

Children's centre inspection outcomes

This release contains:

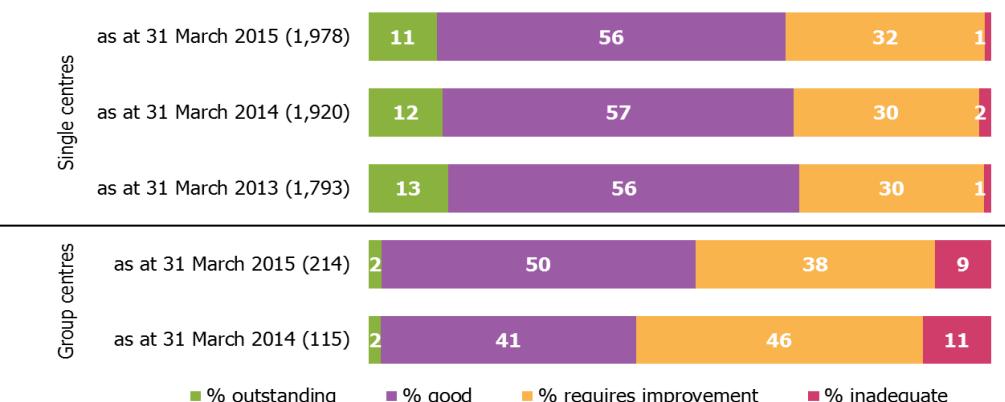
- most recent inspection outcomes completed as at 31 March 2015
- provisional data for inspections completed between 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2015
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2014

Single children's centre inspection outcomes have declined slightly over past two years.

At 31 March 2015, 67% of open and inspected single children's centres were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is two percentage points lower than as at 31 March 2013 at the end of the last inspection framework. Some centres are yet to be inspected so are not included in these findings.

Chart 1: Most recent overall effectiveness of open children's centres

(number of providers in brackets)



Children's centre group inspection outcomes have improved.

Inspection of children's centre groups started on 1 April 2013 and as at 31 March 2015 52% of open and inspected children's centre groups were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is nine percentage points higher than as at 31 March 2014. Some groups are yet to be inspected.

London and the North East are the highest performing regions. South West is the lowest.

At a regional level, London and the North East have the highest proportion (75%) of children's centres judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. The South West has the lowest proportion (53%) judged good or outstanding.

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Acknowledgements

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Key findings

Ofsted began inspecting single children's centres on 1 April 2010, and as at 31 March 2015 there were 1,978 open and inspected single children's centres. Of those 67% were judged good or outstanding, 32% required improvement and 1% were judged inadequate at their most recent inspection. For single centres, the percentage judged good or outstanding is two percentage points lower than the position as at 31 March 2013 before the revised framework was introduced.

Ofsted began inspecting children's centre groups on 1 April 2013, and as at 31 March 2015 there were 214 open and inspected children's centre groups. Of those 52% were judged good or outstanding, 38% required improvement and 9% were judged inadequate at their most recent inspection. The proportion of children's centre groups judged good or outstanding has increased by nine percentage points since 31 March 2014.

Children's centres which have closed or are not yet inspected are not included in these findings. Caution should be taken in drawing conclusions from these figures as inspection of children's centre groups only started on 1 April 2013, whereas the inspection outcomes for single centres span the wider period of 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2015.

Chart 2: Overall effectiveness outcomes at most recent inspection of children's centres inspected as at 31 March 2015

(number of providers in brackets)

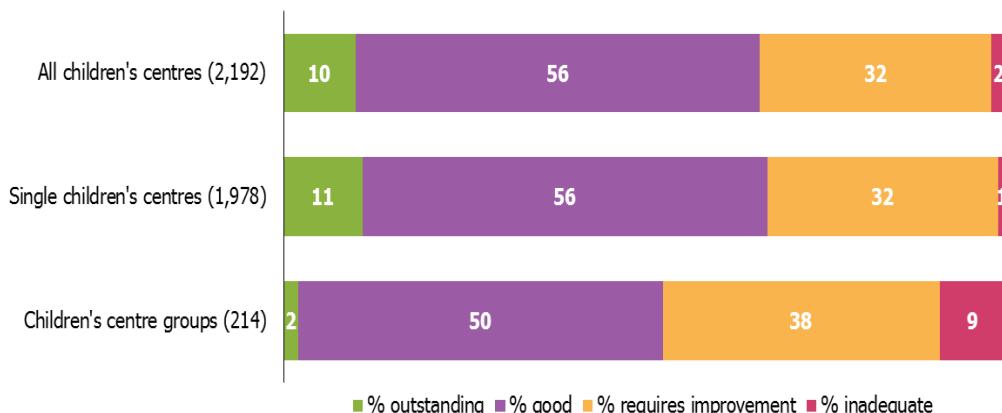
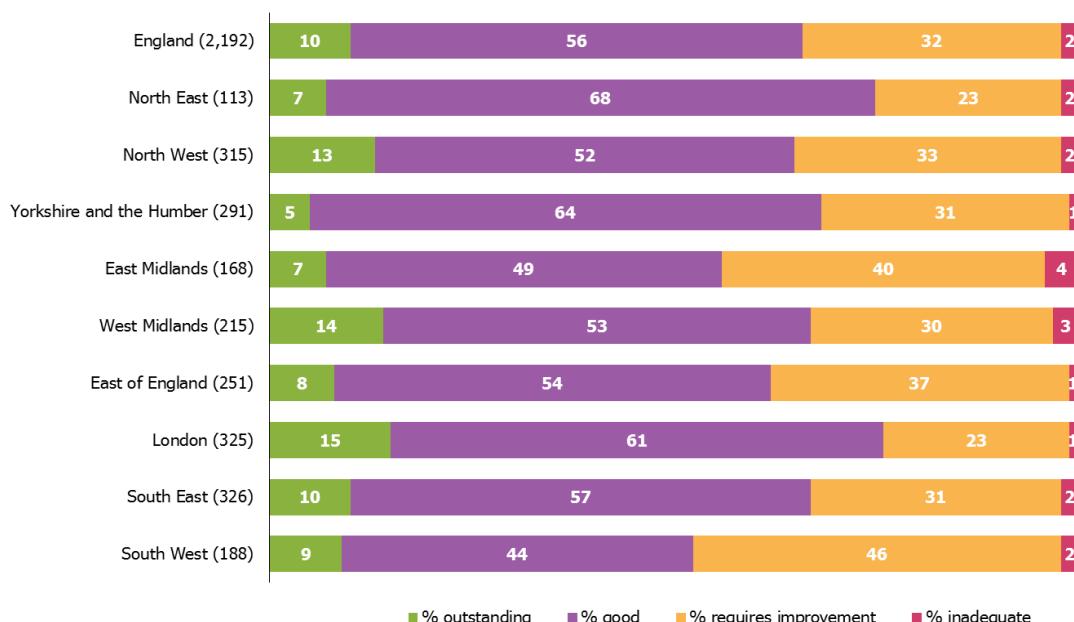


Chart 3 shows that at a regional level, London and the North East have the highest proportion (75%) of children's centres judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. The South West has the lowest proportion (53%) of children's centres judged good or outstanding.

Chart 3: Most recent overall effectiveness of children's centres inspected as at 31 March 2015, by region

(number of providers in brackets)



Revisions to previous release

The previous release related to inspections between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015. A revised list of inspections in this period is included in this publication. There is no impact on the previous key findings.

Methodology

These official statistics report on children's centre inspections carried out in England under Section 3A of the Childcare Act 2006.

'Overall effectiveness' includes the judgement 'How effective is the children's centre in meeting the needs and improving outcomes for families?' from the previous framework and 'The overall effectiveness of the children's centre' from the current framework. The overall effectiveness judgement is the only outcome recorded across frameworks.

'Satisfactory' judgements were recorded at inspections that took place up until 31 March 2013. A new children's centre framework was introduced on 1 April 2013. For inspections on or after this date, a 'requires improvement' judgement is recorded.

The most recent outcome data do not include closed children's centres and do not include open children's centres which are yet to be inspected. Where a previously inspected single centre has joined a group, the previous single centre inspection outcome will continue to be shown. Once the centre is inspected as part of that group only the group inspection outcome will be included in the data. When a centre leaves a group and becomes a single centre it will not be included in the data until it is inspected.

Selection of children's centres for inspection is targeted, so results for inspections in a particular period may not be reflective of the sector as a whole.

The data shown in the official statistics key findings together with additional local authority level data and provider level data can be found in the data file here: www.gov.uk/government/collections/childrens-centres-statistics. Numbers of centres in each local authority are small, so Ofsted does not include analysis of data at this level and caution should be taken in drawing conclusions from these figures.

Data on inspection outcomes up to the end of March will be published in June each year, data on inspection outcomes up to the end of August will be published in November each year. Inspections are included if the inspection report is published within one month of the end of the reporting period. As children's centres consist of two releases per year, inspections will be included if they are published by 30 April and 30 September respectively. Further data over time are published at dataview.ofsted.gov.uk

Revisions to data in this publication are published in line with Ofsted's revisions policy for official statistics, which can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics

Additional information

Children's centre inspections are governed by Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by Part 9 of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

The current framework came into force in April 2013, and sets out the statutory basis for Sure Start children's centre inspections conducted from April 2013 – and reflects that some local authorities manage their children's centres in groups with a variety of shared management and integrated services, as distinct from single children's centres.

Inspections carried out under this framework focus on the impact children's centres are having on young children and their families, especially those families that centres have identified as being in most need of intervention and support.

Ofsted must inspect all children's centres, at least once within five years, or sooner where the Secretary of State for Education requires this. Centres may be inspected more frequently where Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) or the Secretary of State have concerns about the performance of a children's centre and consider that it would be appropriate.

Inspectors make three key judgements that contribute to the judgement of the overall effectiveness of the centre centre – access to services; the quality and impact of services; and the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management of the centre.

Local authorities submit information on children's centres to the Department for Education (DfE) via the Sure Start_On database which is shared with Ofsted.

Ofsted publishes information on the inspection of children's centres on its website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-childrens-centre-inspection-from-april-2013>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-centre-inspection-handbook-for-inspections-from-april-2013>

If you have any comments or feedback on this publication, please contact Selina Gibb on 03000 130 407 or Selina.Gibb@ofsted.gov.uk

Glossary

The core purpose of Sure Start children's centres (as defined in the Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance, April 2013) is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances.

The statutory definition of a children's centre is defined in the Childcare Act 2006 as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- at which activities for young children are provided.

Children's centres also signpost or provide childcare, encourage and support parents who wish to consider training and employment. They aim to support the improvement in the overall health and well-being of young children and their families while improving the outcomes for children including those from deprived backgrounds. They aim to raise parents' aspirations for their children and themselves, encourage parental engagement in their children's early learning and development to help children overcome development barriers and make a good start in their school careers.

Many local authorities manage their children's centres in groups with a variety of shared management and services. If two or more centres share leadership and management and provide integrated services across an area in one local authority we will inspect them as a children's centre group, otherwise we will inspect them as single centres.

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