



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 April 2010.

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Introduction

The evaluation schedule sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and report on for children's centres from April 2010.

The background to inspection of children's centres

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 amends the Childcare Act 2006 by introducing a new part 3A that gives Ofsted a legal duty to inspect children's centres at prescribed intervals or at any other time the Chief Inspector or Secretary of State 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 that early childhood services in their area are made available in an integrated manner, 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; information and assistance for parents and prospective parents.

Inspections of childcare and/or early education are inspections of the Early Years Foundation Stage or requirements of the Childcare Register 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: includes fathers, mothers, carers and other adults with responsibility for looking after a child, and prospective parents.

Users:¹ includes all those who access services offered by the centre such as:

- children under five,² including looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

¹ The Ofsted definition of 'user' is children, parents, learners and employers. This definition has been expanded to cover the wider range of services offered at a children's centre.

² Also referred to as 'young children'.

- families with young children and parents to be who need access to health services, including pregnant teenagers and those with mental health problems
- members of the extended family (for example grandparents, aunts and uncles)
- others involved with young children such as childminders
- parents of young children, including young parents, parents with disabilities and those seeking employment.

Wider community: refers to those in the area who may not use the services offered, especially those who are hard to engage or isolated.

Evidence

The evidence inspectors use includes:

- any available data such as that from the National Indicator Set and Early Years Foundation Stage profile results broken down to locality or reach area level; this includes performance indicators 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
- 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; 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
- 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 balance of evidence in a particular area and to consider it against the descriptors for outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate before making a judgement.
- The grade descriptors and the associated outline guidance should be interpreted in the context of the particular centre being inspected.
- The outline guidance is not exhaustive but is intended to guide inspectors to the range and type of evidence they might collect.

Inspection judgements

For use with inspections from April 2010.

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

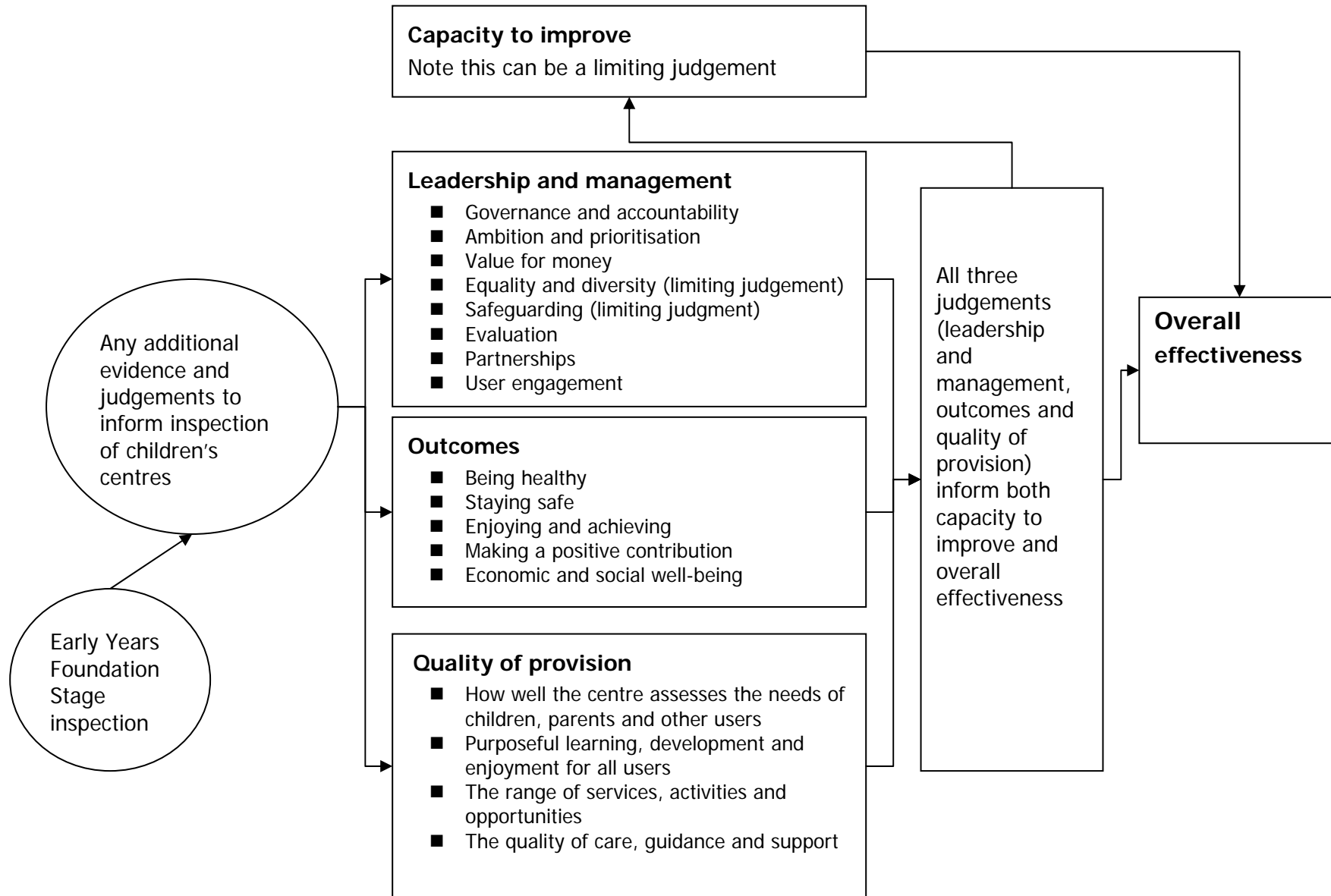
	Grade
<p>Overall effectiveness: The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community. This judgement takes account of the overall outcomes for users and the capacity for sustained improvement.</p>	
<p>The centre's capacity for sustained 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>	
<p>How good are outcomes for users?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive 	

relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment. 	

How good is the provision?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community. 	

How effective are the leadership and management?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision. 	

Relationships between judgements



Evaluation schedule

Outcomes for children, parents and other users

Children's centres are at different stages of maturity and therefore the contribution each makes to the outcome areas will vary according to the services provided at the time of the inspection. All centres, when fully operational, are expected to provide a core of services for under-fives and their parents unless they serve a rural community.

Overall outcomes are likely to be inadequate if one or more outcome areas are judged inadequate. Overall outcomes are unlikely to be outstanding unless all outcome areas are judged good or better and there is convincing evidence of notable improvement.

Being healthy

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles.

Inspectors should take account of data available from the National Indicator Set (NIS) at a locality, cluster or centre level and the National Health Service Vital Signs³ on:

- the emotional health of children (NIS 50)
- percentage of mothers initiating breastfeeding (NIS 53 and children's centre key performance indicator)
- percentage of mothers sustaining breastfeeding
- services for disabled children delivered from the centre (NIS 54)
- percentage of children in reception year who are obese (NIS 55 and children's centre key performance indicator)
- smoking cessation – for women who are pregnant and other members of the family
- under-18 conception rate
- immunisation rates

³ Vital signs are an approach to planning and managing developed by the Department of Health to develop healthcare that better meets the needs of local people. Vital signs are split into three areas: national requirements; national priorities to be delivered at local level; and local actions. They cover things like childhood obesity rates, breastfeeding and quitting smoking.

- access to maternity services
- the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which the promotion of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, good hygiene, participation in sport or other activities, has improved the understanding and take-up of more healthy lifestyles by children and their families
- the impact of support users receive to keep children healthy
- the impact of the centre’s work regarding obesity and smoking cessation
- 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
- the impact of programmes for users that help them to understand the emotional needs of children
- the impact of health services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the impact of services for children and young people with long term conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy
- 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,⁴ 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).

Outstanding	Being healthy outcomes for young children and parents are maintained at a high level and/or are improving strongly. The majority of families are fully engaged with universal and/or specialist services as appropriate, and there is evidence that services are reaching families considered hard to engage. A significant majority of parents show that they are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy and take-up of preventative health services such as immunisation is good. Families benefit from fully integrated universal and specialist services, which improve outcomes for young children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from vulnerable groups. Users have prompt access to wider
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⁴ Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families.

	services and families are maximising the benefit of those services.
Good	Being healthy outcomes for young children and parents are good and improving. Most families are engaging well with universal and/or specialist services as appropriate. Almost all parents show that they are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. Families with young children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from vulnerable groups, benefit from well-integrated services. Users have good access to wider services and good take-up rates are leading to improved outcomes.
Satisfactory	Being healthy outcomes for young children and parents are satisfactory and beginning to improve but are variable. Outcomes are not inadequate in any major aspect. More families are engaging with universal and/or specialist services as appropriate. Most parents show that they are developing a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. The centre provides adequate support to users in improving all aspects of the health and well-being of children and their families and outcomes for young children are showing some improvement, but this may be variable or not well evidenced by the centre. Families with young children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from vulnerable groups derive some benefit from well-integrated services. The centre ensures that users have reasonable access to wider services, and satisfactory take-up of services is leading to improved outcomes in some cases.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and their parents have little or no understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children have too few opportunities to engage in physical activities. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant or vulnerable groups are not benefiting adequately from services and health outcomes are not improving.

Staying safe

The staying safe grade 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 data available from the National Indicator Set, at a locality, cluster or centre level, on:

- emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people (NIS 70)
- children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (NIS 48)
- repeat incidents of domestic violence
- numbers of children in the local area who have child protection plans (NIS 64, 65)
- reports of bullying made by children.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- how safe children and users feel
- the extent to which children are safe when attending the centre or on outings organised by the centre
- the physical safety of users of the centre
- the extent to which children feel protected from bullying
- the extent to which users have improved their awareness of how to keep children safe, including the uptake of local schemes for home safety 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
- 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, including those in families who are hard to engage
- the extent to which the centre's knowledge of and involvement with the most vulnerable families (for example, children subject to a child protection plan) contributes to improving the safety of children
- the extent to which children, 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 users who are experiencing difficulties with children's behaviour.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to whether users:

- feel safe
- understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to contribute to a safe learning environment
- employ safe working practices
- have the knowledge, understanding and good practices to enable them to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being.

Outstanding	Children 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 using services at the centre are very well safeguarded. Parents have an excellent understanding of how to ensure the safety of their family. Parents that are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their lives show clear and consistent improvement in their confidence and parenting skills. Children and other users say and/or show they feel safe at the centre and are confident to share concerns with staff. There is significant and sustained evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans.
Good	Children 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 using services at the centre are effectively safeguarded. Parents have a good understanding of how to ensure the safety of their family. Parents who are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their lives show improvement in their confidence and parenting skills. Children and other users say and/or show that they feel safe at the centre and will share concerns with staff. There is good evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans.
Satisfactory	Most children 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 is promoted adequately and may be good in some respects. Parents understand how to ensure the safety of their family and this is having some impact. Outcomes for parents who are experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their parenting show some improvement but this may be variable or not well evidenced. No aspect of staying safe is inadequate. Most children and other users say and/or show they usually feel safe at the centre. There is some evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children have little understanding and awareness of safety issues and this poses a risk to their own and others' safety. and/or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children receive little attention and direction from adults working with them which impacts on their ability to understand rules and boundaries. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children and/or other users say or show that they do not feel safe when attending activities provided by the centre. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vulnerable individuals or groups are not safe or protected enough.
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Enjoying and achieving

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development.

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

- the achievement of children who have accessed services provided or commissioned by the centre, shown by 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 rate at which the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest is being reduced.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which support and information for parents regarding their child's transition into early years provision and/or school are improving outcomes
- the impact of opportunities for parents and children to play, have fun and learn together
- the extent to which information, advice and guidance for users 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.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- outcomes from any adult learning programmes, both accredited and non-accredited
- whether users attend any learning programmes as required and are punctual
- whether users enjoy the courses offered
- whether users develop relevant skills to achieve their learning goals, including qualifications as planned
- whether users on learning programmes make progress relevant to their starting points.

Outstanding	Children make outstanding progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. Young children are very well prepared for school. Outcomes for users who participate in recreational and learning activities are outstanding. Users develop their skills, including parenting skills, very effectively and almost all users demonstrate improvement in educational and/or personal development. Users, including those who may previously have been hard to engage, report that their engagement with the centre is highly enjoyable. The centre can demonstrate good improvement in users' achievement and how this impacts on outcomes for young children.
Good	Children make good progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. Young children are well prepared to attend school. Outcomes for users who participate in recreational and learning activities are good. Users develop their skills, including parenting skills, well and most users demonstrate improvement in educational and/or personal development. Users, including those who may previously have been hard to engage, report that their engagement with the centre is enjoyable. The centre can demonstrate improvement in users' achievement and how this impacts on outcomes for young children.
Satisfactory	Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points, although this may be stronger in some areas of learning. Children are adequately prepared for the challenge of school. Users make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, including parenting skills, and some users demonstrate improvement in educational and/or personal development. They report that their engagement with the centre is enjoyable. There is some improvement in users' outcomes but this may be variable and is not well evidenced by the centre. Some users who had been hard to engage do not feel their contact with the centre has been enjoyable or do not maintain contact with the centre.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children are not making enough progress from their starting points. Children do not show enthusiasm for

	<p>learning and are not developing the social and learning skills that will equip them well for the future.</p> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Users' skills and personal development are not improving sufficiently or quickly enough. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant or vulnerable groups are not benefiting adequately from services. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant or vulnerable groups are not making enough progress in their learning and personal development.
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Making a positive contribution

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children who have accessed services provided or commissioned by the centre engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships
- the extent to which users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre.

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

- perceptions of the wider community about parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (NIS 22)
- the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in the wider community (NIS 1).

Inspectors should also consider other evidence such as:

- the extent to which children and parents improve their ability to make appropriate choices and decisions
- the extent to which children and adults with communication difficulties are able to express their views
- the extent to which all users 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, is promoting tolerance and understanding and community cohesion is improving as a result
- the extent to which users contribute to the governance of the centre through membership of a parents' forum or advisory board.
- the contribution of users to the development of services

- the extent to which users volunteer in the centre or local community.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- users' achievement of personalised development goals
- whether learners are involved in additional community-based development activities and projects
- whether learners develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to community cohesion and sustainable development.

Outstanding	Children demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and are developing positive relationships. Users are systematically and routinely engaged in the governance of the centre. Users participate in decision-making and develop enterprising behaviour, leading to enhanced personal development. Those users who are less confident in communicating their views are very well supported and enabled to do so. Users feel valued because their views are listened to and used to shape services. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community. Children and families using the centre and/or living in the wider community treat each other with respect and, as a result, community cohesion is greatly enhanced.
Good	Children behave well, make good progress in their personal development and are developing sound relationships. Some users are engaged in the governance of the centre, 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 treat each other with respect and, as a result, community cohesion is developing well. The majority of users are able to communicate their views.
Satisfactory	Overall, children demonstrate positive behaviour and are developing sound relationships. Some users 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. Children and families are developing respect for others and, as a result, community cohesion is beginning to improve. There is some evidence that users are able to communicate their views.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children have little 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 users 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 users are engaged in governance or decision-making at the centre. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant or vulnerable groups are not able to make their views known.
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Economic and social well-being

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which children are developing skills for the future
- the extent to which parents are developing economic stability and independence, including access to training and employment.

Inspectors should take account of data available from the National Indicator Set, locality, cluster or centre on:

- how many users are benefiting from adult training and how well they achieve
- the take-up of formal childcare by low-income working families
- the percentage of children aged 0–4 living in households dependent on workless benefits (children’s centre key performance indicator)
- the percentage of teenage mothers aged 16–19 in education, employment or training (children’s centre key performance indicator)
- the number of level 1 qualifications in literacy (including English for speakers of other languages) achieved
- the number of entry-level qualifications in numeracy achieved
- the proportion of the population with level 2 and 3 qualifications.

Inspectors should also consider other evidence, such as:

- the extent to which children are active, inquisitive and independent learners
- the extent to which children’s understanding of the wider world is demonstrated through their play
- improvements in outcomes for users who face challenges, such as teenage and lone parents and families living in poverty or without work

- the impact of information available for users regarding employment, adult education and training opportunities (including flexibility to suit parental needs)
- the impact of information, advice and guidance for users regarding childcare options
- the extent to which access to information regarding benefits and tax credits is improving economic stability and independence for families.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- whether users develop employability skills, including personal and social skills, and literacy, numeracy and language skills
- the progression that users make to further learning, employment or promotion at work
- whether learners participate in further education, training and/or employability.

Outstanding	Children make outstanding progress in developing skills for the future. Outcomes for users, including the most vulnerable, are greatly improved through information, advice and guidance provided by the centre. Users engage well in training and adult education programmes and take-up rates are excellent. This is leading to demonstrable, clearly evidenced improvements in outcomes for families. Outcomes for users seeking suitable employment are excellent and the centre can demonstrate success in this area. Significant numbers of parents are improving their economic stability and independence and, as a consequence, there are notable improvements in their children's well-being.
Good	Children make good progress in developing skills for the future. Outcomes for most users, including the most vulnerable, are improving well due to information, advice and guidance provided by the centre. Users are engaged in training and adult education programmes and take-up rates are good. This is leading to good and improving outcomes for families. Outcomes for users seeking suitable employment are good and the centre can demonstrate some success in this area. Parents are improving their economic stability and independence and, as a consequence, their children's well-being is improving.
Satisfactory	Children make satisfactory progress in developing skills for the future. Outcomes for some users, including the most vulnerable, are improving due to information, advice and guidance provided by the centre. Some users are engaged in training and adult education programmes and

	<p>participation rates are satisfactory or increasing. This leads to adequate outcomes and/or rapidly improving outcomes for families. Some parents have been supported in finding suitable employment and the centre can demonstrate some success in this area. Some parents are improving their economic stability and independence and, as a consequence, their children's well-being is beginning to improve.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children are not sufficiently demonstrating the skills necessary to secure their future learning. or ■ Services are not making enough impact and too few parents are improving their economic stability or independence. or ■ Significant or vulnerable groups are not developing economic stability or independence.

How good is the provision?

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

Assessing needs

Inspectors should evaluate

- the effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users.

Inspectors should take into account:

- how effectively the centre ensures that users' welfare (health and social) needs are appropriately assessed and reviewed
- 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.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- whether programmes of work are negotiated with adult learners to accurately reflect their abilities and aspirations
- whether adult learners' achievements and learning goals are recorded and accredited

- to what extent assessment information about individual and diverse groups of learners is used in programme and course development.

Outstanding	Users' needs are assessed sensitively and appropriately to ensure services can be tailored to suit individual child and family needs. The centre has an excellent understanding of individual user's needs, including the most vulnerable, which leads to demonstrable improvement across the five outcome areas. Excellent partnership working ensures assessment is rigorous and well-informed.
Good	Assessment is used well to ensure services meet most individual user's needs. The centre knows its users well and most make demonstrable improvements across the five outcome areas. Good partnership working ensures that assessment is robust.
Satisfactory	Assessment is used satisfactorily to ensure services meet the majority of individual user's needs. The centre has an adequate understanding of its users and can demonstrate some improvement in outcomes. Some partners are not fully engaged and therefore individual assessments may lack detail.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual assessments are not used effectively to ensure services meet individual user's needs. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The centre's contribution to robust assessment through working in partnership is inadequate.

Learning and development

Inspectors should evaluate:

- how well the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users.

Inspectors should take account of:

- how well the centre celebrates achievement and raises the aspirations and expectations of children, their families and other users
- the extent to which the centre enables individual users to improve their educational and/or personal development and progress to further employment, education or training
- the impact of provision on improved outcomes for children and their families.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- 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
- whether users receive constructive feedback on their progress and how they might improve.

Outstanding	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. Personal development and achievement are routinely celebrated and teachers and other adults have high expectations of users.
Good	Provision to help children to learn and develop is good. The centre promotes purposeful learning well and activities are of good quality. Personal development and achievement are celebrated and teachers and adults encourage users to build on their achievements.
Satisfactory	Provision to help children to learn and develop is satisfactory. The centre promotes purposeful learning adequately but this is not always sufficiently individualised. Some users may enjoy good-quality activities but the quality is variable. Personal development and achievement are noted but targets for improvement are not sufficiently challenging.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provision to help children to learn and develop is inadequate. and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning opportunities provided are not leading to improvements in learning, development or raising aspirations.

The range and appropriateness of services provided

Inspectors should evaluate

- how well the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of the users and the wider community.

Inspectors should take account of the percentage of each of the following groups in the children's centre reach area 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
- other groups that are priority vulnerable groups in the children’s centre area.

Inspectors should also consider:

- the extent to which the centre delivers the early childhood services it has been commissioned to provide
- how well the centre adapts services to meet the needs of users
- the extent to which services are based on a sound analysis of needs
- participation rates, attendance levels and reach of services
- the range of outreach services and their effectiveness
- how effectively programmes take account of the needs of individuals, families, communities and changing social and economic factors
- whether users have sufficient opportunities to study an appropriate range of courses and programmes, and achieve suitable qualifications
- the extent to which the range of programmes ensures equality of access and opportunities for all users or potential users, for example through providing crèche facilities.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- how well staff use enrichment activities and/or extended services that contribute to users’ enjoyment, personal development and achievement.

Outstanding	The quality and range of services offered are excellent and meeting the needs of almost all users well. Provision offers a highly cohesive package of integrated services that impact positively on users’ lives. Services, including outreach services, are flexible, managed creatively and adapted to meet need, thereby encouraging high participation rates by the target groups of users.
Good	The quality and range of services offered are good, well integrated and cohesive. They meet the needs of most users well. Services within the centre are adapted to meet need and local participation rates by the target groups of users are good and improving.
Satisfactory	The quality and range of services offered are adequate, and the centre is meeting the needs of some of the targeted groups of users. Participation rates, although satisfactory, may be variable or not increasing. Services within the centre are sometimes adapted to meet need.

Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The quality and range of services offered are poor or not sufficiently targeted at the right 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 users. Services within the centre are not adapted to meet need and therefore some services are under-used or ineffective.
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Care, guidance and support

Inspectors should evaluate

- the quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community.

Inspectors should take into account information gathered across the five Every Child Matters outcomes 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 (including dental services and immunisations) and how effectively parents are encouraged to use these services
- the impact of family and parenting support, including outreach
- the quality of information, advice and guidance for users on smoking, alcohol and drug misuse and sexual health
- 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.

Where adult and community learning is offered, consideration will also need to be given to:

- the quality of impartial information, advice and guidance on appropriate learning programmes, services or employment to meet learners' needs
- whether learners receive individual care and support to help them overcome barriers to learning and successfully complete their programmes and learning and development goals.

Outstanding	The quality of care for young children, parents and other users provided by the centre is excellent. There is very effective personalised support for users to develop the well-being of their families across all outcome areas. In times of crisis families feel confident in turning to the
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	centre and are very well supported. The outstanding quality, coordination and range of guidance and support empower parents and their children to improve individual and family outcomes.
Good	The quality of care for young children, parents and other users provided by the centre is good. There is effective, tailored support for users to develop the well-being of their families across most outcome areas. In times of crisis families feel well supported by the centre. Well-targeted and coordinated guidance and support enables parents and their children to improve individual and family outcomes.
Satisfactory	The quality of care for young children, parents and other users provided by the centre is at least adequate. The support for users is satisfactory, but may be variable across services or outcome areas. There is evidence that care, guidance and support is making a discernible difference for some families. Some families feel 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 are unsatisfactory or may not lead to measurable progress for children or families. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The care, guidance and support provided by the centre are not sufficiently targeted at children and families who are hard to engage or in the most need.

How effective are the leadership and management?

Inspectors will always use their professional judgement when weighing up the evidence to determine the grades to be awarded. However, the judgements on safeguarding and equality and diversity will be significant. Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for safeguarding or 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.

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 services are effective and the efficient use of public funds.

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood.

Inspectors should take account of:

- the extent to which governance arrangements enable all those responsible to work together to ensure high-quality, integrated provision
- 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.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Governance and accountability arrangements are very well established and understood. There are strong links between strategic planning, management plans and service provision. All partners take an active role in promoting high-quality, integrated provision which is responsive to local needs. An integrated management team provides high-quality professional supervision for all staff.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. There are clear links between strategic planning and service provision. All partners understand their roles in supporting and developing integrated provision which meets identified needs. Professional supervision and management arrangements at the centre are aligned and relevant information is shared.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Governance and accountability arrangements are in place but not consistently understood. Services provided can be linked back to strategic planning. The key partners are engaged in supporting and developing integrated provision but other partners are not fully engaged. All staff are appropriately supervised by their own agency but this is not integrated with the centre's management processes.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Governance and accountability arrangements are unclear or not understood by all parties. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant partners are not engaged in supporting and developing integrated provision. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff are not receiving the appropriate professional supervision.

Ambition and prioritisation

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the effectiveness of senior leaders in communicating high expectations to all staff and users
- the effectiveness of local needs analysis to identify integrated provision that is targeted at narrowing the gap for the most disadvantaged
- 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 extent to which the centre's development plan sets out the priorities, challenging targets for improvement, how and when they will be delivered and the resources required to deliver them
- the extent to which resources are clearly identified, targeted at identified priorities and shifted to meet changing needs
- the extent to which partners, including users, are clear about the priorities and have been involved in identifying them at both local and strategic levels.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>The centre offers a highly cohesive package of integrated services for the children and their families which impacts positively on their lives. The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers are conspicuously successful in inspiring the centre to work towards meeting or sustaining ambitious targets. Morale is very high and belief in the centre's success runs through all levels of staff. Self-evaluation at all levels within the centre and key partners is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. This leads on to well-targeted planning and actions taken by the centre and its partners. As a result, outcomes for most users are good, and some are exceptionally high.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>The leadership is strongly focused on promoting a good range of services which are matched to the wants and needs of the users. The senior leadership team and many middle leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations to staff about securing improvement. They galvanise the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts to good effect. Leaders and managers conduct a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and their analysis provides a firm basis for</p>

	accurate diagnosis of strengths and areas for development. Planning involves all relevant partners, and is founded on sound evidence. Services are carefully integrated as they are developed with the support and input from users. Consequently, outcomes are generally good, or there is substantial evidence that they are improving strongly.
Satisfactory	The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers are motivated to seek further improvement and are effective in focusing the centre's efforts on priorities. Most partners are involved in planning and some services are integrated. Senior leaders and managers adequately monitor progress and outcomes for users. 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. The centre has implemented satisfactory plans that are aimed at improving relevant outcomes.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall the leadership and management of the centre have too little effect on improving outcomes. The senior leadership team is not sufficiently ambitious or is unable to motivate staff effectively. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priorities are insufficiently focused on the needs and wants of children and their families. Senior leaders and managers do not drive improvement effectively because priorities are inappropriate or planning is weak or monitoring fails to secure consistency. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leadership and management lack the authority and drive to make a difference. Evaluation lacks rigour or substance, and does not inform planning to an appropriate degree.

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 users and the wider community.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the progress or levels of development reached by users, 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
- the extent to which staff knowledge and expertise is deployed to ensure high-quality provision
- the quality and availability of support for users
- the number of users 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 which 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 have a wide reach to the most vulnerable groups in the community. The impact on improving outcomes for users is at least good and may be outstanding. Users state that provision and support are aligned accurately 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 services are sustainable.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Resources are managed well and the impact on outcomes for users is generally good. Provision or services offered by the centre are well used and engage vulnerable groups in the community. Users state that provision and support are generally well aligned to their needs and make an effective contribution to improving outcomes. 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 limited range of users. Outreach to vulnerable groups in the community is developing and is beginning to have an impact. Users 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>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management of resources has little or no consistent impact on improving outcomes.

	<p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Services offered do not reflect the needs of the community or children's centre principles. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resources are not deployed effectively and efficiently to meet users' needs. Services and provision are not well used and the community is not well engaged.
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Equality and diversity

Two principles guide the overall judgement:

- 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 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:

- how effectively the centre actively promotes equality, celebrates diversity and tackles illegal or unlawful discrimination
- how well the centre 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 users reflects the community that the centre serves
- 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 users 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 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the extent to which provision is planned to ensure it is accessible for adults with 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 all children and their families 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 are improving rapidly and any gaps in engagement or achievement between different groups of users are narrowing significantly. Monitoring and evaluation are sophisticated and highly influential in ensuring provision is matched to the needs of the community. The centre exceeds the duties that apply to it.
Good	The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision. The centre articulates and pursues ambitious strategies for its particular groups of users 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 these groups. Gaps between 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. The centre meets the duties that apply to it and, in a few cases, has exceeded them.
Satisfactory	The centre promotes the inclusion of all children and their families. The centre meets the duties that apply to it. It has pertinent information about the precise groups of users 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 relevant groups. <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, records information relevant to safeguarding concerns clearly and accurately and shares it appropriately, both internally and with other agencies

- the clarity of information sharing protocols and child protection procedures, understanding of thresholds for referral to social care services, and effectiveness of communication between all agencies
- the extent to which 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 users are made aware of safeguarding issues and understand the importance of ensuring 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
- 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 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 service 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 its users, including working proactively and</p>
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	effectively with other key agencies.
Good	<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 users. These are usually acted upon to make effective improvements to the safeguarding systems.</p>
Satisfactory	<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 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 pupils.</p>
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements for safeguarding 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. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is little or unproductive involvement of key agencies.

Evaluation

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities.

Inspectors should take into account:

- the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and routine reflection on practice in informing the centre's development plan
- how well the views of users are reflected in the self-evaluation
- how effectively partners evaluate the outcomes of their service or provision and also contribute to the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the centre
- the effectiveness of systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision on outcomes for users, for example the impact on achievement and attendance of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, accredited qualifications for adult learners, numbers returning to work and parental confidence in meeting their child's needs.

Outstanding	Self-evaluation is rigorous and is well supported by evidence of impact on outcomes for users. There is a very clear link between the centre's evaluation of its services and the priorities set out in the centre development plan. Users' views make a significant contribution to the self-evaluation. All agencies routinely evaluate the outcomes of their service or provision and contribute to the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the centre. There is clear evidence that evaluation has resulted in changes to provision or use of resources which have been successful in meeting needs more effectively. Systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision on improving outcomes for children and adults using the centre are well established and very effective.
Good	Self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of impact on outcomes for users. The centre's evaluation of its services informs the priorities set out in the centre development plan. Users' views influence the self-evaluation. Most agencies regularly evaluate the outcomes of their service or provision and contribute to the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the centre. There is evidence that evaluation has resulted in changes to the provision, which is increasingly successful in meeting needs. Systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision on improving outcomes for children and adults using the centre are established and increasingly effective.
Satisfactory	Self-evaluation is generally systematic and is supported by

	<p>some evidence of impact on outcomes for users. There are links between the centre's evaluation of its services and the priorities set out in the centre development plan. Users' views are reflected in the self-evaluation. Some agencies evaluate the outcomes of their service or provision and contribute to the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the centre. There is some evidence that evaluation has resulted in changes to provision in order to meet needs more effectively. Systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision on improving outcomes for children and adults using the centre are in place.</p>
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Self-evaluation is superficial or not supported by evidence of impact. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agencies are not evaluating the impact of their provision, or are not using evaluations effectively to shape services or contribute to evaluating the overall effectiveness of the centre. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision on improving outcomes are insufficiently developed.

Partnerships

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide.

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
- how partnership working at the Children's Trust level feeds down to the operational level in the centre
- the effectiveness of work with other services, for example childminders from the private, voluntary and independent sector.

Outstanding	<p>Services are fully integrated resulting in highly cohesive provision for users which impacts positively on their lives. User involvement is firmly established as central to effective partnership working. Relationships between</p>
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	<p>statutory 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 community. Very effective partnership working enhances opportunities for users and has a very positive impact on improving outcomes.</p>
Good	<p>Services are integrated and deliver cohesive provision for users which impacts positively on their lives. User involvement is well established in effective partnership working. Relationships between statutory 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 community. Effective partnership working enhances opportunities for users and has a positive impact on improving outcomes.</p>
Satisfactory	<p>Services generally deliver cohesive provision for users which has some positive impact on their lives. Users are seen as important partners. Relationships between statutory partners are increasingly clear and understood and are being more effectively managed, although some partners may not be fully engaged. The centre contributes to developing and implementing partnership activities which include statutory, private, voluntary and independent providers. These activities meet some of the needs in the community. Partnership working provides some additional opportunities for users and has some impact on improving outcomes.</p>
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnership activity does not result in improvements in outcomes for users 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. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One or more key partners are not engaged.

User engagement

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community 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 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 users
- 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
- 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 users are used to shape services
- the extent to which users contribute to management of the centre, for example parent representation on the governing body or advisory board; working or interest groups; contributing to interviews, voluntary work, and so on.

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Users have excellent opportunities to be involved in the design and set-up of services and regularly 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, they express high levels of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the work of the centre. The centre is very effective in reaching out to engage with members of the community who are not accessing services, in order to identify and meet their needs.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Users have regular opportunities to be involved in shaping services and evaluating the effectiveness of provision. There are consistent and productive partnerships with users, resulting in strong levels of satisfaction and engagement with the centre’s work. Services regularly ask users for their views and ensure that these are used to inform important decisions. The centre is increasingly effective in reaching out to engage with members of the community who are not accessing services in order to identify and meet their needs.</p>

Satisfactory	Users express no major concerns about the centre's work and direction. The centre regularly seeks and takes account of the views of different groups of users about important issues. Users 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 community.
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Users are not effectively engaged in developing and evaluating provision. or ■ Take-up of activities is low or there is a high drop out rate. or ■ Outreach work is limited and based on perceived needs rather than identified needs. or ■ Communication with users is poor.

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
- 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
- users and partners 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 setting are committed to bringing about sustainable improvements and have confidence in the leaders and managers to provide effective leadership
- the responsible body, for example local authority and/or directors or the governing body, ask challenging questions of senior managers to improve provision and outcomes.

Outstanding (1)	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.
Good (2)	Action to overcome weaknesses, gaps in provision and 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 users' needs and are being used effectively to improve outcomes.
Satisfactory (3)	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 users' needs 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.
Inadequate (4)	<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 need. 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:

- how well the centre meets the needs of users and the wider community and demonstrates it has the capacity for sustained improvement.

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 the key judgements on the overall outcome for users and the centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of leadership and management.

Outstanding (1)	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 the needs of children, families and the wider community are met and their protection 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.
Good (2)	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 users 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.
Satisfactory (3)	To be satisfactory, all key judgements are at least satisfactory and may be good in some respects.
Inadequate (4)	Overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any of the following are inadequate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the overall outcomes for users ■ the quality of provision ■ leadership and management ■ the centre's capacity for sustained improvement.