Inspections of children's centres

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Inspection requirements

The inspection must address the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

Inspection arrangements

- Notice period
- Tariff
- Preparation
- During the inspection
- After the inspection
- Integration

What Ofsted looks for

How children's centres:

- identify early childhood services for children and their families
- identify children and their families who would otherwise not take advantage of these services
- encourage those children and families to use the services
- improve outcomes for children and their families
- effectively deliver integrated multi-agency services
- safeguard children
- have effective leadership and management
- use resources effectively and efficiently to provide universal and targeted services.

Developing the centre

- Have you identified all potential users including any groups or individuals that may find it more difficult to access services?
- How do you know what you are providing is right for your area?
- Are you attracting those who you want to come into the centre and if not what are you doing about it?

Developing the centre

- Have you set yourselves realistic targets for the services and activities you provide and measuring whether you meet these?
- Are you involving everyone including users and other agencies in evaluating the impact of what you provide?
- What data and evidence do you have or need to start to collect to support your evaluation of services?

Planning for successful provision

Effective self-evaluation will enable leaders and managers to:

- Promote quality
- Plan for improvement
- Provide well tailored support

Inspection judgements

- How good are outcomes for users.
- How good is the provision.
- The quality of leadership and management.
- Overall effectiveness including the centre's capacity for sustained improvement.

Early findings

Reports are available on website www.ofsted.gov.uk

Judgements made across all grades

Strengths and weaknesses relate to:

- recognising local needs and targeting services effectively to meet these
- records about centre users
- evaluation, including collecting the views of users
- partnership arrangements.

Local authority role

- Guidance on self-evaluation.
- Data down to centre reach level.
- Service level agreements.
- Updating the tracker with centre data.
- Action plan in relation to the inspection report.
- Annual return to Ofsted on:
  - strategic plan
  - arrangements for delivery
  - key partners
  - arrangements for safeguarding.

Available to help

On our website:

- inspection of children's centres: evaluation schedule
- the framework for the inspection of children's centres
- children's centre self-evaluation form and guidance
- inspecting your children's centre leaflet
- frequently asked questions from conferences and elsewhere.

All on **www.ofsted.gov.uk**