

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of  
**Education, Children's Services and Skills 2016/17**





# **The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2016/17**

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 121  
of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed  
13 December 2017.



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ISBN 978-1-5286-0111-5

CCS1117358636 12/17

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by the APS Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

13 December 2017



Rt Hon. Justine Greening MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

**The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2016/17**

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report to Parliament as Chief Inspector, as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Copies of this report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

My Annual Report addresses the breadth of our inspection and regulation responsibilities in education and care. My comment on our findings this year is underpinned by inspection evidence from around 26,000 inspections of schools, colleges and providers of social care, early years and further education and skills. I also draw on findings from our research and analysis this year.

Our aim is to be a force for improvement. As Chief Inspector, I am entirely committed to supporting improvement and raising standards for children and learners, regardless of their circumstances or where they live in the country. Therefore, in this report, as in other aspects of our work, it has been my aim to direct attention to those things where improvement is needed.

This should in no way detract from the achievements of those very many professionals who have this year delivered a high standard of education and care. It is with pleasure that I can report that in many of the areas that we inspect, a greater proportion of the provision available is good or outstanding this year compared with the last. This continues the general trend of improvement that we have seen over a number of years.

I trust that this report will provide useful evidence to inform policies aimed at securing the very best futures for our children and learners.

Yours sincerely

**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector





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# HMCI's commentary

This is my first Annual Report as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector.

Throughout my first year in office, I have been struck by the exceptional dedication and commitment of the people who serve children and learners in this country. Millions of people work in our nurseries, schools, colleges, care providers and council offices. Together they form the bedrock on which education and care in this country are built.

They do a demanding, sometimes difficult job, but it is thanks to their effort that the quality of education and care provided to young people today is better than ever. Right across the sectors we inspect, we are seeing not only widespread good practice, but also evidence of continual improvement.

- The quality of early years providers has continued to improve, with 94% now judged to be good or outstanding: a marked improvement from 2012 when this proportion was just 74%.
- Ninety per cent of all primary schools and 79% of secondary schools are currently judged good or outstanding. Secondary schools, pupil referral units and special schools have all improved their position to a small degree compared with last year. Across all phases, a high proportion (83%) of good schools stayed good or improved to outstanding on a return inspection.
- We have now inspected the quality of children's social care in 146 of the 152 local authorities nationally. We found 34% of these to be good or outstanding, compared with 26% at the time of our previous social care annual report. Even within those authorities that require improvement to be consistently good, there are many areas of good practice.
- There has been an overall trend of improvement across social care providers. The proportion of good and outstanding children's homes has increased from 79% to 83% since we last reported in 2016. Across all the many types of providers we inspect, only secure training centres have declined.

Every incremental improvement represents extensive effort on many people's part. Part of our role is to support their efforts by focusing on those remaining areas of provision that are less than good and highlighting the need for improvement. As long as some children and learners are less well served than others, and as long as some people in this country are given educational advantages that others don't share, there is still more to be done.

That is why, this year, we have set out our intention to be a force for improvement in both education and care. We know that when we identify and report on an area for improvement, the sectors respond by making changes.

With that in mind, I would like to draw your attention to those areas of most concern. It is here that further effort is needed on the part of policy makers, professionals and Ofsted in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. These will drive our focus in the coming 12 months.

- There is a small but persistent group of underperforming schools that have **not improved enough over very many years**. This includes some whose underperformance has lasted for a decade or more. All of these have received considerable attention and investment from external agencies. None of these interventions has worked. The focus on 'Opportunity areas' is a welcome innovation.<sup>1</sup> However, more may be required.

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1. 'Education Secretary announces 6 new opportunity areas', Department for Education, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-6-new-opportunity-areas](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-6-new-opportunity-areas).

- The solution to the problem of school underperformance is often to look to the strongest providers and most accomplished professionals to effect change. In education, we are seeing that these institutions and individuals are spread too thinly. The system is asking a lot of the best multi-academy trusts and school leaders. It is not clear that a small group of large, high-performing trusts has the **capacity to provide all the help that is needed**.
- We have learned over the past 10 years that increases in test scores do not necessarily reflect a real improvement in education standards. While tests are important and useful, they do not, and can never, reflect the entirety of what pupils need to learn. Exams should exist in the service of **the curriculum** rather than the other way round.
- Children who need help and protection is still the area of social care that is most in need of improvement. We are now seeing greater attention being given to **good basic social care practice**. It is in the local authorities that have emphasised getting the basics right that we have seen improved outcomes for children.
- Our early years inspections, whether of a Reception Year, nursery, pre-school or a childminder, are made with reference to the expectations of the **'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'**. However, our survey this year showed a number of weaknesses in this as a guide for children's learning.<sup>2</sup> We found that schools that are best at preparing children for Year 1 are going beyond the framework and setting more challenging expectations.
- Many parents feel it is important that their children are educated according to their own cultural beliefs and community norms; and with an increasingly diverse population, these norms can now differ considerably. Yet the effective functioning of British society depends on some fundamental shared values as well as a culture of mutual tolerance and respect. We have found an increasing number of conservative religious schools where the legal requirements that set the expectations for **shared values** and tolerance clash with community expectations. The schools are, therefore, deliberately choosing not to meet these standards. This tension is also leading to the creation of illegal 'schools' that avoid teaching the unifying messages taught in the vast majority of schools in England. Both of these situations are of great concern.
- This year, the case of learndirect limited has shown that **no provider is too big to fail**. This raises a question for us and for government about failure in market regulation and whether incentives drive the right behaviour. The apprenticeship levy is raising a very substantial amount of money to fund training. This carries the risk of attracting operators that are not committed to high-quality learning, as we saw, for example, with Train to Gain. We also see a high dependence on a small number of large providers in some areas of social care, such as children's homes.
- Domestic abuse is the most common factor in the lives of children who need social care services. Our joint inspections this year found that while there is a need to **prevent, protect and repair the effects of domestic abuse**, it is really only protection that is being given consistent attention. In particular, everyone needs to place more emphasis on tackling perpetrators and understanding what works to stop abusive behaviour.
- Secure children's homes are doing well for children and young people. By contrast, outcomes for children and young people in young offender institutions and secure training centres are much less good, and sometimes extremely poor. Lessons need to be learned urgently about how best to educate and take care of children in the **secure estate**.

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2. This is based on a review of the reports of 118 early years registered providers and nursery schools inspected in 2016/17.

- Children and young people identified as needing **SEND (special educational needs and disability) support** but who do not have an education, health and care plan often have a much poorer experience of the education system than their peers. In the local authorities we inspected, leaders were not clear how their actions were improving outcomes for these children and young people. Some parents reported that they had been asked to keep their children at home because leaders said that they could not meet their children’s needs. This is unacceptable.

## Providers that are not improving

In education, there is a group of schools that are not improving. Some of these schools have not improved over many years. There are over 500 primary and around 200 secondary schools that have been judged as requires improvement or satisfactory at their last two inspections. Of those that we inspected this year, there were around 80 primary and 50 secondary that have not been good or outstanding at any point since 2005. When we looked in detail at some of these schools,<sup>3</sup> we saw some similar characteristics:

- Previous inspections had found evidence of staffing problems. These included varying combinations of unstable leadership, high staff turnover and difficulty recruiting.
- In past inspections and when monitoring, inspectors had frequently reported seeing positive signs of renewal, often after new leaders were appointed. This improvement had not then been maintained.
- Some of these schools had become academies and some were in multi-academy trusts, but this had not had a material impact on their performance.
- Many had higher-than-average proportions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and White British pupils from low-income backgrounds.
- Around four out of five had high proportions of pupils from deprived areas.



3. This is based on a review of 38 secondary schools inspected in 2016/17.

Whole cohorts of children attending these schools may never experience reliably good teaching, and many of them will have had no alternative but to attend that school.

In the experience of inspectors, the lack of change does not mean there is a lack of desire to improve. Instead, these are schools where the demand on the leadership team is especially great. Improvement is difficult to sustain over the longer term without additional, external support. Too often, leaders and teachers in these schools burn out and leave, and the cycle begins again.

Our inspectors recognise the challenge these schools face to get the quality of education to where it needs to be. Schools serving areas of deprivation are more likely than other schools to receive higher judgements for the quality of leadership and management than the overall effectiveness judgement. However, inspectors do not give higher overall judgements than the quality of education merits. Doing so would set different expectations of what an acceptable standard of education is for pupils from different backgrounds. This is not something we will accept.

Nor is it true that schools in challenging circumstances cannot provide outstanding education or improve from a low base. Many can, and do, like Herbert Morrison Primary School and Dixons Kings Academy, whose improvements are described in this report.

The government has taken a number of steps to address this chronic underperformance. A number of the schools that stubbornly fail to improve are located in the Department for Education's 'Opportunity areas'. The local partnerships in these areas span the full breadth of education and care provision. They have the potential to tackle some of the systemic barriers to improvement by addressing local needs. I look forward to seeing their impact in the years to come.

However, there are also short-term practical steps that could be taken to address underperformance. There are many schools that we are not due to inspect for up to three years, usually because they have closed and reopened as academies. Some of them likely share similar characteristics to the schools described here. We recognise that new teams need time to make improvements, particularly following academisation. However, at first inspection we have too often found the schools to require improvement or be inadequate. Similarly, many schools languish for months waiting to be rebrokered and overseen by a sponsor. A full inspection too early may be unhelpful. However, we will now be carrying out monitoring inspections for these schools at an earlier stage to ensure swifter improvement.

An inspection that identifies a need for significant improvement is often the trigger that leaders need to galvanize a cycle of change. In some contexts, the change that is needed does not take hold. We need to better understand why this is and what we might do differently when this happens.

## Capacity within the system

The government is committed to a self-improving system within education and care. At the heart of this policy lies the assumption that the wider system of professionals should be providing capacity to help those providers that have shown that they are unlikely to improve themselves. It has long been the expectation that the best multi-academy trusts (MATs) will provide some of this capacity.





MATs should have the potential to improve and maintain educational standards, but this is not always the case. There is emerging evidence of MATs proactively focusing on professional development and workforce flexibility, for example by offering their own school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) to grow their own teachers. However, these approaches are only beginning to have an effect. The average size of a MAT is five schools, and around half of MATs have three schools or fewer. Leadership capacity is dispersed and financial economies of scale are not being realised. There are senior leaders in our best large MATs who are leading the way and have a history of improving schools. However, they are very few in number. Many of these are coming under pressure from the weight of what they are expected to contribute to the education system.

The DfE is aware of these problems. Through both its regional school commissioners and school improvement initiatives, it has taken steps to address MAT capacity and support the school-led system.

Ofsted could contribute to the identification of capacity in the wider group of MATs, but we currently have only a partial view of what is happening in the sector. We have a written agreement from the Secretary of State to report on MATs. We do this through batched inspections of their schools. These inspections highlight weaknesses in subject leaders, teaching and leadership quality. However, not being able to inspect the organisation directly and focusing only on MATs in which there are concerns means that we cannot provide a complete picture of the quality of MATs. Given the trend towards growing numbers of academies within MATs, there should be a strong system for directly holding them to account for the quality of education in their schools.

## The curriculum

In education, the government and Ofsted have focused on raising the standards expected in English and mathematics for some years. This remains a hugely important and valuable area on which to concentrate. English and mathematics are the gateway to all other learning and indeed are building blocks for later successes expected from pupils and learners of all ages. International tests show that the level of proficiency our young people are reaching remains uncompetitive.<sup>4</sup>

We continue to share this focus and to emphasise the central role that English and mathematics study plays in education. The collective effort to improve teaching and learning in these subjects across the education system has resulted in some important gains:

- We have previously reported that systematic synthetic phonics is now being widely used and that this has resulted in improvements in reading ability, especially for pupils from low-income backgrounds.<sup>5</sup> The DfE key stage 2 national curriculum assessments data shows that more demanding key stage 2 SATs and new measures have resulted in a gap of 21 percentage points in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers.<sup>6</sup> This is wider than the gap previous measures showed. However, based on the past performance of these pupils, it is realistic to expect them to continue to show faster improvements in the coming years.
- We have looked closely through inspection at how colleges teach English and mathematics. Some of the learners on level 2 study programmes have the lowest GCSE results when they go into college. We have previously questioned whether needing to study towards GCSEs in English and mathematics is the best way for these learners to improve in the subjects. Our latest research suggests that, while these learners are not necessarily improving their ability to pass GCSE exams, many of them believe they are still acquiring valuable knowledge in these subjects. Improvement in literacy and numeracy will have lifelong benefits for their ability to gain and keep employment. Therefore, while we would wish to see more young people gaining a strong GCSE pass, failure to do so does not imply time spent on English and mathematics has been wasted.

With any focus, however, comes the risk that the means to the end becomes the end in itself. The study of English and mathematics has such importance because these subjects provide the means to open up the effective study of most other subjects. Testing reading, writing and mathematics in primary schools is only a means to assess whether pupils are reaching the necessary standard. Test results are not an end in themselves, particularly for younger pupils. Yet, in our research on the curriculum, we have seen that the depth and breadth of the curriculum is being eroded by some schools. These schools are focusing too much on their performance, measured in test results, and not the learning:

- A number of primary schools we visited are effectively suspending the curriculum during the course of Year 6, sometimes as early as Christmas, to cram for SATs.
- A number of secondary schools we visited are reducing the length of key stage 3 in favour of a longer key stage 4 and a corresponding earlier start to GCSEs. However, the majority of pupils do not take

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4. 'PISA 2015: National report for England', Department for Education, December 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/pisa-2015-national-report-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pisa-2015-national-report-for-england).

5. A survey on the curriculum in early years, 'Bold beginnings: The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools', Ofsted, November 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings).

6. Data on the new measures is from 'National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2016 (revised) 2016', Department for Education, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2016-revised](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2016-revised).

GCSEs in geography, history or a language. So, unless the Year 9 curriculum is designed to compensate, a large number of pupils will not study these subjects after the age of 13. The same is true of other subjects such as music, drama and art. Pupils are entitled to a broad curriculum to age 14. Reducing key stage 3 to two years risks narrowing their exposure to a wide programme of study.

- The government is committed to 90% of all pupils studying the EBacc.<sup>7</sup> However, our research with schools has shown that a number of lower-attaining pupils are being excluded from studying subjects like languages to prioritise examination results.
- In general further education colleges, the focus rests on the proportion of learners who complete their vocational qualifications. The effect of this is that too many level 2 study programmes are not designed with enough thought being given to everything learners need to become employable.

Neither a focus on English and mathematics, nor a focus on the wider curriculum, is about choosing sides. This is a false dichotomy. What pupils need is balance, and one in which a broad curriculum leads to exam success, rather than a curriculum purely serving tests.

## Good basic social care practice

Local authorities that focus on creating the conditions for social work to thrive are in the best position to improve the quality of their practice and focus on outcomes for children. We have been clear that processes are important and support good outcomes. For example, a well-written court report enables the judiciary to come to better decisions about a child's future. However, it is the outcome for the child that matters the most.

Local authorities that make it easier to get the processes right are then able to make sure that the next steps for a child are the best next steps.

Management oversight and challenge at all levels help to keep this on track, allowing social workers to work alongside families to help them to make the changes they need. This also enables social workers to plan for permanent changes to a child's life at the earliest opportunity. One of the processes that local authorities often struggle with is maintaining short and clear chronologies of children's history. Yet, without knowing all the factors affecting a child, it is difficult to ensure that the best decision is made for the future.

This year, we have emphasised the importance of creating an environment where social work can flourish. This means:

- reasonable caseloads
- technology that makes important tasks easier rather than more burdensome
- commissioners who have enough understanding of the business of social work to make good decisions
- supportive but challenging line management that proactively manages the whole system.

These things might seem self-evident, but it is easy to underestimate the importance of the context in which social work happens.

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7. Press release 'Ambition for vast majority of students to study core academic GCSEs', Department for Education, July 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/news/ambition-for-vast-majority-of-students-to-study-core-academic-gcse](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambition-for-vast-majority-of-students-to-study-core-academic-gcse).



This year, we inspected both Leicester and Knowsley after previous inadequate judgements. Both authorities were judged good for the leadership, management and governance. These are organisations that have embraced the need for change, focused on standards and worked to create an environment where social work can flourish. They focused unwaveringly on getting the basics right and, as a result, they have improved.

By contrast, in some local authorities such as Slough, action to improve has stopped and started. The local authority lacked the capacity to turn services around and reduced funding to social care following an inadequate judgement. Improvement stalled and the local authority remains inadequate.

As the cycle of inspections of every local authority area under the single inspection framework draws to an end, ‘help and protection’ remains the aspect of children’s social care that most often needs to improve. A good ‘front door’ (the first point of contact made when someone is concerned about a child) is one of the cornerstones of good basic social work. There is no one model, but all good front door processes share the same characteristics:

- well-supported social workers
- good information systems
- clear information-sharing protocols
- a healthy culture that respects the roles of different kinds of professionals and places the child at the centre
- astute use of early help
- an approach to understanding risk that analytically and comprehensively considers a family’s strengths
- active participation of partners with responsibilities in children’s care, such as the police, health agencies and schools, without whom decisions about children are ill-informed.

Having focused our attention on social workers being given the best possible conditions to work with children and families, we are now seeing evidence in inspections that these messages are being taken on board. We also emphasised the importance of reasonable caseloads. Since then, national data on caseloads has been published for the first time. We have seen a number of local authorities taking action to reduce caseloads.

## Early years foundation stage in schools

This year, our research into the Reception Year has raised questions about whether the early years foundation stage (EYFS) is appropriately designed to prepare pupils for Year 1.<sup>8</sup> We reviewed the practice in schools that achieved consistently high outcomes for children, not just at the end of the Reception Year, but in many cases throughout primary school. It was clear that they were, by necessity, departing from the EYFS and that the standards in the guidance were too low, particularly for mathematics.

Leaders and staff in schools were increasing quite considerably their expectations for teaching reading, writing and mathematics. They told us that meeting the early learning goals did not get pupils to a level that was high enough to set them up for success in Year 1. Some schools had designed their own

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8. ‘Bold beginnings: The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools’, Ofsted, November 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings).



mathematics curriculum based on the national curriculum programmes of study. In these cases, pupils had a good basis for the more complex learning to follow.

Our inspection of educational effectiveness in early years is based on the standards set in the 'Statutory framework for the EYFS'.<sup>9</sup> If one of the primary functions of an early years provider is to set children confidently on the way to being ready for Year 1, our inspection judgements may reflect a standard that does not reach high enough. We will be reflecting on the implications for our inspection practice.

## Shared values

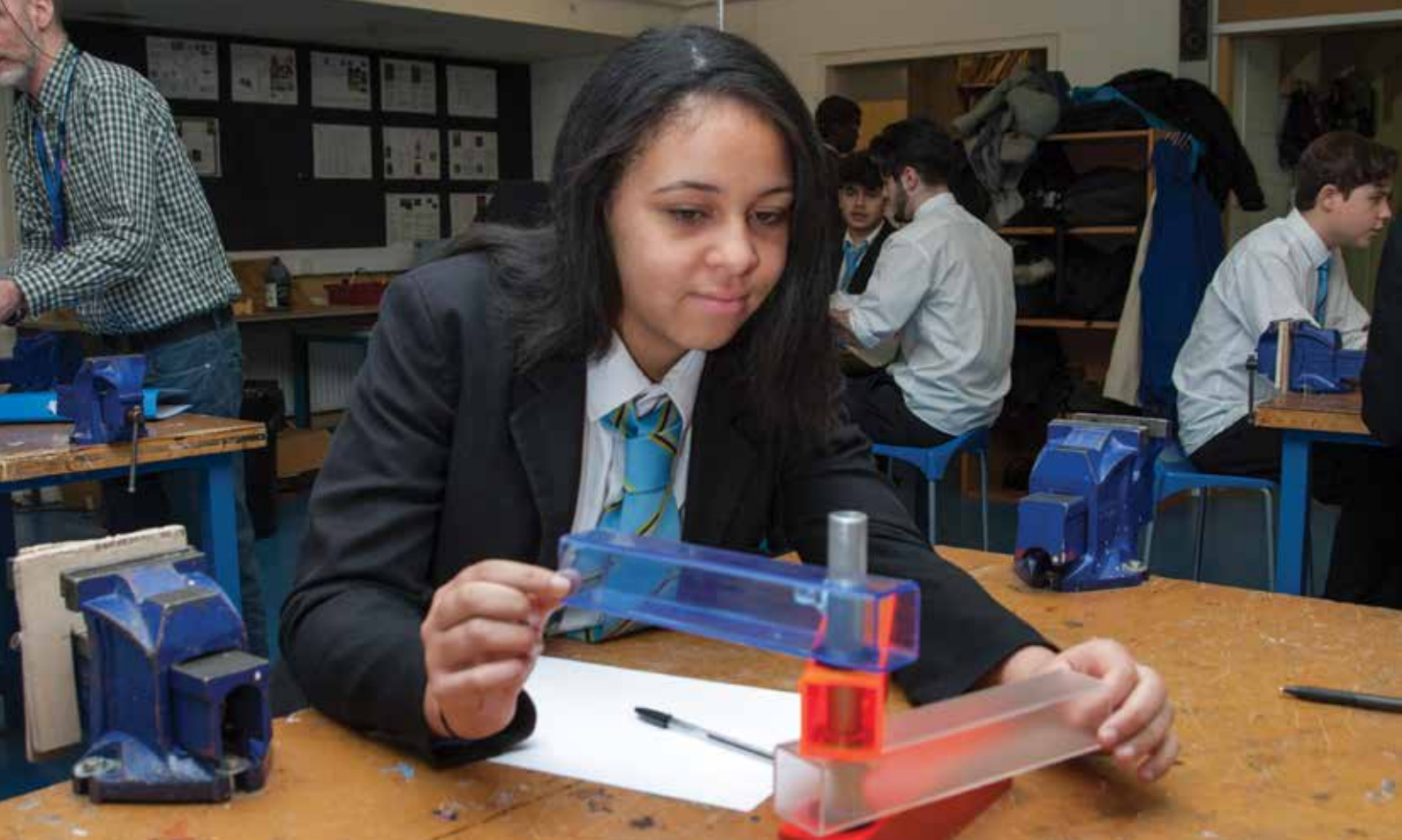
A core function of education is to pass on what one generation knows to the next. Part and parcel of this is spreading the values and culture that bind us as a society. There is no tension between this and religious pluralism. In fact, any proper teaching of fundamental British values encourages respect and tolerance for others' views. In the overwhelming majority of state-funded schools, whether faith or not, these values are embedded in the school's ethos and teaching.

However, there are also those who seek to isolate young people from the mainstream, do not prepare them for life in Britain or, worse, actively undermine fundamental British values.

Within state education, there are schools spreading beliefs that are widely shared within the community that the school serves but that clash with British values or equalities law. The recent case of Al-Hijrah School in Birmingham showed that an ethos that completely segregates children in school and that spreads discriminatory views about women is unacceptable. The fact that this reflects a cultural norm in that community does not mean that children can be disadvantaged in their education.

Within the independent school sector, the proportion of schools judged to be less than good has increased again this year, from 28% to 32%. A number were faith schools, either Christian, Jewish, or Muslim, which tended to be highly conservative. In some of the schools found to be inadequate, the premises were unsafe, even squalid. The most basic checks, such as whether staff were suitable to work with children, were not in place. Perhaps more significantly, in a handful of schools inspectors found instances of sexist and sectarian literature.

9. 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', Department for Education, May 2008; [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321061337tf\\_/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00261-2008](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00261-2008).



In even more extreme cases, children are being educated illegally in unregistered settings. This means that there are no safeguards in place to make sure children are either safe or receiving a decent education.

We are currently working on a number of cases of suspected unregistered schools.<sup>10</sup> In the cases we have investigated so far, some have simply been ignorant that they met the definition of a school. This primarily relates to alternative provision, which accounted for a high proportion of all cases. A tiny number of cases were children's homes.

The rest of the cases are faith settings. These settings are deliberately left unregistered to avoid regulations on the quality of education young people should receive. From conversations with former pupils of unregistered faith settings, we have learned that the curriculum can be very restricted. They can leave education with limited, if any, ability to read and write in English, no qualifications and no skills to get work. Clearly, this leaves children unprepared for life in modern Britain and means we have no way of knowing whether they are being taught to respect fundamental British values. Current legislation is inadequate to tackle unregistered schools. It limits our powers to tackle them and allows institutions to exploit loopholes about definitions of education.

The existence of unregistered schools is harder to detect because there is no record of children who have never been in school. There is no requirement to register a child who is home educated. The current statutory guidance sets out that parents can decline the offer of a home visit by the local authority.

Tensions between belief systems and British values create a motivation for some communities to try avoiding the educational and safeguarding standards that are expected of schools. While this manifests itself in different ways, the root cause is the same. This matters, because the British values of democracy, tolerance, individual liberty, mutual respect and the rule of law are the principles that keep society free from the radical and extreme views that can often lead to violence.

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10. Since January 2016, we have identified 291 possible settings that may be unregistered: 125 inspections have taken place, 38 warning notices have been issued, 34 settings have closed or ceased operating illegally and the remaining cases remain under active investigation. An inspector issues a warning notice at the end of the inspection if she or he believes the setting is operating illegally as a school.

## No provider too big to fail

This year, learndirect limited was judged to be inadequate. learndirect limited was the largest provider of training, with 97,000 learners. Of these, around a third were on apprenticeships. This shows that no provider is too big to fail. It also raises questions about whether there has been enough scrutiny or debate about the risks when providers grow too big, too fast.

One of the benefits of markets is that they can respond swiftly and adventurously to opportunities for growth. They may bring valuable energy and speed where services are needed. When public sector funding is made available to the market, this can act as a stimulus. It can also draw untrustworthy providers into the sector. When billions of pounds were made available for Train to Gain, problems with implementation led the National Audit Office to conclude that the programme did not offer good value for money. A push to rapidly expand take-up led to weak oversight of the companies delivering the training. The funding available subsidised low-level, low-quality training that did not deliver any material gain for learners. We have previously raised concerns about the quality of many apprenticeships. The need to tackle Britain's skills gap will only grow post-Brexit.

The introduction of the apprenticeship levy is due to double the annual investment in apprenticeships in England to £2.5 billion by 2019. This and the associated reforms have the potential to contribute to improving the quality of apprenticeships and training. However, the impact of the distribution and use of apprenticeship funding needs close scrutiny so that young people get the entitlement they deserve. We are working closely with the DfE to monitor the quality of training to make sure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

We have seen what can happen when otherwise good providers have incentive to grow too quickly. Wakefield City Academies Trust has recently announced that it is withdrawing from its 21 schools after rapid expansion. We are limited in our powers to inspect trusts. However, we have used the agreement available to us to scrutinise MATs where we have concerns, or conversely, where we want to see how they are consolidating or improving performance. When we inspected its schools as part of a focused inspection, we reported that the trust had rapidly expanded but was still making a positive difference to the quality of provision within its academies. Two years later, having taken on seven further schools, it collapsed.

In social care, large numbers of children's homes and independent fostering agencies are owned by single organisations. Around one in six children's homes is owned by just five companies. Just under one third of independent fostering agencies are owned by a dozen organisations. The well-being of the highly vulnerable children cared for in these homes and by these agencies is the priority. No provider is too big to fail, and the larger the failure, the greater the effect of failure. More could be done to prevent such an eventuality.

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a very common factor in the lives of children who need social care services.<sup>11</sup> Its ongoing prevalence, while not rising, still generates a very considerable volume of work nationwide across all social care, police, health and probation services.

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11. Joint inspections of the response to children living with domestic abuse: September 2016 to March 2017', Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, August 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-children-living-with-domestic-abuse-september-2016-to-march-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-children-living-with-domestic-abuse-september-2016-to-march-2017).



Because of this amount of work, and the widespread risk to children and adult victims, there has been a necessary focus across all these services on better management of the volume of cases. Much good work has been done to put partnerships and processes in place to react swiftly and decisively.

Good social work starts with all the partners preventing, protecting and repairing harm. At present, most of the focus is on protection. Both prevention and repair are underdeveloped. If these aspects are to receive greater attention, there will need to be a shift away from the current focus being so much on the victim. While it is natural and right to prioritise the victim, sometimes little is done to tackle the behaviour of the perpetrator.

Preventing and repairing harm to children also means taking into account the role played by the services that serve all children, especially GPs and schools. These services can only help to prevent or repair harm if they are provided with the information they need to fulfil their role, and are trained to respond appropriately. The introduction of Operation Encompass has been a helpful step towards schools being better informed.<sup>12</sup> Professionals also need to be able to rely on there being specialist services to which they can refer.

## Children in the secure estate

We inspect secure children's homes, secure training centres and young offender institutions. A secure setting can sometimes, in the right circumstances, improve educational outcomes. In particular, secure children's homes perform much better than secure training centres, possibly due to them being smaller in size or because of the differences in the role they perform. Twelve out of 14 secure children's homes are good or outstanding. Noted strengths include positive relationships between young people and staff, and young people generally making good educational progress. Our inspections of secure children's homes show that being placed in one can result in pupils attending school regularly for the first time in their lives.

There are three secure training centres: Medway and Oakhill, which we judged as inadequate, and Rainsbrook, which we judged to require improvement to be good. Each holds many more children than a secure children's home. Inspectors found rising levels of violence between the children and young people in the centre, and assaults on staff. This was exacerbated by rules and sanctions being inconsistently applied and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. Too many staff lacked the expertise to respond to children's needs with the necessary sensitivity and care.

There are 10 young offender institutions in England, of which four are less than good. This year, we contributed to the HMI Prisons inspection of Feltham. Feltham A held 126 16- and 17-year-old boys at the time of inspection. The prison was found to not be safe for either staff or boys. There was an increase in serious violence, including multiple assailants and the use of weapons. Because of the very restricted regime and little time out of cells, attendance at lessons was a casualty. In Feltham A's report, we estimated that 19,000 hours of schooling were lost over the year from non-attendance and missed classes.<sup>13</sup>

These institutions can clearly learn from the approach within secure children's homes. A violent environment and lack of education is not inevitable when a child is an offender.

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12. Operation Encompass is the scheme for police to report to schools before 9am on a school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening.

13. 'Prison and Young Offender Institution inspections, 'HMYOI Feltham A (children and young people)', Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, November 2015; [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/hmyoi-feltham-a-children-and-young-people](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/hmyoi-feltham-a-children-and-young-people).

## Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

This year, we have published a review of the first year of our local area SEND inspections.<sup>14</sup> These inspections look at provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. We inspect a wide range of outcomes, including children's destinations, educational progress, attainment and participation, and health and well-being. From the first 30 inspections, we have seen that children and young people who were identified as needing SEND support but who were without an education, health and care (EHC) plan did not benefit as consistently from a coordinated approach between education, health and care as those with a plan. Consequently, parents reported that getting an EHC plan was like a 'golden ticket' to better outcomes, even though an EHC plan was rightly not issued because the complexity of the child's need did not require it.

However, in some of the more successful local areas, effective strategies had led to improved outcomes for those identified as needing SEND support but who did not have an EHC plan. This was particularly the case when leaders in education, health and care settings worked together under a shared vision to improve joint working for children and young people who have SEND and for their families.

Many children who have SEND present very challenging behaviour. These children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to underachievement. The underlying causes of poor behaviour in children are not always evident, and therefore there is always a risk of misidentification.

The number of pupils who have SEND and were excluded was typically high. For example, the exclusion of SEND pupils was identified as being high in a third of local areas inspected. Nearly half were criticised for the poor attendance of the same group. Across the majority of local areas inspected, leaders did not have appropriate plans to deal with either issue. Some parents reported that they had been asked to keep their children at home because school leaders said that they could not meet their children's needs. This is unacceptable.

In 2010, we raised a number of concerns about home education and vulnerable children in our report 'Children missing from education'.<sup>15</sup> Home-educated children can be isolated, which makes them hard to protect if they are at risk at home.

This year, we visited four local authority areas to gain a better understanding of home education, including the challenges of safeguarding children in these circumstances. All local authorities visited identified that the number of home educated children is growing. This is partly due to the communities that have moved into these areas. In some cases, this is because of disputes between parents and their children's school. There were some local areas that were aware of schools advising parents that they should home educate their child to avoid exclusion.

Local authorities were not always informed when a child was taken off roll. When this happens, it can lead to a delay in engaging with the child and their family and can potentially leave the child at risk. Providing capacity to oversee the growing number of home-educated children is becoming a challenge for local authorities. In 2016, the DfE amended the regulations relating to pupil registration and updated the statutory guidance in this area.<sup>16</sup> However, more recently the DfE has committed to revise the guidance to make the powers that councils have more explicit and set out the rights and responsibilities of parents.

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14. 'Local area SEND inspections: one year on', Ofsted, October 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-one-year-on](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-one-year-on).

15. 'Children missing from education', Ofsted, August 2010; [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141107062740/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/children-missing-education](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141107062740/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/children-missing-education).

16. 'Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities', Department for Education, November 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education).

## Our work in the year ahead

Through our risk assessments, we focus on particular providers. Through our frameworks, we focus on particular areas of practice. Our commitment to being a force for improvement means we give our attention to those areas that are not yet good enough. All the evidence shows that, when we do so, it focuses providers on driving up standards of practice in these areas.

However, there are also unintended consequences. We know in the education and care sectors that there is a perception, rightly or wrongly, that when Ofsted endorses something, it can lead to professionals adopting it whether it is the right approach for their context or not. This can lead to an approach where people tick boxes or comply without thinking independently about what is best for the people they serve. It can lead to neglecting some particular areas of provision to cater for the ones most in vogue.

Therefore, this year we will, like any good regulator, take particular care to make sure that we do not bend practice out of shape in a way that does not benefit children and young people.

Over the coming year, we will be:

- developing the 2019 education inspection framework, building on the best evidence from research and inspection
- reflecting on our inspection practice and further developing our understanding of what makes inspection as valid and reliable as it can be
- starting our new inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS), which will be a more proportionate system of inspection, focusing on the quality and impact of social care practice
- undertaking research into why some schools get trapped in cycles of underperformance, with the aim of understanding better why interventions to date have not worked, and therefore what we, and others, might need to do differently
- continuing discussions with the DfE over better oversight of MATs, including a role for Ofsted
- supporting prosecutions of unregistered schools, and continuing discussions with government about the legislative barriers to us doing so effectively
- highlighting how some of the best faith-based institutions meet their obligations under equalities law, in a way that is in line with their religious beliefs
- undertaking research into the needs and context of children whose behaviour is very challenging for the people around them
- continuing to minimise any burdens of inspection across all of the remits we inspect; inspection should not create a compliance culture or put up barriers to achieving excellence
- reviewing our inspection of apprenticeships in the context of the new apprenticeship levy, including how we inspect sub-contractors
- working with the DfE to assess the impact of the introduction of 30 hours' free childcare
- continuing our programme of curriculum research.



# Early years

1. The term ‘early years’ covers the care and early education of children aged between 0 and 5. This section of the report covers our findings from inspecting local authority (LA) maintained nursery schools and early years and childcare providers that are registered with Ofsted.
2. The early years and childcare sector is primarily made up of private nurseries, pre-schools and childminders that are registered with Ofsted.<sup>17</sup> On 31 August 2017, there were 81,000 early years and childcare providers registered with us. Of these, 65,000 were registered on the Early Years Register (EYR) and therefore subject to routine inspection.<sup>18</sup> Each provider is registered to provide a particular number of childcare places. The following table summarises the size and shape of early years provision.

**Table 1: Number of providers and places for early years provision**

	Number of providers	Number of places	Proportion inspected (%)
All providers	65,800	1,334,200	80
Childminders	40,800	253,900	79
Nurseries and pre-schools	24,400	1,032,200	82
Childcare on domestic premises	200	4,500	69
LA maintained nursery schools	400	44,000	100

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

2. Home childcarers are excluded because they are not required to register with Ofsted but may choose to register on the voluntary childcare register (VCR).

Source: Ofsted

3. LA maintained nursery schools typically care for and educate children aged between two and five. There are 400 LA maintained nursery schools across the country, with 44,000 children.
4. Further contextual information on providers on the EYR is available in our early years official statistics.<sup>19</sup> LA maintained nursery schools are covered in our maintained schools and academies official statistics.<sup>20</sup>

## Inspection outcomes

5. In the 2016/17 academic year, we carried out inspections of 15,100 providers on the EYR. We judged 88% of these providers good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness. We also carried out 102 short inspections of LA maintained nursery schools, the vast majority of which remained good or outstanding.
6. Early years providers on the EYR continue to achieve high inspection outcomes. On 31 August 2017, 17% were judged outstanding and 76% good. Similarly, LA maintained nursery schools have exceptionally positive inspection outcomes, with 63% judged outstanding (Figure 1).

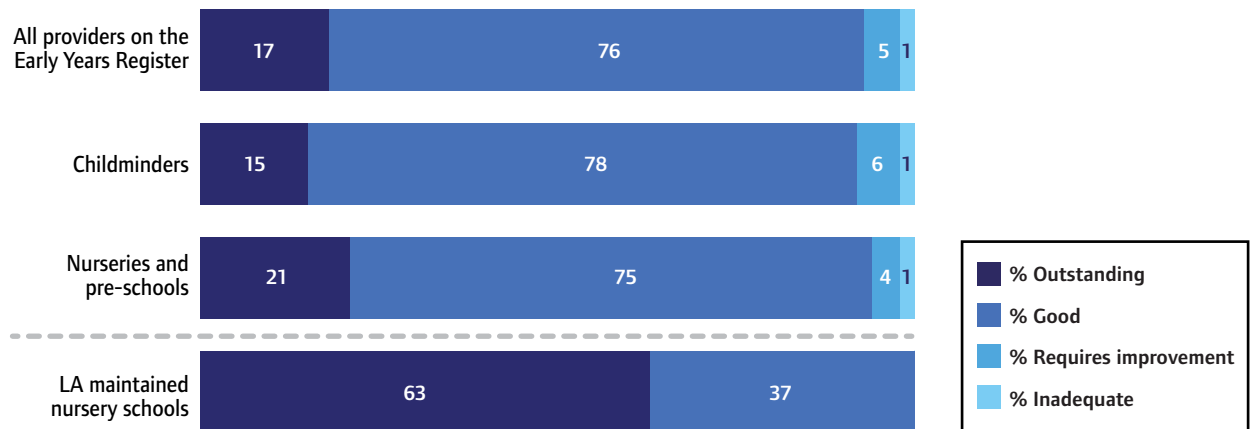
17. Nurseries and pre-schools are used throughout to designate childcare on non-domestic premises.

18. This excludes LA maintained nursery schools, which are exempt from the Early Years Register.

19. Providers can also register on the compulsory or voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. We inspect a sample of providers that are not on the EYR each year. For early years official statistics, see: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics).

20. For maintained schools and academies official statistics, see: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-official-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-official-statistics).

**Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of early years providers at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**



1. LA maintained nursery schools are inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
 2. Childcare on domestic premises are not included because only 148 providers had been inspected on 31 August 2017.  
 3. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.  
 Source: Ofsted

7. The sector has improved over time. In August 2012, 74% of providers were judged good or outstanding. By August 2017, this had increased to 94%. This increase is mostly a growth in the proportions of providers judged good. The increase in the proportion of providers judged outstanding has been small.
8. There are several factors that have contributed to the rise in providers judged to be good. Some of these relate to Ofsted’s inspection practice, which gives providers the opportunity to show improvement. There is some genuine improvement in the sector. However, the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework, against which we have to inspect, could be improved to ensure that children are better prepared for the national curriculum.<sup>21</sup> If the EYFS reflected a genuine preparation for Year 1, inspection outcomes across the sector might not be as high. The following factors may have influenced the profile of inspection judgements:
  - Since November 2013, all nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement have been re-inspected within 12 months.<sup>22</sup> Since August 2016, we have also prioritised the inspections of childminders that had previously been judged requires improvement or inadequate. This means that these providers have had the opportunity to show improvement quickly. Good and outstanding providers are not inspected as frequently.
  - Between August 2016 and August 2017, 23% of the providers inspected were previously requires improvement or inadequate. Of these, 84% improved to be good or outstanding. Of the providers whose previous inspection judgement was good or outstanding, only 9% declined to requires improvement or inadequate during the year.

21. ‘Bold beginnings: the Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools’; Ofsted, November 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-curriculum-in-good-and-outstanding-primary-schools-bold-beginnings).  
 22. Press release: Ofsted revises early years inspection framework, November 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-revises-early-years-inspection-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-revises-early-years-inspection-framework).

- The 2008 EYFS framework allowed childminders to complete training up to six months after registration.<sup>23</sup> However, since changes to the EYFS registration process in 2012, childminders have had to complete training before finalising registration with us.<sup>24</sup> Changes such as this may have contributed to a trend of more providers being judged good or outstanding at their first inspection.
- Providers leaving the sector are more likely to have been judged requires improvement or inadequate than those that remain.



23. 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', Department for Education, May 2008; [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321061337tf\\_/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00261-2008](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321061337tf_/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00261-2008). p.31

24. 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', Department for Education, March 2012; [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130405061537tf\\_/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00023-2012](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130405061537tf_/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00023-2012). p.17

## Getting to good in early years<sup>25</sup>

9. There is a clear journey that providers must take to get to good, irrespective of whether they are childminders or nurseries and pre-schools.
10. Inadequate early years providers generally face issues of poor safeguarding, welfare and compliance. They also tend to not have effective procedures for supervising staff or monitoring the progress children make. These failings are often in addition to weaknesses in the education on offer and how they follow the EYFS framework.
11. Providers that have improved from inadequate to requires improvement have dealt successfully with safeguarding, compliance, supervision or welfare issues or actions that have been raised at their previous inspection (six months earlier). Once these basic requirements are in place, most are able to move their attention to teaching, learning and assessment and, crucially, continuous professional development for their staff.
12. At the same time, these providers begin to develop ways to evaluate and review their provision. This includes introducing procedures to assess individual children and monitor their progress. Providers that improve to good have a much stronger focus on teaching, learning and assessment. They have well-established induction, supervision, appraisal and performance management systems. They use these to evaluate how well they and the children are doing.
13. Good providers need to focus on developing teaching in mathematics, literacy and phonics, as well as on raising attainment.
14. Overwhelmingly, the LA maintained nursery schools we inspected this year that received a judgement of outstanding had exceptional leaders. These leaders focused relentlessly on the academic side of the provision, particularly teaching, learning, assessment and planning.
15. Typical features in these outstanding LA maintained nursery schools included:
  - a continuous and strong focus on professional development for staff; this had an emphasis on children's academic, as well as personal, development
  - a very strong focus on early reading, phonics and literacy
  - a vibrant curriculum, with all areas of learning covered well, including strong outdoor provision
  - rigorous self-evaluation
  - effective partnerships, including with parents.

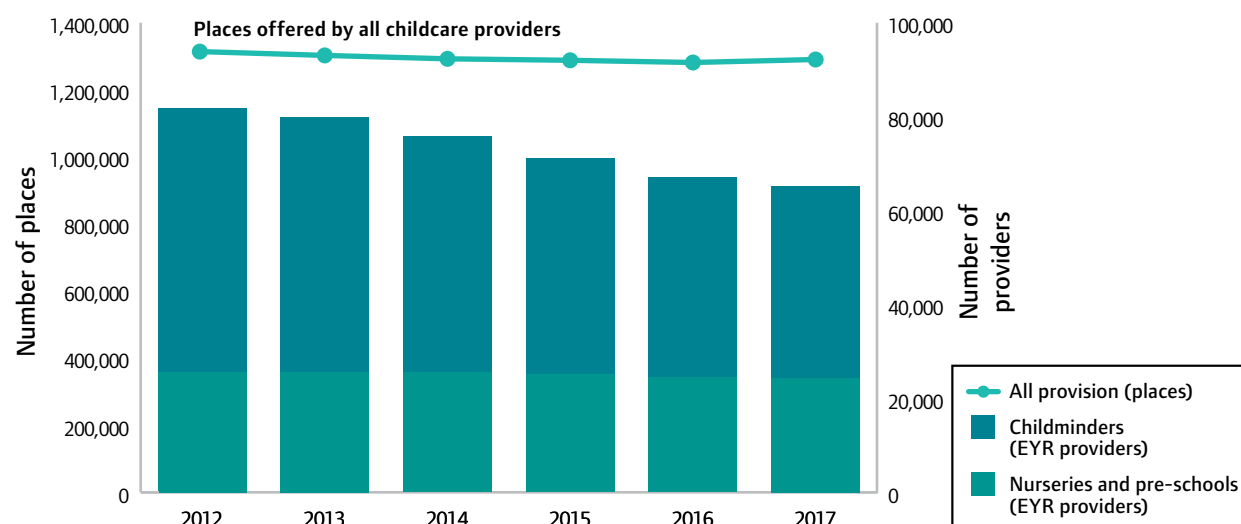
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25. This is based on a review of the reports of 118 early years registered providers and nursery schools inspected in 2016/17.

## Providers and places

16. Overall, childcare provider numbers have decreased steadily since August 2012. There has been a large decrease in childminders, a smaller decrease in nurseries and pre-schools, and no notable change in the number of home childcarers. Since 31 August 2012, broken down by provider type:
- the total number of childcare providers is down 16%
  - childminders are continuing a downward trend, with 26% fewer providers
  - numbers of nurseries and pre-schools have remained fairly stable, having decreased by only 3%
  - the number of nannies and other home childcarers has not changed much.
17. The net decrease in the number of childminders is the result of more providers leaving than joining the sector. Although around 3,500 new childminders joined the EYR between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017, nearly 5,300 left.
18. Since May 2015, schools have been exempt from registering their early years provision for two-year-olds with Ofsted. This means that many schools that provide childcare for two-year-olds are not on our EYR. This may have contributed to the 4% decrease in the number of providers of nurseries and pre-schools since March 2015.<sup>26</sup>
19. Despite decreasing numbers of providers, the number of childcare places has remained broadly stable since August 2012 (Figure 2). Between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017, childminder places decreased but there was a larger increase in the number of places offered by nurseries and pre-schools. This resulted in an overall increase of nearly 9,000 places. On 31 August 2017, there were almost 1.3 million childcare places offered by providers on the EYR.

**Figure 2: Childcare providers and places on the Early Years Register over time, by provider type**



1. Places offered by childcare on domestic premises are excluded due to the small number of places offered.

2. Data refers to providers and places on 31 August in each year.

Source: Ofsted

26. The number of early years registered nurseries and pre-schools on 31 March 2015 was higher than it was in August 2012.



20. Individual childminders are, on average, offering a higher number of places – even though there are fewer childminders and fewer places on offer overall. On 31 August 2012, the average number of places offered by childminders was five, whereas on 31 August 2017 the average was six. This average takes into account childminders with assistants, who are permitted to offer more than six places.

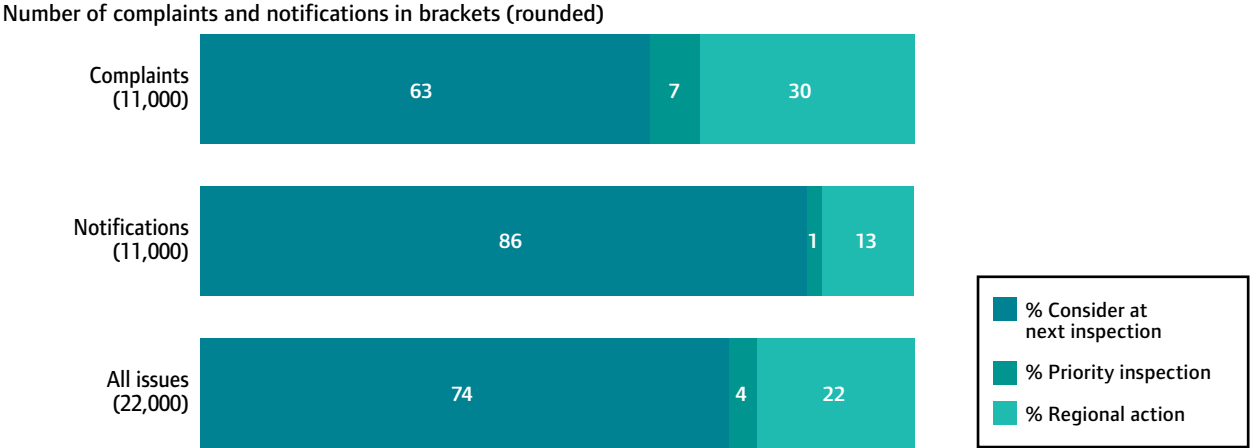
## Complaints and notifications

21. We take account of any concerns about early years providers that we receive from any source. We have a rigorous system to review these cases against a provider's history, taking appropriate action where necessary. However, most complaints and notifications that we receive do not require an immediate inspection and can be left until the next routine inspection to be followed up.
22. All registered early years providers are legally required to notify us about certain events that may occur in a setting. It includes notifying us of any serious incident or accident while a child is in their care. These are referred to as 'notifications'.
23. We also receive complaints and concerns from other sources about things that have happened in a setting. For example, parents may complain to us about something that has happened to their child, or another professional may contact us to tell us about something they have seen there. These are referred to as 'complaints'.



- 24. When we receive any information that, if true, would mean a provider is not meeting the requirements for registration, we carry out a risk assessment. This determines what action we should take. We take into account the information we have received. We also look at the provider’s inspection history and whether there have been any previous concerns about the provision. The risk assessment has one of three outcomes, depending on the provider’s history and the seriousness of the matter:
  - a full inspection of the provider within seven days – known as a priority inspection
  - referring the details of the incident to the relevant regional regulatory team: these are separated into ‘urgent regional action’ and ‘regional action’
  - logging the issue for taking into account at the next routine inspection.
- 25. There are currently around 81,000 early years providers registered with Ofsted. We received over 20,000 complaints and notifications between September 2016 and August 2017, which we risk-assessed.
- 26. In almost three quarters of cases, the issue raised did not require immediate action but will be taken into account at the next inspection. This was most common for notifications from the providers themselves, where this was the outcome in all but a small minority of cases.
- 27. As would be expected, complaints were the most likely to result in a swift response: either a priority inspection or other action taken by one of our regional teams (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Outcomes of complaints and notifications cases reported to Ofsted, 2016/17**



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.  
 2. Miscellaneous outcomes have been excluded due to small numbers.  
 Source: Ofsted





# Schools

28. We inspect almost 22,000 state-funded schools. Nearly a third of these schools are now academies, including free schools. The other two thirds are still overseen by local authorities. There are now nearly 7,000 academies, including over 400 free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges. Around eight million pupils are educated in state-funded schools.

**Table 2: Number of schools by type of school, 31 August 2017**

	Number of schools	Schools maintained by local authorities (%)	Schools that are academies (including free schools) (%)
All schools	21,950	68	32
Primary	16,780	75	25
Secondary	3,380	30	70
Special	1,040	76	24
Pupil referral units	350	71	29

1. Local authority maintained nursery schools are not shown in the table but are included in the 'All schools' figures in the table.  
 2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

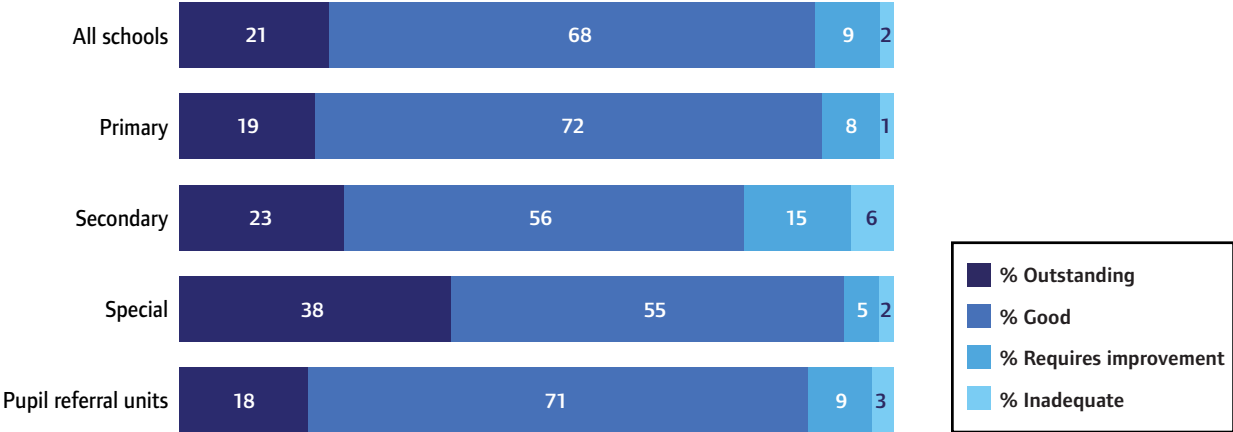
Source: Ofsted

## Inspection outcomes

29. In the 2016/17 academic year, we carried out over 5,400 full or short inspections of state-funded schools. This includes around 4,120 primary schools, 900 secondary schools, 230 special schools, and 80 pupil referral units. Around three quarters of the inspections were of schools that were good or outstanding at their previous inspection. The rest required improvement or were inadequate at their previous inspection.

30. At the end of August 2017, 89% of schools were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection: the same proportion as at the end of the previous year. Grades remain higher for primary schools (90% good or outstanding) than for secondary schools (79% good or outstanding).

**Figure 4: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.  
 2. Local authority maintained nursery schools are not shown on the chart but are included in the 'All schools' figures in the chart.  
 3. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: Ofsted

31. For some types of education, there have been small changes to the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection compared with August 2016:<sup>27</sup>
- pupil referral units<sup>28</sup> – 88% graded good or outstanding: an increase from 86% in 2016
  - secondary schools – 79%: an increase from 78%
  - special schools – 94%: an increase from 93%
  - primary schools – 90%: the same proportion as in 2016.
32. Between September 2016 and August 2017, around 1,200 schools closed. Of these, 94% then reopened as academies. As schools close and re-open, many lose their inspection history, depending on the reason for them closing. This can affect the national proportions of overall effectiveness grades. There are over 900 open schools with no inspection grade. Fifteen per cent are new free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools. Around three quarters are sponsor-led academies that have not been inspected since they became an academy.
33. Around 600 of the schools that do not have an inspection grade had a single predecessor school that had been inspected. Most of these schools were judged inadequate or to require improvement when they were last inspected. In November 2017, we consulted on changing our statistical methodology.<sup>29</sup> We proposed that we include the most recent inspections of these predecessor schools in our official statistics to create a more complete view of the sector. These changes will not affect the timing of the first inspections of the academies that replaced the previous schools.

## Schools that require improvement

34. At the end of August 2017, 9% of schools were judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection. This is a marked improvement from August 2012, when 28% of schools were judged 'satisfactory'. However, the current position is very similar to the position at the end of August 2016, when 10% of schools were judged to require improvement.
35. There are now around 1,900 schools that were judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection. Over 700 (38%) of these schools were also judged to require improvement or to be satisfactory at their previous inspection.
36. Many schools do improve from requires improvement to good or even to outstanding each year. However, a lower proportion of schools previously judged to require improvement improved at their inspection this year than in any other year. This trend is seen for both primary schools (33% did not improve this year) and secondary schools (58% did not improve). A higher proportion of schools also declined to inadequate this year.

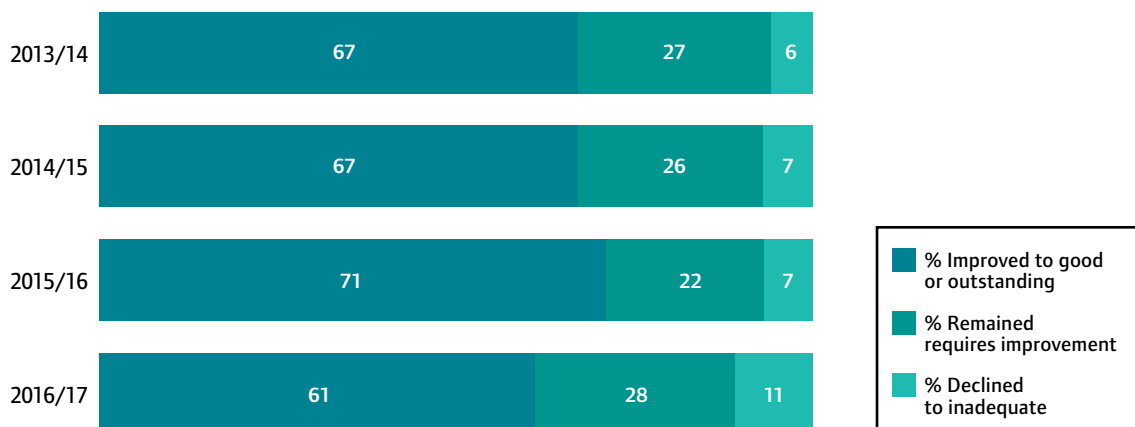
27. The proportion of schools that are good or outstanding is calculated using unrounded data, so is sometimes slightly different from the sum of the % good and % outstanding shown in the chart.

28. Includes local authority maintained pupil referral units plus alternative provision academies (including free schools). See the list of schools in the Excel file of the 'Maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2017' Ofsted, 2017, for details: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-official-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-official-statistics).

29. See [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-ofsteds-statistical-reporting-of-inspection-outcomes-for-maintained-schools-and-academies](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-ofsteds-statistical-reporting-of-inspection-outcomes-for-maintained-schools-and-academies).



**Figure 5: Outcomes of inspections of schools that previously required improvement, 2013 to 2017**



Source: Ofsted

## Deprivation

37. A common factor in the schools that do not improve to good or outstanding is that they have a higher proportion of deprived pupils. Fifty-five per cent of the schools that currently require improvement have high proportions of pupils from deprived areas.<sup>30</sup> Out of the schools that had previously required improvement and had an inspection this year, those schools with high proportions of pupils from deprived areas were less likely to improve than those with pupils from more affluent areas. Part of delivering a high quality of education for disadvantaged pupils means making the best use of the funding available. However, in a third of inspections this year at which schools were judged to require improvement overall, the inspector had concerns about provision for disadvantaged children and so recommended a review of the school’s use of pupil premium funding.
38. Although these schools can face major challenges, great improvements can be, and are, made. Last year, six schools that had previously required improvement were judged to be outstanding at their latest inspection. Four of these were in the most deprived quintile of schools.<sup>31</sup> Having lots of children who are from deprived backgrounds may make improving a challenge, but it can be done. For example:
- **Herbert Morrison Primary School** in Vauxhall, London, was judged to require improvement in November 2014. Since then, senior leaders, staff and governors have worked relentlessly to ensure that achievement and teaching have improved rapidly. The highly innovative curriculum is varied and engages pupils’ interest. Teachers plan work that brings the curriculum to life and develops pupils’ interest and curiosity. Combined with this, the school uses pupil premium funding wisely. It accurately tracks and supports the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, at the time of its next inspection, in November 2016, inspectors noted that the disadvantaged pupils were making excellent progress. The school was judged to be outstanding in this inspection.

30. Based on the indices of multiple deprivation (IDACI) 2015. Each school is assigned a score based on the home postcodes of the pupils who attend the school. The schools are then placed into one of five deprivation bands. Forty per cent of all schools are in the most deprived two bands, whereas 55% of schools that require improvement are in these two bands.

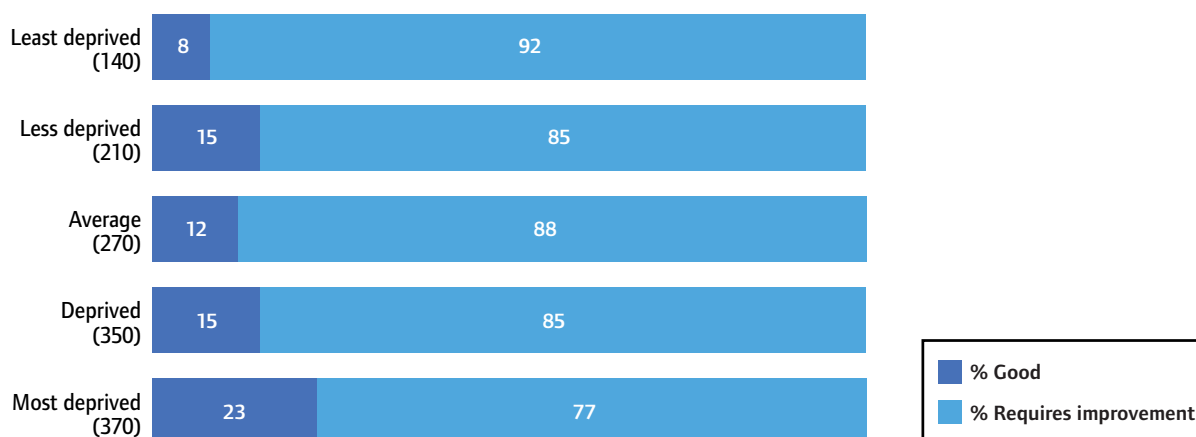
31. Ashmole Primary School, Herbert Morrison Primary School, and Hugh Myddelton Primary School (all in London), and Dixons Kings Academy (Bradford).

- Kings Science Academy, a secondary free school in Bradford, was judged to require improvement in December 2014. It joined Dixons academy trust in September 2015 and became **Dixons Kings Academy**. Since then, leaders have been relentless in their pursuit of excellence. Disadvantaged pupils have particularly benefited from this. Teachers plan activities that challenge pupils of all abilities. Careful record-keeping helps teachers to see where they may need to re-teach some content. The result of this and other effective strategies is that at the time of the next inspection (January 2017), the achievement of disadvantaged pupils had improved. The school was judged to be outstanding in this inspection.

39. When inspectors judge the effectiveness of the leadership and management in a school, they take account of the challenges that leaders face in schools with high proportions of disadvantaged pupils. Out of the primary schools judged to require improvement overall at their most recent inspection, 23% of those with the most deprived intakes were judged good for leadership and management, compared with 8% with the least deprived intakes. The difficulty of the management task in these schools is taken in to account by inspectors. However, inspectors will not judge the quality of education to be better than it is, regardless of the socio-economic circumstances of the school.

**Figure 6: Most recent leadership and management grades of primary schools judged to require improvement for overall effectiveness, by level of deprivation, 31 August 2017**

Number of schools in brackets (rounded)



1. The level of deprivation is based on the indices of multiple deprivation (IDACI) 2015. Each school is assigned a score based on the home post codes of the pupils that attend the school. The schools are then placed into one of five deprivation bands.

Source: Ofsted

### Schools that have been less than good for a long time

40. Some of the schools that did not improve from requires improvement to good or outstanding this year have underperformed for a long time. Out of the 243 inspections of secondary schools that required improvement, 140 did not improve. Out of these 140, over a third (52) have been judged requires improvement, satisfactory or inadequate in every inspection they have had since 2005.<sup>32</sup> Some of these schools have become academies since 2005, but still have not improved to good or outstanding. Thirty-seven of the 52 schools are currently academies and 29 of these are in multi-academy trusts.

32. Section 5 inspections were introduced in September 2005. Before this, schools were inspected under Section 10, which is not comparable. All 52 schools have had between four and six inspections under Section 5. Some schools declined to inadequate at their inspection this year.



41. We analysed the inspection reports of these secondary schools that have been stuck at requires improvement or inadequate for a long time.<sup>33</sup> The reports highlighted the following common issues:

- **Staffing.** A common feature was a change of leadership, particularly a change in the headteacher. In many cases, this change was too recent to show impact. Where the change was a while ago, the impact was often felt to be too slow. A history of recruitment issues, high staff turnover and/or financial difficulties was a frequent feature.
- **Quality of leadership and management.** Over-generous or inaccurate self-evaluation was very common. This sometimes stemmed from ineffective assessment, ineffective information management, or a failure to connect the quality of teaching to pupils' outcomes. Poor self-evaluation had led to weaknesses in planning, weak strategic thinking and a slow pace of change. Improvements were therefore ad-hoc and inconsistent across the schools. Problems with middle leadership was also a very common issue. Middle leaders were sometimes of variable quality, inexperienced, had received little training, and lacked effective monitoring or support from the senior leaders.
- **Teaching.** Leaders' evaluation of teaching was over-generous. They had an inaccurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. This was often seen as a factor in the ineffective performance management of teachers. For example, they set targets that lacked precision and rigour, and accountability for pupils' progress was weak. Weaknesses in the leadership of teaching were also a major factor in inconsistency in teaching across the school. Inspectors noted:
  - poor use of assessment information to plan to meet needs of pupils (especially for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities)
  - lack of challenge (especially for the most able)
  - poor checking of pupils' understanding of what they were learning.

33. The analysis looked at all of the schools that met this criteria at the end of March 2017, which at that time was 38 rather than 52 schools.

- **Governance.** Weak governance was a common feature. The main weaknesses included:
  - not challenging effectively or holding leaders to account (for instance by being too accepting of what they were told)
  - not understanding school performance or quality well enough
  - not holding leaders to account for the use of additional funding (such as the pupil premium)
  - failing to act swiftly enough to challenge or support
  - not checking the quality and impact of external support.

Some governors lacked the confidence, skills and understanding to carry out their role effectively.
- **Curriculum.** Some reports noted that the curriculum was broad and balanced or that schools had recently reviewed the curriculum with positive results. However, where the curriculum was reported as a weakness, several common features emerged:
  - weaknesses in developing literacy across the curriculum
  - the curriculum being too ‘narrow’
  - leaders’ weak review of the curriculum, or unclear rationale/design
  - curriculum at key stage 3 not preparing pupils well for key stage 4.
- **Quality of provision for some groups of pupils.** Disadvantaged pupils and the most able were underachieving. This was linked to the quality of teaching. It was exacerbated by the legacy of weak teaching over time. Additional funding (such as pupil premium and special educational needs and/or disability funding) was not planned or used effectively. A high proportion of pupils in these schools were from deprived areas and/or eligible for pupil premium funding, so good provision for these pupils was particularly important to the success of the schools as a whole.
- **Attendance and behaviour.** Poor attendance was an issue for most of the schools, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Higher than average rates of exclusion were also common. However, this was sometimes seen as a positive step and linked to leaders taking a robust stance on behaviour. Low-level disruption was common.

## Good schools

42. In 2016/17, we carried out over 3,500 short inspections of schools judged to be good at their previous inspection. Overall, 83% of schools remained good or improved to outstanding. Some schools remained good through a short inspection that did not convert. In other cases, the inspection did convert but the extra evidence gathered then confirmed the previous good judgement.
43. Primary schools were more likely to retain their good grade or improve to outstanding than secondary schools. Eighty-four per cent of primary schools stayed good or improved to outstanding, compared with 77% of secondary schools.



**Table 3: Outcomes of short inspections of previously good schools, 2016/17**

	% Outstanding	% Good	Of which: % did not convert % converted	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Primary	4	79	72	14	3
			7		
Secondary	6	72	62	16	6
			10		

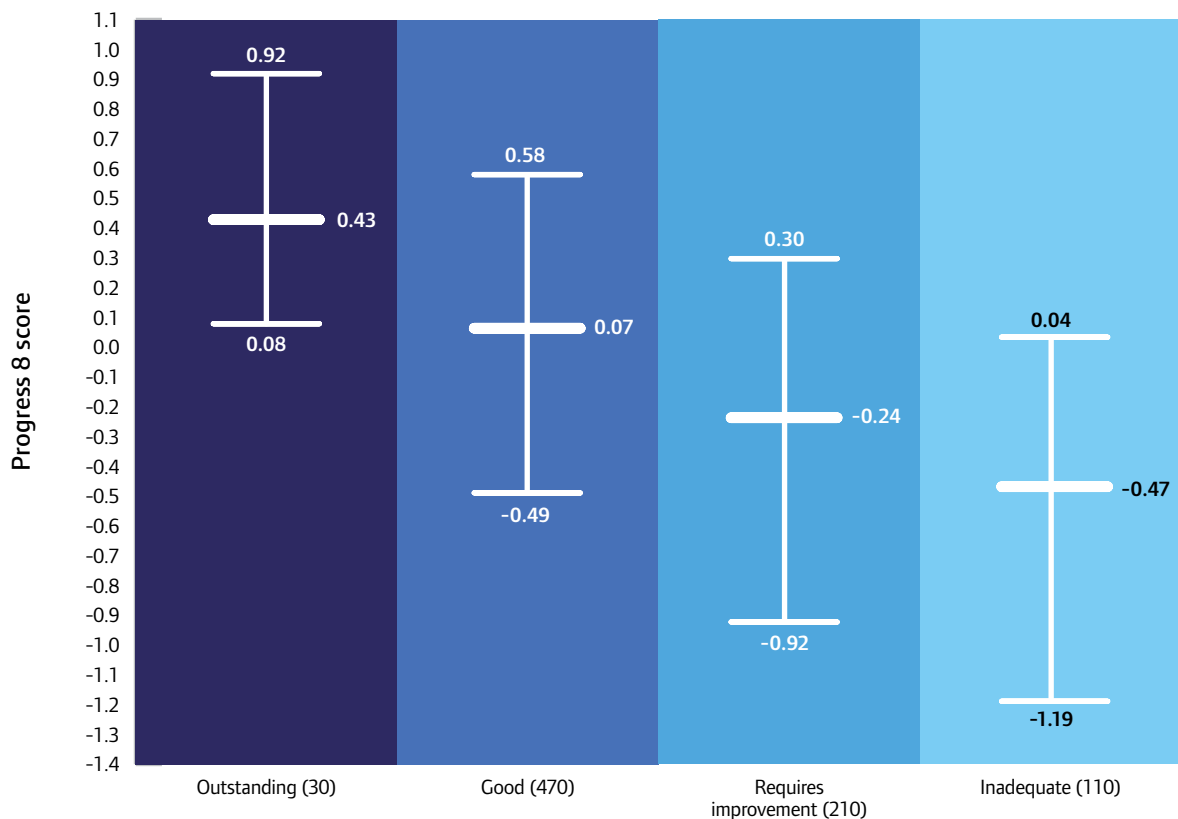
Source: Ofsted

- 44. The proportion of previously good schools that remained good or improved to outstanding following a short inspection is the same this year as last year (83%). A lower proportion of short inspections converted to a full inspection this year (29% compared with 36%). However, more of the inspections that converted then resulted in the school declining to requires improvement or inadequate (58% this year compared with 47% last year).
- 45. In June 2017, we consulted on changes to the way we carry out short inspections. From October half-term, around 20% of previously good schools now automatically receive a full inspection instead of a short inspection, where our risk assessment tells us that a short inspection would be highly likely to convert. In September 2017, we consulted on further changes to inspections of previously good schools. We are publishing the results of this second consultation in December 2017, with changes to be implemented early in the spring term.



46. Good schools are a broad group because more schools are judged to be good than any other grade. Sixty-three per cent of all schools were judged good at their most recent inspection. For the secondary schools judged good this year (including those that stayed good at a short inspection that did not convert), the median average of their Progress 8 scores was +0.07. This is just above the national average of 0.0. However, as Figure 7 shows, within this there was a wide range of scores from +0.58 to -0.49. Looking at all four inspection grades together, there is a clear relationship between median Progress 8 scores and inspection grades for the schools inspected this year. However, there is also considerable overlap in the scores for the four groups of schools. Performance data is just one piece of information we use when judging the effectiveness of a school.

**Figure 7: Progress 8 scores for secondary schools inspected in 2016/17, by overall effectiveness grade (includes full and short inspections)**



1. The centre mark on each bar shows the median Progress 8 score for each group of schools.
2. The upper and lower marks are the upper and lower quartiles of the data.
3. Outliers have been excluded from the chart. Outliers are values beyond the standard 1.5 x the inter-quartile range. Twenty-one schools had values outside of this range.

Source: Ofsted

## Outstanding schools

47. Twenty-one per cent of schools were judged to be outstanding at their most recent inspection. A slightly higher proportion of secondary schools than primary schools are outstanding (23% compared with 19%).
48. As part of the 2011 Education Act, the government made outstanding primary and secondary schools exempt from routine inspections. This means that we have been unable to carry out regular inspections of these schools. As a result, 8% of outstanding primary and secondary schools were last inspected as long ago as 2006/07. However, more than half of outstanding primary and secondary schools have been inspected within the last six academic years.

**Table 4: Outstanding primary and secondary schools by the academic year of their most recent full inspection**

Year of inspection	Number of schools	Percentage
All years	3,790	100
2016/17	200	5
2015/16	190	5
2014/15	410	11
2013/14	420	11
2012/13	530	14
2011/12	480	13
2010/11	210	5
2009/10	200	5
2008/09	470	13
2007/08	390	10
2006/07	300	8

1. The numbers of schools are rounded to the nearest 10 schools.

Source: Ofsted

49. We are still able to inspect outstanding primary and secondary schools if their performance gives cause for concern. We have inspected 141 of these schools this year.<sup>34</sup> Of those schools that had their inspection converted to a full inspection, only two kept their outstanding grade, 63 declined to good, 43 declined to requires improvement and 19 declined to inadequate. The remaining 14 schools did not have a full inspection and remained outstanding. Overall, 89% of the schools declined from their previously outstanding grade. However, this is not surprising because most of the exempt schools inspected were those whose performance appeared to be declining.<sup>35</sup>

34. These inspections are carried out under the powers given to Ofsted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. A section 8 inspection can be deemed a full section 5 inspection, which includes a set of inspection outcomes.

35. Most inspections of exempt schools are carried out because the school's performance appears to be declining. However, some are also due to complaints received by Ofsted about the school, or because the make-up of the school has substantially changed since it was judged to be outstanding (for instance, it has taken on another key stage or merged with another school).

50. We must ensure that our grading system encourages improvement and does not create undesirable incentives. Over the next few years, as set out in our corporate strategy published in October, we will work with the DfE to carry out research into the impact of the inspection grading structure. We will also give greater prominence to underlying judgements and look at how they are used by different audiences for different purposes.<sup>36</sup>



## Inadequate schools

51. Two per cent of schools were judged to be inadequate at their most recent inspection. Around two fifths of these schools are academies and around three fifths are maintained by local authorities.
52. Since the Education and Adoption Act came in to force in April 2016,<sup>37</sup> the DfE issues a directive academy order to any local authority maintained school judged to be inadequate. This requires the school to become an academy. However, the process of becoming an academy can be very complicated. Issues include transferring property and contracts, agreeing financial plans, and finding a strong multi-academy trust in the area that is suitable to take on a struggling school.

36. See 'Ofsted strategy: 2017 to 2022', Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-strategy-2017-to-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-strategy-2017-to-2022) for details.

37. 'Education and Adoption Act 2016', 2016; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/6/contents/enacted).

53. On 1 April 2016, there were 170 inadequate local authority maintained schools.<sup>38</sup> Although 62% of these schools have now closed, 38% are still open 17 months later.<sup>39</sup> In total, there are 113 local authority maintained schools that became eligible for a directive academy order at least nine months ago, and are still open.<sup>40</sup> Twenty-three of these had no planned closure date.<sup>41</sup> Our regional directors work with the regional school commissioners to understand when schools like these are likely to close, and consider whether to carry out monitoring visits in the meantime.

## Multi-academy trusts

54. Around 1,200 schools have closed this year and most have re-opened as academies. Nine out of 10 new academies now join a multi-academy trust (MAT) from the outset.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the government encourages struggling academies to join a MAT.<sup>43</sup>
55. As a result of these developments over the last few years, the number of MATs has grown. There were almost 800 MATs in August 2016. By August 2017, this figure had increased by 29% to just under 1,000 MATs.<sup>44</sup> More than 2.2 million pupils are educated in the schools overseen by these trusts. Established MATs have also grown in size. There are now over 100 MATs with at least nine schools. Within this, there are 27 very large MATs with 20 or more schools. However, most MATs are far smaller than this. Although the average size of a MAT is five schools, around half of MATs have three schools or fewer.

## Inspection outcomes

56. We began to carry out focused inspections of MATs in 2013. Focused inspections include inspecting some of the academies in the MAT, seeking the views of leaders in other academies in the MAT, and meeting with the board of trustees and senior leaders of the MAT. Since 2013, we have visited 19 different MATs, prioritising those that did not appear to be performing well.
57. This year, we carried out focused inspections of seven MATs: University of Chester Academies Trust, Northern Education Trust, Plymouth CAST, Greenwood Academies Trust, Education Central Multi Academy Trust, University of Chichester Academies Trust, and Academy Trust of Melksham.

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38. Excludes local authority maintained nursery schools and non-maintained special schools, because these types of schools are not subject to directive academy orders.

39. Based on schools that were recorded as open on 31 August 2017 in the Department for Education's Get Information About Schools database. Excludes eight schools where the directive academy order was rescinded.

40. Based on schools open on 31 August 2017. Includes some schools that improved their grade at a subsequent inspection, but where the directive academy order is still in place, because it had not been rescinded by the Department for Education by 2 October 2017.

41. Based on planned closure dates in 'Open academies and academy projects in development', Department for Education, 19 September 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development).

42. Based on academies that opened in the 2016/17 academic year.

43. 'Schools causing concern – Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools', Department for Education, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2).

44. Based on MATs registered with the Department for Education and that have at least one school. Excludes MATs that have been set up but that do not yet have any schools. Data provided by the Department for Education and reflects the position on 14 August 2017.



58. We reviewed the outcomes of these seven inspections and found some common problems.<sup>45</sup> In the weaker MATs, the leaders of the trusts were unable to secure sustainable trust-wide improvement because of the following issues.

- **Subject leaders.** Middle leadership in the schools was rarely identified as a strength in the reports. Mostly, it was of variable quality. Subject networks were inconsistent in quality, if they were present at all. The systems and support for developing middle leaders were insufficient. Recruitment strategies were unclear. Most MATs were ineffective at building capacity in this important area.
- **Professional development and training.** There was inconsistency in how the schools provided continued professional development. The impact of appraisal processes and monitoring teaching was variable. Most of the MATs were beginning to strengthen these arrangements to ensure greater accountability of teachers. Training was often seen as valued, but was in most cases not yet having significant impact. There was not enough bespoke professional development provided for staff. Support for newly qualified teachers, where mentioned, was reported to be good.
- **Quality of teaching.** A common feature of most of the schools visited in these MATs was the inconsistent quality of teaching. Common weaknesses typically included:
  - poor use of assessment to check pupils’ understanding and to match work to pupils’ needs
  - insufficient challenge for the most able pupils
  - low expectations of pupils
  - weak subject knowledge
  - poor questioning of pupils by teachers
  - inconsistent feedback and marking.

Teaching that was stronger or improving was often underpinned by clear expectations and more effective monitoring.

- **Leadership.** In most of the MATs, leaders did not know the schools they run well enough. They were too reactive, rather than proactive, in providing support. Therefore, support was too slow in coming. Leaders were not challenging or monitoring the schools rigorously enough. They carried out poor strategic evaluation of how to tackle weaknesses in teaching, curriculum, attendance and exclusions. Processes for school improvement were not well established. Where some schools in the MAT supported other schools, impact was mixed. This is part of the reason why, in some MATs, outcomes were characterised by wide variability from school to school and within schools. Most commonly, disadvantaged pupils in the MATs were underachieving. Outcomes were variable for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Weaknesses in accuracy of assessment were sometimes cited as barriers to raising achievement.

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45. MAT inspection outcomes letters available at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/outcome-letters-from-ofsted-inspections-of-multi-academy-trusts](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/outcome-letters-from-ofsted-inspections-of-multi-academy-trusts).

- **Governance.** In the weaker MATs, there were not clear and published schemes of delegation that outlined the roles and accountabilities of each level of governance. In particular, there was ambiguity between the board of trustees and local governing bodies. Weaker trust boards did not have an accurate picture of pupils' progress in their schools. The weaker boards were overly dependent on school leaders and too few trustees to interpret data. Weaker MATs did not have clear strategies for the spending of additional funding, such as pupil premium funding, nor were there processes to evaluate the impact of the additional funding.

59. We continue to have concerns about the performance of some MATs. We are concerned about their capacity to grow at the rate required by the government to support its policy initiatives. We will work with the DfE to develop new approaches and expertise to allow us to better scrutinise the performance of MATs in the future.<sup>46</sup>



46. See 'Ofsted strategy: 2017 to 2022', Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-strategy-2017-to-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-strategy-2017-to-2022) for details.

## Special schools

60. There are around 1,000 state-funded special schools. Forty-five per cent of pupils with a statement or education, health and care plan attend a state-funded special school. This is an increase from 40% in 2010.<sup>47</sup> There are also around 1,000 state-funded mainstream primary and secondary schools with specialist classes.
61. We inspect around 450 non-association independent special schools. These are fee-paying schools, but some of the places in them are funded by local authorities for children from their area.<sup>48</sup>

## Inspection outcomes

62. State-funded special schools have better inspection outcomes than independent non-association special schools (94% compared with 78% good or outstanding). State-funded<sup>49</sup> special schools are far more likely to be outstanding (38% compared with 16%) and less likely to be inadequate (2% compared with 9%). Both parts of the sector have improved their inspection outcomes slightly this year (an increase from 93% good or outstanding for state-funded schools, and from 77% for independent schools).

## Independent schools

63. There are over 2,300 independent schools in England. We inspect almost 1,100 non-association independent schools. The other inspectorates<sup>50</sup> inspect the schools that are members of associations, for example the associations that make up the Independent Schools Council. Around two fifths of the schools that we inspect are special schools (discussed previously). The other independent schools are primary schools, secondary schools and all-through schools.

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47. 'Special educational needs in England: January 2017', Department for Education, January 2017, [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2017).

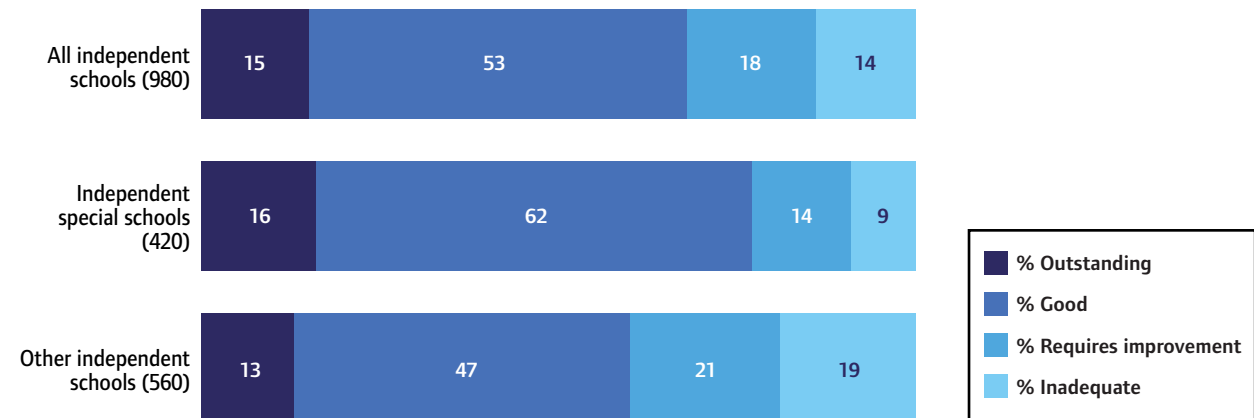
48. Pupils may be placed in schools outside of their own local authority area.

49. State-funded special schools includes local authority maintained schools and academies (including free schools). See Ofsted's official statistics for details of the schools included: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2017).

50. The other inspectorates that inspect the association independent schools are the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the School Inspection Service.

**Figure 8: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**

Number of schools in brackets (rounded)



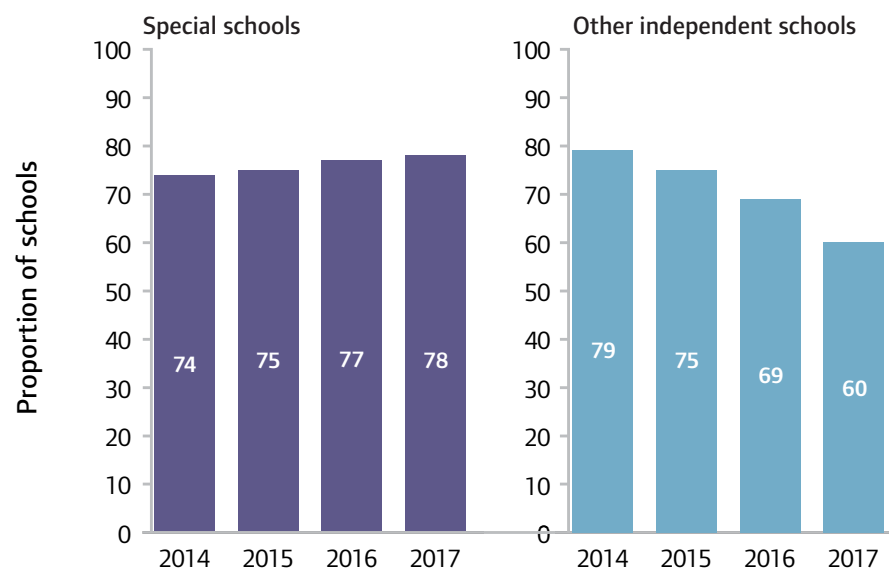
1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.

2. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: Ofsted

64. Over the last few years, the proportion of non-association schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection has declined. This is driven by a decline in grades for the schools that are not special schools. The proportion of these schools that are good or outstanding at their most recent inspection has fallen from 79% in 2014 to 60% in 2017. Conversely, the outcomes for independent special schools have gradually improved during the same period, from 74% good or outstanding in 2014 to 78% in 2017.

**Figure 9: Proportion of non-association independent schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**



Source: Ofsted

This decline since 2014 is caused by a combination of:

- schools failing to meet the new standards introduced by the DfE in 2014 and 2015<sup>51</sup>
- safeguarding issues
- a sharp decline in inspection outcomes for faith schools, exacerbated by the number of faith schools inspected by Ofsted increasing in the period
- failing schools taking too long to improve.

65. The DfE introduced new standards for independent schools in January 2015. In the year before the standards were introduced, 79% of schools inspected met all standards, compared with just 66% in 2016/17. The most common failings this year include ineffective safeguarding, poor leadership and poor effectiveness of leaders, governors or proprietors.
66. Since September 2015, we have inspected independent schools under the common inspection framework for education and skills. This means that they are assessed against the same rigorous criteria as state-funded schools.

### Safeguarding

67. Ineffective safeguarding is of particular concern. We have found safeguarding to be ineffective in 17% of independent schools inspected since September 2015. Of the 124 independent schools judged inadequate for overall effectiveness since September 2015, 98 had ineffective safeguarding.
68. In the worst cases, inspectors have found:<sup>52</sup>
- inadequate vetting and checking of staff and proprietors to ensure that they were suitable to work with children
  - squalid, unsafe and unfit premises; for example, at one school, there was no running hot water for pupils to use
  - poor boarding facilities; for example, in one case adults shared boarding facilities with children as young as 11
  - inappropriate, sexist or sectarian literature
  - misleading and opaque accountability arrangements
  - admission and attendance registers that were incomplete and unsatisfactory.

### Independent faith schools

69. There has been a sharp decline in inspection outcomes for independent faith schools. Almost half of these schools are judged less than good. Over a quarter are currently inadequate. However, there is a lot of variation within the different faith groups.

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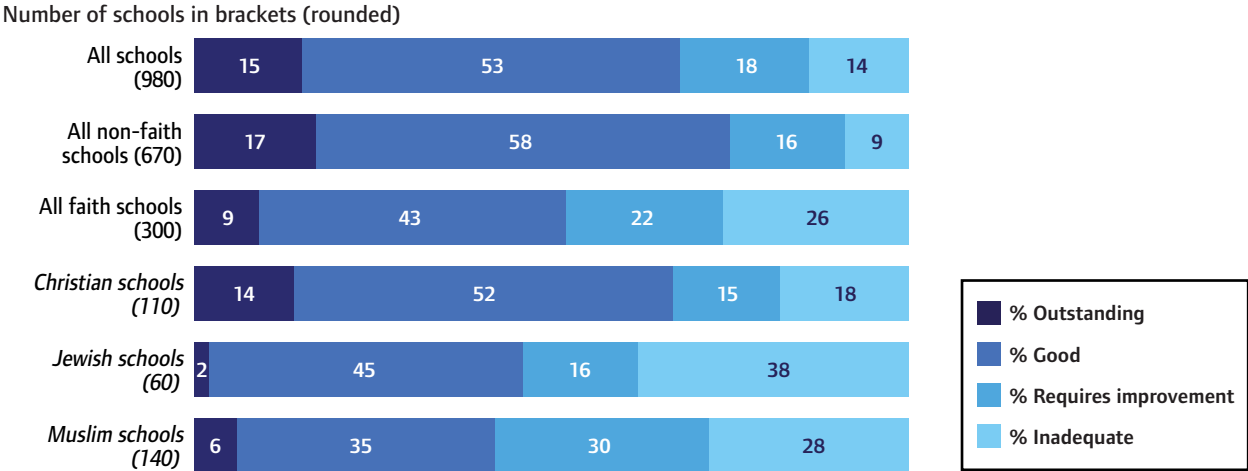
51. New standards were introduced by the Department for Education on 29 September 2014 and supplemented on 5 January 2015. See: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made).

52. Based on a review of inspection reports of schools that were ineffective for safeguarding at their latest inspection, at 31 March 2017.



70. Some of the weaker faith schools fail on the new standards for fundamental British values and on leadership and management.<sup>53</sup> Poor leadership is a feature of most failing non-association independent schools. Too often, trustees and proprietors do not perform their role well enough and fail to act quickly on inspection recommendations. Some leaders do not fully recognise their responsibilities, have not yet got the basics right and do not sufficiently promote fundamental British values.

**Figure 10: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent inspection, by faith, 31 August 2017**



1. Data on faith is taken from the DfE's Get Information About Schools database. It is based on a declaration by the school that it has either a religious character, a religious ethos, or both.  
 2. Christian schools include Church of England; Roman Catholic; Anglican; Evangelical; Seventh Day Adventist; Quaker; Protestant; Greek Orthodox and Christian.  
 3. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.  
 Source: Ofsted

71. The number of faith schools inspected by Ofsted has increased over the last few years. We now inspect schools previously inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI). These schools are Christian and Muslim schools. We have inspected 39 of the 51 former BSI-inspected schools in the last two years. Twenty-eight of these schools have been judged to be less than good. As a result of this, we have seen a far larger fall in the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding than we would otherwise have expected. We plan to inspect all non-association independent schools under the common inspection framework and the new independent school standards by August 2018.

53. There are three independent schools standards relating to British values, in relation to written policies on the curriculum (requirement 2(1)(b)(ii)), the quality of teaching (requirement 3(i)) and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (requirement 5(a)). Out of the faith schools judged requires improvement or inadequate between September 2015 and August 2017: 10% did not meet 2(1)(b)(ii), 10% did not meet 3(i), and 18% did not meet 5(a). See the Official Statistics for further details: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes).

### Schools' capacity to improve

72. Inadequate schools are taking too long to improve. Of the 141 non-association schools that are currently inadequate, over a quarter have been inadequate for over two years. Since September 2015, around three fifths of action plans submitted to the DfE by schools were not considered to be good enough. Almost half of schools receiving progress monitoring inspections in the same period did not meet the standards being checked. While just over half of schools did meet the standards being checked on their progress monitoring inspection, these schools remain inadequate until their next standard inspection, where a full review of all standards is completed. Independent schools are regulated by the DfE, which can take enforcement action such as closing a school or restructuring the number of pupils they can take.
73. Some non-association independent schools fail to improve because of ineffective and confused governance arrangements. We reviewed 25 inspection reports for special schools graded inadequate or requires improvement. We also analysed the results of a questionnaire on governance submitted by lead inspectors for 50 independent schools inspected in summer 2017. These two sources highlighted the following issues.
74. The responsibility for effective governance in these schools rests firmly with the proprietor. However, the proprietor may be an individual, group of individuals, a trust, a charity or a company. Sometimes, the proprietor is the headteacher and fulfils both the role of school leader and governance. This may make an objective analysis of the school's performance difficult, unless they have recruited a governing body to support them. In other examples, the proprietor is too remote from the school to oversee it effectively.
75. There are many instances of individuals, companies and joint proprietors fulfilling their governance role with insight and integrity. These proprietors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are actively involved in improvement planning. However, in schools that are less than good, this is not the case. The proprietor's oversight of the school's effectiveness is poor. They do not hold school leaders to account effectively for pupils' progress and well-being. They have little understanding of how pupils' progress is assessed and whether progress is good enough. They may understand that there are regulations that the school must meet to fulfil the terms of its registration. However, they do not check sufficiently on how well the regulations are implemented and how pupils benefit from this. This means that, in these schools, pupils miss out. They do not have access to all the areas of learning and to the high-quality teaching that would enable them to progress and develop well. In some cases, pupils are also not kept safe enough.

## Initial teacher training

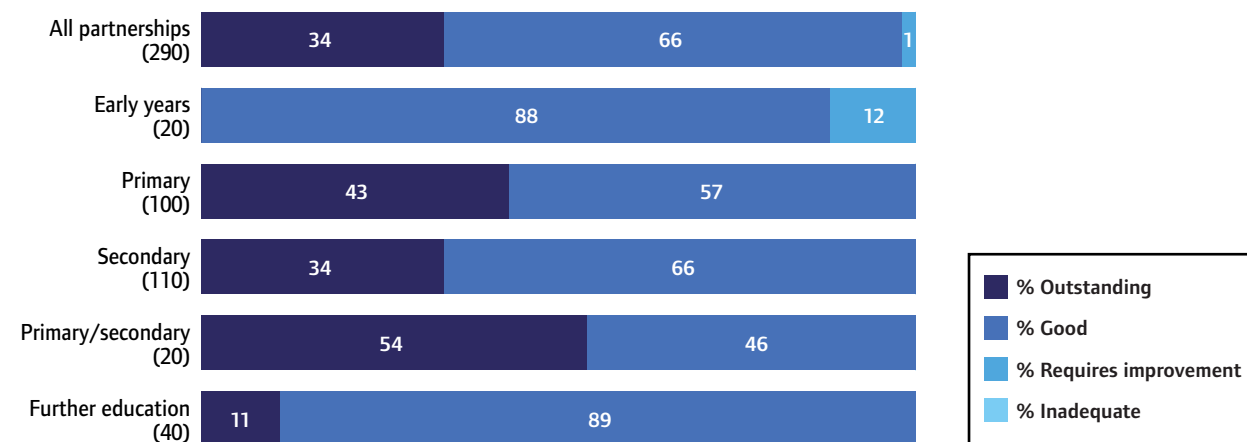
76. There are around 260 initial teacher education (ITE) providers. Around 180 are school-led providers and 80 are university-led providers. They offer training for one or more age phase partnerships. These are: early years, primary, secondary, or further education. In 2016/17, they provided training for over 63,000 trainees.
77. When we inspect an ITE provider, we usually make separate judgements for each age phase partnership. A small number of providers receive a single set of judgements for primary and secondary phases combined.
78. We inspect ITE providers in two stages. Stage one occurs in the summer term and allows inspectors to observe trainees during their training. No inspection judgements are formed during this stage. Stage two takes place in the following autumn. This focuses on observing newly qualified teachers or former trainees in the classroom. Outcomes of inspections are only finalised after the second stage.

## Inspection outcomes

79. At the end of June 2017, we had inspected 174 providers with 285 age phase partnerships. Ninety-nine per cent of all partnerships are good or outstanding. This is the same proportion as at the end of the previous academic year. There are no inadequate partnerships. Only two partnerships were judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection.

**Figure 11: Overall effectiveness of initial teacher education partnerships at their most recent inspection, 30 June 2017**

Number of partnerships in brackets (rounded)



Source: Ofsted

80. This is the second year of inspections of early years partnerships. So far, 17 have been inspected. All but two have been judged to be good at their most recent inspection. The two partnerships that require improvement have no trainees allocated for the early years training for 2017/18.

## A changing sector

81. Five years ago, 61% of all ITE partnerships were based in universities. Today, this has decreased to 48%. School-led providers are generally smaller, offer fewer age phases and take fewer trainees than university-led providers. For example, nearly eight in 10 (79%) university-based providers offer at least two age phases. Many (47%) offer at least three age phases. However, just over half (54%) of school-led providers specialise in a single age phase.<sup>54</sup>
82. The quality of training is similarly high in both school-led partnerships and university-led partnerships. Ninety-nine per cent of university-led partnerships and 100% of school-led partnerships were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. Within that, there is a difference in the proportion of partnerships judged outstanding: 27% for university-led partnerships and 45% for school-led partnerships.
83. MATs are beginning to gain accreditation to provide their own school-centred training, to ensure a supply of new teachers for their schools. Ninety-three MATs now have their own school-centred initial teacher training partnership.<sup>55</sup> This includes many of the largest national MATs, for example, The Kemnal Academies Trust, Harris Federation and United Learning Trust. So far, 31 age phase partnerships led by MATs have been inspected. Thirteen were judged to be outstanding and 18 were judged to be good.



54. The number of age phase partnerships offered by each provider is based on the phases that had trainees in place in the 2016/17 academic year. This information is submitted by providers to Ofsted each year.

55. Data on MATs with their own school-centred initial teacher training partnerships is provided by the Department for Education, and is the number as at 31 August 2017.

# Further education and skills

84. The further education and skills sector provides education, training and apprenticeships for around 3.3 million learners aged 16 and above.<sup>56</sup> In 2016/17, it received £7.8 billion in funding.<sup>57 58</sup> This section of the report covers our findings from the inspections of further education and skills providers.
85. The further education and skills sector is primarily made up of independent learning providers, colleges and community learning and skills providers. At 31 August 2017, there were 1,170 open and funded further education and skills providers.

**Table 5: Number of further education and skills providers by provider type, 31 August 2017**

	Total number of open and funded providers	Number of providers that have been inspected
<b>All further education and skills providers</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,050</b>
Colleges	280	280
<i>General further education colleges</i>	190	190
<i>Sixth form colleges</i>	80	80
<i>Specialist further education colleges</i>	20	20
Independent specialist colleges	80	60
Independent learning providers (including employer providers)	490	400
Community learning and skills providers	230	230
16-19 academies	30	30
Dance and drama colleges	20	20
Higher education institutions	30	30
National Careers Service contractors	10	10

1. Dance and drama colleges – inspected as a whole and awarded an overall effectiveness judgement from 1 September 2015 onwards.

2. Higher education institutions – inspection of further education provision only, not provider as a whole.

3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source: Ofsted

86. This year, however, there has been an unusually high level of change in providers of further education and skills. This is because:
- providers delivering Advanced Learner Loans funded provision for adults have been included in scope for inspection
  - several colleges have merged
  - several sixth form colleges have become academies.
87. This changeability is likely to accelerate in 2017/18 as a consequence of changes to apprenticeship funding, further college mergers and more sixth form colleges becoming academies.

56. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

57. 'Funding allocations to training providers: 2016 to 2017', Skills Funding Agency and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017).

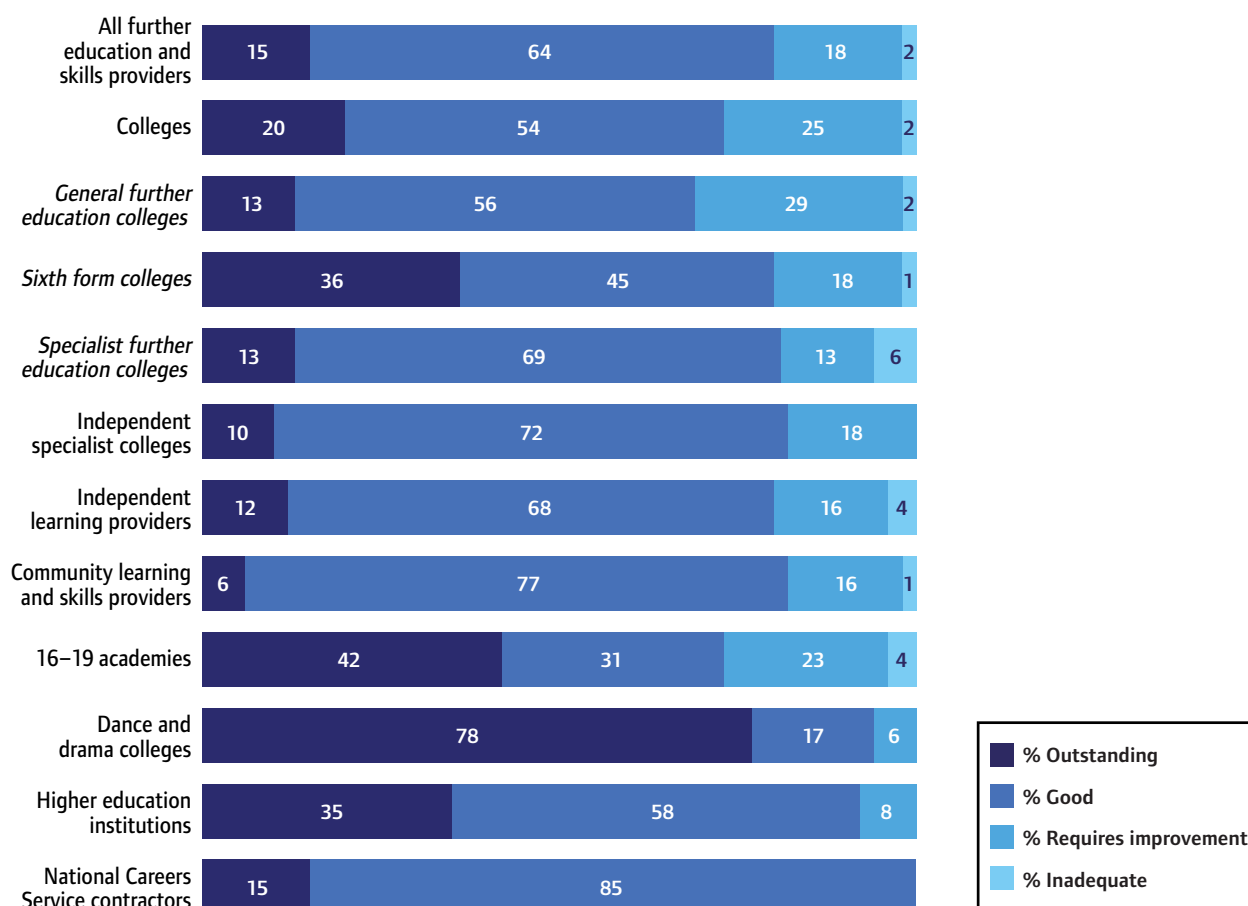
58. '16 to 19 allocation data: 2016 to 2017 academic year', Education Funding Agency, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year).



## Inspection outcomes

88. Between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017, 392 further education and skills providers were inspected. This included 102 colleges, 159 independent learning providers (including employer providers) and 78 community learning and skills providers. Ofsted also contributed to the inspections of 41 prisons and young offender institutions, where the reports were published between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017.
89. On 31 August 2017, eight out of 10 of the 1,052 further education and skills providers that had been inspected were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is the same proportion at the end of last year.

**Figure 12: Overall effectiveness of further education and skills providers at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.
  2. Independent learning providers – includes employer providers.
  3. Higher education institutions – inspection of further education provision only, not provider as a whole.
  4. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100. Some percentages are based on small numbers and should be treated with caution.
- Source: Ofsted

90. Further contextual information on further education and skills providers is available in our further education and skills inspections and outcomes official statistics.<sup>59</sup>

59. 'Further education and skills inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2017, Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-inspection-outcomes](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-inspection-outcomes).

## Further education colleges

91. General and specialist further education (FE) colleges provide education, training and apprenticeships for around 1.8 million learners aged 16 and over.<sup>60</sup> In 2016/17, they were allocated £4.6 billion to deliver this training.<sup>61 62</sup>
92. Over the summer of 2017, there were a series of mergers of general FE colleges. This reduced the number of general FE colleges from 207 last year to 189 on 31 August 2017.
93. Another significant change for this group of providers was the introduction of the new tech levels and certificates. Over 100,000 16- to 18-year-olds participated on these courses full time in 2016. The very large majority of these courses were being delivered by the general FE colleges.<sup>63</sup>



60. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

61. 'Funding allocations to training providers: 2016 to 2017', Skills Funding Agency and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017).

62. '16 to 19 allocation data: 2016 to 2017 academic year', Education Funding Agency, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year).

63. 'Participation in education, training and employment: 2016', DfE, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2016).

## Inspection outcomes

94. The proportion of general FE colleges judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection declined by two percentage points, from 71% on 31 August 2016 to 69% on 31 August 2017.
95. Nine colleges improved to good this year from requires improvement or inadequate. Eight of those colleges had either new principals and/or senior leadership teams in place at the time of their previous inspection, which was within the past two years. At their inspection this year, inspectors found that a new culture within the colleges had led to rapid improvements: the quality of teaching had improved; and learners were now achieving well and had positive destinations, such as further education or employment.
96. In seven of the 10 colleges that remained requires improvement at inspection this year, inspectors found new principals and/or senior leadership teams were starting to have a positive impact. There were signs of improvement and a change in culture, but changes were at an early stage and the colleges were not yet good overall.
97. In the 18 general FE colleges that declined from good or outstanding to requires improvement or inadequate this year, inspectors found a general decline in the quality of provision. Where improvement actions had been put in place, they had not had a sufficient impact on quality. In at least half of colleges, inspectors found that the leadership and management of teaching, learning and assessment was weak. This had resulted in:
  - too few learners completing and/or achieving their qualifications and too few achieving the grades they were capable of
  - too many learners not being set challenging targets and/or being provided with sufficiently detailed feedback to help them make good progress
  - too many learners not improving their English and mathematics skills sufficiently
  - low attendance and poor punctuality.
98. In the two general FE colleges that improved to outstanding this year, inspectors found that college leaders had successfully established a culture of high expectations for all staff and learners. Links with employers and the local communities were highly effective. They created excellent opportunities for learners to progress into further learning and jobs that met local, regional or national needs. Learners made significant progress from their starting points and achieved their qualifications as a result of high-quality teaching.



99. In our Annual Report in 2016, we highlighted that the government’s policy on GCSE retakes, while focused on an important aim of raising proficiency, is not having the desired outcome of higher proportions of students securing qualifications in these subjects. This has not changed in 2017. In 2016/17, around a fifth of students not attaining GCSE 9 to 4/A\* to C grade in English by age 16 did so by 19. The proportion was similar for mathematics.<sup>64</sup> Students clearly benefit from developing English and mathematics knowledge and skills through studying these subjects further, especially where teaching is effective.<sup>65</sup> However, in seven out of the nine colleges that improved to good this year, English and mathematics were still weak. Learners’ progress remained too slow and, frequently, their attendance at lessons was poor.
100. In addition to the general FE colleges, we inspected seven specialist FE colleges during 2016/17. These colleges specialised in agriculture and other land-based provision. The four previously good colleges that received a short inspection all remained good. Out of the three previously good colleges risk assessed for a full inspection, two remained good and one declined to inadequate.

## Sixth form colleges and 16 to 19 academies

101. Around 90% of students being educated and trained by sixth form colleges are aged under 19.<sup>66</sup> In 2016/17, the colleges received £770 million to educate around 180,000 students.<sup>67 68</sup>
102. The number of sixth form colleges decreased in 2016/17. Following area reviews, four sixth form colleges merged with four separate general FE colleges and seven sixth form colleges converted to become 16 to 19 academies. These changes reduced the number of sixth form colleges from 90 on 31 August 2016 to 79 on 31 August 2017.

64. ‘A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2016 to 2017 (provisional)’, DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results-2016-to-2017-provisional](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results-2016-to-2017-provisional).

65. Ofsted research into level 2 study programmes, due to be published early 2018.

66. ‘FE data library: local authority tables’, DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

67. ‘16 to 19 allocation data: 2016 to 2017 academic year’, Education Funding Agency, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year).

68. ‘Funding allocations to training providers: 2016 to 2017’, Skills Funding Agency and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017).

## Inspection outcomes

103. The proportion of sixth form colleges judged to be good or outstanding declined by eight percentage points, from 89% on 31 August 2016 to 81% on 31 August 2017. This decline can be attributed equally to a drop in performance at inspection this year and to a number of sixth form colleges converting to 16 to 19 academies or merging with other colleges, and hence being excluded from sixth form college official statistics.
104. There were eight sixth form colleges inspected this year that declined to requires improvement or inadequate. Across these colleges, inspectors found that:
- governors, senior leaders and managers had not identified a deterioration in students' progress quickly enough; in all but one of the colleges, leaders had taken action to tackle the decline but this had not yet led to consistent improvement in students' progress
  - too much teaching resulted in activities or tasks that were either too easy for the most able students or too hard for those who were struggling; too often neither of these groups made sufficient progress
  - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was not consistently good across the colleges; weaknesses included poor performance management of teachers and a failure to explore the relationship between the quality of teaching and students' progress; staff development activities had not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that it was consistently good.
105. There were two sixth form colleges that improved to outstanding. In these colleges, inspectors found that:
- the principal, leadership team and governors had worked relentlessly to develop high aspirations and expectations for students and staff
  - college leaders had good monitoring processes in place that enabled them to recognise and swiftly tackle any underperformance
  - continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning was a main focus for the leadership team, which meant that teachers were clear about the standards expected of them and what they needed to achieve; teachers assessed students' starting points skilfully, they planned lessons well to meet the needs of the vast majority of students.
106. The number of 16 to 19 academies has increased from 21 on 31 August 2016 to 31 on 31 August 2017. This is largely as a result of seven sixth form colleges converting to become 16 to 19 academies over the summer of 2017. All of the colleges that converted were either judged to be good or outstanding. A total of 26 academies (including the former colleges) had been inspected by 31 August 2017, with 73% judged to be good or outstanding.



## Independent learning providers

107. Independent learning providers (including employer providers) play an important role in delivering post-16 education. This can be through apprenticeships, employer-based professional development or study programmes. Around 80% of learners are adults aged 19 and over.<sup>69</sup> In 2016/17, independent learning providers and employer providers were allocated £1.6 billion to educate around 675,000 learners.<sup>70 71</sup>
108. Independent learning providers are companies that provide government-funded education. Some of the biggest independent learning providers include learndirect limited (around 97,000 learners), Lifetime Training Group Limited (34,000 learners) and Babcock Training Limited (27,000 learners).<sup>72</sup> On 31 August 2017, there were 420 open and funded independent learning providers.
109. Employer providers only offer government-funded training to their own employees. For example, the British Army receives funding to train approximately 25,000 learners, Capita PLC for 4,500 learners and British Telecommunications PLC for 1,400 learners.<sup>73</sup> On 31 August 2017, there were 71 open and funded employer providers.
110. Since the reduction of the adult education budget in 2013/14,<sup>74</sup> there has been a decline in the number of adults engaged in learning.<sup>75</sup> Advanced Learner Loans were introduced to enable more adults to access learning. So far the take-up of these loans has been low.<sup>76</sup>
111. Learners taking out Advanced Learner Loans can be found in most types of providers. However, there are providers whose funding comes solely from the Advanced Learner Loans. They were included in the scope for Ofsted inspections from September 2016 as independent learning providers. The inclusion of these providers increased the number of open and funded independent learning providers (including employer providers) by 3%, from 477 on 31 August 2016 to 491 this year.

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69. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

70. '16 to 19 allocation data: 2016 to 2017 academic year', Education Funding Agency, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2016-to-2017-academic-year).

71. 'Funding allocations to training providers: 2016 to 2017', Skills Funding Agency and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2016-to-2017).

72. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

73. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

74. 'Funding allocations and performance management for FE providers: SFA funding allocations', Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-allocations-and-performance-management-for-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-allocations-and-performance-management-for-providers).

75. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

76. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

## Inspection outcomes

112. The proportion of independent learning providers (including employer providers) judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection declined from 83% in 2016 to 80% this year. A higher proportion of providers previously judged good declined at inspection this year. Of the 159 providers inspected during the year, 57% were judged to be good or outstanding. This is 15 percentage points lower than last year.
113. Forty-three previously good providers declined at inspection this year. In at least half of these providers, inspectors found that:
- leaders' evaluation of the quality of provision was insufficiently rigorous and monitoring processes did not identify areas of underperformance accurately
  - progress and/or achievement of learners and apprentices was either too low, too slow, or in decline
  - learners and apprentices did not always make as much progress as they should have because the work or tasks they were given were often too easy or, less often, too difficult
  - leaders, managers and teachers did not always make sure that learners and apprentices developed good skills in English and mathematics.
114. In the seven providers that either remained or improved to outstanding in 2016/17, inspectors found that:
- leaders, managers and staff had high expectations for the learners and apprentices
  - training officers were highly skilled, had good industry knowledge and gave significant support and guidance to the learners and apprentices
  - learners and apprentices were making outstanding progress and had excellent achievement rates; they took additional qualifications that helped them to prepare well for their future careers; they developed their skills in English, mathematics and information technology to a higher level, often reaching well beyond the standard needed for their qualifications.
115. While our evidence from the inspections of Advanced Learner Loans funded providers is limited, it has highlighted some potential concerns about the quality and effectiveness of distance-learning provision in some providers.

## Apprenticeships

116. To improve the quality and range of apprenticeships available to learners, the government has introduced a number of reforms over the last three years. These include the apprenticeship levy, employer-led standards and degree-level apprenticeships. The number of apprenticeships started in 2016/17 fell by 4% compared with the previous year, to around 490,000.<sup>77</sup> Employers who pay the apprenticeship levy have begun to plan how they will recruit and train apprentices. However, employers are not yet delivering to the scale envisaged in policy.

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77. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

## Inspection outcomes

117. In 2016/17, 189 providers were judged on the delivery of their apprenticeships: 6% were found to be outstanding; 43% good; 40% required improvement; and 11% were inadequate. At the point of inspection, these providers were delivering apprenticeships to 187,000 apprentices. Fifty-two per cent of the apprentices were in good or outstanding provision. This year, the proportion of apprentices training with inadequate providers was much higher compared with last year, at 20% (37,000 apprentices).
118. In the providers judged good or outstanding for their apprenticeships in 2016/17, inspectors found that:
- employers and providers showed drive and ambition
  - employers and providers worked well together to ensure that apprentices gained the technical and occupational skills they needed to secure or maintain permanent employment
  - employees who took on new roles through their apprenticeship often gained promotion
  - apprenticeships supported young people previously not in education, employment or training (NEET) with training to get their first job.
119. In the providers judged requires improvement or inadequate for their apprenticeships in 2016/17, inspectors found that:
- apprentices took too long to complete their apprenticeships because employers did not value the apprenticeship enough to challenge apprentices to do better
  - training providers failed to check on the work that apprentices were doing
  - at work, apprentices were not able to apply what they'd learned
  - other characteristics of inadequate training for apprentices included:
    - no off-the-job training
    - apprentices not in work or on zero-hours contracts
    - employers using apprenticeships to give qualifications to employees who did not require training
    - a failure to improve apprentices' skills and qualifications in English and mathematics
    - too few apprentices completing their apprenticeships.
120. Apprenticeship standards were introduced in 2014/15. The number of apprentices starting an apprenticeship standard continues to grow rapidly, rising from 4,300 in 2015/16 to 23,700 in 2016/17. However, this still represents just 5% of all apprenticeships started. More than 460,000 apprentices started on an apprenticeship framework in 2016/17.<sup>78</sup>

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78. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

121. Most apprenticeships being delivered in 2016/17 were at levels 2 and 3,<sup>79</sup> yet over a third of the standards ready for delivery were at level 4 and above.<sup>80</sup> If this trend continues, there will not be enough approved standards at levels 2 and 3. This could have a detrimental impact on the recruitment of 16- to 18-year-olds into apprenticeships.

## Community learning and skills providers

122. Community learning and skills providers deliver community learning, education and training, and apprenticeships designed to help people of all ages and backgrounds. They support wider government policies on stronger families, digital skills and social mobility. Learning often takes place in community settings, such as primary schools, church halls, libraries and community centres.

123. The community learning and skills providers are made up of around 138 local authorities, 77 not-for-profit organisations with charitable status and 10 specialist designated institutions. Although a small group, the specialist designated institutions include some of the oldest adult education providers in Europe, such as the Workers' Educational Association, the Mary Ward Centre and the Working Men's College, which date back to the 19th century. On 31 August 2017, there were 225 open and funded community learning and skills providers. They deliver community learning and education and training to around 700,000 learners.<sup>81</sup>



79. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

80. 'Apprenticeship funding bands', Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands).

81. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

## Inspection outcomes

124. Inspection outcomes for the 78 providers inspected this year have been more positive than last year. This year, we carried out more re-inspections of providers that previously required improvement. Eleven out of 15 improved to become good.
125. This year, 78% of the providers were judged to be good or outstanding: eight percentage points higher than last year. These positive outcomes increased the proportion of providers judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection by one percentage point, from 82% on 31 August 2016 to 83% on 31 August 2017.
126. In the providers judged good or outstanding this year, inspectors found that:
- a good range of programmes that engaged the most vulnerable and disadvantaged learners
  - effective partnerships with other agencies that targeted and supported learners
  - good levels of support that enabled learners to progress well from often low starting points
  - development of good personal, social and employability skills
  - good promotion of British values through the development of tolerance and understanding among learners from diverse backgrounds.
127. In the providers judged requires improvement or inadequate this year, inspectors found that:
- a lack of challenging targets for learners and insufficient monitoring of progress, particularly on non-accredited courses
  - insufficient quality assurance and improvement arrangements to improve the quality of provision
  - governors and managers not having access to, or not using, timely and accurate data to analyse and improve performance
  - learners' awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism was low
  - attendance was poor.

## Independent specialist colleges and high needs provision

128. Around 20% of 16- to 18-year-olds and 15% of adult learners in further education considered themselves to have a learning difficulty and/or a disability. Of these learners, around 50% will be studying at a general FE college and a further 25% with community learning and skills providers.<sup>82</sup> Around 13,000 16- to 18-year-olds and 9,000 19- to 24-year-olds are allocated high needs funding to support their learning. Seventy per cent study with general FE colleges and 13% with independent specialist colleges.<sup>83</sup>

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82. 'FE data library: local authority tables', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables).

83. 'High needs funding arrangements: 2016 to 2017', Education Funding Agency, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2016-to-2017).



### Inspection outcomes

129. There were 77 providers judged on the quality of their provision for learners with high needs during 2016/17. Six per cent of the providers were judged to be outstanding, 65% were good, 23% required improvement and 5% were inadequate.
130. Of the 49 general FE colleges graded on the quality of their provision for learners with high needs, 80% were judged to be good or outstanding. This was much higher than their overall effectiveness judgement. Forty-three per cent of those colleges were judged to be good or outstanding overall.
131. Independent specialist colleges (ISCs) offer provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. During 2016/17, 16 of the 22 ISCs we inspected were judged good or outstanding. All of the ISCs that had a full inspection received the same grade for their high needs provision as they did for overall effectiveness. Overall, the proportion of all ISCs judged to be good or outstanding was 82% on the 31 August 2017. This is the same proportion as last year.



132. In the providers judged good or outstanding for their high needs provision this year, inspectors found that:
- the assessment of learners' starting points was detailed and effective and made a strong contribution to the planning of learning programmes
  - well-planned work experience helped learners develop a wide range of personal, social and employability skills
  - specialist support, including speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and other professionals, was well coordinated
  - high-quality leadership and governance that provided a high level of support and challenge, alongside realistic and ambitious plans for the learners' futures.
133. In the providers judged requires improvement or inadequate for their high needs provision this year, inspectors found that:
- teachers did not plan learning effectively and did not integrate English and mathematics skills into vocational activities
  - medium- and long-term goals in learners' education, health and care plans were not personalised, measurable or time-bound
  - targets were overly broad or linked to completing tasks: they lacked focus on individual skills development
  - learning programmes did not sufficiently focus on developing learners' independence or give them the skills necessary for becoming successful adults.
134. There are two main areas of concern within this part of the sector. The first is that there continues to be a lack of specialist careers advice available to all learners with high needs. At present, there is no nationally available specialist training for careers staff that would help them to provide suitable careers advice and guidance for young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Post-16 providers are relying on their own general careers guidance arrangements. In a minority of cases, providers have commissioned staff with some knowledge of special educational needs and/or disabilities from careers companies to work with their learners.
135. The second concern is that access to specialist mental health services remains inadequate for post-16 and in particular post-19 learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. One college in the South West employs two mental health professionals because their learners are unable to access statutory services until their condition has become critical.

## Learning and skills in prisons and young offender institutions

136. We work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons to inspect the quality of education delivered in prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs). On the 31 August 2017, there were 114 prisons and YOIs, all of which had been inspected.

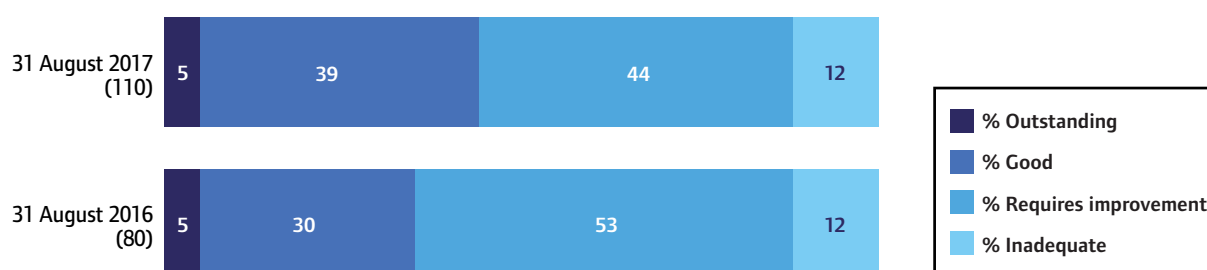
137. In 2016/17, 89,000 offenders aged 18 and over participated in learning. This is provisionally a 6% decline from the previous year. Most of the offenders were participating on qualifications below level 2. Just over a third of offenders were studying towards an English and/or mathematics qualification.<sup>84</sup>

### Inspection outcomes

138. We contributed to 41 inspections of prisons and YOIs, the reports for which were published between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017. We judged 56% of prisons to be good or outstanding for the overall effectiveness of learning and skills and work activities. This is 16 percentage points higher than last year.

139. For 22 prisons, this was the first time they had received a judgement on the overall effectiveness of learning and skills and work activities since the judgement was introduced in March 2014. Fifteen out of the 22 were judged to be good and one was judged to be outstanding. This had a positive effect on the most recent inspection outcomes for all prisons and young offender institutions. The proportion judged good or outstanding increased from 35% last year to 44% on 31 August 2017.

**Figure 13: Overall effectiveness of learning and skills and work activities (overall effectiveness) of prisons and young offender institutions at their most recent inspection, over time**



1. The overall effectiveness of learning and skills and work activities was introduced in March 2014 (with the exception of two prisons and young offender institutions that received the judgement in February 2014). Prisons and young offender institutions that have yet to receive this judgement are not included in the statistics. As at 31 August 2017, there were nine prisons and young offender institutions without an overall effectiveness judgement.

2. Inspections published by 31 August 2017.

3. Number of prisons and young offender institutions rounded to the nearest 10.

4. Prior to 1 September 2012, providers with an inspection outcome of grade 3 were judged as satisfactory.

5. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and Ofsted

84. 'Further education and skills: October 2017', DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017 (provisional); [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017).

140. In the 23 prisons judged good or outstanding, inspectors found that:

- many had developed good partnership working that had for example helped to provide work experience and improve the prisoners' employment prospects, or helped to provide a better curriculum offer
- prisoners' views were sought regularly and used to improve the education and activities on offer, along with informing curriculum development
- information about the prisoners was used effectively to support their learning and they were challenged effectively in class, which helped them to make good progress
- prisoners were helped to develop employability skills linked to jobs in the region; for example, one prison offered a range of work experience placements including in a call centre, on a 35-acre farm and in an award-winning smokery
- prisoners improved their English and mathematics skills in their vocational training and prison work
- managers assessed the quality of provision accurately.

141. In the 18 prisons judged requires improvement or inadequate, inspectors found that:

- prison leaders did not always ensure that prisoners were allocated to appropriate education and training activities that enabled them to develop new skills and/or achieve qualifications
- prison leaders did not sufficiently prioritise providing education within the prison regime and often failed to ensure a sufficient or appropriate education offer for the population
- teachers did not make enough use of information about prisoners' starting points to plan their lessons and did not challenge prisoners sufficiently to make progress in their learning
- the number of prisoners achieving English and mathematics qualifications was too low
- managers did not make good use of data on education and training to allow them to rigorously monitor and improve the quality of provision.







# Social care

## Local authorities

142. There are 12 million children and young people in England.<sup>85</sup> Of these children, at any one time, just over 3% are in the social care system.<sup>86, 87</sup>

**Table 6: Children and young people in England and the social care system**

Designation	Number of children
<b>Children in need</b>	<b>390,000</b>
<i>Children on child protection plan</i>	51,000
<i>Children looked after</i>	73,000
Care leavers aged 19–21	27,000

Source: Department for Education

143. We inspect each local authority's (LA) children's services. These inspections are conducted under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. They focus on:

- the effectiveness of LA services and arrangements to help and protect children
- the experiences and progress of children looked after
- the arrangements for achieving permanence for children who are looked after including adoption performance
- the experiences and progress of care leavers
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

144. Our inspections are carried out under the single inspection framework (SIF).<sup>88</sup> The SIF has an overall effectiveness judgement. There are three key judgements: help and protection, children looked after, and leadership and management. The SIF also has two sub judgements: adoption and care leavers.

## Inspection outcomes

145. In the period since the last Ofsted social care annual report, 1 April 2016 onwards, we have inspected 57 LAs' children's services.<sup>89</sup> Fifty-two LAs received a SIF inspection for the first time. Five received a SIF re-inspection, having previously been judged inadequate at their first. One hundred and forty-six of the 152 LAs have now received at least one SIF inspection.

85. 'Population estimates analysis tool', ONS, 2017; [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesanalysisistool](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesanalysisistool).

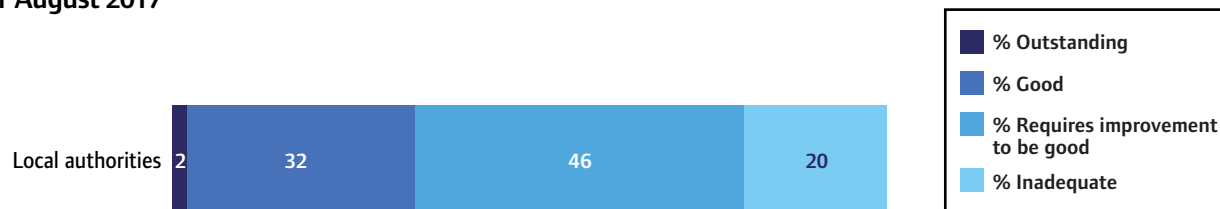
86. 'Characteristics of children in need: 2016 to 2017', DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2016-to-2017).

87. 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017', DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017).

88. 'Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services', Ofsted, 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-childrens-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-childrens-services).

89. 'Ofsted social care annual report 2016', Ofsted, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-social-care-annual-report-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-social-care-annual-report-2016).

**Figure 14: Overall effectiveness of local authorities at their most recent SIF inspection, 31 August 2017**



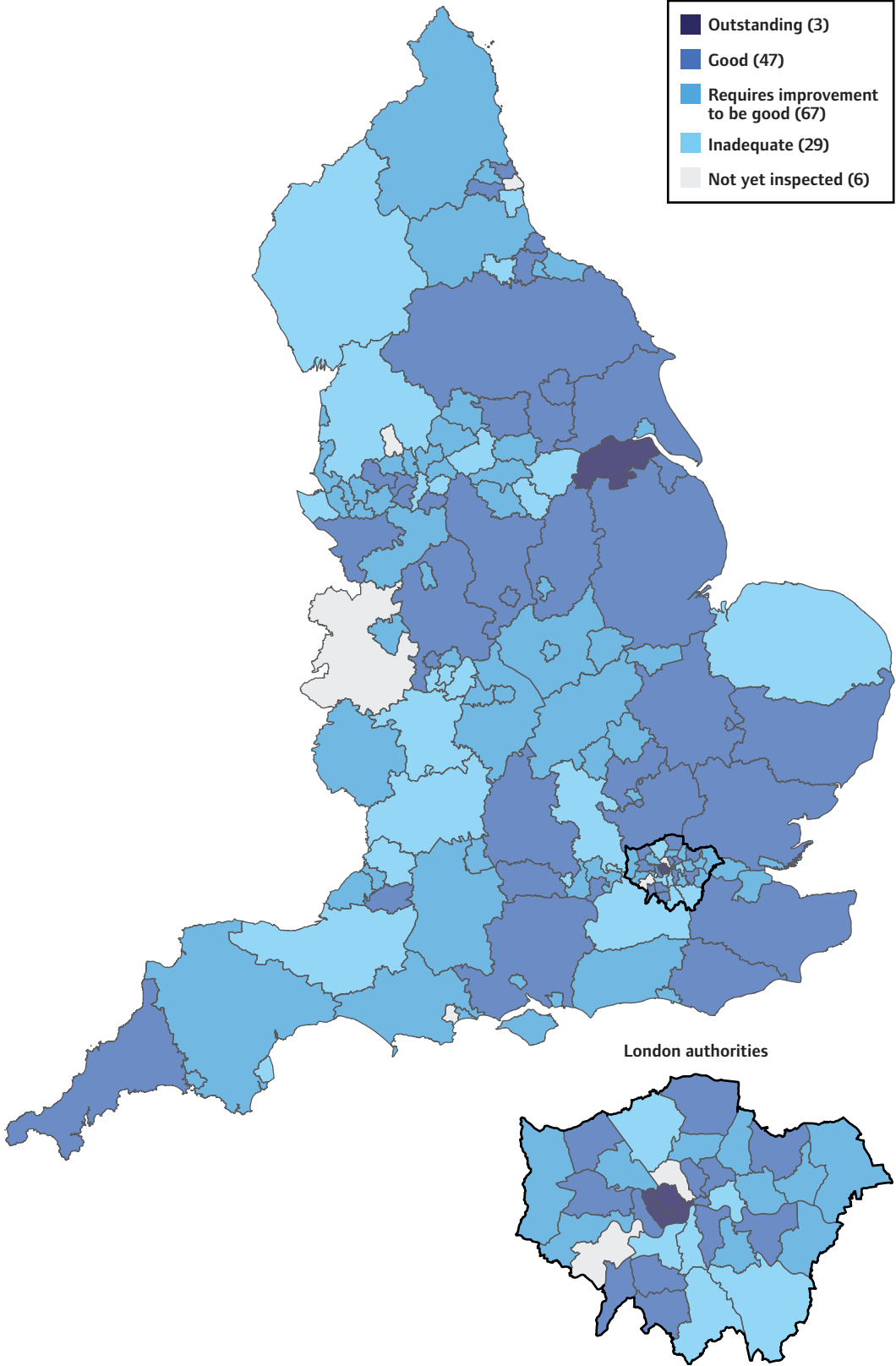
1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.

Source: Ofsted

146. Nationally, the overall effectiveness of LAs continues to improve. There is now a considerably higher proportion of LAs (34%) judged as either outstanding or good compared with at the time of the last social care annual report (26%).



**Figure 15: Map of local authorities by the overall effectiveness judgement of their most recent SIF inspection, 31 August 2017**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.  
 Source: Ofsted

**Table 7: A sample of LAs to show overall effectiveness judgements do not always tell the whole story of a LA**

	Key inspection judgements				Children looked after sub judgements	
	Overall effectiveness	Children who need help and protection	Leadership, management and governance	Children looked after and achieving permanence	Adoption performance	Experiences and progress of care leavers
Westminster	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Hampshire	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding	Good
Harrow	Good	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Brighton & Hove	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Bury	Good	Good	Good	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Requires improvement to be good
Darlington	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Good
Cumbria	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Requires improvement to be good

Outstanding
  Good
  Requires improvement to be good
  Inadequate

1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.

Source: Ofsted

147. To really understand what is happening for children in an LA, you need to look beyond the overall judgement. Very few LAs are inadequate in all areas of practice. Of the 29 LAs judged inadequate overall, 17 (59%) of them had at least one key area of practice where children were receiving a service that was not yet good, but it was not failing children. Only two LAs were inadequate across all areas, including adoption and care leavers.

148. LAs judged as requires improvement to be good were most likely to have all key area judgements match their overall effectiveness judgement (81%). Of the LAs that were judged requires improvement to be good, there were 13 (19%) that had at least one key area judged to be good.

### Monitoring inadequate local authorities

149. To support LAs in improving their services for children, we carry out quarterly monitoring visits to those judged inadequate.<sup>90</sup> Since June 2016, we have carried out 82 of these monitoring visits to 26 inadequate LAs.<sup>91</sup> These LAs had almost all been judged inadequate in the key area of children who need help and protection (23 LAs, 88%). Only 13 (50%) of the LAs had been judged inadequate for their support of children looked after.

90. 'Local authority children's services judged inadequate: guidance for inspectors', Ofsted, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors).

91. The figure of 82 refers to all the monitoring visits that took place in the period. However, not all of the 82 visits have published reports, because a report is not published for the first monitoring visit each LA receives.

150. The area looked at the most in monitoring visits was help and protection, which inspectors looked at in 55 visits across all 26 LAs. Most visits also included inspectors looking at the effectiveness of management oversight of practice and quality of supervision. Other areas that inspectors regularly looked at were:
- the services for looked after children: 32 visits to 18 LAs
  - care leavers services: 20 visits to 15 LAs.
151. During monitoring visits, inspectors found that the pace of improvement varied across the 26 LAs, but almost all were making at least some progress. Some areas are slow to progress initially, while others are improving at a much steadier rate.
152. Many LAs that have successfully addressed significant workforce problems have also improved the quality of care and support to children and families. Where workforce issues have not been addressed, progress is more patchy and harder to sustain.
153. Where inspectors saw LAs making progress, they mainly noted improvement in the following areas of work:
- better use of performance information and quality assurance
  - direct work with children and recording the voice of the child
  - responding quicker to contacts and referrals
  - completing assessments and improving the timeliness of statutory visits and reviews
  - senior management oversight of frontline practice
  - better operational practice in helping and protecting sexually exploited children and those missing from home and care.
154. Some LAs that have been less effective or slower to improve have focused more on measuring whether processes or procedures are followed rather than on the quality of work and how this impacts on children's lives. Quality assurance and performance measurement, at every level of the LA, should not only be about compliance. It should provide insight and challenge to frontline practice that measurably improves the lives of children.
155. Some LAs' efforts to improve have been hindered by their limited engagement with important partners, both inside and outside of the LA. LAs that do not have effective or supportive relationships with agencies such as health, police, probation and schools find it difficult to improve.
156. Six LAs have been re-inspected after an inadequate judgement and subsequent monitoring visits. Of these six, four achieved an improved overall effectiveness judgement. West Berkshire improved by two grades to good. The other three were all judged requires improvement to be good. Birmingham and Slough remained inadequate. Birmingham did, however, improve its services for children looked after.
157. The six re-inspections also showed the importance of strong and effective leadership to help improve children's services. Of the four LAs that improved their judgement, three improved both the overall effectiveness and leadership judgements and the other was already judged to have leadership that was not failing. Two LAs did not improve both of these judgements.

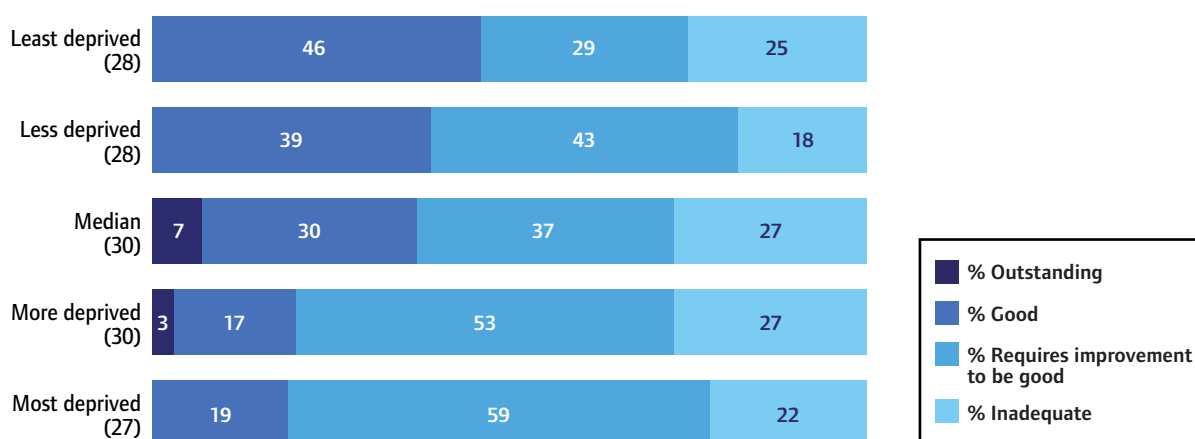


## Local authority context

158. Recent research has suggested that the LAs with the lowest levels of deprivation get higher judgements. It also suggests that LAs that spend more money are more likely to receive a higher overall effectiveness judgement.<sup>92</sup> We have begun looking at these findings and we found some correlation between the level of deprivation in the area and overall effectiveness.<sup>93, 94</sup> However, we found less correlation between spend and overall effectiveness.

159. This does not mean that the level of funding is unimportant to an LAs performance. Social care demand continues to rise. Numbers of children looked after, for example, are at a record high since the introduction of the 1989 Children Act.<sup>95</sup> Levels of spending on children's services are often achieved through consistently spending more than had been originally planned.<sup>96</sup> It is clear that highly deprived LAs that have high demand and that are facing further reductions to funding will have the greatest challenges to either achieve or maintain good services.<sup>97</sup>

**Figure 16: SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgements by level of LA deprivation (quintile)<sup>98</sup>**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 4 September 2017.

2. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: Ofsted, Department for Communities and Local Government

160. We found that there was some relationship between the level of deprivation in an LA area and its SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgement. The less deprived LAs were more likely to be judged good and less likely to be judged requires improvement to be good. Perhaps most importantly, there was no strong relationship between deprivation and those judged inadequate.

92. 'Ofsted ratings do reflect local authority deprivation and spending', P. Bywaters, C. Webb and T. Sparks, Community Care, 2017; [www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/01/18/ofsted-ratings-reflect-local-authority-deprivation-spending](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/01/18/ofsted-ratings-reflect-local-authority-deprivation-spending).

93. City of London and Isles of Scilly were excluded from the data due to extremely low numbers of children in need.

94. Ofsted will publish its research, which uses a different methodology to the group led by Professor Bywaters, in early 2018.

95. 'Children looked after in England including adoption 2016 to 2017', DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017).

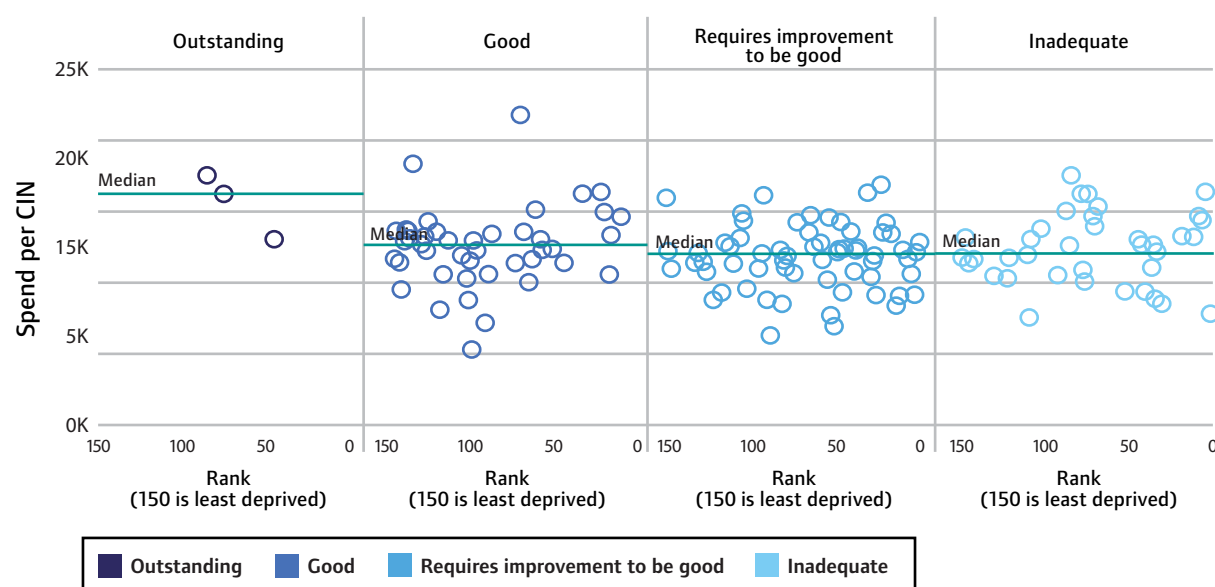
96. Section 251 documents, Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/section-251-materials](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/section-251-materials).

97. See, for example, 'Safeguarding pressures Phase 5', The Association of Directors of Children's Services, 2016; [www.adcs.org.uk/safeguarding/article/safeguarding-pressure-phase-5](http://www.adcs.org.uk/safeguarding/article/safeguarding-pressure-phase-5). Also, 'Exploring demand and provision in English child protection services', The British Journal of Social Work, Vol 46, June 2016; [www.academic.oup.com/bjsw/article/46/4/923/2472957/Exploring-Demand-and-Provision-in-English-Child](http://www.academic.oup.com/bjsw/article/46/4/923/2472957/Exploring-Demand-and-Provision-in-English-Child).

98. Index of multiple deprivation – 'English indices of deprivation', Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015).

161. Our initial research suggests no clear relationship between spend per head and SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgement.

**Figure 17: Level of LA deprivation and their spend per child in need in the year, profiled across SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgements**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 4 September 2017.

Source: Ofsted, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Education, Education and Skills Funding Agency

162. There is little difference in the median level of spending when comparing judgements. Good LAs do not spend more than lower performing authorities.

### The future arrangements for inspecting local authorities

163. The new inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) will support the earlier identification of risk and success. It consists of:

- an annual self-evaluation of social work practice shared by the LA
- an annual engagement meeting with each LA to share strengths and areas for improvement based on their self-evaluation and our intelligence
- focused visits on an identified area of weakness or strength; visit letters will report narrative findings only
- a standard or short inspection of each LA, graded on our established four-point scale, depending on their strengths and performance history, about every three years.

164. We will also continue quarterly monitoring visits to inadequate LAs, followed by re-inspection under the SIF. Joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) will continue at 10 a year. A JTAI will usually replace a focused visit.

165. Consequently, we will either visit or inspect around two thirds of LAs in any one year. This is a much greater rate of contact than under the SIF programme. We will use LAs' self-evaluation, annual engagement meetings and our own data and intelligence to decide when and where to carry out focused visits. All of these components will also help us decide when and where to carry out a standard or short inspection and, critically, to 'catch LAs before they fall'.



## Social care providers

166. We inspect almost 3,000 social care providers and providers of residential accommodation in boarding schools and further education colleges.<sup>99</sup> The following table summarises the size and shape of the providers.

**Table 8: Social care providers inspected by Ofsted, 31 August 2017**

Provider type	Number of providers	Number of places	Number of providers inspected
All providers	2,900		2,731
All children's homes	2,180	11,700	2,061
<i>Children's homes</i>	2,090	9,300	1,972
<i>Residential special schools registered as children's homes</i>	80	2,200	75
<i>Secure children's homes</i>	14	200	14
Boarding schools	80	11,300	77
Further education colleges with residential accommodation	40	5,800	38
Residential family centres	40	200	36
Residential special schools	160	5,300	156
Adoption support agencies	40		33
Independent fostering agencies	300		274
Residential holiday schemes for disabled children	20		13
Voluntary adoption agencies	40		40

1. Cafcass (one provider which has been inspected) and secure training centres (three providers that have all been inspected) are excluded from the table due to the small number of providers.

2. Numbers of providers and places have been rounded. To the nearest 10 for providers and the nearest 100 for places. The one exception is secure children's homes provider numbers that have not been rounded as the exact number is quoted in HMCI's commentary section of the report.

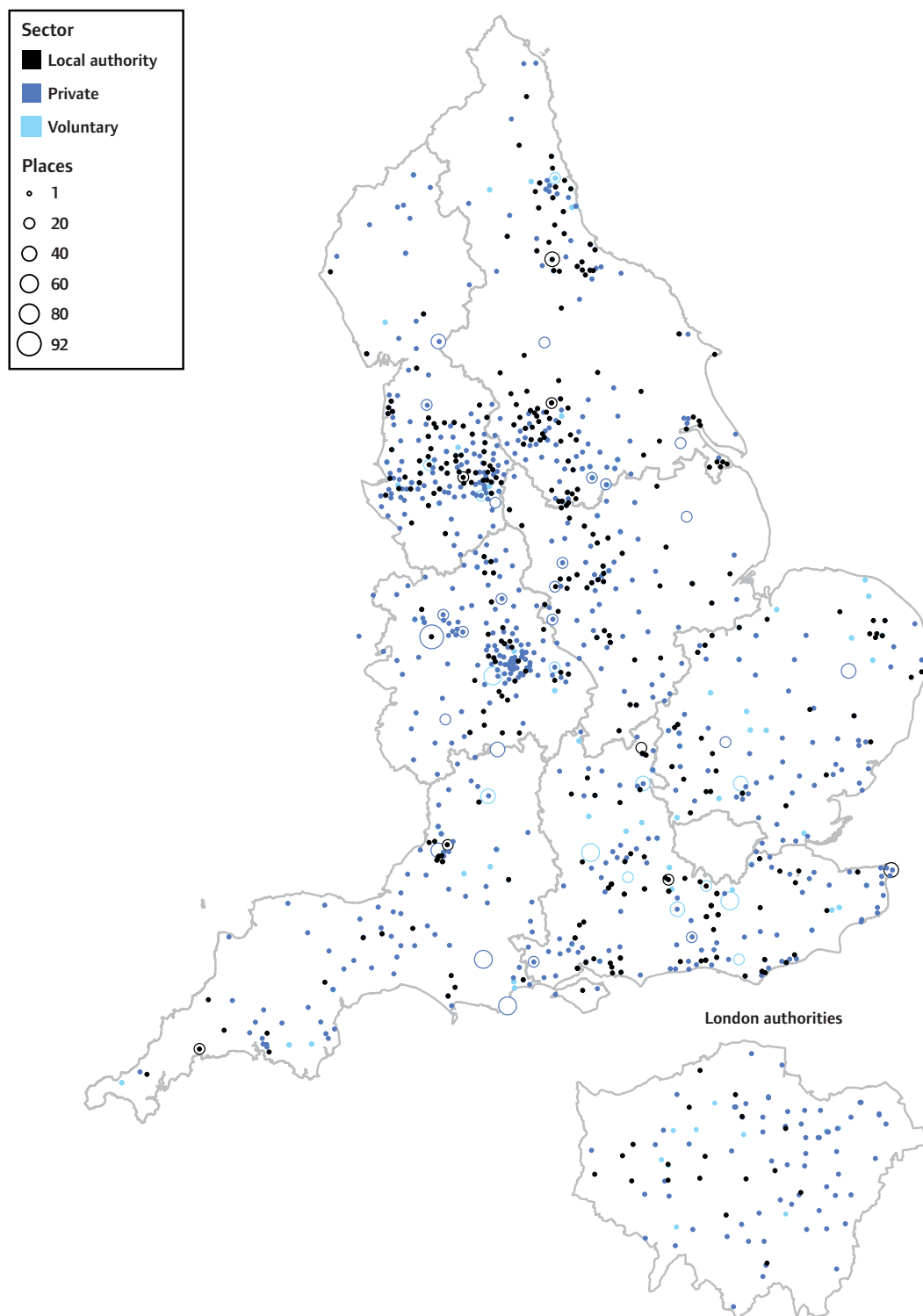
Source: Ofsted

167. Further contextual information on social care providers is available in our social care national statistics.<sup>100</sup>

99. The majority of boarding schools are independent and belong to associations, which are members of the Independent Schools Council. As both education and welfare in these schools are inspected by their own inspectorate, Ofsted does not inspect these schools and so they are not included in the data. The remainder are maintained and independent boarding schools, where both education and the welfare of boarders are the subject of Ofsted inspection, and independent boarding schools which are members of the Schools Inspection Service and that receive their education inspections by this organisation and their welfare inspections by Ofsted.

100. 'Children's social care data in England 2017', Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-data-in-england-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-data-in-england-2017).

Figure 18: Location, size and sector of all children's homes in England, 31 August 2017<sup>101</sup>



Source: Ofsted

101. In this map and throughout the report, whenever we talk about children's homes, we are referring to all types of homes unless we specifically state it is a subtype of home.



168. Over two-thirds of social care providers are children's homes. There are around 6,000 children in homes at any one time in the year; this figure has remained the same for a number of years. Children's homes cater for a variety of children and young people with varying difficulties/disabilities/disorders. These include, for example, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, mental health problems, sensory impairment and learning difficulties. Homes are not restricted to offering care for children with only one type of issue. The three most common types of care offered are for children with: emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (80% of homes), learning disabilities (31% of homes) and physical disabilities (12% of homes). Homes can also offer differing lengths of care.
169. For many years, the number of children's homes in England stayed fairly static. However, since the 2016 social care annual report, the number of homes has increased at the fastest rate since we took over the responsibility of registering of homes. There has been an increase of more than 100 homes (5%) since March 2016.
170. The number of new homes opening across the country, when re-registrations of existing homes are excluded, shows a differing regional picture.<sup>102</sup> The East Midlands has seen an increase each year since 2013 in the number of new homes opening.<sup>103</sup> In contrast, London had a three-year trend of fewer children's homes opening each year.
171. Despite the increase in the total number of children's homes in England, the spread of homes across the regions has stayed fairly static over the years. However, there are clear variations across the regions in terms of the number of homes opened in the last five years. Some regions have seen large percentage increases in the number of homes, for example, the East Midlands 20% (34 homes) and the South East 13% (33 homes). The South West was the only region that saw a decrease in the number of homes from 2013: down by 5% (11 homes).
172. There has been a large increase in homes in the South East. London has had a very small increase. London is a region that already had a very low number of children's homes and beds when compared with its number of children looked after. This may help further explain data collected by Ofsted and the DfE that shows a large export of children looked after from London to the surrounding regions, especially the South East.

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102. Re-registrations have been excluded. They have the potential to skew the figures because the home has both closed and opened. A children's home can re-register for a number of reasons including: moving site but remaining under the same ownership, changing ownership but staying on the same site, and a change in legal status, but keeping at least one member of the same ownership group.

103. When looking at changes in the number of homes opening or closing year on year, we have not included homes that have opened or closed since 1 April 2017. This is because two thirds of children's homes openings and closures take place in the second half of the financial year, so to include them could skew the data.

**Table 9: The size of organisations which open children’s homes each year**

Number of homes the organisation already owns	Percentage of homes opened in the year				Percentage of places provided in newly opened homes that year			
	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
New provider	28	23	28	18	28	32	32	21
1–2 homes	17	24	27	21	15	19	27	20
3–5 homes	21	14	5	15	19	17	5	15
6–9 homes	18	24	15	11	17	19	11	8
10+ homes	17	14	25	35	21	14	24	35

1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100. Some percentages are based on small numbers, and should be treated with caution.  
Source: Ofsted

173. There is a changing picture of who is opening children’s homes over time. Large organisations (those with 10 or more homes, including LAs), are increasing the number of homes they open each year. In the last four years, large organisations have increased from opening 17% of all new homes to opening 35% of all new homes. On 31 August 2017, there were 43 of these organisations that ran 41% of all children’s homes in England and accounted for 35% of all beds. Approximately 17% of children’s homes were owned by the five largest organisations.
174. There has been some suggestion that one-bed children’s homes are replacing beds that used to be in secure children’s homes.<sup>104</sup> However, there has not been any noticeable increase in new registrations of one-bed children’s homes, nor a significant decrease in secure children’s homes beds. Proportionally, one-bed children’s homes continue to account for 5% of all homes, as they have each year since 2013.
175. There is, therefore, no obvious one reason why the number of homes is increasing nationally. The size profile of individual homes has not changed to any great extent. The only consistent changes are a recent rise in the number of four-bed homes and the continued long-term trend of fewer large homes. The number of places has risen at a slower rate than the number of homes. So, while there are more children’s homes, there are not significantly more places for children. The slower growth in places has been driven by established homes reducing the number of beds they offer. Since the last social care annual report, almost 90 homes have reduced the number of beds they offer by more than 300 beds in total. In contrast, in the same period, just over 90 homes increased the number of places they had by more than 130 beds in total, a net reduction of more than 170 beds.
176. While the total number of homes in England continues to increase, the number of homes run by LAs continues to fall. It is down from 27% in 2012 to 20% now. Excluding homes that provide short-break care only, 36% of LAs (54) do not run any children’s homes. Since 2012, more than 80 LAs have closed at least one of the children’s homes they ran. While most of these still run at least one home, 11 no longer run any homes and another eight only run short-break homes.
177. The decrease in LA-run homes is not specific to any one region and is replicated across the country. The proportion of LA-run homes has decreased by between three and 13 percentage points (three and 35 homes) in every region since 2012. The proportion of places offered in LA-run homes in each region has also decreased since 2012.

104. ‘Residential Care in England’, DfE, July 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england).



178. Since March 2016, the number of residential special schools has decreased by nine (5%). This continues the long-term trend of decreasing numbers of these schools: down from 230 in April 2007 to just under 160 schools on 31 August 2017. Of the almost 100 schools whose registrations ceased: 34 (35%) changed to become a residential school registered as a children's home due to the number of days they offered care, three continued operating, but under a new registration and 59 (61%) stopped offering residential care. Of the 59 schools that stopped offering residential care, 14 (24%) closed completely while 45 (76%) continued operating, but as day schools only.

179. The latest fostering data from March 2016 shows that the number of fostering households across both independent fostering agencies (IFAs) and LA fostering agencies has changed very little, remaining at around 44,000.<sup>105</sup> Within this number, there was a rise of 13% in family and friends fostering households. The large drop (of one third) in the number of applications to be foster carers may be a future concern.<sup>106</sup> However, this was mitigated to a certain extent by de-registrations of foster carers decreasing by 14%.

180. The number of children placed through IFAs and LA fostering agencies in 2016 has remained the same, at around 52,000. The number of children staying put, under the government initiative to allow children to stay with their foster carers for longer, increased by 22%.<sup>107</sup>

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105. 'Fostering in England 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016', Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2015-to-31-march-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2015-to-31-march-2016).

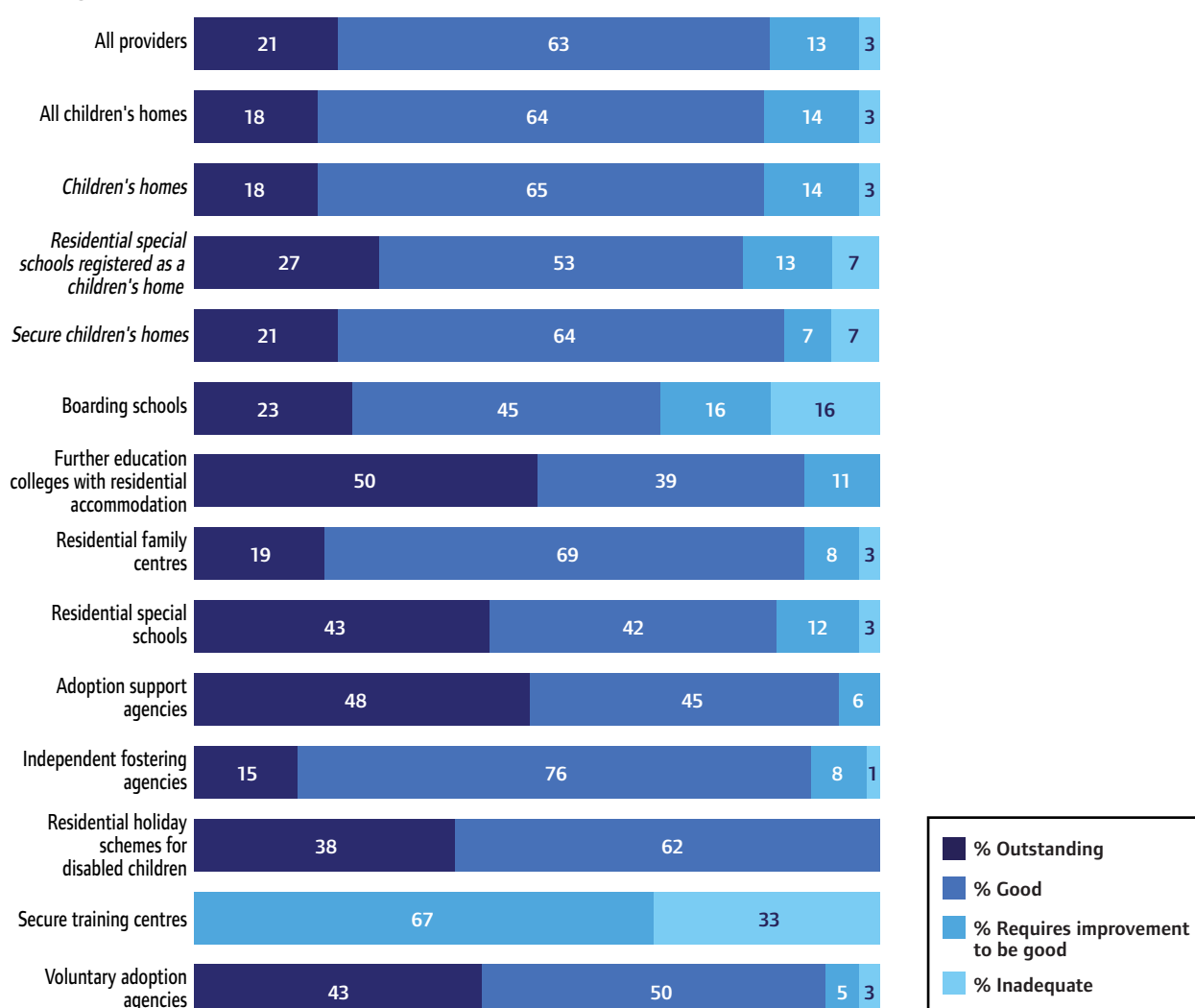
106. Part of this drop could be due to data quality issues, but we will only be more certain on the completion of the 2016–17 data collection.

107. 'Staying put: arrangements for care leavers aged 18 years and above', DfE, Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-put-arrangements-for-care-leavers-aged-18-years-and-above](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-put-arrangements-for-care-leavers-aged-18-years-and-above).

## Inspection outcomes

181. In April 2017, we introduced the social care common inspection framework. This covers all social care providers that we inspect. It brought all the former different inspection frameworks in line with each other. We have also introduced risk assessment into the scheduling of children’s homes inspections this year, as has previously been the case for other types of social care provider.<sup>108</sup> This means that good or outstanding homes will still be inspected every year, but will not receive an interim inspection mid-way through the year unless we have reason to be concerned.<sup>109</sup>

**Figure 19: Overall effectiveness of all active social care providers at their most recent inspection, 31 August 2017**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.
2. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100. Some percentages are based on small numbers, and should be treated with caution.
3. The judgement profile for secure training centres does not match the profile in HMCI's commentary at the start of the report. This is because the inspection report for Oakhill Secure Training Centre was published on 21 November 2017 (outside the inspection date range for the Annual Report) and it was judged inadequate. Because it was inadequate, we felt it important to state that in the commentary, even though the underlying data shows it as requires improvement to be good.

Source: Ofsted

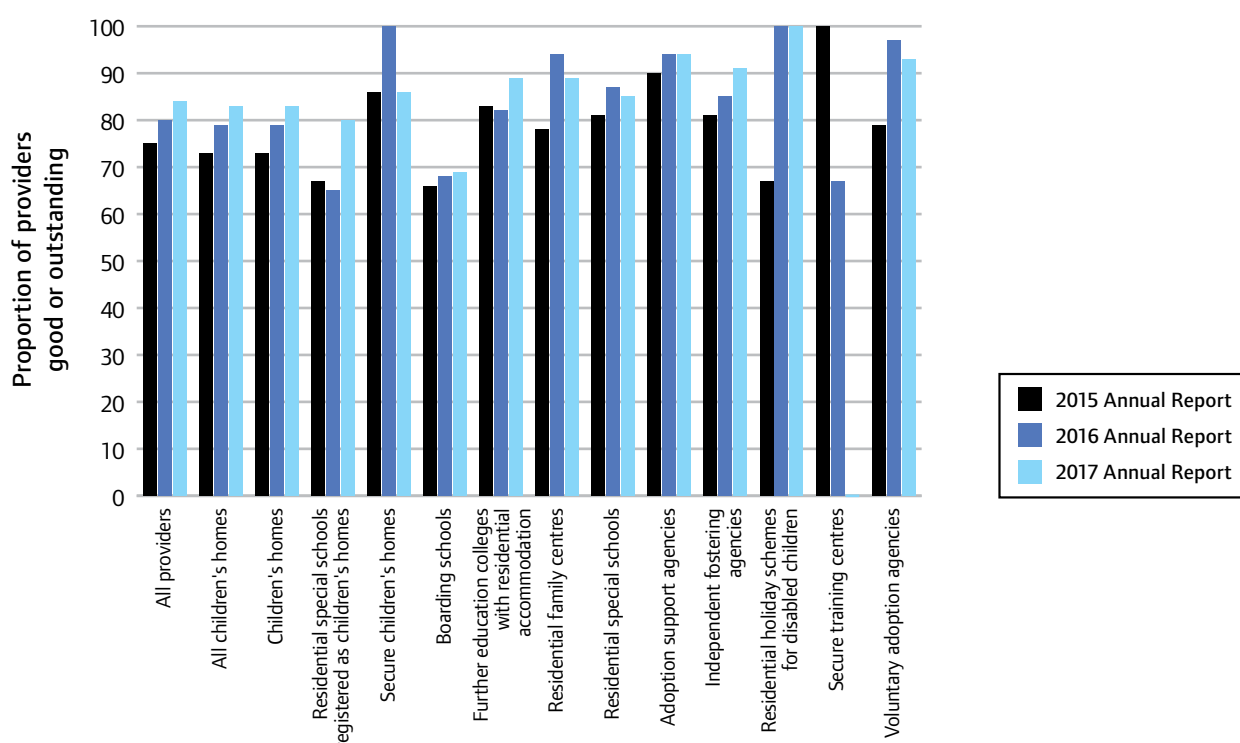
108. 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): children's homes, including secure children's homes', Ofsted, 2017; [www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-children-s-homes-including-secure-children-s-homes/10-scheduling-and-the-inspection-team](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-children-s-homes-including-secure-children-s-homes/10-scheduling-and-the-inspection-team).

109. 'Fees and frequency of inspection regulations – Government consultation response', DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fees-and-frequency-of-inspections-regulations-consultation](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fees-and-frequency-of-inspections-regulations-consultation).

182. For most types of social care provider, 80% or more of providers are judged good or outstanding. The exceptions to this are boarding schools and secure training centres.

183. Children’s homes that offer short-break care only are more often found to be good or outstanding than homes that offer long-term care only, or a combination of care. On 31 August 2017, 89% of short-break only homes were judged good or outstanding, compared with 82% of all other homes. However, the gap has continued its trend of narrowing by one percentage point each year.

**Figure 20: Percentage with an overall effectiveness of good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, by provider type, at each Ofsted Annual Report<sup>110</sup>**



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.

2. Some percentages are based on small numbers, and should be treated with caution.

3. The judgement profile for secure training centres does not match the profile in HMCI’s commentary at the start of the report. This is because the inspection report for Oakhill Secure Training Centre was published on 21 November 2017 (outside the inspection date range for the Annual Report) and it was judged inadequate. Because it was inadequate, we felt it important to state that in the commentary, even though the underlying data shows it as requires improvement to be good.

Source: Ofsted

184. Social care providers in England have continued to improve over the years. More providers are now judged good or outstanding than previously (84%). All but two of the individual provider types have also improved since the 2015 Annual Report. Only secure children’s homes and secure training centres have not improved over time. Currently, no secure training centres are judged good or outstanding.

185. There are a number of factors behind the improvements, including:

- Providers are more likely to improve inspection-on-inspection than decline. Of the almost 2,200 providers that have been inspected since 1 April 2016 and were also inspected in the preceding period, over 470 (22%) have improved. Just over 400 (18%) have declined.

110. The 2015 Annual Report covers inspections carried out by 30 September 2014 where the report was published by 31 October 2014. The 2016 Annual Report covers inspections carried out by 31 March 2016 where the report was published by 30 April 2016.

- We return to providers judged as requires improvement to be good or inadequate in a shorter timescale. This gives them more opportunity to show improvement. For example, children’s homes judged inadequate are visited again, often through a re-inspection, within six to eight weeks. Seventy-eight per cent of homes judged inadequate since April 2016 improved when re-inspected.
- Children’s homes that achieve a good or outstanding judgement are likely to maintain their performance. Of the 1,640 or so homes active at the end of August 2017 and inspected in each year of the last three years, up to 31 March 2017, 54% were judged either good or outstanding in every inspection. Only 3% of these 1,640 homes have never been judged good or outstanding in the same three-year period.

186. Unlike in other sectors, the nature of the providers that join or leave the sector is not a material factor in changing the proportion of good and outstanding providers overall. Since 2013, almost 70% of newly registered social care providers received a good or outstanding first inspection judgement. Most providers who close are not poorly performing providers. Since 2013, only 12% of the providers that voluntarily cancelled their registration or were cancelled by Ofsted were inadequate. In the same period, 44% were good and 11% outstanding.

**Table 10: Number of inspections since 1 April 2016, by provider type and inspection type**

Provider type	Number of full inspections	Number of interim inspections	Number of monitoring inspections	Total number of inspections
All providers	3,570	1,960	340	5,870
All children’s homes	3,170	1,960	300	5,430
Children’s homes	3,010	1,870	260	5,140
Residential special schools registered as a children’s homes	130	70	40	240
Secure children’s homes	20	10	10	40
Boarding schools	50	0	20	70
Further education colleges with residential accommodation	10	0	0	10
Residential family centres	20	0	0	20
Residential special schools	180	0	10	190
Adoption support agencies	10	0	0	10
Independent fostering agencies	90	0	10	90
Residential holiday schemes for disabled children	20	0	0	20
Voluntary adoption agencies	10	0	0	20

1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.

2. Four secure training centre full inspections and two emergency visits to boarding schools also took place in the period.

3. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source: Ofsted

187. Since 1 April 2016, we have carried out almost 5,900 inspections on more than 2,500 providers. Some providers will have been inspected more than once in the period.<sup>111</sup> Some providers will have closed since inspection and some will not have been inspected because they have not yet been operating long enough.

111. Different social care provider types have different cycles. Inspection frequency can also depend on inspection judgement or concerns about the provider.



## Secure children's homes and secure training centres

188. Secure children's homes accommodate both children and young people who are remanded or have been sentenced for committing a criminal offence. They also accommodate those whose behaviour is deemed to present a significant and immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others, unless they are placed in a secure environment. Secure training centres accommodate young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been remanded or sentenced by the courts.
189. Although the DfE statistics on secure children's homes show an average occupancy rate of 79%, there is clearly a high demand for beds.<sup>112</sup> The National Secure Welfare Commissioning Unit, created to provide a dedicated single point of contact for secure welfare placements, continues to report that the numbers of referrals for places in secure children's homes are significantly more than are available. As a consequence, children with the most complex and significant needs are not always placed where their needs would be best met. The continued pressure on secure children's homes placement availability has inevitable consequences for other children's homes and potential for the use of unregulated provision.
190. The chair of the Association of Directors of Children's Services has recently suggested that each vacant bed is currently attracting 15 referrals.<sup>113</sup> The young people in these providers are often placed a long way from home, which may reflect a lack of local capacity. In other words, there may not be enough beds in the places that children need them most. The government has, though, accepted the main principles of Charlie Taylor's review of the youth justice system.<sup>114</sup> It announced plans to establish two secure schools (one in the north of England and one in the south).
191. Secure training centres have more young people in them than secure children's homes.<sup>115</sup> Research suggests that the smaller size of secure children's homes may improve staff–children relationships and staff's knowledge of children's needs. Those young people in secure children's homes were also more likely to be engaging in education (55% compared with 47% in secure training centres).<sup>116</sup> There is, however, no one main reason for the differing performances between secure children's homes and secure training centres.
192. There is a marked contrast between the inspection outcomes for secure children's homes and secure training centres. While 86% of secure children's homes have been judged good or outstanding, all of the secure training centres have been judged less than good.

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112. 'Children accommodated in secure children's homes: 31 March 2017', DfE, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-accommodated-in-secure-childrens-homes-31-march-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-accommodated-in-secure-childrens-homes-31-march-2017).

113. 'Councils struggling to find secure placements for children at risk', ADCS president, April 2017; [www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/04/10/councils-struggling-find-secure-placements-children-risk](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/04/10/councils-struggling-find-secure-placements-children-risk).

114. 'Review of the youth justice system', Ministry of Justice, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-youth-justice-system](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-youth-justice-system).

115. 'Youth custody data', Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-custody-data](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-custody-data).

116. 'Youth Justice statistics: 2015 to 2016', Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2015-to-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2015-to-2016).

193. Inspectors of secure children's homes have noted strengths in:

- staff's ability to develop positive and effective relationships with young people who are disaffected
- well-established systems for assessing educational achievement leading to young people making at least good educational progress
- effective partnership working
- strong and developing health provision
- staff trained in awareness of radicalisation and clear procedures in place for any referrals to relevant agencies
- good relationships with Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

194. Our findings from inspections of secure training centres reflect the serious concerns held nationally about the experiences of children and young people in them.<sup>117</sup> In particular, we are concerned about poor behaviour management and the safety of children and staff. Inspectors found secure training centres that were characterised by rising levels of violence between children and young people and assaults on staff. This was exacerbated by rules and sanctions being inconsistently applied and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff across all three centres. Despite pockets of better practice, staff often did not have the skills and experience to respond to children's needs with the necessary sensitivity and care.

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117. 'Action taken by the YJB to safeguard young people at secure training centres', Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-by-the-yjb-to-safeguard-young-people-at-secure-training-centres](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-by-the-yjb-to-safeguard-young-people-at-secure-training-centres).



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