

Inspection of children's centres

Evaluation schedule and grade descriptors

The evaluation schedule sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and report on for children's centres from September 2011.

Age group: 0–5

Published: September 2011

Reference no: 100005

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100005.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No.100005

© Crown copyright 2011



Contents

Introduction	4
The background to inspection of children’s centres	4
Terminology	4
Evidence	5
Evaluation schedule	7
Inspection judgements	7
Evaluation schedule	10
How good are outcomes for families?	10
How good is the provision?	20
How effective are the leadership and management?	26
What is the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management?	40
Overall effectiveness	41

Introduction

The evaluation schedule sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and report on for children's centres from September 2011.

The background to inspection of children's centres

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 amended the Childcare Act 2006 by inserting a new part 3A that gives Ofsted a legal duty to inspect children's centres at prescribed intervals, or at any other time that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) or the Secretary of State for Education decides to do so.

Terminology

This document uses the following meanings throughout:

Children's centre: a place or a group of places, managed by, or on behalf of, or under arrangements made with, an English local authority with a view to securing the availability of the early childhood services in their area in an integrated manner. The children's centre is the place or group of places through which each of the early childhood services is made available and at which activities for young children are provided. They are defined in law as Sure Start Children's Centres but are referred to throughout this document as children's centres.

Early childhood services include: early years provision; the social services functions of the local authority in relation to young children, parents and prospective parents; health services relating to young children, parents or prospective parents; provision of assistance to parents and prospective parents for training and employment; and information and assistance for parents and prospective parents.

Families include parents and children,¹ prospective parents and carers including wider family members.

Inspections of childcare and/or early education are inspections of the Early Years Foundation Stage or the requirements of the Childcare Register as provided directly by a centre or by schools and settings working in partnership with the centre. It does not refer to all inspections of childcare and early years in the reach area of the centre.

Parents include: fathers, mothers, carers and other adults with responsibility for looking after a child, and prospective parents.

Reach area (may be abbreviated to 'area'): a designated geographical area within the local community which is the centre's catchment area.

¹ 'Children' in this guidance refers to children in the early years age group: that is children aged from birth until 31 August after their fifth birthday.

Target groups refer to the most excluded groups as identified in the performance management section of the *Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance*.² They include:

- teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers
- lone parents
- children in workless households
- children in Black and Minority Ethnic groups
- disabled children and children of disabled parents
- fathers
- other groups that are priority vulnerable groups in the children's centre area. This includes all families in most need of intervention and support.

Wider community refers to all families in the reach area, including those who may not use the centre or benefit from its services.

Expressing 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 no/very few.

Evidence

- Inspectors must consider whether the centre has identified all the families with young children³ in its reach area and, in particular, those children in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support. Evidence must show how the centre effectively encourages families with young children to engage with its services and activities, especially those in most need of intervention and support.

² *Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance*, DCSF (now DfE), www.yפש.net/.../sure%20start%20childrens%20centre%20guidance.pdf. This document was published under the previous government.

³ 'Young children' refers to children aged from birth until 31 August after their fifth birthday.

- There is likely to be better evidence on outcome judgements for families that are using the centre or its outreach services. However, outcomes for the wider community are also important, as an effective centre will have a positive impact on the whole of its reach area, especially on those families most in need.
- Each centre will have its own performance measures agreed with the local authority. However, inspectors will need to consider for themselves how appropriate these measures are and the level of challenge and ambition they represent.

The evidence that inspectors use includes:

- any available data such as that from the national data sets, early years assessments and where applicable, Early Years Foundation Stage profile results broken down to locality or reach area level; this includes performance indicators⁴ identified as key for children's centres in their local authority performance monitoring form
- any other relevant data such as participation rates and outcomes for the reach area of the centre, in particular data that clearly identifies the children and families who are in target groups in the reach area and those who are in most need of intervention and support
- case study or life story evidence which demonstrates the impact of services on improving outcomes
- any monitoring and evaluation of the services provided by the centre and its partners
- any self-evaluation completed by the centre, including the self-evaluation form of any school or registered early years provision linked to the centre, and the self-evaluation produced by the centre for its annual conversation with the local authority
- inspections of the Early Years Foundation Stage of any school or registered early years setting provided directly or commissioned by the centre if carried out at the same time as the inspection of the children's centre or within the previous 12 months
- interviews with: the centre's leadership and management, including any key partners; front-line staff including any key partners; parents; prospective parents; other users; members of the advisory board
- information supplied by the local authority on their arrangements for children's centres and, if the local authority chooses to contribute directly, an interview with the local authority children's centre lead

⁴ *Conducting children's centres inspections* (100154), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100154, pages 21–22.

- direct observations of activities and services including outreach, where appropriate
- scrutiny of the centre's policies and procedures including, at every inspection, those for safeguarding.

Evaluation schedule

- Inspectors are required to weigh up the evidence in each area and to consider it against the descriptors for outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate before making a judgement.
- The outline guidance in the schedule is not exhaustive but is intended to guide inspectors to the range and type of evidence they might collect.

Inspection judgements

These are for use with inspections from September 2011.

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate.

Please note the definition of target groups on page 5.

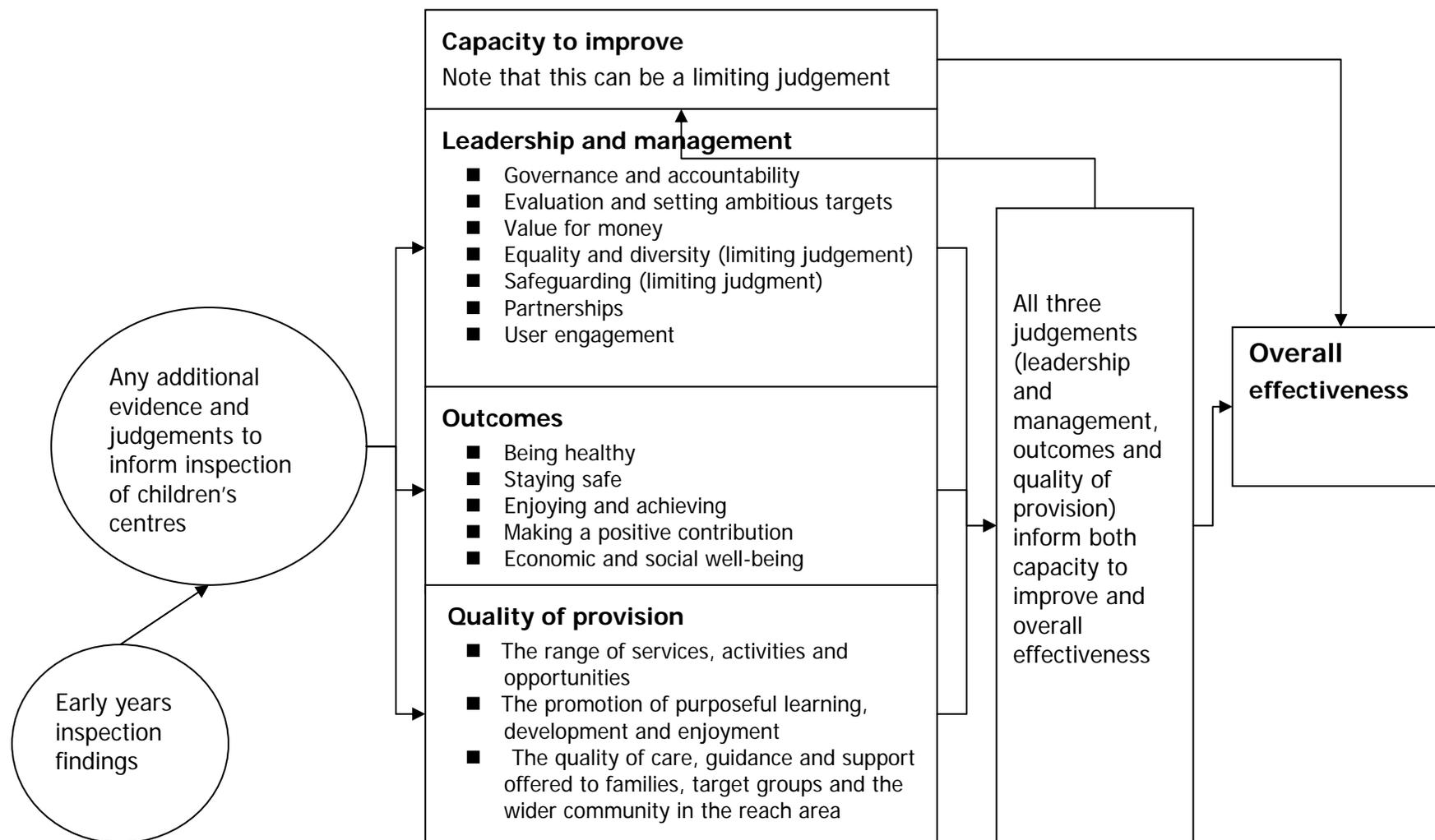
	Grade
<p>Overall effectiveness: The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of, and improving outcomes for, families. This judgement takes account of the overall outcomes for families and the capacity for sustained improvement.</p>	
<p>The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management.</p>	
<p>What does the centre need to do to improve further? Recommendations for further improvement Focusing on the most significant of the weakest areas of performance that are hindering improvement.</p>	

How good are outcomes for families?	
The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles.	
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them.	
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development.	
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre.	
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.	

How good is the provision?	
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups.	
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for families, including those in target groups.	
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	

How effective are the leadership and management?	
The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood.	
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes.	
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those from target groups.	
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties.	
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults.	
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose.	
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision.	

Relationships between judgements



Evaluation schedule

Making judgements

Inspectors must always use their professional judgement when weighing up the evidence to determine the grades to be awarded. Inspectors should make their judgements by a 'best fit' to the grade descriptors in the evaluation schedule.

How good are outcomes for families?

Being healthy

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children, including those from target groups and those who are identified as in most need of intervention and support in the reach area, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles.

Inspectors should take account of assessment information available from national data at a locality, cluster or centre level, such as the:

- percentage of children being breastfed at six to eight weeks (children's centre key performance indicator)
- percentage of children in reception year who are obese (children's centre key performance indicator).

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which the promotion of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, good hygiene, smoking cessation, participation in sport or other activities, has improved the understanding and take-up of more healthy lifestyles by children and their families especially for those in target groups or who are identified as in most need of support in the reach area
- the impact of the support that families receive to keep children healthy
- the impact of the centre's work regarding healthy weights for children
- the impact of child and family health services, such as antenatal and post natal support, information and guidance on breastfeeding, bottle-to-cup schemes, support groups for teenage parents, family and parenting support, support for women at transition into motherhood especially for those in target groups or who are identified as in most need of support in the reach area
- the impact of programmes for families that help them to understand the emotional needs of children especially those in target groups or who are in most need of support in the reach area

- the impact of health services for children and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the impact of health services for children and young people with long term health-related conditions
- the impact of specialist services such as speech and language therapy
- how the centre's links with other services such as GPs, child and adolescent mental health services, portage,⁵ special educational needs coordinators and community mental health teams have led to improved health and well-being for children and their families (cross-reference with partnerships in leadership and management section).

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Health outcomes (as indicated by performance measures) for families in the reach area, including target groups and those identified as in most need of support, are outstanding or are improving strongly. The very large majority of families in the local reach area are fully engaged with appropriate health services. There is also evidence that these services are reaching the large majority of families identified as in most need of support and within the target groups in the reach area. A very large majority of families who are using the centre have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Families in target groups and/or who are identified as in most need of support have immediate access to integrated wider health services and take-up rates are excellent.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Health outcomes (as indicated by performance measures) for families in the reach area, including target groups and those identified as in most need of support, are good or improving securely. A large majority of families in the area are engaging well with appropriate health services. There is also evidence that these services are reaching most families identified as in most need of support and within the target groups in the reach area. A large majority of families who are using the centre are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Families in the reach area have good access to integrated wider services and good take-up rates especially by those most in need are leading to improved outcomes.</p>

⁵ Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families.

Satisfactory	Health outcomes (as indicated by performance measures) for families in the reach area, including those identified as in most need of support and in target groups, are at least satisfactory and beginning to improve. Health outcomes are not inadequate in any major respect. A majority of families in the area are engaging with appropriate health services. Most families who are using the centre show that they are developing a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. The centre provides adequate support to families in improving all aspects of their health and well-being and outcomes for young children are showing improvement. The centre ensures that families in the reach area have satisfactory access to wider services, and rising take-up of services is leading to improved outcomes.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health outcomes are inadequate in any major respect. ■ Families who use the centre have a poor understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. ■ Families who are in most need of support and target groups are not benefiting adequately from services. ■ Health outcomes are not improving.

Staying safe

The staying safe grade links with the safeguarding judgement in leadership and management and will contribute to the grade for overall effectiveness.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them.

Inspectors should take account of assessment information available from national data at a locality, cluster or centre level, such as the:

- rate of emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people (children's centre key performance indicator).

Inspectors should consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which families are safe when attending the centre or on outings organised by the centre
- the extent to which families using the centre feel protected from bullying

- the extent to which families using the centre have improved their awareness of how to keep children safe as indicated in the uptake of home safety advice and equipment
- the extent to which children's understanding of safety within and outside of the centre helps to keep them safe
- the extent to which family and parenting support is improving parenting skills and reducing incidents of harm or injury to children especially those families who are identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the extent to which the centre's engagement with the prevention strategy, locality working and the use of the common assessment framework is improving the safeguarding of children (as indicated by numbers of children subject to a child protection plan within the reach area), including those in families who are hard to engage and who are identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the extent to which children and adults, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are kept safe because their concerns are listened to and acted upon appropriately
- the extent to which structured parenting programmes are improving outcomes for those parents who are experiencing difficulties with children's behaviour
- the extent to which adults understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to contribute to a safe learning environment
- adults feel safe, employ safe working practices and have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Children using the services of the centre consistently behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. They are developing an excellent understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Children and vulnerable adults using the services of the centre are exceptionally well safeguarded. Families who are using the centre have an excellent understanding of how to ensure the safety of their families. The majority of families from target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support who are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their lives, show clear improvement in their confidence and parenting skills. The large majority of families who are using the centre are confident to share concerns with staff. There is significant and sustained evidence of improved outcomes for most children on child protection plans.</p>
--------------------	--

<p>Good</p>	<p>Children using the services of the centre behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. They are developing a good understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Children and vulnerable adults using the services of the centre are effectively safeguarded. Families who are using the centre have a good understanding of how to ensure the safety of their families. A rising proportion of families from target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support who are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their lives, show improvement in their confidence and parenting skills. Most families who are using the centre are confident to share concerns with staff. There is good evidence of improved outcomes for the majority of children on child protection plans.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Most children using the services of the centre behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others, and their understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe is satisfactory. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is promoted adequately and may be good in some respects. Families who are using the centre understand how to ensure the safety of their families and this is having some impact. Outcomes for families from target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support who are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their parenting, show some improvement. No aspect of staying safe is inadequate. A large majority of families who are using the centre say or show that they feel safe at the centre. There is evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safeguarding outcomes are inadequate in any major respect or ■ target groups or those identified as in most need of intervention and support are not adequately safe or ■ families who are using the centre have little understanding and awareness of safety issues and this poses a risk to their own and others' safety or ■ children receive little attention and direction from adults working with them, which impacts on their ability to understand rules and boundaries or ■ families who are using the centre say or show that they do not feel safe when attending activities provided by the centre.

Enjoying and achieving

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups and those who are identified as in most need of intervention and support, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development.

Inspectors should take account of the data available at a locality, cluster or centre level on:

- the achievement of children who have accessed services provided or commissioned by the centre, shown by the percentage of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy (children's centre key performance indicator)
- the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the rate at which the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest is being reduced
- the extent to which support and information for parents regarding their child's transition into early years provision and/or school are improving outcomes especially for those children in target groups and those who are in most need of support in the reach area
- the impact of opportunities for parents and children to play, have fun and learn together
- the extent to which information, advice and guidance for families regarding child development, for example toileting and speech development, is making a difference
- the extent to which parents improve their skills and confidence to enable them to access further learning and help with their children's learning
- outcomes from any adult learning programmes, both accredited and non-accredited
- whether adults develop relevant skills to achieve their learning goals, including qualifications as planned
- whether adults and children accessing learning programmes make progress relevant to their starting points.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Children in the reach area make outstanding progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. They are very well prepared for transition to school. Learning outcomes for children and families using recreational and learning activities at the centre are outstanding. The large majority of families who are using the centre develop their skills, including parenting skills, very effectively and demonstrate outstanding educational and personal development. The centre can demonstrate outstanding improvements in the achievements of children and families using the centre, including target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Children in the reach area make good progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. They are well prepared for transition to school. Learning outcomes for children and families using recreational and learning activities at the centre are good. Most families using the centre develop their skills, including parenting skills, well and demonstrate good educational and personal development. The centre can demonstrate secure improvements in the achievement of children and families using the centre, including target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Children in the reach area make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. They are adequately prepared for transition to school. Most families using the centre make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, including parenting skills and demonstrate improvement in their educational and personal development. Families including those from most of the target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support are engaged in the centre's services. Families using the centre report that their engagement with the centre is enjoyable. There is some improvement in their outcomes. Families from target groups maintain sufficient contact with the centre to make progress.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children are not making enough progress from their starting points or ■ children are not adequately prepared for the future and transition to school or ■ the skills and personal development of families who are using the centre are not improving satisfactorily or ■ target groups and those families identified as in most

	need of intervention and support are not making adequate progress in their learning and personal development.
--	---

Making a positive contribution

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships
- the extent to which parents, including those from target groups and those who are identified as in most need of intervention and support, contribute to the decision-making and governance of the centre.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which children and parents using the centre improve their ability to make appropriate choices and decisions
- the extent to which all children and adults using the centre including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to express their views
- the extent to which all families using the centre and centre staff treat each other with respect and consideration
- the extent to which the centre has established itself at the heart of the community, and is promoting tolerance and understanding
- the extent to which families using the centre contribute to the governance of the centre through membership of a parents' forum or advisory board
- the contribution of families, including those in target groups and who are in most need of support in the reach area, to the development of services
- the extent to which families using the centre volunteer in the centre or local community
- whether families using the centre are involved in additional community-based development activities and projects
- whether families using the centre develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to sustainable development.

Outstanding	Children using the services of the centre demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and relationships. Families using the centre are fully engaged in its governance and drive improvements. They express their views, participate in decision-making and develop enterprising behaviour, leading to enhanced personal development. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community. The vast majority of children and families using the centre and/or
-------------	---

	<p>living in the wider community, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, treat each other with respect.</p>
Good	<p>Children using the services of the centre behave well as demonstrated in their good personal development and positive relationships. Some families using the centre are systematically and routinely engaged in the governance of the centre. Most families using the centre express their views, participate in decision-making and develop enterprising behaviour, leading to good improvement in their personal development. The centre's role in the life of the community is good and improving. Most children and families using the centre and/or living in the wider community, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, treat each other with respect.</p>
Satisfactory	<p>Overall, children using the services of the centre demonstrate positive behaviour and are developing sound relationships. Some families using the centre are engaged in the governance of the centre. The majority of families using the centre express their views and contribute to decision-making, leading to improvement in their personal development, although some are proving difficult to engage. The centre is beginning to establish its role in the community. The majority of children and/or families living in the wider community are developing respect for others, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.</p>
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Too many children using the centre do not have sufficient confidence and self-esteem and have difficulty in building relationships with other children and adults <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ significant numbers of families who are using the centre are not developing their confidence and self-esteem and are not improving their ability to build relationships in the wider community <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ too few families are involved in the decision-making at the centre <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support are not able to make their views known.

Economic and social well-being

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which parents, including those from target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, are developing economic stability and independence, including access to training and employment.

Inspectors should take account of the data available from the national datasets, locality, cluster or centre on:

- the percentage of children aged 0–4 living in households dependent on workless benefits (children’s centre key performance indicator)
- the percentage of eligible families benefiting from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit (children’s centre key performance indicator).

Inspectors should also consider other evidence, such as:

- improvements in outcomes for families in the area who are in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the impact of information available for parents regarding employment, adult education and training opportunities (including flexibility to suit parental needs)
- the impact of information, advice and guidance for parents regarding childcare options
- the extent to which access to information regarding benefits and tax credits is improving economic stability and independence for families
- the extent to which families participate in further education or training, develop employability skills, including personal and social skills, and literacy, numeracy and language skills
- the progression that families make to further learning, employment or promotion at work.

Outstanding	A large majority of families in the area, including target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, are improving their skills, economic stability and independence. The majority of families using the centre engage in training, adult learning or relevant activities leading to suitable employment. The centre can demonstrate success in terms of completion rates and progression towards employment.
-------------	--

Good	The majority of families are improving their economic stability and independence, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support. Over a third of families using the centre are engaged in training, adult learning or relevant activities and take-up rates are good. Outcomes for families who are using the centre seeking suitable employment are good. This is leading to demonstrable, clearly evidenced improvements in outcomes for families.
Satisfactory	Some families using the centre are improving their economic stability and independence. Some families, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, are engaged in training and adult learning or relevant activities, and take-up rates are satisfactory or increasing. This leads to adequate outcomes or rapidly improving outcomes for families. Some families using the centre have been supported in finding suitable employment and the centre can demonstrate success in this area.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Too few parents are improving their skills, economic stability and independence <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support are not developing adequate skills, economic stability and independence.

How good are outcomes for families?

The summary judgement on overall outcomes for families is likely to be inadequate if one or more outcome areas are judged to be inadequate. Overall outcomes are unlikely to be outstanding unless all outcomes areas are judged to be good or better and there is convincing evidence of notable improvement, especially from those families in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.

How good is the provision?

Services, activities and opportunities

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.

Inspectors should take account of:

- the percentage of each of the following target groups in the children's centre reach area and with whom the children's centre establishes contact (children's centre key performance indicators):
 - teenage parents and pregnant teenagers
 - lone parents
 - children in workless households
 - children in minority ethnic groups
 - disabled children and children of disabled parents
 - fathers
 - other groups that are priority vulnerable groups in the children's centre area
- how effectively the centre has identified its target groups and individual families in most need of intervention and support
- how effectively the centre ensures that target families' welfare (health and social) needs are appropriately assessed and reviewed
- to what extent assessment information about individual families including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support is used in programme and course development
- participation rates, attendance levels and reach of services
- the range of outreach services and their effectiveness in supporting those identified as in most need of intervention
- whether programmes of work are negotiated with adult learners to accurately reflect their abilities and aspirations
- how the achievements and learning goals of families using the centre are recorded and accredited.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The needs of families in the reach area are assessed sensitively and appropriately to ensure that services are tailored to individual needs. The quality and range of services offered are excellent and meeting the needs of almost all families using the centre. The centre has an excellent understanding of individual families' needs, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, which leads to outstanding impact across the majority of all outcome areas. Excellent partnership working ensures assessment is rigorous and well-informed. Services, including outreach services, are of high quality, flexible, managed creatively</p>
--------------------	---

	and adapted to meet need, thereby encouraging high participation rates by the target groups of families in the area.
Good	Assessment is used well to ensure services meet the needs of the large majority of individuals and families who are using the centre. The centre knows the families who are using the centre, leading to impact across the majority of outcome areas. Good partnership working ensures that assessment is robust. Services within the centre are adapted to meet need and local participation rates by the target groups of families, including those identified as in most need of intervention and support, are good and improving.
Satisfactory	Assessment is used satisfactorily to ensure that services meet families' needs. The centre has an adequate understanding of families who are using the centre, and can demonstrate that impact is satisfactory or better in all outcome areas. The quality and range of services offered are adequate, and the centre is meeting the needs of some of the targeted groups of families, including those identified as in most need of intervention and support. Services within the centre are sometimes adapted to meet need. Not all partners are fully engaged and therefore individual assessments may lack detail.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The centre's contribution to robust assessment through working in partnership is inadequate <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the quality and range of services offered are poor or are not sufficiently targeted at the needs of families and especially the target groups in the reach area <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the centre is meeting the needs of an insufficient number of families who are using the centre. Services within the centre are not adapted to meet need and therefore some services are under-used or ineffective.

Learning and development

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for families, including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support.

Inspectors should take account of:

- how well the centre celebrates achievement and raises the aspirations and expectations of children and their families, especially those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the extent to which the centre enables individuals to improve their educational and/or personal development and progress to further employment, education or training, especially those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the impact of provision on improved outcomes for children and their families, especially those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- how staff use learners' prior learning, achievements and identified learning goals to plan and deliver learning and assessment
- the assessment of learners' performance, standards and progress and whether it is fair, timely, consistent and reliable.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Provision to help children to learn and develop is outstanding. The centre promotes individualised, purposeful learning very well and activities are of a high quality. Activities are very well located and are very effectively engaging all target groups, including those children and parents identified as in most need of support. The centre makes good use of individuals' and families' prior interests, knowledge and achievements to raise their aspirations and make rapid progress from their starting points. Personal development and achievement are celebrated to good effect and teachers and other adults have high expectations of families using the centre.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Provision to help children to learn and develop is good. The centre promotes purposeful learning well and activities are of good quality. Activities are well located and are effectively engaging most target groups, including those children and parents identified as in most need of support. Personal development and achievement are celebrated and teachers and adults encourage families who are using the centre to build on their achievements.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Provision to help children to learn and develop is satisfactory. The centre promotes purposeful learning adequately but this is not always sufficiently individualised. Activities are appropriately located and are beginning to engage some target groups, including those children and parents identified as in most need of support. Some families who are using the centre enjoy good-quality activities. Personal development and achievement are</p>

	noted but targets for improvement are not sufficiently detailed to ensure all individuals and families who use the centre achieve well.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provision to help individuals and families who are using the centre to learn and develop is inadequate and/or ■ learning opportunities provided for the majority of individuals and families who are using the centre are not leading to improvements in learning, development or raising aspirations.

Care, guidance and support

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups and those children and parents identified as in most need of support.

Inspectors should take into account information gathered across the five outcome areas such as:

- the quality of childcare provided either directly or commissioned by the centre
- the quality of information, advice and guidance about universal preventative and treatment provision for children; on smoking, alcohol and drug misuse, sexual health for adults and how effectively parents are encouraged to use these services
- the impact of family and parenting support, including outreach for target groups, including those children and parents identified as in most need of support
- the quality of information, advice and guidance for parents on accessing support, benefits and seeking work
- the quality of care and support offered to families in times of crisis
- the quality of impartial information, advice and guidance on appropriate services, learning programmes or employment to meet families' needs and overcome barriers.

Outstanding	The quality of care for families provided by the centre is excellent. There is very effective personalised support to enable families using the centre to develop the well-being of their families across all outcome areas. In times of crisis, families including target groups and those in most need of support in the reach area feel confident in turning to the centre and are exceptionally well supported. The outstanding quality, coordination and range of guidance and support empowers parents and their children, including those in target groups and those in most need of support, to improve individual and family outcomes.
Good	The quality of care for families provided by the centre is good. Families using the centre receive effective, tailored support to develop their well-being across most outcome areas. In times of crisis, families including target groups and those in most need of support in the reach area feel well supported by the centre. Well-targeted and coordinated guidance and support enables parents and their children, including those in target groups, to improve individual and family outcomes.
Satisfactory	The quality of care for families provided by the centre is at least adequate. The support for families using the centre is satisfactory. There is evidence that care, guidance and support is making a discernible difference for some families, including some from target groups in the area. Families, including target groups and those in most need of support in the reach area, feel that the centre has helped them in times of crisis.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the centre is unsatisfactory or may not lead to measurable progress for families who are using the centre. ■ The care, guidance and support provided by the centre are not sufficiently focussed on the children and families in target groups.

How good is the provision?

The summary judgement on the quality of provision is unlikely to be better than satisfactory if one or more of the preceding judgements is inadequate. Quality of provision overall is unlikely to be outstanding unless all judgements are graded good or better.

How effective are the leadership and management?

Governance and accountability

The term 'governance' means the system of decision-making which determines the services offered through the children's centre, and applies to all levels at which decisions are made, including local authorities, children's trust partners, providers, advisory boards, school or college governing bodies and centre managers.

Accountability refers to the people or bodies who are responsible for ensuring that services are effective and that public funds are used efficiently.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which arrangements for governance and accountability are clear and understood
- the effectiveness of professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements in the centre.

Inspectors should take account of:

- the extent to which governance arrangements enable all those responsible to work together to ensure high-quality, integrated provision, particularly for target groups including those families identified as in most need of intervention and support in the reach area
- the clarity and effectiveness of accountability arrangements, including quality assurance, performance management and financial oversight
- the clarity of contractual arrangements and service level agreements between partners
- the clarity of and relationship between professional supervision arrangements and day-to-day management responsibilities.

Outstanding	The management team provides high-quality professional supervision for all staff, which supports outstanding performance. Governance and accountability arrangements are embedded and highly effective. There is a clear, shared sense of purpose between all parties. There are strong links between strategic planning, development plans and service provision so that outcomes are excellent. All partners take an active role in promoting high-quality, integrated provision which is highly responsive to local needs.
-------------	---

Good	Professional supervision and management arrangements at the centre are consistently good and this improves performance. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. There are clear links between strategic planning and service provision so that outcomes are at least good or improving rapidly. All partners understand their roles in supporting and developing integrated provision which meets identified local needs.
Satisfactory	Governance and accountability arrangements are in place but not consistently understood. Services provided can be linked back to strategic planning so that overall outcomes are at least satisfactory. The key partners are engaged in supporting and developing integrated provision that mainly meets local needs. All staff are appropriately supervised by their own agency but this is not integrated with the centre's management processes.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Governance and accountability arrangements are unclear or not understood by all parties or ■ significant partners are not engaged in supporting and developing integrated provision or ■ staff are not receiving adequate professional supervision and performance management.

Evaluation, ambition and prioritisation

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which evaluation is accurate and used to set ambitious targets that secure improvement in outcomes, especially for those families in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation in informing the centre's development plan, providing accurate priorities and setting challenging targets for improvement
- the extent to which partners, including families who are using the centre, are clear about the priorities and have been involved in identifying them at both local and strategic levels
- the effectiveness of local needs analysis to identify integrated provision that is targeted at narrowing the gap for those in target groups including the most disadvantaged groups and those in most need of intervention and support

- how well the centre delivers early childhood services including the steps taken to ensure that early years provision – either made directly or commissioned by the centre – is of good quality
- the effectiveness of senior leaders in communicating high expectations to all staff and families using the centre.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers are conspicuously successful in inspiring the centre in meeting and sustaining ambitious targets. All staff at the centre are clearly focused on a limited number of ambitious priorities. Self-evaluation at all levels within the centre and with key partners is the result of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. The views of families make a significant contribution to the self-evaluation. There is a very clear link between the centre's evaluation of its services and the priorities set out in the centre development plan. This leads to well-targeted planning and actions taken by the centre and its partners. As a result, outcomes for the large majority of families including target groups and those in most need of intervention and support within the centre's reach area are good, and some are exceptionally high.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Senior leaders and managers are strongly focused on securing improved outcomes and promoting services that are well matched to the needs of families in the area. Leaders of the centre are clearly focused on a limited number of ambitious priorities. Leaders and managers conduct a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of impact on outcomes for families. The centre development plan sets out clear ambitious actions aimed at key priority areas. The views of families who are using the centre influence the centre's self-evaluation. Development planning involves all key partners, and is founded on sound evidence. Services are carefully integrated as they are developed with the support and input from families using the centre. Outcomes for families including those in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support are generally good, or there is substantial evidence that they are improving strongly.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Senior leaders and managers are motivated to seek further improvement and are effective in focusing the centre's efforts on priorities. These leaders and managers know the centre's major strengths and areas for development, including who their key target groups are, and the factors influencing outcomes. There are links between the centre's evaluation of its services and the</p>

	<p>priorities set out in their development plan. The views of families are reflected in self-evaluation. Key partners are involved in planning and some services are integrated. Senior leaders and managers adequately monitor progress and outcomes for families including those in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support. The centre has implemented satisfactory plans that are aimed at improving relevant outcomes for all families using the centre.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall, the leadership and management of the centre have too little an effect on improving outcomes or ■ the senior leadership team is not sufficiently ambitious or is unable to motivate staff effectively or ■ key partner agencies are not using evaluations effectively to shape services to meet the needs and wants of families in the area or ■ senior leaders and managers do not drive improvement effectively because priorities are inappropriate or planning is weak or monitoring fails to secure consistency or ■ self-evaluation is superficial or is not supported by evidence of impact. Leadership and management lack the authority and drive to make a difference.

Value for money

This judgement should contribute to the overall effectiveness judgement. The judgements on outcomes and user engagement will influence this judgement.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- how efficiently and effectively the centre uses and manages its available resources to meet the needs of families, including those from target groups and those in most need of intervention and support.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the progress or levels of development reached by families using the centre, taking account of their starting points where this is possible
- how effectively resources are managed and used for the different activities to achieve the desired outcomes, especially for those families in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support

- the extent to which staff knowledge and expertise is deployed to ensure high-quality provision
- the quality and availability of support for families, especially for those in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support
- the number of families, especially those in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support, using the centre and how this affects outcomes
- the quality of the centre's environment, which may also include care for that environment
- how efficiently the centre uses its accommodation
- the centre's commitment to sustainability.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The centre is managed in a way that ensures the best use of resources and an incisive quality assurance of the centre's work. Provision or services offered by the centre are very well used and engage the large majority of families in target groups in the reach area. The impact on improving outcomes for families using the centre, especially for those in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support, is at least good and may be outstanding. Families using the centre state that provision and support are closely matched to their needs and make a significant contribution to improving outcomes. The environment is conducive to learning and is safe. Resource planning, including the deployment of staff skills and expertise, is well established, responsive to changing needs and takes very good account of the need to ensure that services are sustainable.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Resources are managed well and the impact on outcomes for families using the centre is generally good. Provision or services offered by the centre are well used and engage the majority of families in target groups in the area. Families using the centre state that provision and support are aligned to their needs and make an effective contribution to improving outcomes, including those in target groups and those in most need of intervention and support. The environment is welcoming and safe. Resource planning, which includes effective deployment of staff, is effective and takes account of the need to develop sustainable services.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>The use of resources has a satisfactory impact on outcomes for users. Provision or services offered by the centre are used well by a satisfactory range of families from the reach area. Outreach to target groups and those families most in need of intervention and support in the reach area is developing and is beginning to have an</p>

	<p>impact. Families using the centre state that provision and support generally meet their needs. Accommodation is suitable and the environment is generally safe. There are no major shortcomings in resource planning, including the deployment of staff.</p>
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Services offered do not reflect the needs of families in the area <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ management of resources has little or no consistent impact on improving outcomes for families using the centre <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ resources are not deployed effectively and efficiently to meet families' needs. Services and provision are not well used and families in the area are not engaged.

Equality and diversity

Two principles guide the overall judgement. These are:

- how effectively the centre is narrowing the achievement gap
- how effectively the centre actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles discrimination.

The equality and diversity grade will contribute to and may limit the grade for overall effectiveness in the following ways.

- If the centre cannot demonstrate that it is working within the above two principles, this should prompt a judgement of inadequate for equality and diversity.
- Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for equality and diversity, it is most unlikely that the leadership and management judgement will be better than satisfactory.
- Where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for equality and diversity, it is most unlikely that the leadership and management judgement will be better than good.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated
- the extent to which the centre tackles illegal or unlawful discrimination and fulfils its statutory duties.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the extent to which diversity is celebrated and contributes to improving community cohesion
- how well the range of families using the centre reflects the community that the centre serves, including target groups and those in most need of intervention and support
- how well the management team knows who its most vulnerable groups are and takes steps to engage them in the centre's work
- how well the centre defines and monitors outcomes for its key target groups and takes steps to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged
- the effectiveness of support to enable target groups who do not speak English as their first language or have poor literacy skills to access information and provision at the centre
- the effectiveness of equality impact assessments and actions taken as a result of their findings
- the extent to which equality and disability legislation is implemented
- the range, coordination and accessibility of services for children and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the extent to which the range and timing of activities is relevant and accessible for all parents, including those who work
- how well parents with young children are supported in attending training at the centre, for example by provision of crèche facilities
- the effectiveness of the centre's procedures for dealing with complaints about discrimination.

Outstanding	The inclusion of children and families in the area is promoted very effectively and discrimination is tackled with vigour. Inequalities are swiftly and effectively identified and the centre is proactive in removing barriers to access. Outcomes for key target groups, including those in most need of intervention and support, are good or improving rapidly and any gaps in engagement or achievement between different target groups of users are narrowing significantly. Monitoring and evaluation are sophisticated and highly influential in ensuring that provision is matched to the needs of families in the area.
Good	The inclusion of children and their families is central to the centre's vision. The centre articulates and pursues ambitious strategies for its particular families who may be subject to discrimination and is effective in removing barriers to access. Concerted action to promote greater equality has resulted in sustained and significant

	improvement in the engagement of target groups, including those in most need of intervention and support. Gaps between these different groups are closing. The centre has identified where further improvements can be made to overcome any remaining variations in outcomes and it has good strategies to tackle them.
Satisfactory	The centre promotes the inclusion of children and their families. The centre meets the duties that apply to it. It has pertinent information about the precise groups of users that it serves and evaluates their engagement in provision made by the centre. There is some improvement in areas where the centre has targeted its actions.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The vision for the centre is insufficiently focused on the needs and wants of children and their families. It does not have relevant insight into the needs of different groups of users or is inactive in promoting the engagement of target groups, including those families in most need of intervention and support <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the centre does not meet the duties that apply to it <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ unlawful discrimination is not effectively identified and/or tackled.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding practice and guidance is underpinned by a duty for children's centres to cooperate with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The protection of children is of the highest priority for Ofsted across all its inspection remits. The staying safe judgement will influence the safeguarding judgement.

Safeguarding is a **limiting** judgement across **all** inspection remits. The safeguarding grades will contribute to, and may limit the grade for, leadership and management in the following ways.

- If a provider is not meeting their statutory duties, this should prompt a judgement of inadequate for safeguarding.
- Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for safeguarding, it is most unlikely that the leadership and management of the provider will be better than satisfactory.
- Where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for safeguarding, it is most unlikely that leadership and management of the provider will be better than good.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults.

Inspectors should take into account:

- how well safeguarding is prioritised
- how well the centre discharges its responsibility to work together with key agencies to safeguard children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults
- the extent to which the centre identifies concerns about possible abuse, and records information relevant to safeguarding concerns clearly and accurately
- how well the centre works in partnership with other agencies to ensure that assessments, such as those carried out under the common assessment framework and assessments of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are robust and well-informed
- the clarity of information-sharing protocols and child protection procedures, the understanding of thresholds for referral to social care services, and the effectiveness of communication between all agencies
- the extent to which the Criminal Records Bureau, vetting and recruitment procedures comply with current government requirements and local protocols
- the extent to which managers from the agencies working within the centre ensure practice complies with their agency policy and the centre's policy
- the extent to which the centre's procedures ensure that all staff working on the site have the appropriate checks, including the suitability of any other adults looking after children or having unsupervised access to them
- the effectiveness of systems to ensure the physical safety, health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, including the effectiveness of risk assessments and actions taken to manage or eliminate risks
- how well parents and other adults using or working in the centre are made aware of safeguarding issues and understand the importance of ensuring that children in the centre are kept safe
- parents' views on how they are helped to keep their children safe and to support their emotional health and well-being, for example through information, courses, parenting classes or access to support, including those in families who are hard to engage and who are identified as in most need of intervention and support

- the extent to which all staff working in the centre receive appropriate, up to date, high quality safeguarding training, especially those working with more vulnerable children and adults, for example those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- how well children and vulnerable adults are supported in making concerns known and whether action is taken as a result.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The centre exemplifies high-quality practice. The centre has excellent quality assurance and risk assessment systems which are routinely informed by the views of users, including those who may have barriers to communication. Staff and other adults consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding all children. Children's safety and well-being are significantly enhanced by the robust and highly consistent implementation of policies, procedures and practice that are individual to the setting. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among staff, especially those working with children or adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All staff receive regular training on safeguarding, particularly child protection. Protocols and practice for making referrals and sharing information between the relevant agencies working within and outside the centre are exemplary. The centre actively promotes the safety and welfare of all who use the centre, including working proactively and effectively with other key agencies.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>The centre adopts recommended good practice across all areas of its work. Good safeguarding arrangements are in place and there is a system to maintain and update them. Training of all staff, particularly in relation to child protection and for those working with children or adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is of good quality. Protocols and practice for making referrals and sharing information between the relevant agencies working within and outside the centre are very effective. The centre is pro-active and collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. All agencies working in the centre understand the implications of the wider safeguarding agenda. The centre's well-developed quality assurance and risk assessment systems take account of the views of those using the centre. These are usually acted upon to make effective improvements to the safeguarding systems.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>The manager of the centre has effective procedures in place within the centre and with partner agencies which ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate checks in line with government and local requirements, and that these are kept up to date. All safeguarding</p>

	<p>regulations are met. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and are kept under review. All staff working in the centre receive suitable safeguarding training, especially those working with children or adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and they know what action to take in the event of a safeguarding issue. Protocols and practice for making referrals and sharing information between the relevant agencies working within and outside the centre are in place. The centre cooperates with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to those using the centre.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safeguarding and welfare requirements for children, as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are not met <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ arrangements for safeguarding are not in place or are not robust and there is no system to maintain and update them, or the systems that are in place are ineffective <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ staff are insufficiently vigilant or trained to protect children's safety and well-being.

Partnerships

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the extent to which the centre works in partnership with parents to improve outcomes for young children
- the effectiveness of arrangements with partner agencies to ensure delivery of a wide range of services and provision
- the effectiveness of work with other services, for example childminders, from the private, voluntary and independent sector.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Services are fully integrated, resulting in provision that impacts positively on the lives of families using the centre across all outcome areas. Involvement by those using the centre is firmly established as central to effective partnership working. Relationships between all key partners are well established and very effectively managed. The centre takes a full and active role in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities which include statutory, private, voluntary and independent providers. These activities make a significant contribution to meeting the widest possible range of needs in the local area. Very effective partnership working enhances opportunities for families in the area, including those from target groups, and has a very positive impact on excellent outcomes.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Services are integrated and deliver provision for families who are using the centre, which impacts positively on their lives across the majority of outcome areas. Involvement by those using the centre is well established as central to effective partnership working. Relationships between key partners are clear, understood and effectively managed. The centre takes an active role in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities which include statutory, private, voluntary and independent providers. These activities make an identifiable contribution to meeting a wider range of needs in the local area. Effective partnership working enhances opportunities for families in the area and has a positive impact in securing good or rapidly improving outcomes.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Services generally deliver provision for families who are using the centre, which has a positive impact on their lives. Those using the centre are seen as important partners. Relationships between key partners are increasingly clear and understood and are being more effectively managed, although not all partners are fully engaged. The centre contributes to developing and implementing partnership activities which include statutory, private, voluntary and independent providers. These activities meet the majority of needs in the local area. Partnership working provides some additional opportunities for families and has some impact on improving outcomes.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnership activity does not result in improvements in outcomes for families using the centre or it does not deliver cohesive provision <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ partnership arrangements are unclear or poorly understood and managed.

User engagement

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the effectiveness with which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area, including those families who are in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision.

Inspectors should take into account:

- any evidence on the percentage of parents of children aged 0–5 in the children’s centre area who are satisfied with the services (children’s centre key performance indicator)
- how well the centre routinely seeks the views of those using the centre
- the effectiveness of outreach services in engaging with members of the community who do not access services offered by the centre to identify their needs and views, including those families who are in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- how well the views of young children are captured to help shape provision
- how effective the centre is in seeking the views of children, young people and adults who need support to communicate their views
- the extent to which the views of families are used to shape services, including those families who are in target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the extent to which families who are using the centre contribute to its management, for example parent representation on the governing body or advisory board, working or interest groups; contributing to interviews; and voluntary work.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Families who are using the centre are fully involved in the design and set-up of services and evaluate the effectiveness of what is provided. The centre’s relationship with different groups of users is based on their secure understanding of, and regular engagement with, the centre’s work. This includes contributing to decision-making on key matters affecting the centre. As a result, the very large majority express high levels of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the work of the centre. The centre is engaging with all target groups from the reach area, including those families identified as in most need of intervention and support.</p>
--------------------	---

Good	Families who are using the centre have good opportunities to be involved in shaping services and evaluating the effectiveness of provision, and make good use of these opportunities. There are consistent and productive partnerships with users so that the majority express satisfaction and are engaged with the centre's work. Services regularly ask families who are using the centre for their views and ensure that these are used to inform important decisions. The centre is reaching out to engage with target groups who are not accessing services in order to identify and meet their needs.
Satisfactory	Families who are using the centre support the centre's work and direction. The centre regularly seeks and takes account of the views of different groups of users about important issues. Families who are using the centre are invited to evaluate the impact of services they receive and their responses are taken into account in developing provision. Outreach services are developing and are targeting identified needs in the local area.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outreach work is limited and based on perceived needs rather than identified needs <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ those using the centre are not effectively engaged in developing and evaluating provision <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ take-up of activities is low or there is a high drop out rate.

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspectors will always use their professional judgement when weighing up the evidence to determine the summary judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management.

However, the judgements on safeguarding and on equality and diversity will be significant when deciding on the grade for the summary judgement. Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for safeguarding or for equality and diversity, it is unlikely that the leadership and management judgement will be better than satisfactory.

The overall judgement on leadership and management is a significant factor in determining the capacity to improve judgement.

What is the centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management?

The capacity to improve judgement will be linked to the overall effectiveness judgement but may not always be the same grade.

The capacity to improve will be a limiting judgement (see overall effectiveness criteria below).

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which the centre has the ability to improve outcomes and provision based on what it has accomplished so far, or to maintain exceptionally high outcomes and provision, especially for target groups and those families identified as in most need of intervention and support
- the extent to which self-evaluation provides the centre with an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness and what it needs to do in order to secure further improvements.

Inspectors should take account of the extent to which:

- the centre's self-evaluation is of high quality, gives those in charge a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and enables them to secure continuous improvement
- plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to outcomes and provision and focus appropriately on identifying target groups and those families in most need of intervention and support
- those who use the centre and those who work in partnership with the centre are meaningfully involved in the self-evaluation process
- actions taken to tackle identified weaknesses – including those identified during any previous inspections – are effective in delivering improved provision and outcomes
- staff development and training is effective and appropriate in order to meet current and future needs
- those working in the centre are committed to bringing about sustainable improvements and have confidence in the leaders and managers to provide effective leadership
- the responsible body (either the local authority or those commissioned to provide centres on the local authority's behalf) ask challenging questions of senior managers to improve provision and outcomes.

<p>Outstanding (1)</p>	<p>The pursuit of excellence in all of the centre's activities has led to notable improvement in provision and outcomes, or has securely maintained and built on previously outstanding performance. Self-evaluation at all levels is grounded in sophisticated and robust analysis. Processes for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used exceptionally well.</p>
<p>Good (2)</p>	<p>Action to overcome weaknesses and gaps in provision, and to improve outcomes is likely to have been concerted and effective. Overall performance has consolidated and improved. Realistic and challenging targets are grounded in detailed and accurate analysis of families' needs in the reach area and are being used effectively to improve outcomes.</p>
<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>	<p>The centre has focused on improving areas of weakness, gaps in provision and outcomes. There is a trend of improvement in its overall performance, despite a few remaining weaknesses. Targets are based on an accurate analysis of the families' needs in the reach area and are met adequately. Systems are embedded sufficiently to enable the centre to continue improving and are not solely dependent on only one or two senior leaders.</p>
<p>Inadequate (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The centre's self-evaluation is poor and has not accurately identified its weaknesses or ■ the centre is not using target-setting effectively to improve outcomes, or current targets are unambitious or not related to local needs or ■ significant aspects of leadership and management are weak.

Overall effectiveness

Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for capacity to improve, it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the centre will be better than satisfactory. It is likely that the overall judgement will be inadequate.

Where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for capacity to improve, it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the centre will be better than good.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families.

Inspectors should:

- make the overall effectiveness judgement the final judgement, to take into account all of the available evidence
- note the quality of the centre’s procedures for safeguarding and the extent to which the centre promotes equality and tackles discrimination
- weigh up the key judgements on the overall outcomes for families and the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of leadership and management.

<p>Outstanding (1)</p>	<p>The centre is highly effective. Outcomes are consistently good and exemplary in significant elements. All major aspects of the provision are at least good and excellent in most respects. Highly effective partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure that the needs of children, families and the wider community are met and their protection is assured. Leadership and management, including the capacity for sustained improvement, are outstanding. Outcomes and the quality of provision are at least good and one is outstanding.</p>
<p>Good (2)</p>	<p>Outcomes, quality of provision, and leadership and management, are all at least good. In exceptional circumstances, the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement may be satisfactory. Effective arrangements exist to ensure the safety and health of children and other users. Strong links with families who are using the centre and the wider community help to involve them in the work and governance of the centre. Those in charge have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and take effective steps to improve it.</p>
<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>	<p>To be satisfactory, all key judgements are at least satisfactory and may be good in some respects.</p>
<p>Inadequate (4)</p>	<p>Overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any of the following are inadequate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the overall outcomes for families ■ the quality of provision ■ leadership and management ■ the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement.