

Children's centre inspection outcomes

This release contains:

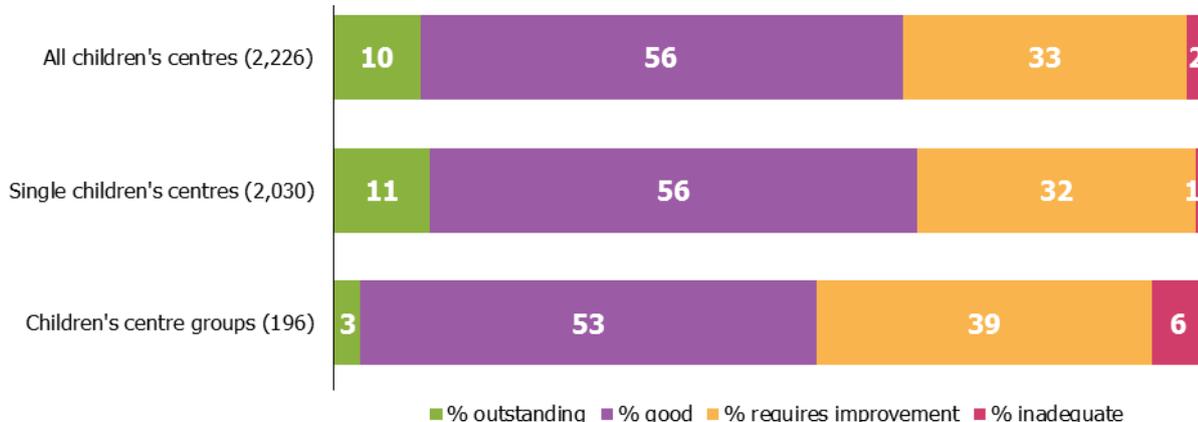
- most recent inspection outcomes as at 31 August 2015
- provisional data for inspections completed between 1 April 2015 and 31 August 2015
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2015

The proportion of children's centre groups judged good or outstanding has increased by four percentage points since 31 March 2015.

As at 31 August 2015, 56% of open and inspected children's centre groups were judged good or outstanding. This is a four percentage point increase since the previous publication as at 31 March 2015.

Chart 1: Overall effectiveness outcomes at most recent inspection of children's centres inspected as at 31 August 2015

(number of providers in brackets)



The proportion of single children's centres judged good or outstanding remains the same.

As at 31 August 2015, 67% of open and inspected single children's centres were judged good or outstanding; this has not changed since the previous publication. Therefore, the difference between the proportion of good or outstanding single children's centres and children's centre groups has reduced although this comparison should be treated with caution.

North East has the highest proportion of good or outstanding children's centres, South West remains the lowest.

The highest performing region is the North East with 81% of children's centres judged good or outstanding, whilst the lowest performing region is the South West with 53% judged good or outstanding.

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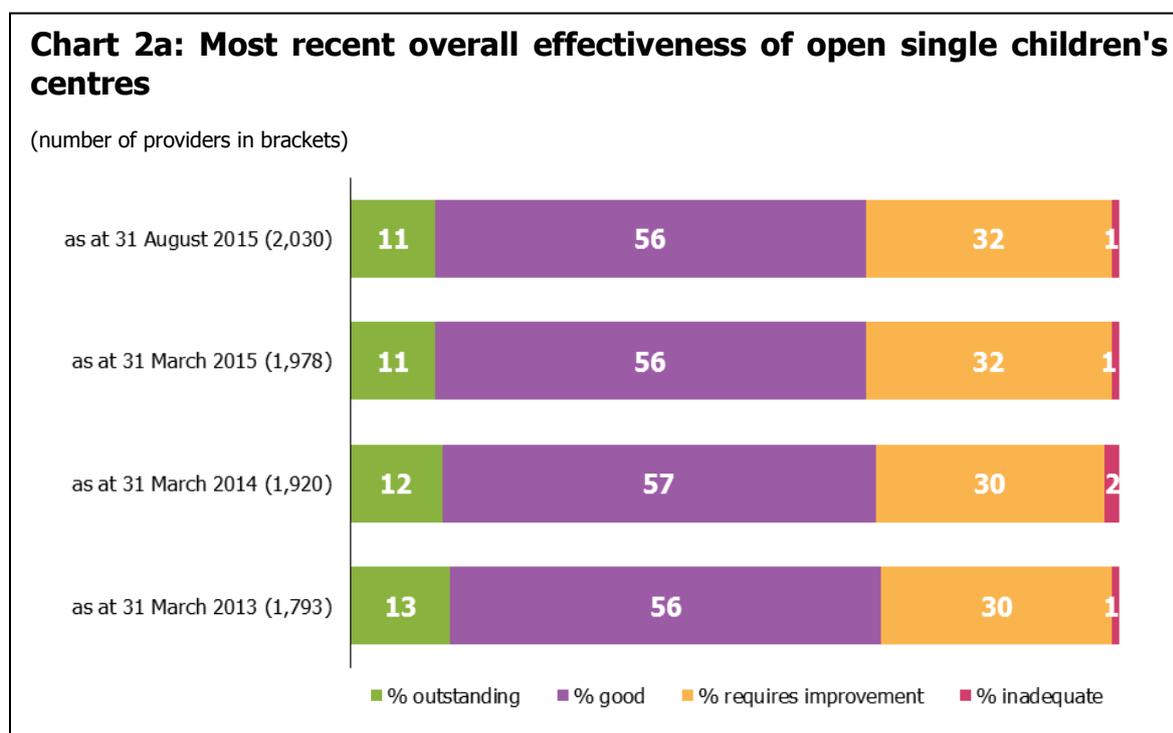
Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Kieran Rudge, Stuart Lloyd, Antoinette Ponniah and Nathan Hook.

Key findings

Single children’s centres

Ofsted began inspecting single children’s centres on 1 April 2010, and as at 31 August 2015 there were 2,030 open and inspected single children’s centres. Of those, 67% were judged good or outstanding, 32% were judged to require improvement and one per cent were judged inadequate at their most recent inspection. As Chart 2a shows, these are the same proportions as at 31 March 2015. The percentage judged good or outstanding was three percentage points lower than the position as at 31 March 2013 before the revised framework was introduced.



Between 1 April 2015 and 31 August 2015 Ofsted carried out 102 inspections of single children’s centres: 53% were judged good or outstanding, 41% were judged to require improvement and six per cent were judged inadequate. This was a targeted selection, so may not be reflective of the sector as a whole.

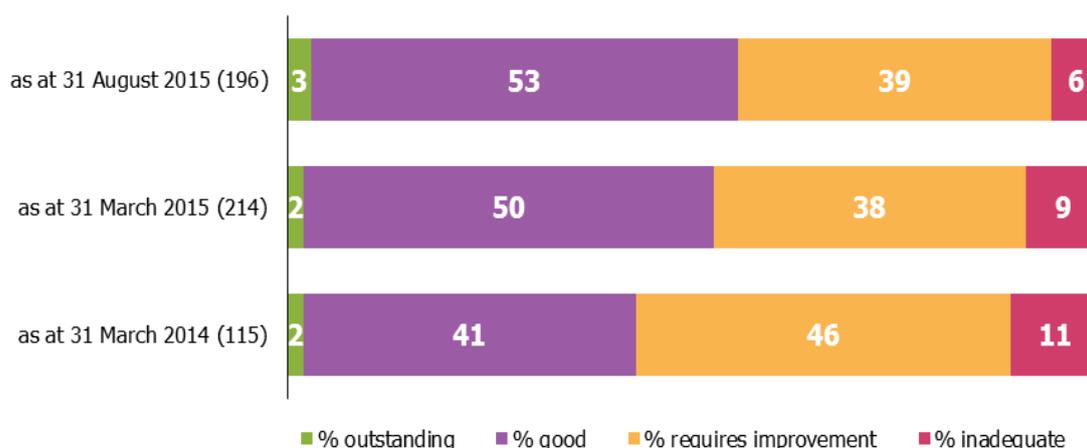
Children’s centre groups

Ofsted began inspecting children’s centre groups on 1 April 2013. As at 31 August 2015, the number of open and inspected children’s centre groups was 196. This is down from 214 as at 31 March 2015. Children’s centres which have closed or have not been inspected are not included in these findings. Hence, closures and reorganisation of children’s centre groups can influence the grade profile of the sector.

Of these 196 open and inspected children’s centre groups, 56% were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. As seen in Chart 2b, this is a 13 percentage point increase since 31 March 2014, which was the end of the first full year of inspecting children’s centre groups.

Chart 2b: Most recent overall effectiveness of open group children’s centres

(number of providers in brackets)



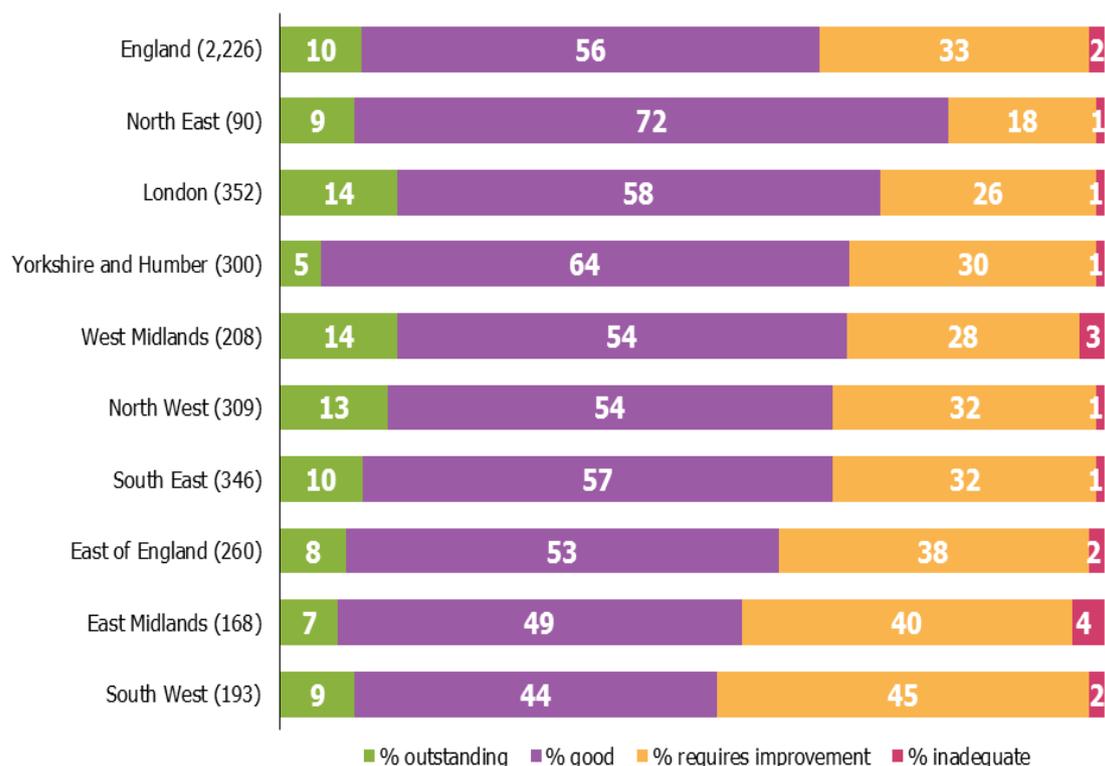
Due to legislative requirements, Ofsted only inspected 12 children’s centre groups during this reporting period. These tended to be weaker providers as many were re-inspections. Six of these were judged good, five were judged to require improvement and one was judged inadequate.

Regional analysis

The North East has the highest proportion of children’s centres judged good or outstanding (81% as at 31 August 2015). This is an increase of six percentage points from the previous publication. London and North East jointly had the highest proportion of children’s centres judged good or outstanding as at 31 March 2015. London has now decreased by three percentage points to 72% as at 31 August 2015. The South West still has the lowest proportion with 53%, with minimal change in the remaining regions.

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

(number of providers in brackets)



As seen in Chart 3, inspection outcomes between regions are varied. The difference between the highest and lowest performing regions is 28 percentage points, an increase of almost six percentage points between 31 March 2015 and 31 August 2015.

Revisions to previous release

The previous release related to inspections between 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2015. A revised list of inspections in this period is included in this publication, which includes three additional inspections published too late for inclusion in the previous release. Two of these resulted in a judgement of requires improvement and one in a judgement of inadequate. There is no impact on the previous key findings.

Future of children's centre inspections

The Department for Education (DfE) will be launching a consultation later in 2015 on the Sure Start children's centre programme which will include considerations about new accountability arrangements. The Secretary of State does not consider it appropriate to start a new inspection cycle under a framework which is likely to change. Therefore, inspection of children's centres has been suspended pending the outcome of the consultation.

The publication of official statistics on children's centres inspection outcomes has also been suspended, so this will be the last publication pending the outcome of the consultation. There will not be a publication in June 2016 reporting on inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2016 as previously planned.

Early years provision on the site of children's centres will continue to be inspected as part of the new Common Inspection Framework. Children's centres will continue their work as usual during this pause. Ofsted will also continue to respond swiftly to any complaints or safeguarding concerns in children's centres.

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 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.

Inspections are included in this publication if the inspection report was published as at 30 September 2015. 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 – 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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