet children's needs and enable them to develop and achieve throughout their lives. This involves the recruitment, assessment and support of adopters, work with children, birth families and adoptive families, and adoption support provided both before and after an adoption order. The number of children adopted in the year to 31 March reduced from 3,330 in 2006/07 to 3,050 in 2010/11, during a period when the total number of looked after children has risen overall. Over the same period, there has been an increase in children ceasing to be looked after as a result of special guardianship orders from 760, in 2006/07 to 1,740, in 2010/11.⁷⁹

Figure 70 Overall effectiveness of adoption agencies inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Local authority adoption agencies	Voluntary adoption agencies	All adoption agencies
Outstanding	7	6	13
Good	40	8	48
Satisfactory	7	0	7
Inadequate	0	0	0
Total	54	14	68

79. *Children looked after by local authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) – year ending 31 March 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR21/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

Children's social care

440. Figure 70 shows that no adoption agency was judged inadequate during the period. There were 13 outstanding agencies, and 48 of the 68 inspected were found to be good.

441. In November 2010, the Minister for Children and Families drew attention to the disparity between the generally positive outcomes of adoption inspections compared with the more challenging outcomes of inspections for looked after children's services overall. This is clearly an issue, during a period in which the percentage of children being adopted is declining and delays in the adoption process remain considerable. Looked after children inspections judge a wide range of services which include, but are not limited to, adoption services. Therefore an exact relationship should not be expected. Up to 31 August 2011, 75 local authorities, in total, have received inspections of both their looked after children services, which took place between August 2009 and August 2011, and their adoption services, which took place between July 2007 and August 2011. Of these, 30 received the same judgement in both inspections, seven received a less favourable judgement in their adoption inspection than in their looked after children inspection and 38 received a more favourable judgement in their adoption inspection.

442. The new national minimum standards no longer explicitly exclude the effectiveness of the planning of care by local authorities from consideration during inspection. As Ofsted's inspection of adoption services must take account of the national minimum standards, this change, made on 1 April 2011, has enabled a greater focus on the requirement for local authorities to consider adoption as an option for permanence for all children in care at an early stage. Ofsted has consulted on a new inspection framework for adoption agencies, which will be introduced in April 2012 and will make this new focus more explicit.

443. In inspections carried out this year, although the numbers are small, voluntary adoption agencies were more likely to be judged outstanding than those services run by local authorities. This may be because, typically, the remit of voluntary adoption agencies is narrower than that of local authority adoption services. Voluntary adoption agencies are judged on service provision to prospective adopters and adoptive families and the impact of this on outcomes for children. Unlike local authority services they are generally not responsible for planning for children or working with birth families, although a small number do so.

444. Once an adoption plan is in place, the majority of local authority adoption services are successful in finding secure, safe and appropriate permanent placements for children. In the small number of cases where placements break down, usually before the adoption order, the best agencies examine these cases in detail to determine any aspects of their processes that could be improved. During inspection, many adoptive parents reported that they found the assessment and training processes to be rigorous but fair. They said that they received high-quality and detailed information about the children to help them decide if they could become adoptive parents for those children. As a result, in most cases, appropriate prospective adoptive parents are brought to the adoption panels where thoughtful attention is given to individual issues such as adoptive parents' ability to manage challenging behaviour.

445. However, the process of adoption often takes too long. Statutory guidance says that a child should be placed within 12 months of the decision that she or he should be adopted and that the decision should be made within six months of the child entering care. On average, in the year ending March 2011, children were placed for adoption 21 months after entering care. However, this ranged from an average of 19 months for babies less than a year of age, at the start of the period of care, to 29 months for five- and six-year-olds.⁸⁰

80. *Children looked after by local authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) – year ending 31 March 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR21/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

446. Delays prolong uncertainty about children's futures and can also be very frustrating for prospective adoptive parents. Several smaller adoption agencies have recognised that their size means that they have to work harder to recruit the right balance of adoptive parents to meet the needs of children awaiting adoption. Some agencies fast-track assessments of prospective adopters who appear able to meet the needs of harder-to-place children.

447. Delays can be caused by starting planning too late, or by the infrequency of information meetings and preparation training for prospective adopters. To avoid this, some services work together to ensure that these events are held regularly enough to ensure a steady flow of adoptive parents. Some agencies have increased the number of information meetings, preparation courses and adoption panels to speed up their processes. The provision of children's life-story work, particularly the gathering and recording of information about a child's past for their use in the future, often takes too long. Court processes were also identified as contributing to the delays in the placement of children in some authorities.

448. Delay can be minimised where tracking systems allow senior staff to monitor the progress of each child's and each prospective adopter's case at frequent intervals, for example by making sure that visits to prospective adopters take place within reasonable timescales. One report commented that, due to staff sickness, some prospective adopters said that in the past they had experienced delays in assessment and in their case being brought to panel.

449. In many cases delay is reduced by ensuring that recruitment focuses on prospective adopters who are most likely to be able to offer an adoptive home to harder-to-place children such as those who are older, disabled or in sibling groups. The impact of the adoption team in reducing delay was highlighted in one report where the team was found to 'work hard to avoid "drift" for looked after children seeking permanent placements'.

450. The work of adoption panels is often thorough and comprehensive, where careful and detailed consideration is given to the assessments of children and prospective adopters, and matching recommendations give priority to the needs of children. Prospective adoptive parents are invited to the panel and their views used to improve its future working. The proper separation of roles between panel membership and the management of social workers presenting cases to the adoption panel is important to ensure that the panel effectively fulfils its remit in providing challenge to, and quality assurance of, the adoption process. This does not always work well when the professional adviser to the panel has a management role within the adoption agency, which causes a potential conflict of interest. Although the role of the agency decision-maker is usually performed well, the results of the decisions are sometimes not conveyed clearly enough to prospective adopters.

451. In the best local authority services, support for children to move from foster carers to adoptive parents was a notable strength, as was work to involve birth parents with the adoption process. Birth families were encouraged and welcomed to participate in the planning for their children's futures and in enabling their children to have as full an understanding of their backgrounds as possible. However, in weaker local authorities, the omission of important information on birth parents from reports about children presented to adoption panels was a common concern.

Adoption support agencies

452. Adoption support agencies work with children, adults and/or families affected by adoption and offer a range of services which include support, therapy, counselling, advice, training and consultation. Some agencies specialise in tracing birth records and birth relatives and providing intermediary services. As at 31 August 2011, there were 44 adoption support agencies in England. Ofsted inspects each adoption support agency at least once every three years and must take account of the national minimum standards for adoption which were revised in April 2011.

Children's social care

Figure 71 Overall effectiveness of adoption support agencies inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

Adoption support agencies	
Outstanding	10
Good	8
Satisfactory	1
Inadequate	0
Total	19

453. The adoption support agencies inspected this year were all judged to be good or outstanding, apart from one which was satisfactory. Common to all these agencies is a clear commitment, from very well-qualified and knowledgeable staff, to provide sensitive and accessible services that respect people's differences and are designed in partnership with service users and commissioners.

454. Outstanding agencies are consistently strong in their delivery of user focused services and two of the eight good agencies were also judged to be outstanding in this area. In the outstanding agencies there is an unwavering commitment to getting it right for service users, who reported high levels of satisfaction with the services they received. The best agencies have been singled out as contributing to the prevention of the breakdown of adoptive placements, offering a highly professional service delivered with considerable warmth and care. Service users who spoke to inspectors often commented on the positive impact agencies have had, for example:

'We are very happy and incredibly grateful for the service we receive... Their professionalism, knowledge and attitude in providing essential support is proving invaluable through very difficult experiences and challenges.'

455. For agencies aiming to improve from good to outstanding, inspectors noted the need for tighter monitoring, reviewing and reporting to senior managers on the quality of services and their impact on outcomes for children, families and adults receiving a service. This should help to improve services and identify any gaps in staffing of the agency. In some services there was also the need to make key documentation, for example the Statement of Purpose, more accessible to the whole range of service users.

Residential family centres

456. Residential family centres are centres where parents undergo a residential assessment of their ability to care safely for their children, usually arranged and paid for by the local authority, often at the direction of the courts.

457. As at 31 August 2011, there were 60 residential family centres in England. Ofsted inspects each residential family centre at least once every three years. Ofsted inspection must take account of the national minimum standards for residential family centres. However, these are long overdue for revision and have a weak focus on outcomes. This is currently limiting the impact of inspection in this sector.

Figure 72 Overall effectiveness of residential family centres inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

Residential family centres	
Outstanding	5
Good	11
Satisfactory	6
Inadequate	0
Total	22

458. The residential family centres inspected this year are, in the main, good or outstanding – an improving picture from last year when most centres inspected were no better than satisfactory. The majority of centres have either maintained or improved their performance from the previous inspection. Eight residential family centres were inspected for the first time since registration; three were judged to be satisfactory, three good and two outstanding.

459. In 14 of the 22 inspections, Ofsted set actions to require the centre to meet the regulatory requirements. In eight of these inspections overall effectiveness was still judged to be good, despite the fact that actions were set, because in these instances the shortfall identified was minor. Although the requirements varied overall, there were some similar areas for development in relation to recruitment practice and record-keeping, and the most common actions, raised in 12 services, related to health and safety – for example keeping the building clean and ensuring that it is free from hazards.

460. All but three centres achieved good or better judgements for enabling residents to contribute positively. This judgement reflects practice in some of the most critical areas for this type of service. It was found that in the good and outstanding centres, parents and children generally enter and leave the service in a planned and sensitive manner, they receive quality assessments, they are informed and involved in decision-making and they experience sound relationships built on honesty and mutual respect.

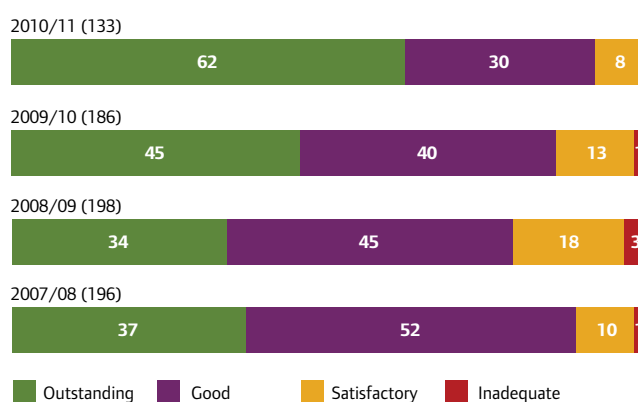
461. Common themes are identifiable in those centres judged to be outstanding overall. Outstanding services are strong in critical areas such as treating families with respect and empowering them to develop positive and respectful relationships, and having clear expectations and robust transitions. As one report states: ‘Staff are able to challenge, teach and guide.’ Providing access to a range of specialist services is common across many centres, but, in two of those services judged to be outstanding, the staff themselves come from a wide variety of specialist disciplinary backgrounds such as health visiting, social work, clinical psychology and nursing, which enables them to have a better understanding of physical and emotional health matters.

Care in residential special schools

462. There are 202 residential special schools in England offering 5,115 places; 112 of them are maintained by the local authority and the remainder are independent. Ofsted inspects the care of residential pupils in these schools every year under the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Where the education inspection is also due and it is feasible and practical to do so, both inspections are integrated to enable a report of the whole provision made by the school.

463. After extensive consultation, Ofsted introduced a new framework for inspecting residential provision in boarding and residential special schools in September 2011. The framework focuses on what matters for the success of pupils in a residential setting: the quality of the boarding provision; outcomes for boarders; their safety; and the leadership and management of boarding. The national minimum standards, which were also revised for September 2011, are covered under relevant sections of the evaluation schedule. Inspection outcomes against this new framework will be reported in next year’s Annual Report.

Figure 73 Overall effectiveness of care in residential special schools inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)

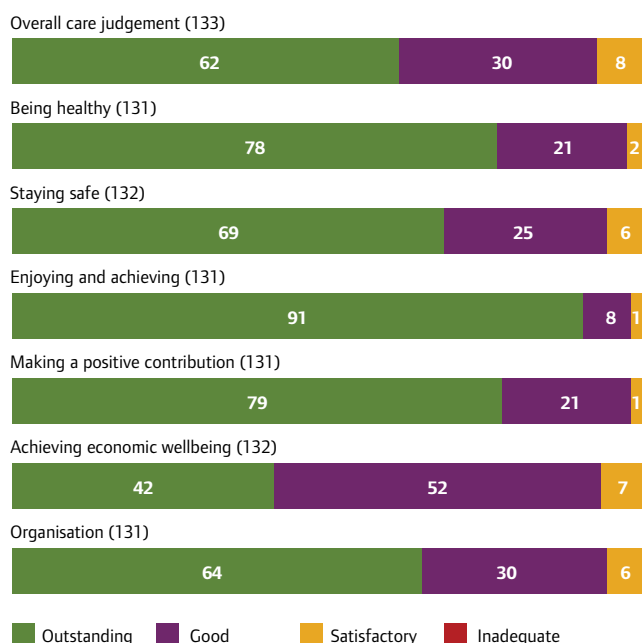


Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Children's social care

464. In 2010/11, Ofsted inspected the care provided in 133 residential special schools. Overall, these schools make very good provision for residential pupils: 62% were judged outstanding and none was judged inadequate. Inspections this year have shown a further improvement on the very good provision found last year and reveal that the large majority of residential special schools care very well for vulnerable children with special needs and/or disabilities who are living away from home.

Figure 74 Key care inspection judgements in residential special schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of providers)



In two residential special schools not all judgements were made as there were no children on roll at the time of the inspection.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

465. Through the high quality of care they receive, residential pupils in special schools are able to enjoy their time in school. A large majority of them achieve exceptionally well. These schools are, in the main, effective in breaking down the barriers to learning so that young people can make a positive contribution to their school and wider communities. This promotes pupils' personal and social development and self-esteem.

466. Almost all schools make effective arrangements to care for pupils' health. This is a particularly strong feature in that in over three quarters of schools young people receive outstanding support for their health from knowledgeable, experienced and well-trained staff who are frequently supported by therapists and other professionals. The best schools provide excellent support for residential pupils' personal and academic development. The staff who teach them and those who care for them work in close partnership to ensure that children are understood and treated as individuals. Care plans are detailed, well suited to individual needs and reviewed on a regular basis so that pupils get the support they need to realise their full potential.

467. Most schools try hard to help pupils feel at home and provide clean and comfortable accommodation in a welcoming environment. They have strong systems to identify and deal with bullying effectively, so that pupils report that bullying is rare and that they feel safe at school. Robust policies for child protection and staff recruitment are in place in order to protect vulnerable pupils from contact with unsuitable adults. Staff are well trained in safeguarding children and schools have good working partnerships with outside agencies and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to deal with any issues that arise.

Compliance, investigation and enforcement

468. Ofsted investigates concerns about children's social care where it is alleged that providers are not meeting legal requirements or minimum standards, are putting children at risk or are providing services without appropriate registration. The law gives Ofsted a range of powers to regulate children's social care providers; these set out the action that Ofsted can take in order to enforce compliance with legal requirements.

469. Ofsted's priority is to ensure that vulnerable young people are protected effectively and looked after properly. Ofsted acts immediately on any information that suggests that the welfare of children and young people is not safeguarded and shares information with other agencies, such as child protection agencies and the police, to protect children. During this year 257 cases were referred to other agencies. Almost all of these referrals were to Local Authority Designated Officers about safeguarding issues.

470. Ofsted takes a proportionate, risk-based approach to investigation and enforcement, only using its statutory powers when a relevant threshold is met. Some thresholds are imposed by legislation and others are set by Ofsted. After careful consideration of each case, Ofsted takes action in line with a published escalating tariff. The most appropriate power is invoked at the lowest point in the escalating tariff to ensure that the response is proportionate to the seriousness of each concern and to mitigate any risk of harm to children and young people. The aim is to secure improvement in practice.

471. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, as a result of concerns received against registered social care providers, Ofsted investigated 675 cases – slightly fewer than the previous year. In the majority of cases, Ofsted was able to secure improvements and compliance with the law without using statutory enforcement action. For example, in 168 cases Ofsted asked the registered individual to conduct an internal investigation into the concerns and to report to Ofsted on her or his findings and the action taken as a result.

472. Ofsted set actions for providers in 81 cases. These included a case where concerns were raised regarding the lack of policies, procedures and training for dealing with difficult behaviour and risk in a children's home. An inspector made an unannounced visit to the home and, as a result, set actions to remedy the failings identified. The provider put an action plan in place and made significant improvements. At the next inspection the provision was judged to be good.

473. Certain failures in care constitute an offence, although the large majority do not. Where there is evidence that a person has committed an offence, Ofsted has the power to prosecute, but may issue a warning letter where the letter is likely to be sufficient to prevent a recurrence. Ofsted issued two warning letters and served two statutory compliance notices this year. Providers can be prosecuted for failure to comply with these.

474. Where providers are not able to meet the required standards, or children are at risk of harm, Ofsted has the power to restrict accommodation, which prevents a children's home from admitting any more children for a specified period of time, or to refuse or cancel registration. Ofsted restricted accommodation in one children's home this year, thereby ensuring that no children were at risk of harm while an investigation into serious allegations of physical abuse was carried out. Ofsted then issued a notice of proposal to cancel the registration of this children's home. However, the provider had meanwhile already voluntarily resigned their registration. One applicant was deemed unfit to manage a children's home and registration was refused.

Safeguarding

475. Ofsted undertakes two types of inspection that focus on local authority safeguarding arrangements: inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements; and full safeguarding inspections.

476. Unannounced inspections of local authority contact, referral and assessment arrangements were introduced in June 2009 and had covered all local areas by August 2010. They are now in their second cycle. Contact, referral and assessment services are the front door of child protection services. Inspections focus on the local authority as the lead agency for child protection. They assess how well practice helps to manage the risk of harm to children and young people and minimises the incidence of abuse and neglect. Inspectors spend the majority of their time looking at direct practice, including scrutinising individual case files with front-line workers.

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477. These unannounced inspections do not grade the effectiveness of the services but instead identify where the authority is meeting the requirements of statutory guidance, and identify areas of particular strength, areas for development and any areas for priority action. An area for priority action identifies a serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection and of significant harm.

478. In addition to the unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements, Ofsted will complete, by July 2012, a three-year programme of full inspections, jointly with the Care Quality Commission, of all safeguarding services in each local authority area. Inspections of local authority looked after children services are carried out at the same time as full inspections of safeguarding services. Inspections of looked after children services are discussed in detail in paragraphs 498–511. Full safeguarding inspections may be brought forward when serious issues are identified in the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements.

Local authority safeguarding performance

479. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, 133 inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements were completed. Of these, only three councils received priority actions to improve their services.⁸¹ An area for priority action concerns an area of serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection and of significant harm and is therefore only given for very serious failings. One of these three local authorities subsequently also received an Ofsted inspection of their safeguarding services between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 and was judged to be inadequate.

480. It is clear that most local authorities are using the findings of unannounced inspections well to improve the quality of contact, referral and assessment services. These arrangements have noticeably improved in this second year, meaning that more children who require protection have their needs identified in a timely way. In the vast majority of instances where areas for development had been identified at a previous inspection, appropriate action has been taken. Improvement has been driven by strong leadership, robust improvement plans and targeted additional resources. Effective contact, referral and assessment arrangements also have a clear focus on listening to children and young people and involving them in their assessments. However, even though improvements are being made, the challenge for local authorities relates to achieving consistently good outcomes from consistently good practice.

Figure 75 Inspection outcomes for local authority safeguarding services inspected 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 (number of providers)⁸²

	Overall effectiveness	Capacity for improvement	Leadership and management
Outstanding	0	4	5
Good	13	20	19
Adequate	25	17	16
Inadequate	9	6	7
Total	47	47	47

481. However, despite this improvement in contact, referral and assessment arrangements, the quality of safeguarding services overall presents a very mixed picture. Of the 47 local authorities that have received a full inspection of safeguarding this year, 38 provide safeguarding services that at least meet the minimum requirements for keeping children and young people safe. This compares with 19 out of 29 last year.

81. The definition of an 'area for priority action' was revised by Ofsted on 1 April 2010. Comparisons between 2009/10 and 2010/11 on this measure are, therefore, not appropriate.

82. Ofsted evaluates the quality of safeguarding services against a four-point scale: outstanding, good, adequate and inadequate.

482. Nine local authorities inspected this year were not effective in keeping children and young people safe. This represents around one fifth of the sample inspected. This, combined with the lack of outstanding safeguarding services this year, is a serious cause for concern. Last year safeguarding services were inadequate in one third of the local authorities inspected, which suggests some progress. However, the comparisons are not straightforward. Last year less successful authorities were prioritised for a full safeguarding inspection on the basis of data and the outcome of the inspection of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements.

483. Three of the full inspections this year were reinspections of local authorities previously judged to be inadequate. In one authority, substantial improvement led to the child protection needs of children being more effectively addressed. Improvements were achieved through necessary increases in social care capacity, the effective leadership of the senior management team and the continued delivery of valued family support services through partner agencies, such as the services to support young people on the edge of care as well as those returning home. In the two other local authorities safeguarding continued to be judged inadequate. One had demonstrated some improvement in safeguarding services, including significant improvements in performance management and audit systems. However, these systems were not yet sufficiently robust to identify and tackle poor practice. In the other local authority too little progress had been made against agreed priorities and there was not enough evidence of sustained improvement. Although some plans had been put in place to strengthen services too many changes were simply reacting to day-to-day crises. Furthermore, some aspects of service delivery had deteriorated.

Strengths and areas for development

484. The findings from inspection of safeguarding and contact, referral and assessment this year corroborate many of the conclusions in Professor Eileen Munro's review of child protection, which was published in October 2010 and her final report published in May 2011.⁸³

485. Professor Munro drew attention in her report to the importance of the quality of work with children and families and the sometimes negative impact that an excessive focus on meeting assessment timescales can have. It is clear from inspection that although assessments are mostly timely, their quality is variable and they do not always sufficiently identify risk and protective factors. Moreover, the quality of recording and the rigour of oversight by managers were not always secure. Although many authorities have improved in these areas, these improvements are not always consistently embedded in practice.

486. The effectiveness of early intervention and multi-agency working is critical to the success of local authority safeguarding services. In many of the more successful local authorities, effective 'front door' arrangements into social care are providing access for children and families to a wide range of advice and support with strong arrangements for multi-agency working and early intervention. Inspections show that effective co-location of professionals and multi-agency teams, including with voluntary agencies, enables services and initiatives to be targeted towards particularly vulnerable groups. For example, in one local authority, multi-agency arrangements were leading to effectively targeted interventions for children who had been trafficked.

83. *The Munro review of child protection – part one: a systems analysis*, Department for Education, 2010.

The Munro review of child protection: final report, Department for Education, 2011.

Children's social care

487. Some of the inadequate authorities had pockets of good early intervention practice; however, ineffective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was a common barrier to early intervention in many of these cases. Six of the nine authorities had not embedded the CAF across the partnership and were making ineffective use of the process. This is in contrast with the local authorities performing well, where 11 of the 13 were making effective and efficient use of the CAF.

488. Professor Munro states that 'to be able to practise well, social workers have to be employed in an organisation that supports them and their professional development.'⁸⁴ It is vital to have a well-trained and supported workforce that has the capacity and opportunity to critically reflect on practice and be challenged by managers. However, in inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements, one of the most commonly raised areas for development relates to supervision and appraisal. Weaknesses have been identified across a range of areas, in terms of quality, rigour and challenge as well as the frequency of supervision and the recording of staff development needs. This is particularly critical for newly qualified social workers.

489. As found last year, there is no evident strong relationship between the size or demography of the local authority and its inspection judgement. Those local authorities judged to be performing well and those that are not effective in keeping children and young people safe are facing similar challenges in relation to the effective use of electronic recording systems, rising referrals and workforce issues.

490. A number of the themes that were identified in last year's Annual Report in relation to 'a system under pressure' remain. The effectiveness, accessibility and functionality of nationally prescribed electronic recording systems are regularly identified as ongoing challenges. In struggling local authorities it remains common that a lack of understanding between agencies means that the contact, referral and assessment team is carrying out work that would be more appropriately managed by other partners or by other social care teams. In particular, in more than one authority the division of responsibility between the police and the contact, referral and assessment team in managing referrals in relation to domestic abuse is not sufficiently clear. In other authorities, early preventative work is not sufficiently embedded or pathways to other services are not clear. All these factors create additional demand on services already under pressure.

491. Local authorities that are performing well are able to manage these pressures effectively. These authorities have strong and visible leadership, clearly articulated plans and ambitions for improvement. The Local Safeguarding Children Board has a key role in challenging and holding organisations to account. These authorities have developed a sound performance management and quality assurance system across the partnership that identifies and addresses weaknesses and areas of poor performance and tackles them effectively. In three instances, these performance management systems were judged to be outstanding, with clear involvement from all senior managers, including directors, in a 'hands on' approach to auditing, challenge and regular discussions with front-line staff.

492. In sharp contrast some very clear weaknesses were identified in those authorities judged to be inadequate this year. These authorities were unable to translate their stated commitment to improvement into action because they did not have all the necessary information and levers to effect change and were therefore not sufficiently aware of what was happening within their safeguarding services at the front line.

84. *The Munro review of child protection: final report*, Department for Education, 2011.

493. Although some inadequate authorities had significantly underestimated the scale of their problems, all had, to a greater or lesser extent, identified their own shortcomings and had drawn up action plans which identified issues and prioritised actions for improvement. Most authorities were making some progress, but in general this was too slow and was not having sufficient impact on their core function of safeguarding children. The ability of these authorities to effect improvement was hampered by weaknesses in performance management, quality assurance and auditing practices. Seven out of the nine inadequate authorities lacked clear thresholds for referrals that were understood by partner agencies, leading to inappropriate referrals and additional pressure and work for social care professionals. All the inadequate authorities were judged to be placing children at risk of significant harm, with delays in responding to children and families noted in each of their inspection reports.

494. Local Safeguarding Children Boards are expected to provide robust challenge and oversight of safeguarding issues. In seven of the nine inadequate authorities this was not the case. This led to shortcomings in understanding and addressing the safeguarding performance of partner organisations, a failure to hold organisations to account and a lack of scrutiny of management information. As a result, the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in these authorities did not have sufficient understanding of the changes needed to improve front-line practice.

495. Where Local Safeguarding Children Boards are more effective, monitoring, auditing and learning from serious case reviews are used to improve performance consistently across all agencies. In the best Local Safeguarding Children Boards, accountability is clearly defined and there is an independent, rigorous chair combined with membership of sufficient seniority from the different agencies to effect change through professional challenge.

496. Local authorities are finding innovative ways to use resources effectively and to maximise positive outcomes, as the following three examples illustrate. One local authority is using creative planning and pooled resources to finance early intervention services, resulting in a decrease in the total number of referrals to social work teams. Another local authority is re-shaping its services, working in small social work units that have shared understanding and responsibility for all cases. In the third example, a nurse clinician is delivering workshops in schools on the impact of knife crime which have contributed to a reduction in the number of young people treated for knife wounds.



497. An important priority for local authorities is ensuring that only those children and young people who need to be looked after are taken into care. Ofsted has carried out a survey this year exploring the successful methods used by local authorities to support adolescents 'on the edge of care' and help them to stay safely in their families and communities.⁸⁵ The survey shows how services in 11 local authorities helped to change the lives of young people at risk of coming into care for the better.

85. *Edging away from care – how services successfully prevent young people entering care* (110082), Ofsted, 2011.

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Edging away from care

Those authorities visited as part of the survey were committed to working 'safely' to reduce their numbers of looked after children and to manage the risk associated with maintaining the young people within their families and communities. The authorities approached this challenge in different and varied ways, but from their experience a number of consistent themes emerged.

The overriding message from the young people and families was that the quality of the professional involved was the crucial factor in helping achieve success. They were described as persistent, reliable, open and honest, which included being absolutely straight about what needed to change. They enabled the families to see that they had strengths and that change was possible and they persevered with families who often did not want to engage with them. These were professionals who had the time to respond quickly, often out of normal working hours, and work intensively with families.

In addition to the qualities of the professionals involved, the most successful services were those which incorporated explicit and clearly stated models and methods of intervention, including a repertoire of tools for professionals to use. A clear intervention model supported professionals to be more confident and informed and led to better outcomes with young people and families. It also enabled young people and families to have a better understanding of the overall direction, plan and timescales of the intervention.

The survey found that successful services were supported by some key factors, which included:

- ✧ strong multi-agency working both operationally and strategically; this involved strategic analysis and understanding of the needs of this cohort of young people accompanied by investment into services to address those needs
- ✧ clear and consistent referral pathways into services
- ✧ clearly understood and consistent decision-making processes

- ✧ a prompt, persistent and flexible approach, which was based on listening to the views of the young person and family and building on their strengths
- ✧ a clear plan of work based on thorough assessment and mutually agreed goals; regular review of progress and risk factors; robust arrangements for risk management; and clear planning for case closure and sustaining good outcomes.

Young people and their families were readily able to identify the difference that these services had made to their lives. In all the families spoken to, the young person had been supported to remain living at home or in the community. They also told inspectors about improved behaviour, including anger control, offending or anti-social behaviour, better school attendance and attainment, and raised confidence, self-esteem and aspirations. Despite these good outcomes the survey found that local authorities needed to work to achieve greater consistency in how success was measured and to set realistic timescales to achieve longer-term benefits such as the impact on the overall numbers of children in care.

Looked after children

498. Inspections of local authority looked after children services are carried out at the same time as full inspections of safeguarding services. They are conducted on a three-yearly cycle and are carried out jointly with the Care Quality Commission.

In some of the effective local authorities inspected this year the 'virtual school' and 'virtual headteachers' for looked after children have been important drivers for improvement.

Figure 76 Inspection outcomes for local authority services for looked after children carried out between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of providers)

	Overall effectiveness	Capacity for improvement	Leadership and management
Outstanding	0	5	5
Good	19	20	18
Adequate	26	21	23
Inadequate	1	0	0
Total	46	46	46

499. Only one local authority service for looked after children was judged to be inadequate. This authority was also judged to be inadequate in respect of safeguarding. However, none of the 46 local authority services inspected during the reporting period was judged to have an outstanding service. Twenty-seven local authorities were judged to be no better than adequate for their overall effectiveness. Although no local authorities were judged to have outstanding services for looked after children overall, both leadership and management and the capacity to improve were judged outstanding in four.

500. Over the past five years the educational achievement of children in care has improved, but the gap with their peers has also increased. In 2009/10, the latest year for which figures are available, 11.6% of children looked after for 12 months or more achieved five GCSEs graded A* to C, including English and mathematics. This is a considerable increase on the 5.9% who achieved this in 2005/06 and represents nearly a two percentage point increase between 2009 and 2010. However, over the same period the percentage of all children achieving this benchmark increased from 45.6% to 53.0%. Both the low absolute attainment of looked after children and the fact that the gap between looked after children and their peers remains persistently wide are key challenges for local authorities, schools and other agencies. Nonetheless, it is encouraging that on 30 September 2009 more than three quarters of looked after children were in full-time education, training or employment following year 11 at secondary school.⁸⁶

501. In some of the effective local authorities inspected this year the 'virtual school' and 'virtual headteachers' for looked after children have been important drivers for improvement. The virtual school is a structure to improve the education of looked after children. The pupils of the virtual school attend a number of different physical schools or settings. The virtual headteacher is responsible for monitoring the attainment, progression, attendance, exclusion and out-of-school-hours learning of all the local authority's looked after children to enable support to be put in place where needed. In authorities where the virtual schools are effective, evidence from inspection shows that they have:

- ✘ challenged schools, promoted high aspirations and raised the profile of looked after children
- ✘ supported headteachers, staff, governing bodies and other professionals, such as foster carers
- ✘ driven effective strategies for managing attendance, engaging young people in their education, and early intervention to support improvement
- ✘ worked with designated looked after children's teachers to support individual children and young people, for example by identifying at an early stage those children who might find transition from primary to secondary school difficult and putting in place appropriate support
- ✘ supported schools to ensure that the personal education plans of looked after children are used and monitored effectively.

502. In authorities where virtual school arrangements and support for the education of looked after children are less effective, a number of common challenges emerge. Often these local authorities, acting as corporate parents, do not ensure that all the people involved in the care and planning for looked after children are working effectively with those young people facing exclusion to keep them motivated in education. This weakness is compounded by a narrow choice of education placements. This can lead to poor stability of education placements for looked after children. A further common weakness is failure to establish effective protocols for managing arrangements where a child is placed outside the local authority area.

86. *Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, as at 31 March 2010*. Statistical First Release (SFR38/2010), Department for Education, 2010.

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503. Supporting the emotional well-being and mental health of looked after children is important to ensuring good and improving outcomes in the long term. Providing access to services which help looked after children to address mental health issues and promote emotional well-being is a priority for most authorities. Twenty local authorities inspected this year were judged to be outstanding or good for supporting looked after children to 'be healthy'. In the majority of these, dedicated child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for looked after children and young people were in place and, where this was not the case, effective fast-track pathways had been established. As a result, in the best authorities looked after children were able to access CAMHS in a timely manner, although in one authority judged good, this was not reflected in the response to young people at tier three.⁸⁷ Many of these successful authorities demonstrate effective use of strengths and difficulties questionnaires to identify looked after children's needs and in one authority a generic assessment of all looked after young people had been effective in ensuring those in greatest need accessed the appropriate service.

504. In the seven local authorities where support for the health of looked after children was inadequate the provision of services was inconsistent and the quality and timeliness of health assessments were not robustly monitored. In these authorities looked after young people often had to wait longer to receive CAMHS, which in some cases reflected a lack of local priority given to securing timely access to mental health services. Although some inadequate authorities were making reasonable use of the strengths and difficulties questionnaires to assess individuals, the inconsistent recording of outcomes was a common weakness.

505. The effectiveness of corporate parenting is another important factor in driving ambition and improved outcomes for children in care. Nineteen of the 46 local authorities received good judgements for looked after children's services. Many of these shared some distinctive characteristics in relation to their approach to corporate parenting. In these authorities the corporate parenting board:

- ✦ demonstrated a strong cross-party commitment to looked after children, by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes
- ✦ clearly understood its role and the responsibilities of the local authority towards looked after children, and planned for and prioritised their needs, resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes
- ✦ actively engaged with their young people, for example through children in care councils that are well-established and have effective and regular links with senior management and elected members.

506. Too many local authorities inspected this year, however, lacked a robust strategy for corporate parenting. Not all of the good authorities were able to evidence having clearly articulated strategies. In some authorities corporate parenting boards are still at an early stage of development. In many of the weaker local authorities, moreover, there was a clear lack of challenge in the corporate parenting process.

507. In the authorities inspected this year, looked after children have generally reported to inspectors that they are engaged well in contributing to the planning for their care. Most are satisfied with how they are engaged in their care plan and supported to contribute to their reviews. Independent reviewing officers are often cited as being central to helping young people contribute. In some local authorities young people expressed concerns about changes in their social worker which made participation less effective.

508. In more than half the authorities inspected, looked after children and care leavers had good opportunities to contribute to strategic planning, mainly through children in care councils. Examples included: involvement in service commissioning and tendering; contributing to the development of the Children and Young People's Plan; engagement in the local Corporate Parenting Board; involvement in staff recruitment and training; and taking part in campaigns to improve transport arrangements. Where engagement of children and young people was most effective there was clear evidence that their views had an impact upon changes to policy and service delivery. In many of these authorities there is an active pledge to children in care and a strong culture

87. CAMHS are often described as having four tiers, ranging from universal to highly specialist support. Tier three refers to specialist mental health services, often delivered on a multi-disciplinary basis.

of consultation. However, in some authorities young people's opportunities to contribute at a strategic level were limited, inconsistent or only at an early stage of development.

509. Placement stability remains a challenge for most authorities and too many children still experience placement breakdown. However, this picture is improving. Nationally, the percentage of children who have been looked after continuously for two and a half years or more and in that time have been in one placement for at least two years increased slightly from 65% in 2008 to 68% in 2010.⁸⁸ Having a good range of placements available and getting the placement right first time are critical to ensuring stability.

510. Most local authorities inspected this year are focused on addressing the issue of placement stability, but inspections show that there is no simple or single solution. Where local activity is effective, a key contributing factor is the quality of support provided to carers. This includes timely meetings and reviews to discuss the placement and any support needed; good-quality training for foster carers; and targeted therapeutic support for individual young people from dedicated therapists or psychologists. In one local authority, training for landlords providing supported living arrangements was also found to be effective in promoting stability for care leavers.

511. In two authorities the continuity of children's care was adversely affected by a high turnover of social workers. Indeed, some children told inspectors that they had experienced five or more changes to their social worker in the last two years.

Serious case review evaluations

512. Serious case reviews are local enquiries into the death or serious injury of a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor. They are carried out by Local Safeguarding Children Boards so that lessons can be learned. Ofsted evaluates the quality of serious case reviews against a four-point scale: outstanding, good, adequate and inadequate. The evaluation looks at how well the organisations have learned lessons and critically reflected on what they did well and what they could have done differently, and the recommendations they have put in place to further improve practice. It is not an evaluation of the quality of professional practice, or of the services provided.

Figure 77 Evaluation of serious case reviews undertaken between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 (number of reviews)

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Outstanding	0	0	1	9
Good	20	56	66	67
Adequate	34	84	62	22
Inadequate	36	55	8	5
Total	90	195	137	103

2007/08 total does not include two serious case reviews which were evaluated prior to September 2007.

2008/09 total differs to that published in the 2008/09 Annual Report due to challenges to judgements.

513. Ofsted completed the evaluation of 103 serious case reviews between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011. There has been a decline in the number of serious case reviews submitted to Ofsted. Between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 89 serious case reviews were submitted to Ofsted for evaluation compared with 116 last year.

514. The trend in improvement has continued since last year and there is an increase in the proportion of serious case reviews judged to be good or outstanding. Nine reports were judged to be outstanding compared with just one last year.

88. *Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, as at 31 March 2010*. Statistical First Release (SFR38/2010), Department for Education, 2010

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515. Common features of outstanding serious case reviews are: tight and comprehensive terms of reference; a willingness to revisit and reshape these terms of reference during the process as necessary; a strong commitment to family involvement where that has been possible, which has helped to illuminate the lessons learned; a robust engagement with lessons learned from previous serious case reviews; a sophisticated use of relevant research; and a rigorous overview report which systematically analyses and critiques the individual management reviews.

516. This year Ofsted published two reports to disseminate the learning from serious case reviews. They both provide a thematic analysis of the lessons identified. The first report, arising from the evaluation of serious case reviews in the six months from April to the end of September 2010, specifically focused on the voice of the child.⁸⁹ In too many cases:

- ✘ the child was not seen frequently enough by the professionals involved, or was not asked about her or his views and feelings
- ✘ agencies did not listen to adults who tried to speak on behalf of the child and who had important information to contribute
- ✘ parents and carers prevented professionals from seeing and listening to the child
- ✘ practitioners focused too much on the needs of the parents, especially vulnerable parents, and overlooked the implications for the child
- ✘ agencies did not interpret their findings well enough to protect the child.

517. Ofsted's most recent report on serious case reviews takes a retrospective view of all the serious case reviews that have been evaluated by Ofsted since 2007, with a specific focus on two age groups that are particularly vulnerable: children under one year old and young people aged 14 years and over.⁹⁰ For babies less than one year old common weaknesses in practice identified in the serious case reviews included:

- ✘ shortcomings in the timeliness and quality of pre-birth assessments

- ✘ underestimating the risks resulting from the parents' own needs, particularly given the vulnerability of babies
- ✘ insufficient support for young parents and marginalisation of the role of fathers
- ✘ poor quality assessment of and support for parenting capacity
- ✘ issues for both commissioning and provider health agencies, whose practitioners are often the main or the only agencies involved with the family in the early months
- ✘ underestimating the fragility of the baby.

518. A notable feature of the cases about young people over the age of 14 is the wide diversity of incidents that resulted in serious case reviews. Although the lessons learnt tend to be quite specific to the particular cases, the reviews found that too often:

- ✘ agencies had focused on the young person's challenging behaviour, seeing them as hard to reach or rebellious, rather than trying to understand the causes of the behaviour and the need for sustained support
- ✘ young people were treated as adults rather than being considered as children, because of confusion about the young person's age and legal status or a lack of age-appropriate facilities
- ✘ a coordinated approach to the young people's needs was lacking and practitioners had not always recognised the important contribution of their agency in making this happen.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)

519. Cafcass has a statutory responsibility in England to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in family proceedings, give advice to the court, ensure that children are represented, and provide information, advice and other support for the children and their families. Cafcass's professionally qualified social work staff, called Family Court Advisers (FCAs), work exclusively in the family courts. Cafcass is a national organisation which this year restructured from 21 to

89. *The voice of the child – learning lessons from serious case reviews* (100224), Ofsted, 2011.

90. *Ages of concern: Learning lessons from serious case reviews* (110080), Ofsted, 2011.

19 service areas across England. The programme of inspecting all service areas began in 2009 and will be completed by March 2013.

520. Last year Ofsted’s Annual Report described Cafcass as a poorly performing organisation with the pace of improvement still inadequate. During the summer of 2010, the Minister responsible for Cafcass asked Ofsted to undertake inspections to make a judgement on the progress Cafcass was making in relation to their improvement programme, rather than on the overall effectiveness of the organisation. From October 2010 to March 2011 Ofsted undertook three short unannounced inspections to report on progress.

521. These inspections were of progress at a local level against some key priorities in Cafcass’s improvement programme, specifically: aspects of service planning; performance management; safeguarding practice; and progress in reducing delays. Critically, they did not include judgements on the quality of assessment, intervention and direct work with children, case planning and recording, or reporting and recommendations to the court.

Figure 78 Outcomes of inspections of progress by Cafcass to 31 March 2011

Cafcass service area	Overall progress
Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire	Good progress
Kent	Inadequate progress
North and South of Tyne	Good progress

522. Of the three progress inspections carried out, two Cafcass service areas were making good progress and one was making inadequate progress. In the service areas where good progress has been made, leaders have successfully put in place business planning, intervention programmes and organisational restructuring which has been effective in tackling delays in allocating and completing work ordered by the courts. This has been achieved through collaborative work with the courts, the judiciary and other partner organisations during a time of continued high demand. In the service area where progress was inadequate, statutory safeguarding duties were not being applied consistently and managers had not identified this deficiency. As a result, outcomes for

children and young people were too variable, with the quality of social work practice ranging from strong to poor.

523. In April 2011 Ofsted resumed the full programme of inspection of all Cafcass service areas. Two full inspections of Cafcass service areas, Sussex and Surrey and the area of South Yorkshire and Humberside have been carried out since April. In Sussex and Surrey, the overall effectiveness, capacity to improve and safeguarding judgements were all judged to be satisfactory. Children, young people and their families were receiving a timely service and the service area was meeting its statutory functions. In South Yorkshire and Humberside, the overall effectiveness of the service was judged satisfactory with a good capacity for improvement. The contribution of the service area to safeguarding children and young people was satisfactory.

524. Ofsted also undertakes two-day post-inspection monitoring visits where service areas have been judged inadequate for overall effectiveness. The purpose of these is to establish whether the Cafcass service area has made sufficient progress in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report.

In the service areas where good progress has been made, leaders have successfully put in place business planning, intervention programmes and organisational restructuring.

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Figure 79 Outcomes of post-inspection monitoring visits

Cafcass service area	Number of 'areas for improvement' where progress was judged satisfactory or better	Number of 'areas for improvement' where progress was judged inadequate	Overall progress
Cheshire and Merseyside	11	0	Good progress
Lancashire and Cumbria	6	1	Satisfactory progress
Greater London	10	2	Satisfactory progress

525. Ofsted's post-inspection monitoring visits have found that the introduction of early intervention teams and a proportionate approach to assessing need has resulted in more timely risk assessment and advice to the courts, which have contributed to safeguarding children's welfare in many cases. In one post-inspection monitoring visit, progress against all areas for improvement was judged to be at least satisfactory. In the other two monitoring visits, areas of inadequate progress were related to the poor practice of a small number of staff and managers.

526. Progress is evident in the way managers monitor the workforce's performance through the use of quality assurance, quality improvement planning and staff supervision. This has led to improvements in practice, for example sharing case plans and reports with families. Progress has also been made in undertaking equality impact assessments, although as they are still in their early stages the effectiveness of this is hard to measure.

Looking forward

527. Looking forward, there will be substantial changes in the inspection of children's social care services in 2012. New arrangements for the inspection of local authority children's social care services, and the partnership working that supports them, will be introduced in May 2012. They will build on all the strengths of the existing arrangements, and will have an even greater focus on the difference that services make to children's lives and the direct involvement of children and their families in inspection. It is likely that inspection will include significantly more direct observation of professional practice.

528. Ofsted will complete the three-year programme of local authority safeguarding and looked after children inspections by July 2012. This will establish a comprehensive baseline of performance in every local authority in England as a platform for the introduction of the new inspection arrangements. Ofsted will also complete the first year of children's homes inspections under the framework introduced in April 2011, and will have a clear picture of the difference this has made – the difference to the outcomes of inspections, but more importantly the difference it should make to the experiences and life chances of children and young people in residential care. Ofsted will introduce new frameworks for the inspection of adoption and fostering services in April 2012 and complete inspections of all Cafcass service areas by 2013. Ofsted is also planning to introduce a new joint framework with Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons for the inspection of secure training centres.

529. In all of these areas Ofsted will be focusing on outcomes – the difference that services make to children's lives. Ofsted will be asking whether services are improving in the impact that they have, whether they are learning from the growing body of evidence about what works, whether the best services are continuing to improve, and whether the gap between the best and the merely adequate, or worse, is narrowing as significantly and as rapidly as it needs to.

530. The government has accepted Professor Eileen Munro's recommendation that in due course the expectation that Ofsted should evaluate serious case reviews should end. However, at the time of writing it has not determined a timescale for that change. Ofsted has recently published a report on the key lessons that should be learnt from the whole programme of evaluations that have been carried out since 2007.⁹¹ Ofsted evaluation has contributed to a substantial improvement in the way that partnerships review and learn the lessons from these often tragic incidents, and this practice is now well embedded in the system. The government, following Professor Munro's recommendations, is reviewing the fundamentals of the serious case review process. Whatever takes its place, it is essential that learning is taken forward. Although Ofsted will no longer be evaluating reviews, its focus in inspection on the extent to which local authorities and their partners have established what Professor Munro called a 'learning culture' will be strengthened, not relaxed. As she said:

'The complexity of the multi-agency child protection system heightens the need for continual and reliable feedback about how the system is performing. This is in order that organisations can learn about what is working well and identify emerging problems and so adapt accordingly. Such a learning culture is needed both within and between agencies.'⁹²

91. *Ages of concern: learning lessons from serious case reviews* (110080), Ofsted, 2011.

92. *The Munro review of child protection: final report*, Department for Education, 2011.

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Children's services assessments



Key findings

- ✦ The 2011 children’s services assessments show that the large majority of local authorities provide good children’s services.⁹³ However, even in the best performing local authorities there are areas for further improvement.
- ✦ A slightly higher proportion of local authorities are judged to be performing well or excellently in 2011 compared with 2010. Within this, the number of authorities judged to be performing excellently has increased by eight.
- ✦ The local authorities judged to be performing excellently represent all local authority types – counties, unitaries, and metropolitan and London boroughs – and are spread across the country. However, London boroughs continue to perform better, on average, than other types of local authority. Since last year there has been an increase in the number of London boroughs that are performing well or excellently.
- ✦ Fifteen out of 147 local authorities are judged to be performing poorly, the same number as last year. All but one of these have substantial inadequacies in their safeguarding arrangements. Common concerns include poor leadership and management, weak performance management arrangements, and practices that potentially place some children and young people at serious risk of harm.
- ✦ Twenty-five local authorities have improved their performance since last year, 11 of which have improved from performing adequately to performing well. These authorities have been successful in tackling the weaknesses identified in earlier assessments, in ensuring greater consistency in services and settings which are inspected, and in improving outcomes for children and young people.
- ✦ Seven local authorities have declined in their performance since last year. In these authorities, the quality of services inspected is mixed, education outcomes have often not improved or are improving at a slower rate than comparators, or weaknesses identified in recent inspections of safeguarding arrangements have contributed to a lower assessment.

93. These figures were correct on 8 November 2011.

Introduction

531. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Ofsted to provide an annual assessment of children’s services in each of the 152 local authorities with children’s services responsibilities in England. These include universal services, such as schools, which cater for all children, and specialist services for children who need additional support, such as those who are disabled or who are in the care of a local authority. The main responsibility for providing or commissioning children’s services lies with the local authorities. However, they work in partnership with a range of public agencies, such as the police and health, as well as with the voluntary and private sector.

532. Since 2009 Ofsted’s assessment of children’s services has focused on bringing together the findings from the inspection and regulation of the full range of services, settings and institutions for which local authorities are directly responsible, as well as providers that are located within the area but are not accountable to the local authority, such as academies. This information forms the basis of a performance profile for each local authority, which identifies trends over several years and allows performance in one area to be compared with performance in similar areas or across the country. The annual assessment is made on a four-point scale and takes account of both the performance profile and the application of the professional judgement of the inspector undertaking the assessment.⁹⁴

Figure 80 Definitions of annual assessment judgements

Judgement	Definition
4 Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3 Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2 Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1 Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

533. In 2011 a number of revisions have been made to the performance profile to take account of changes at local and national level. The National Indicator Set was discontinued in 2010. Therefore the 2011 children’s services assessment has made use instead of four-year trends in performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at Key Stages 2 and 4, and in level 3 attainment

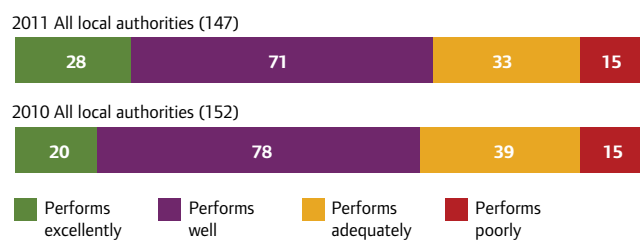
94. For further information see *Children’s services assessment for 2011*, Ofsted 11008, 2011.

Children's services assessments

at the age of 19.⁹⁵ Consideration has also been given to the extent to which gaps in attainment have narrowed between particular groups of children and young people, such as those who are eligible for free school meals and their peers.

534. Over the last year, there has been a considerable increase in the number of schools, many of them good or better, that have closed and subsequently become an academy or converted to academy status, either singly or as part of a federation. To ensure consistency in the assessment of each local authority, the most recent inspection grades of such schools were taken into consideration, even though they may not appear in the local authority's published performance profile. A further refinement to the assessment process concerned places or services commissioned from the private and voluntary social care sectors. Local authorities were asked to provide information about their placement and commissioning practice for looked after children which ensured that they were assessed on the basis of services that they actually used, rather than those that happened to fall within their geographical areas.⁹⁶

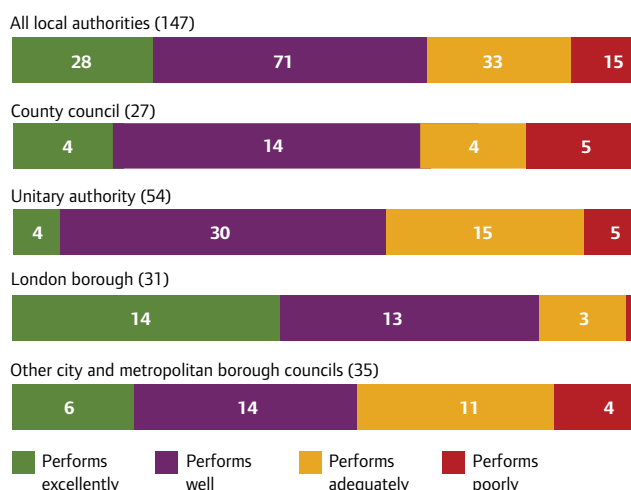
Figure 81 Annual assessment of local authority children's services for 2010 and 2011 (number of local authorities)⁹⁷



535. The 2011 data in Figure 81 are based on assessments of 147 of 152 local authorities and will be subject to further change before the full set of 2011 annual assessments is finalised and published. The proportion of local authorities performing well or

excellently in 2011 is slightly higher than in 2010. It is encouraging that a higher proportion are performing excellently this year compared with last year.

Figure 82 2011 annual assessments of local authority children's services by type of local authority (number of local authorities)



536. The local authorities judged to be performing excellently represent all local authority types and are spread across the country. However, as in 2010, London boroughs continue to perform better, on average, than other types of local authority. This year, 27 of the 31 London boroughs were judged to be performing well or excellently compared with 25 in 2010.

537. In the very best local authorities, high numbers of services and settings are good or outstanding and there are strengths in local safeguarding arrangements and services for looked after children, including the consistency with which the authorities place looked after children in good or outstanding children's homes. Special schools are almost always good or better. Across services and settings, children and young people are generally supported well to be safe and achieve their best. As a result, most of them reach educational standards that are at least in line with the national averages for their age, although lower attainment among looked after children remains a widespread concern. Children and young people in these local authorities attend secondary schools where behaviour is almost always at least good and absence rates are generally low.

95. Level 3 qualifications are the equivalent of two passes at A level.

96. For example, an authority will not necessarily commission a place for a child from a local, privately run children's home.

97. These charts are based on the grades published on 8 November 2011.

538. Where local authorities are performing well, provision is mostly good for early years and childcare and consistently good for children under five in nursery and primary schools. Although good in some local authorities, primary schools, secondary schools and educational provision after the age of 16 show more variation. Good support from local authorities for the few primary and secondary schools that are in an Ofsted category of concern helps them to make at least satisfactory progress. Most secondary schools have good or outstanding standards of behaviour and, where there is poor attendance by some young people, this is almost always reducing. For children and young people requiring specialist provision, special schools and pupil referral units are mostly good. For looked after children, arrangements for adoption and fostering are good, as are children's homes run by the local authority and homes in the private and voluntary sector where they commission places. In most of these authorities, educational standards match those in similar areas and nationally at the ages of seven, 11, 16 and 19 and generally show steady improvement. Attainment gaps between key vulnerable groups and the rest of the population are closing but not consistently at all ages and for all groups.

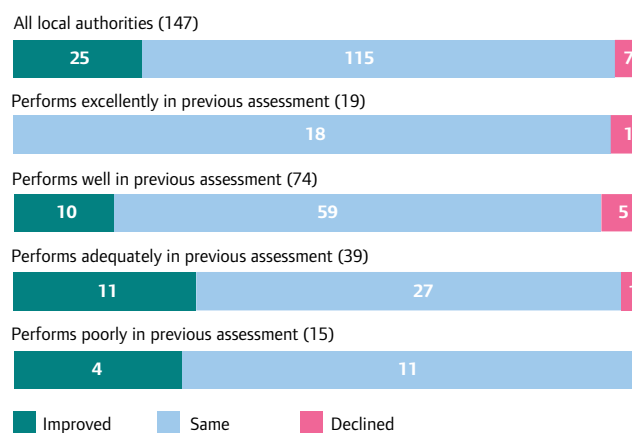
539. Local authorities that are performing well have generally succeeded in tackling areas for development identified in unannounced inspections of front-line child protection arrangements. However, some still require further improvement. Safeguarding arrangements are mostly good, as are services for looked after children.

540. Local authorities that are performing adequately typically have little provision that is inadequate but much that is only satisfactory. In these authorities, good provision is often available for the youngest children. Pupil referral units and special schools are also mostly good or better. However, a key weakness for adequate authorities lies in persistent inconsistencies in the quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people as they get older. Another common weakness is the mixed quality of secondary schools and post-16 education provision, with too much that is no better than satisfactory. In a few of these local authorities, school sixth forms are weak.

541. In local authorities that perform adequately, education performance is often improving overall but improvement is not consistently achieved across different age ranges and groups of pupils. The attainment gaps between the majority of young people and those from low-income families, from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds or with special educational needs are not closing quickly enough, particularly at the ages of 16 and 19. In a few local authorities, persistent absence from secondary schools remains a weakness.

542. As in 2010, all of the local authorities that are performing poorly have substantial inadequacies in their safeguarding arrangements or services for looked after children.⁹⁸ These include weaknesses in the leadership and management of these services, poor performance management or quality assurance arrangements, and poor practices that potentially place some children and young people at serious risk of harm. However, weaknesses in these authorities are not limited to shortcomings in safeguarding and looked after children's services. In a small number of them, too many secondary schools and sixth forms are no better than satisfactory, levels of absence are high and standards of behaviour are not as good as elsewhere.

Figure 83 Changes in overall effectiveness for local authorities between 2010 and 2011 (number of local authorities)



98. Birmingham, Calderdale, Cheshire West and Chester, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Kent, Peterborough, Salford, Sandwell, Slough, Staffordshire, Torbay, Waltham Forest, West Sussex and Worcestershire.

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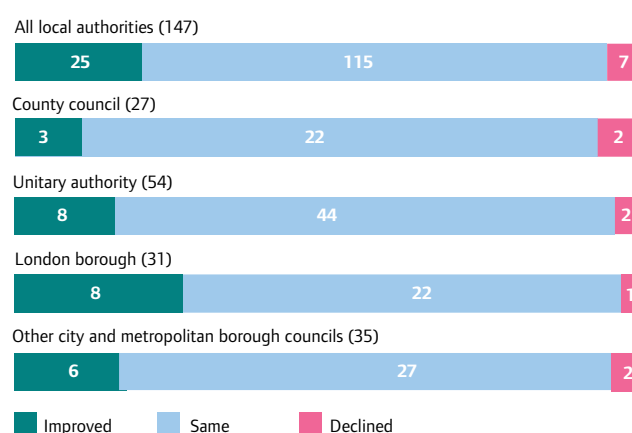
543. Figure 83 shows how the performance of local authorities has changed between 2010 and 2011. Overall, more local authorities improved than declined, with the large majority sustaining their performance. However, the pattern of improvement varies for local authorities at different levels of performance. It is clear that the most successful authorities have sustained their very strong performance. All but one of those judged to be performing excellently last year continue to perform excellently this year. However, the same ability to sustain their performance has not been observed among local authorities previously judged to be performing well. Of the authorities that were performing well last year, two are now assessed as performing adequately and three as performing poorly. In the case of these three, the change of grade is the result of weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements.

544. For a small number of local authorities performing adequately, recent inspections of safeguarding have also made an important contribution to their assessment. In these cases, the identified weaknesses have not been serious or urgent enough to lead to an overall children's services assessment of performing poorly. However, the areas for improvement are significant, with some aspects of the safeguarding services being inadequate, or insufficient progress having been made in tackling weaknesses identified in previous inspections.

545. Over a quarter of the local authorities previously judged to be performing adequately have improved. The local authorities in this group demonstrate clear and sustained improvement in areas identified as in need of development in previous assessments and inspections. Strategies to tackle relative weakness and underperformance are well planned and implemented successfully. The quality of universal services, such as childcare, primary and secondary schools and post-16 education provision, has improved in almost all cases. Some local authorities have also achieved considerable improvement in social care services, such as fostering and adoption, and in safeguarding arrangements. Most importantly, these improvements have been achieved while sustaining the quality of provision elsewhere.

546. Four local authorities were judged to be performing poorly last year and have improved so that they now perform adequately. In these, good progress has been made in improving safeguarding arrangements which, together with education provision that is at least satisfactory, has led to the higher assessment.

Figure 84 Changes in annual assessment judgements between 2010 and 2011 by type of local authority (number of local authorities)



547. Figure 84 shows how performance has changed in different types of local authority between 2010 and 2011. The most improvement has been achieved by London boroughs. However, among county councils, despite the fact that most authorities have sustained their performance, almost as many have declined as have improved over the last year. This is a particular concern given that the highest proportion of poorly performing authorities is found among county councils.

Gaps in educational performance

548. A recurring weakness identified in last year's assessment was the gap in educational attainment between children and young people whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, and others of the same age. In over a quarter of local authorities this was identified as a key area for further development. This year, Ofsted has conducted a more detailed analysis to determine the extent to which attainment gaps are narrowing. The analysis focused particularly on comparing the performance of children and young people from low-income families with that of their contemporaries at the ages of five, 16 and 19. The most recent data available for this exercise were those for 2009/10.

549. Nationally, the extent to which achievement gaps have narrowed or widened varies between age groups. The greatest improvement has occurred in the early years, where the achievement gap between five-year-olds from low-income families and others of the same age has narrowed by two percentage points, so that there is now a 19 percentage point difference between the two groups.⁹⁹ The least improvement has been at the age of 16, where the gap between those from low-income families and their contemporaries has widened by one percentage point, resulting in a 28 percentage point difference. Fifty-six per cent of local authorities assessed were successful during 2009/10, the latest year for which data are available, in narrowing the gap in attainment between five-year-olds from low-income families and their peers.¹⁰⁰ However, only 43% of local authorities assessed were successful in narrowing the gap in attainment between 16-year-olds from low-income families and their peers.

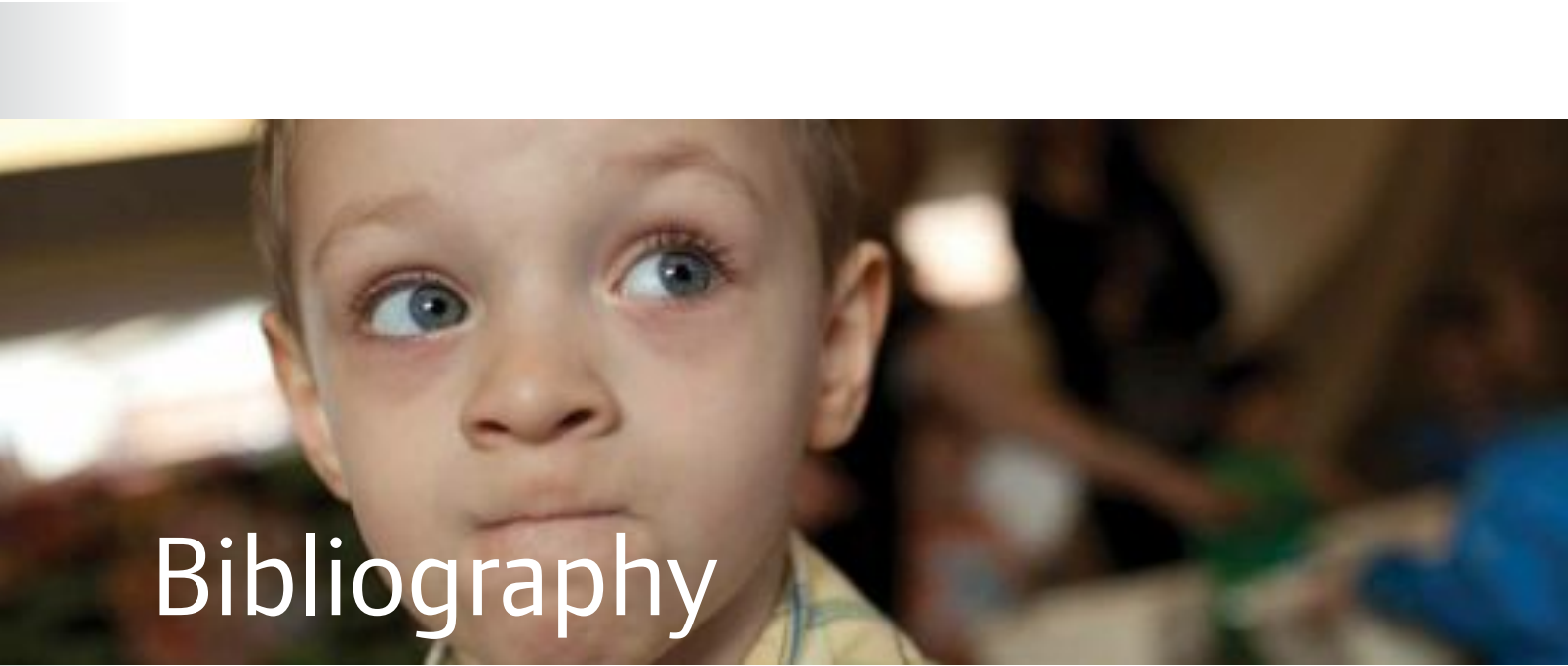
550. There is no clear relationship between the level of deprivation in a local authority and how successfully the authority narrows gaps in attainment. In general, the authorities with the highest levels of deprivation are more likely to narrow gaps in attainment than authorities with the lowest levels of deprivation, but this difference is not substantial. For many age ranges, it is local authorities with moderate levels of deprivation that are most likely to succeed in narrowing the gaps in achievement between children or young people from low-income families and their peers.

551. Only 12 authorities succeeded in narrowing attainment gaps at each stage.¹⁰¹ Of these, seven were London boroughs and one was a unitary authority. There were no county councils in this group. One hundred and fourteen authorities managed to narrow the gap for at least two stages. However, 11 authorities failed to narrow the gap at any stage. Of these six were unitary authorities and one was a London borough.

99. The attainment of five-year-olds is calculated on the basis of the proportion reaching a 'good level of development'. To reach this level, children must achieve at least 78 points across the 13 scales of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. They must achieve at least six points across each of the scales in personal social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.

100. Local authorities are counted as having successfully 'narrowed the gap' if the difference between the proportion of children eligible for free school meals reaching the expected level for their age and the proportion of children not eligible for free school meals reaching the expected level for their age reduced between 2008/09 and 2009/10. This reduction may not be statistically significant.

101. Newcastle, Salford, Sefton, Leeds, Leicester, Lambeth, Lewisham, Barnet, Brent, Harrow, Hounslow and Redbridge all narrowed gaps at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, at the end of Key Stage 4 and at levels 2 and 3 for 19-year-olds.



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Children's social care

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<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/serious-case-review-evaluations-april-2007-onwards>

Annexes

Annex 1. Definitions

Table 1 Inspection frameworks

Type of inspection	Framework	Effective since	Legislation
Provision on the Early Years Register	Inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage in registered provision	September 2008	Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006
Compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register	Inspection of compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register	April 2007 for providers on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register September 2008 for providers on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register	Sections 60, 61 and 77 (2) (b) of the Childcare Act 2006
Maintained schools	The framework for school inspection	September 2009	Section 5 of the Education Act 2005
Independent schools	The framework for inspecting education in non-association independent schools	September 2005	Section 162A of the Education Act as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005
Post-16 education and training (further education colleges, sixth form colleges, independent specialist colleges, work-based learning, adult and community learning, Next Step)	Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills 2009	September 2009	Section 123 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Initial teacher education	Framework for the inspection of initial teacher education 2008–11	September 2008	The Education and Inspections Act 2006
Children's social care	<i>Inspecting for better lives – delivering change</i> is the Commission for Social Care Inspection framework, adapted by Ofsted for inspections of social care provision	April 2007	Sections 80 and 87 of the Children Act 1989. Sections 31, 45 and 105 of the Care Standards Act 2000. Sections 146, 147 and 148 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Children's homes	Framework for the inspection and regulation of children's homes	April 2011	Section 22 of the Care Standards Act 2000
Children's centres	Inspection of children's centres	30 April 2010	Sections 98A(1), 98B(3) and (4), and 104(2) of the Childcare Act 2006
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)	Framework for the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) 2009 (revised April 2011)	April 2009 (revised April 2011)	Sections 143–145 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Safeguarding and looked after children services	Every Child Matters: framework for the inspection of children's services	April 2009 (revised October 2010)	Sections 20–24 of the Children Act 2004
Contact, referral and assessment arrangements	Framework for the inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements	July 2009 (revised September 2010)	Section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Annexes

Table 2 Children’s social care: frequency of Ofsted inspection

Type of provision	Ofsted’s role	Frequency of inspection
Children’s homes	Regulates and inspects	At least twice a year
Secure training centres	Inspects	At least twice a year
Local authority fostering services	Inspects	At least once every three years
Independent fostering agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Private fostering arrangements	Inspects	Sample at request of DfE
Local authority adoption services	Inspects	At least once every three years
Voluntary adoption agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Adoption support agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Boarding schools	Inspects	At least once every three years
Residential special schools	Inspects	At least once a year
Residential family centres	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Further education colleges that provide or arrange accommodation for one or more students under 18	Inspects	At least once every three years

Use of proportions in this report

In this report proportions are described in different ways. If sample sizes are small – generally fewer than 100 – scale is usually expressed using actual numbers of institutions to which particular judgements apply.

Proportions, which are used when sample sizes are large, are expressed in a number of ways: percentages, common fractions and general descriptions such as ‘majority’, ‘minority’ or ‘most’. Where general descriptions are used, they relate broadly to percentages as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Expressions of proportions in words

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none, very few

Ofsted's powers to investigate complaints about schools

The Education Act 2005, as amended, gives Ofsted powers to consider whether to investigate certain complaints made by any person. To qualify, a complaint must give rise to wider concerns about the school (rather than a solely individual issue) relating to:

- ✘ the quality of the education provided in the school
- ✘ how far the education provided in the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school
- ✘ the educational standards achieved in the school
- ✘ the quality of the leadership in and management of the school, including whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- ✘ the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils at the school
- ✘ the contribution made by the school to the well-being of those pupils
- ✘ the contribution made by the school to community cohesion.

Ofsted's remit does not include complaints about:

- ✘ admissions policy
- ✘ exclusions of individual pupils
- ✘ individual special educational needs
- ✘ temporary exceptions to the curriculum
- ✘ religious education or the religious character of the school.

Ofsted is not in a position to:

- ✘ investigate incidents that are alleged to have taken place, except where they are part of a pattern that give rise to concerns about a school
- ✘ judge how well a school investigated or responded to a complaint
- ✘ mediate between a parent or carer and a school to resolve a dispute.

More detailed information for anyone who wishes to make a complaint about a school can be found on Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Table 4 Number of complaints received and handled by Ofsted between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011

Description	Number of complaints
Total number of written complaints received	2,727
Total number of complaints the handling of which has been completed by Ofsted ¹	2,727
Number of complaints considered and which Ofsted referred the complaint to another agency to consider ²	35
Number of complaints considered and which Ofsted provided details of more appropriate sources of help or advice to the complainant ³	2,531
Number of complaints for which a waiver of the local complaints route was approved	16
Number of complaints that raised safeguarding issues and were followed up by liaising as appropriate with social services and the police ⁴	603
Number of complaints that qualified for further investigation under Ofsted's powers	161
Total number of qualifying complaints the handling of which has been completed by Ofsted	161
Total number of investigations conducted	53
Number of qualifying complaints that raised concerns significant enough to bring forward a section 5 inspection of the school	0
Number of qualifying complaints that raised concerns significant enough to warrant an immediate inspection of the school	3
Number of complaints about schools retained as part of the evidence base for their next scheduled inspections	137

1. Written complaints received and 'closed' between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011.

2. If serious concerns raised to Ofsted sit outside of our remit, action is taken to refer them to the relevant statutory agency when it is in the public's best interest to do so.

3. One of the first steps that Ofsted takes with a complaint is to analyse it to see whether it raises an issue that falls within the qualifying conditions, and whether it appears to affect the school as a whole. Where this is not the case Ofsted tries to refer the complainant to more appropriate sources of help and advice.

4. This is the total number of complaints where a potential safeguarding issue has been identified and the complaint referred to CIE for evaluation and then referred to the LADO.

Annex 2. Inspection evidence

Table 5 Number of inspections between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011

	Number of inspections 2010/11
Early years registered provision¹	
Childminders	12,106
Childcare on non-domestic premises	7,707
Childcare on domestic premises	43
Total	19,856
Maintained schools and pupil referral units²	
Nursery schools	126
Primary schools	4,246
Primary academy converters	4
Secondary schools	823
Secondary academy converters	7
Sponsor-led academies	64
Special schools	328
Pupil referral units	129
Total	5,727
Non-association independent schools	
Section 162A inspections ³	314
School registration visits	123
Material change visits	34
Emergency visits and follow-up visits ⁴	156
Total	627
Colleges of further education	
General further education, tertiary and specialist further education colleges	63
Sixth form colleges	10
Independent specialist colleges	11
Total	84
Adult learning	
Adult and community learning providers	45
Independent learning providers	167
Employer	16
Total	228
Children's social care⁵	
Children's homes excluding secure children's homes (old framework) ⁶	2,730
Children's homes excluding secure children's homes (new inspection framework) ⁶	751
Local authority fostering services	34
Independent fostering agencies	68
Private fostering services	6

	Number of inspections 2010/11
Local authority adoption services	54
Voluntary adoption agencies	14
Adoption support agencies	20
Residential family centres	24
Residential special schools ⁷	140
Boarding schools (care only)	154
Further education colleges (care only)	12
Contact, referrals and assessment inspections	133
Safeguarding	47
Looked after children	46
Inspection of service provision by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to children and families	8
Total	4,241
Care for children and young people in secure settings⁸	
Secure children's homes	32
Secure training centres	9
Total	41
Education and training for children and young people in secure settings⁸	
Secure children's homes	6
Secure training centres	4
Total	10
Offender learning and skills⁹	
Prisons (adult and young offender)	24
Young offender institutions accommodating young people aged 15–17	3
Probation offender management	11
Immigration removal centres	1
Total	39
Other inspections	
Annual performance assessment of children's services in local authorities	152
Serious case review evaluations	103
Initial teacher education	90
Armed Forces training ⁹	10
Dance and drama colleges	11
Children's centres	710
Total	1,076
Total inspection activity	31,939

Annexes

1. Early years registered inspections include inspections of providers active at 31 August 2011, multiple inspections of the same provider, and inspections for providers who have since resigned from the register or who Ofsted have cancelled or suspended. Excludes inspections of providers on the childcare register only, and inspections where no children were on roll.
2. This year Ofsted also conducted 145 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other sub-judgements are excluded.
3. These are full or light touch inspections of independent schools carried out under the section 162A framework.
4. Emergency visits cover announced and unannounced visits.
5. Data include all social care inspections undertaken in the year, including inspections of providers no longer active at the end of the year.
6. Children's homes are inspected twice in a year and figures include interim inspections.
7. Data include residential special schools reinspected in the year.
8. Secure children's homes and secure training centres are inspected twice in a year.
9. Figures exclude partial re-inspections and inspections for which the report was not published by the time of writing.

Annex 3. Other analyses

Table 6 Early years registered provision

Aspects of childcare	Total number of providers inspected ^{1, 2, 3}	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	19,323	12	62	23	3
Leadership and management	19,323	13	62	23	3
Quality of provision in the EYFS	19,323	13	62	23	2
Outcomes for children in the EYFS	19,323	13	63	22	2
Feeling safe	19,323	17	61	20	2
Adopting a healthy lifestyle	19,323	17	63	19	1
Enjoying and achieving	19,323	17	61	21	1
Making a positive contribution	19,323	18	62	20	1
Skills for the future	19,323	15	61	23	1

1. Data include 41 providers of childcare on domestic premises.
2. Data relate to the most recent inspection of providers active at 31 August 2011.
3. Figures are rounded and do not add exactly to 100.

Table 7 Childminding

Aspects of childcare	Total number of providers inspected ^{1, 2}	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	11,875	11	60	26	3
Leadership and management	11,875	11	60	27	3
Quality of provision in the EYFS	11,875	11	61	26	2
Outcomes for children in the EYFS	11,875	12	61	25	2
Feeling safe	11,875	15	61	22	2
Adopting a healthy lifestyle	11,875	15	63	21	1
Enjoying and achieving	11,875	15	60	24	1
Making a positive contribution	11,875	15	61	23	1
Skills for the future	11,875	13	59	26	1

1. Data relate to the most recent inspection of providers active at 31 August 2011.
2. Figures are rounded and do not add exactly to 100.

Annexes

Table 8 Childcare on non-domestic premises

Aspects of childcare	Total number of providers inspected ^{1,2}	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	7,407	15	65	18	3
Leadership and management	7,407	15	64	18	3
Quality of provision in the EYFS	7,407	15	65	17	2
Outcomes for children in the EYFS	7,407	16	65	17	2
Feeling safe	7,407	20	62	15	2
Adopting a healthy lifestyle	7,407	21	64	14	1
Enjoying and achieving	7,407	19	63	17	1
Making a positive contribution	7,407	23	62	14	1
Skills for the future	7,407	18	63	18	1

1. Data relate to the most recent inspection of providers active at 31 August 2011.

2. Figures are rounded and do not add exactly to 100.

Table 9 Primary schools

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness^{2,3}					
Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?	4,250	8	47	40	5
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	4,160	10	45	40	5
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	4,160	8	55	34	3
Outcomes: how well are pupils doing taking account of any variation?					
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4,160	5	51	40	4
Pupils' attainment ⁴	4,160	6	25	58	11
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4,160	5	51	40	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4,160	6	55	36	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4,160	26	68	6	0
Pupils' behaviour	4,160	18	72	10	0
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	4,160	22	71	7	0
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	4,160	19	64	17	0
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4,160	6	42	48	4

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Pupils' attendance ⁴	4,160	13	36	44	7
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4,160	14	69	17	0
How effective is the provision?					
The quality of teaching	4,160	4	53	39	3
The use of assessment to support learning	4,160	5	49	43	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4,160	9	55	34	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4,160	30	59	9	1
How effective are leadership and management?					
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4,160	10	54	33	3
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4,160	8	54	35	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4,160	6	49	42	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4,160	18	64	18	0
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4,160	19	64	17	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination	4,160	10	52	34	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4,160	11	67	22	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4,160	6	49	44	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4,160	9	46	40	5
How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage?					
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3,754	9	66	25	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3,754	7	62	21	0
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3,754	9	67	24	0
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3,754	10	66	24	1
Overall effectiveness: how effective is the boarding provision?					
The effectiveness of the boarding provision	0	0	0	0	0

1. Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

2. This year Ofsted also conducted 90 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012 for primary schools. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other sub-judgements are excluded.

3. Figures include four primary academy converter inspections.

4. The judgements for pupils' attainment and pupils' attendance are high, above average, average and low.

Annexes

Table 10 Secondary schools

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness^{2,3}					
Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?	894	14	38	40	8
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	859	14	37	40	8
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	859	15	55	27	4
Outcomes: how well are pupils doing taking account of any variation?					
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	859	7	48	40	6
Pupils' attainment ^{4,5}	858	11	22	45	22
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	859	7	48	40	6
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	859	8	49	38	5
The extent to which pupils feel safe	859	31	59	9	0
Pupils' behaviour	859	12	64	22	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	859	15	66	19	0
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	859	30	54	17	0
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	859	15	44	38	4
Pupils' attendance ⁴	859	21	38	33	8
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	859	19	58	23	0
How effective is the provision?					
The quality of teaching	859	3	51	42	3
The use of assessment to support learning	859	3	38	54	5
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	859	18	58	23	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	859	36	52	10	2
How effective are leadership and management?					
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	859	18	53	25	4
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	859	13	52	32	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	859	14	50	32	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	859	13	58	29	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	859	27	56	16	0

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination	859	17	53	27	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	859	19	62	19	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	859	16	48	35	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	859	14	38	40	8
How effective is the sixth form?⁶					
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	465	9	40	49	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	463	10	39	49	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	464	9	46	44	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	463	11	45	41	2
How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage?					
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	27	37	48	15	0
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	27	1	2	0	0
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	27	30	56	15	0
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	27	41	48	11	0
Overall effectiveness: how effective is the boarding provision?					
The effectiveness of the boarding provision	0	0	0	0	0

1. Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

2. This year Ofsted also conducted 35 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012 for secondary schools. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other sub-judgements are excluded.

3. Figures include seven secondary academy converter and 64 sponsor-led academy inspections.

4. The judgements for pupils' attainment and pupils' attendance are high, above average, average and low.

5. In one secondary school inspected in 2010/11, no judgement was made for pupils' attainment.

6. In two secondary schools with a sixth form inspected in 2010/11 no judgement was made for the outcomes for students in the sixth form or the leadership and management of the sixth form. In one of these no judgement was made for the quality of provision in the sixth form.

Annexes

Table 11 Special schools

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness²					
Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?	328	28	48	20	4
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	317	29	47	20	4
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	317	27	52	17	3
Outcomes: how well are pupils doing taking account of any variation?					
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	317	18	59	20	3
Pupils' attainment ^{3,4}	91	0	1	29	70
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	317	18	59	20	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	317	18	59	20	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	317	53	38	9	0
Pupils' behaviour	317	41	47	11	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	317	48	44	9	0
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	317	38	48	13	0
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	317	20	57	21	3
Pupils' attendance ⁴	317	9	37	41	13
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	317	39	49	12	0
How effective is the provision?					
The quality of teaching	317	15	60	22	2
The use of assessment to support learning	317	15	55	27	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	317	34	48	17	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	317	63	28	7	2
How effective are leadership and management?					
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	317	32	50	15	3
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	317	21	57	19	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	317	14	57	24	5
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	317	45	44	10	0
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	317	57	34	9	0

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected ¹	Percentage of schools			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination	317	37	44	17	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	317	38	48	12	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	317	19	52	28	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	317	28	48	21	3
How effective is the sixth form?					
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	150	33	48	17	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	150	33	48	17	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	150	35	47	17	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	150	36	45	18	1
How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage?					
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	140	34	54	11	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ⁴	140	15	24	5	0
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	140	33	54	12	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	140	34	53	11	1
Overall effectiveness: how effective is the boarding provision?					
The effectiveness of the boarding provision	46	37	48	11	4

1. Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

2. This year Ofsted also conducted 11 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012 for special schools. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other sub-judgements are excluded.

3. In 226 special schools inspected in 2010/11, no judgement was made for pupils' attainment.

4. The judgements for pupils' attainment and pupils' attendance are high, above average, average and low.

Annex 4. Glossary

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide definitions or explanations of some of the key terms that are used in the Annual Report and which may be unfamiliar to readers.

Term	Definition or explanation
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)	This is an index of multiple deprivation calculated by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The index shows the percentage of children in each lower super output area who live in families that are income deprived (that is, receiving Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Families' Tax Credit or Disabled Person's Tax Credit below a given threshold).
Inspection and regulation	Ofsted regulates and inspects social care, early years and childcare provision. Regulation is for those providers registered by Ofsted. It has four aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – registration, for which applicants meet the requirements for registration – inspection includes judgements about the quality of provision as well as a check of continued compliance with requirements for registration (other than inspections of those on the Childcare Register, where Ofsted checks only compliance with requirements) – investigation of any information that suggests non-compliance with requirements for registration – enforcement, whereby Ofsted takes legal action to bring about compliance with requirements for registration; or against those who operate without registration. Those providers who are not required to register with Ofsted may be subject to inspection. Inspection involves visiting a provision at regular intervals, usually set out in law, to check the quality of what is provided.
Childcare and early years	
Early learning goals	The knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five.
Early Years Foundation Stage	New registration and inspection arrangements against the Early Years Foundation Stage started on 1 September 2008. This single framework sets the standards for care, learning and development for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday.
Sure Start Children's Centres	These provide a range of services for children and their families from pregnancy through to when a child goes to school. Children's centres provide families with, or make arrangements for them to have access to: early learning and childcare; family support; health services; support into employment; other specialist services.
Maintained schools	
Categories of concern	There are two Ofsted categories of concern: <p>(1) a school is made subject to special measures if it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and if the persons responsible for leading, governing or managing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement;</p> <p>(2) a school is given a notice to improve if it is judged through inspection to be: a) failing to provide an acceptable standard of education but demonstrating the capacity to improve, or b) not failing to provide an acceptable standard of education but performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.</p>
Interim assessment	From September 2009 Ofsted has varied the frequency of schools' inspections. We now inspect most schools judged good or outstanding at their previous inspection at approximately five-year intervals unless we identify any concerns. To help decide whether we could wait longer than three years before undertaking a full inspection of a good or outstanding school, Her Majesty's Inspectors consider various sources of information about the school's performance. This is called an interim assessment.
Key stages	These are the five stages of the maintained school curriculum between the ages of three and 16 years: <p>Early Years Foundation Stage: from birth to 31 August following a child's fifth birthday</p> <p>Key Stage 1: 5–7 years</p> <p>Key Stage 2: 7–11 years</p> <p>Key Stage 3: 11–14 years</p> <p>Key Stage 4: 14–16 years.</p>

Term	Definition or explanation
Persistent absence	Identified nationally as absence of more than 20%.
Warning notice	A warning notice may be issued by a local authority to a school about which it has serious concerns. Warning notices should only be used where there is evidence to justify both the local authority's concerns and the school's reluctance to address these concerns. The school may make representations about the warning notice to Ofsted. Ofsted will decide whether to accept or reject the appeal. If the appeal is upheld the warning notice will be rescinded; otherwise it will be reissued. Once the warning notice has been confirmed, the school has 15 working days to comply with the warning notice. Such compliance may not involve full rectification of the problem, since it will not always be practical to do so within the time, but it will involve positive steps towards the solution.
National qualification levels	
Explanation of national qualification levels	<p>Level 1 includes qualifications at level 1 and level 'E' (entry level), such as NVQs, foundation GNVQs and other foundation or pre-foundation qualifications.</p> <p>Level 2 includes level 2 NVQs, intermediate GNVQs and precursors (BTEC first certificate or first diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at intermediate level), GCSEs and other intermediate level qualifications.</p> <p>Level 3 includes level 3 NVQs, advanced GNVQs and precursors (BTEC national certificate or national diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at national level), advanced VCEs, GCE A, A2 and AS levels and other advanced level qualifications.</p>
Learning and skills	
Adult and community learning	Adult and community learning, provided by councils, the voluntary and community sector, specialist adult education establishments and by some further education colleges, is diverse in character and aims to meet the needs and interests of a wide range of communities and the different groups within them. Provision includes 'First Step' courses for those who have not participated in learning for some years and where progression is a primary aim; courses leading to qualifications, especially those that contribute to level 2 qualification targets; provision for 'Personal and Community Development Learning'; and programmes and projects that specifically target improvements in community cohesion and the contribution that local people make to their neighbourhoods.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes for young people below the age of 25. Learners complete a framework which includes practical training, work towards technical certificates and key skills training. Apprenticeships, which last approximately two years, equate to a level 2 qualification; Advanced Apprenticeships generally last three years and provide a qualification at level 3. Where appropriate, apprenticeships can also be accessed via Train to Gain.
Learning and skills in prisons	Ofsted undertakes judicial service inspections in partnership with HMI Prisons and HMI Probation. Ofsted HMI evaluate the quality of learning and skills in prisons, including young offender institutions and secure units for young people. Learning and skills provision in the community settings with HMI Probation are inspected across a range of work-based learning providers and colleges. Prison and probation inspection findings form part of the reports published by HMI Prisons and HMI Probation, and can be found on each inspectorate's website. Separate reports for prison learning and skills are also placed on the Ofsted website.
Sector subject areas	Sector subject areas are 15 groups of subjects as classified by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Most subject areas have a number of secondary subject areas or tiers. For example, subject area seven, retail and commercial enterprise, covers warehousing, hospitality, hairdressing and beauty therapy, as well as retailing. In providers that offer second-tier subjects, the area for inspection may be at that level and not the whole subject area.
Specialist designated institutions	Specialist designated institutions have educational status under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, clause 28. They were founded as philanthropic institutions, mostly in the 19th century, to help the disadvantaged in society.
Train to Gain	The Train to Gain initiative enables employers to access free training for employees without a level 2 qualification to undertake training towards one. Skills brokers work with employers to identify their training needs and link them with appropriate training providers.

Annexes

Term	Definition or explanation
Social care	
Adoption support agencies	Adoption support agencies help adoption agencies in preparing and training adoptive parents. They also assist adoptees who have reached the age of 18 and would like to contact their original parents.
Cafcass	The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) provides advice to the family courts and provides support and advice to children and families involved in family court proceedings.
Children's home	Children's homes provide care and accommodation mainly for children and young people under the age of 18 where they are not able to continue living with one or more parents and the local authority agrees this is the best thing for the child.
Common Assessment Framework	The Common Assessment Framework is a standardised approach to conducting assessments of children's additional needs and deciding how these should be met.
Fostering services	Fostering services find and recruit adults who want to become foster carers and then support them to look after children. Fostering services can be provided by an independent fostering agency or by the local authority.
Independent fostering agency	An independent fostering agency is a voluntary or private organisation that places children with foster carers. Independent fostering agencies recruit, assess, approve, train, supervise, support and review foster parents who care for children looked after by local authorities.
Local authority adoption agencies	Local authority adoption agencies decide whether being adopted is the best thing for a child, finds the right family for them and makes all the necessary arrangements.
Local authority private fostering	Privately fostered children can be up to 15 years old; they are placed with an appropriate adult for 28 days or more but are not looked after by the local authority. Parents and carers must tell the local authority when this happens so that the local authority can check the child is safe and support the private foster carer to meet the child's needs.
Residential family centres	Residential family centres give somewhere to stay for a short time to children with their parents. During the stay the centre assesses the parents' ability to look after their children's needs.
Residential special school	This is a school for students with special educational needs where they can also live.
Secure training centre	A secure training centre provides education, training and physical education for young people aged 10 to 17 who have been in trouble with the police and who have to stay in a secure place whilst they wait for their punishment to be decided or who are serving their punishment.
Special guardianship orders	A special Guardianship Order (SGO) is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'Special Guardian' and gives those individuals parental responsibility for the child until the child is 18 years old. SGOs are made under the Children Act 1989 and are intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement. It is less permanent than an Adoption Order because it does not sever the legal relationship between the child and her/his birth parents.
Virtual headteacher	A virtual headteacher is someone appointed by a local authority to promote the educational achievement of all the children looked after by that authority. These children may attend schools in that local authority or schools in other local authorities.
Voluntary adoption agencies	Voluntary adoption agencies recruit adopters for a wide range of children and young people who need families, regardless of which local authority is responsible for the child or young person, and children from any local authority in the UK can be placed with adopters approved by them.



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