



Sam Gyimah MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education

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Sir Michael Wilshaw
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
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25th September 2015

Ofsted Inspection of Sure Start Children's Centres

Dear Sir Michael

I am writing on behalf of the Secretary of State to advise of a change to the inspection arrangements for Sure Start Children's Centres.

I have listened to the views of local authorities and their partners, the Education Select Committee and a range of commentators, including Ofsted itself, on the difficulties with the current inspection framework and how it fails to assess children's centres on the way they are organised now and the impact they have. I announced that we would conduct a consultation in the autumn on the future of children's centres, including their accountability arrangements. Given that expectation I do not think it is appropriate to commence a new cycle under the current inspection arrangements as they are likely to change. Instead I am suspending, on a short term basis the requirement for Ofsted to undertake the inspections at prescribed intervals pending the outcome of the consultation.

The Secretary of State retains the ability to require Ofsted to undertake inspections under section 98A (1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006, and that Ofsted itself retains the ability to inspect children's centres under section 98A (2).

I do not want this to affect the normal activity of children's centres and I expect them to continue their work to improve the outcomes for children and families in local areas, including their work on self-evaluation, monitoring and collecting data. Those children's centres that also deliver early years provision will continue to be inspected for that provision as part of the new Common Inspection Framework.

I will communicate this change directly to local authorities shortly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Gyimah', written in a cursive style.

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education