

Early Years Inspection Update

September 2015

Deputy Director's introduction

On 1 September 2015, Ofsted introduced the common inspection framework. This changes the way Ofsted inspects early years provision, and brings more consistency to the way we judge all provision offering education for children and learners.

Under the common inspection framework, all education remits will be inspected against the same four key judgements.

In line with the common inspection framework, we have amended our early years inspection handbook to introduce the four new judgements on outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

We have ensured that our early years framework reflects the age of the children in early years provision. For example, we've ensured that the framework fully reflects provision for babies and toddlers, and the new 'outcomes' judgement will focus heavily on the progress children make, given their starting points.

Early years provision in schools for children aged two and over, where that provision is managed by the governing body, will be inspected as part of the school's inspection under the common inspection framework under the separate early years judgement.

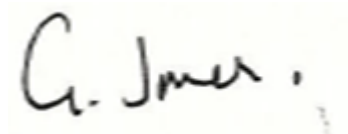
Under the common inspection framework, most group providers will get half a day's notice of their inspection. Childminders and group providers that operate restricted hours will get a telephone call, no more than five days before the inspection, to establish their availability and whether they have children on roll and present.

Ofsted reserves the right to inspect any provider without notice where we judge it necessary, for example if we receive a safeguarding concern.

Leadership changes

On 1 September 2015, Sean Harford took over the responsibility as National Director, Early Education, as early years is absorbed into a single education remit. Sean now leads a directorate that covers early education, schools and further education and skills. I am delighted to welcome Sean to early years work. I will continue to support him in my role as Deputy Director, Early Education.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'G. Jones'.

Gill Jones
Deputy Director, Early Education

Early Years Annual Report

We published our second annual report dedicated to early years on Monday 13 July 2015.

We are committed to using this opportunity to highlight important issues encountered in the early years sector, and to find new ways to contribute to raising the profile of the value of the work done by practitioners.

The report states that early education is getting stronger - 85% of early years settings are now judged good or outstanding.

'Overall, 72 per cent of all early years settings were good while 13 per cent were outstanding.'

Use the link below to access the report.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-early-years-report-2015

Revisions and additions to core inspection activity

Early years inspection handbook

We have revised our guidance for inspecting early years providers under the common inspection framework, which has taken effect from September 2015. This guidance sets out the main activities and the judgements inspectors must make, when inspecting early years providers, under the common inspection framework. The link below will take you to the landing page where you can access the document.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015

Early years compliance handbook

We have revised the 'Compliance, investigation and enforcement handbook' to update our policies and processes and to make it more accessible. The revised handbook also contains new guidance on how we deal with providers who are judged as inadequate. The previously separate individual sections have been put into a single document version, called the 'Early years compliance handbook'. The link below will take you to the landing page where you can access the document.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/compliance-investigation-and-enforcement-handbook-childcare

The next steps: when a provider is judged inadequate or not complying with requirements

This leaflet has been revised to make it clearer on what happens when a provider is judged inadequate or fails to comply with registration requirements. The link below will take you to the landing page where you can access the document.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-the-next-steps-when-a-provider-is-judged-inadequate-or-is-not-complying-with-requirements

Children's centres

Although children centres will not be inspected under the common inspection framework, we have revised a number of guidance documents for children centres, for use from September 2015. These include:

- Children's centre inspection handbook
- Subsidiary guidance - Supporting the inspection of children's centres
- The framework for children's centre inspection
- The web page entitled 'Being inspected as a children's centre: guidance for providers'

- The web page entitled 'Being inspected as a children's centre: guidance for providers'
- a new children's centre leaflet.

These can be accessed using the link below.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-childrens-centres

Supplementary information from Ofsted

Letter from HMCI to early years inspectors

In August 2015, HMCI, Sir Michael Wilshaw, sent a letter to early years providers outlining the reforms that have been since introduced in September 2015. You may use the link below to access the letter.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-changes-from-september-2015-ofsted-letter-to-providers

Other material

Recognising exceptional leaders

We want to recognise and celebrate exceptional leaders in early years settings. These are leaders who have made a significant contribution to improving a setting other than their own, through additional challenge, advice or expertise. Usually, the improved provider will have moved up by at least two judgements since its last inspection. We are asking that all inspectors notify the central Policy Team and Data and Insight Team at ey-childcare@ofsted.gov.uk and childcaredataqueries@ofsted.gov.uk respectively when their inspection identifies that recognition is deserved.

We want to recognise leaders of early education providers, schools and further education and skills providers who have shown exceptional leadership by giving additional challenge, support and expertise to bring about significant improvements in another provider. This is particularly important in cases where settings were less than good and facing challenging circumstances.

Criteria for nominating exceptional leaders

- The supported provider has improved by two grades since its previous inspection.
- In exceptional circumstances, we will consider providers moving from requires improvement to good where there has been a strong contribution from an external leader.
- The improvement made can be linked demonstrably to support, expertise and challenge provided by the external leader.

- The nominated leader is not part of the supported provider's management structure.
- The setting should be recognised as having particular challenges. This could mean having a high proportion of disadvantaged children.

How will candidates be selected for recognition?

- Following an inspection, inspectors are encouraged to report any instances of leaders who meet the criteria. For inspectors of early years settings, this can be done by email to the central Policy Team mailbox. Schools inspectors should use an EF marked with the code 'EE'.
- An internal panel will consider these nominations and select the ones to be recommended to HMCI, who will then make the final decision on which nominations are successful.

Exceptional leaders will receive a letter from HMCI, with a copy also sent to the Secretary of State for Education. All letters will then be published on a dedicated 'Exceptional Leaders' page of the Ofsted website.

Memorandum of understanding between Ofsted and the Food Standards Agency (FSA)

All childminders in England are currently required to register with Ofsted, unless they are exempt from registration. If a registered childminder serves food to children in their care, they are also required to register as a food business operator with their local authority.

Under the Government's commitment to reduce burdens on businesses, Ofsted and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have committed to remove the need for childminders that intend to serve food to children in their care from having to register twice. New data sharing arrangements between Ofsted and the FSA mean that relevant data provided to Ofsted by childminders will be shared with local authority food teams so that childminders no longer have to actively register as a food business operator with their local authority, where they are already registered with Ofsted. Ofsted already shares childminder registration data with local authorities under statutory duties set out in the Childcare Act 2006. Ofsted and the Food Standards Agency are encouraging local authorities to coordinate arrangements for sharing relevant data locally.

For more information about the MoU, please click on the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-between-ofsted-and-fsa

Making up infant formula – NHS advice

The NHS has useful advice on infant formula preparation on its website. The information includes a 14 step-by-step guide to preparing a formula feed, 'dos' and 'don'ts' of making up infant formula, and sterilising baby bottles. Use the link below to access the page.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/making-up-infant-formula.aspx#close

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) – a guide produced by the Lullaby Trust

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant where no cause is found after detailed post mortem. According to the Lullaby Trust, about 290 babies and toddlers still die every year of SIDS in the UK. However, advice on reducing risks given to parents and carers has led to a significant fall in the number of infants dying. Use the link below to access the guide.

www.lullabytrust.org.uk/document.doc?id=297

You may also want to see some statistics on SIDS. Use the link below:

www.lullabytrust.org.uk/statistics

FAQs about the new common inspection framework

Below, we have compiled a list of key questions and answers that have been raised as we have told people about the new common inspection framework.

1. What changes are we making to the notice we give early years providers of inspection?

We will give most providers, including pre-schools and nurseries, half a day's notice of their inspection. This will give inspectors the opportunity to gather the information needed to help the inspection run smoothly. Current arrangements for notifying childminders of inspection will not change. Ofsted will always also reserve the right to inspect without notice in particular instances, for example: where we receive concerns that, if true, would mean the provider is not meeting the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. Will there be short inspections for early years?

The length of inspection is short already for many early years providers and we are not considering introducing a similar model to good schools and further education and skills providers for early years. However, we will introduce more proportionality for schools that directly provide early years provision.

Where the school also provides care and education for children aged two years and over, we will inspect that provision as part of the school's section 5 inspection. Provision managed by the school for children younger than two years will continue to be inspected under the Childcare Act.

3. Are all inspectors employed by Ofsted, including early years?

The majority of early years inspections are currently carried out by inspectors working for Ofsted's inspection service providers. The existing contracts for early years inspections run until March 2017. We will make a decision soon on how early years inspections will be carried out after this date.

4. How will you ensure your inspectors understand impact and outcomes in early years provisions?

Inspectors already cover this under 'meeting the needs of children' judgement in the current framework, where they look at the impact of teaching and children's outcomes. We have refreshed all our inspectors' understanding about this in the training we rolled out for the common inspection framework over the summer.

5. How will you train your inspectors? Will you use a single theory of early development studies?

Our HMI deliver training for all early years inspectors, including those who work for our inspection service providers. We do not promote any particular early years theory in our training. Inspectors are very experienced in their field and use their professional judgement to interpret and apply the grade descriptors. Inspectors will talk with the early years provider about how they assess the children when they join the setting and during their time in the provision; plan their learning; and track progress. Inspectors will not support or expect to see any particular pedagogy.

6. What will you expect to see in provision for two-year-olds – do we have to have a teacher?

Two-year-olds do not require teachers with QTS. The requirements for qualifications are set out in the EYFS.

7. Will my outstanding nursery school get a full section 5 inspection after a recent change of leadership?

Outstanding maintained nursery schools are not exempt from routine inspections and have regular section 5 inspections at present. From September 2015, they will have short inspections, conducted under section 8, approximately, every three years. Ofsted uses a broad range of indicators as part of the risk assessment process to select providers for inspection and, in between risk assessments, providers may be inspected where there are concerns about the standards of leadership and governance.

8. Are inspection arrangements for new provisions changing? Parents may ask to see an inspection report for new provision?

No, we will inspect them within 30 months, as we do now.