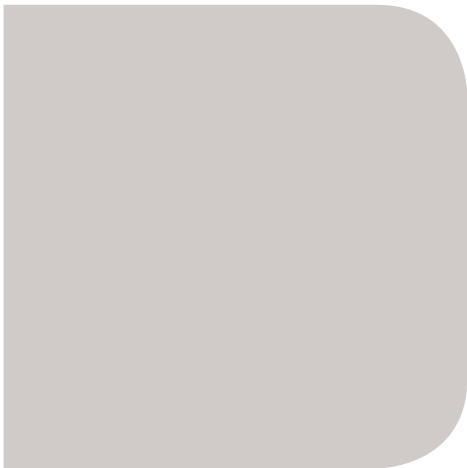Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008/09

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Contents

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Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

November 2009

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

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Dear Secretary of State

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2008/09

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report to Parliament, as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

As usual, my report opens with my commentary on the outcomes from Ofsted's regulatory and inspection activity in 2008/09. This is the second Annual Report in which I have been able to present a complete year's evidence from the full range of our remit. The report which follows sets out the findings from our inspections of childcare, children's social care, local authority services for children, schools, colleges, initial teacher education, adult learning, provision for young people in secure accommodation and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service.

The first section of the report draws upon evidence from some 40,000 inspections and regulatory visits in 2008/09, a secure and wide-ranging evidence base for our conclusions. The second section makes use of findings from our survey visits, as well as other inspection evidence from across our remit, to explore three key themes.

I hope that the report will be read with interest and that its findings will contribute to the continuing national debate on standards and quality in care, education and skills.

Yours sincerely

Christine Gilbert

Preface

Christine Gilbert
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

This Annual Report presents evidence from inspection and regulatory visits undertaken broadly between September 2008 and August 2009 by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Evidence is taken from inspection activity across the full range of Ofsted's remit, including childcare, children's social care, local authority services for children and provision for education and skills in schools, colleges and adult learning. The report draws upon the findings both of routine inspection visits and of the focused survey inspections through which we collect more detailed evidence about subjects and aspects of provision in social care, education and skills.

The first part of the report summarises the findings from our inspections and regulatory activity in 2008/09 in all the areas of our remit. For each sector, we set out an overview of the quality of provision and of the progress and experience of the learners and children concerned. Where it is appropriate and valid to do so, comparisons with inspection findings from previous years are included and trends over the lifetime of an inspection cycle are identified.

The second part of the report develops three important themes. The first, 'Improving outcomes for looked after children', builds upon some of the material explored in the section of last year's Annual Report entitled 'Improving life chances: outstanding education and social care'. This year, the focus is on ways in which the best providers succeed in improving the life chances of children and young people who are potentially among the most vulnerable: those who are looked after in the care of local authorities.

The second thematic section considers the ways in which the quality of teaching and learning in England measures up against the best in the world. The section examines the degree to which the English system attracts the right people to become teachers; develops them into consistently effective practitioners; and has in place the systematic support needed to ensure excellence in provision to the benefit of all learners.

Last year, the Annual Report contained a thematic section entitled 'Skills for working lives', which analysed the elements of the best skills provision on which learners build successful working lives and the areas of weakness that detract from the effectiveness of the sector as whole. We return to the theme in this report but in an economic and employment context that has changed dramatically in the intervening year. The third thematic section, 'Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment', looks at the new challenges facing the skills sector and the ability of providers to meet them.

Finally, as in previous years, Ofsted will be recognising and celebrating the success of those providers whose work with children, young people and adult learners has been found by inspection to be of exceptionally high quality. This year's list of outstanding providers is published on Ofsted's website at the same time as this report.

6

Commentary

This report presents the findings from the full range of Ofsted's work, bringing together evidence from inspections of education, children's services and skills with detailed surveys of specific themes, subjects and issues. It coincides with the completion of a full cycle of inspection of schools, colleges and work-based learning. The report, therefore, presents a particularly good vantage point from which to look back over inspection evidence in these areas: the success stories, and the critical weaknesses to be addressed.

The report also illustrates different aspects of improvement by considering three themes of national interest drawn from across Ofsted's wide remit: improving outcomes for looked after children; teaching and learning; and developing skills for employment. The first theme considers the changes needed to tackle a seemingly intractable challenge; the second explores progress from good to great; and the third looks at sustaining improvement in a rapidly changing environment. The context in which these issues are explored, and indeed in which Ofsted has carried out its inspection responsibilities, has changed dramatically since the publication of the last Annual Report, and this report reflects on the new challenges. In particular, the thematic section on skills for employment describes and evaluates how the skills sector is responding to the changing economic climate.

The national overview: strengths…

This commentary and the report itself draw on a remarkably extensive evidence base including evidence from some 40,000 inspections and regulatory visits. The overall picture of the quality of provision is positive and much inspection evidence is generally encouraging. For example:

* the large majority of childcare, whether provided by childminders or in day care, is good or outstanding; almost all childminders meet the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and 65% do it well

* almost 70% of maintained schools inspected are now good or outstanding, with nursery schools and special schools judged to be particularly effective; the proportion of schools in Ofsted's categories of concern fell in 2008/09

* 88% of initial teacher education providers are good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness

* of the further education colleges inspected in 2008/09, 63% were good or outstanding; the level of employer engagement is a continuing strength of the learning and skills sector

* a greater proportion of the provision for learning and skills in prisons was judged to be satisfactory or better, including the first prison judged to be outstanding; achievements and standards in employability training have improved to good or outstanding in 22 of the 33 prisons inspected

* the quality of social care is good or outstanding in around 64% of settings, including children's homes

* the large majority of councils provide good-quality children's services, often in difficult circumstances. In many cases, youth work makes a valuable contribution to young people's development.

The report also provides evidence of sustained improvement over the past four years. For example, in 2005/06 only 11% of maintained schools inspected were outstanding, while 8% were inadequate; in 2008/09, 19% of schools are outstanding and only 4% inadequate. There has also been a trend of improvement in colleges of further education; again, more colleges are now outstanding and fewer are inadequate than was the case four years ago.

…and weaknesses

While there is much that should give us encouragement, real concerns remain. There are still too many providers that are mediocre or worse. Given the considerable progress made over recent years in increasing the proportion of outstanding and good settings, the greatest challenge across childcare, social care, education and the skills sector is to raise satisfactory provision to the level of good or outstanding. Since so many have now made the journey successfully, I see no reason why every setting, every school and college, and every provider, should not aspire to be good and working towards excellence. That is the only way they can really improve the lives and life chances of the children and learners they serve.

There are more specific concerns which must be addressed with urgency today if our children, young people and adult learners are to benefit tomorrow. For example:

* some provision appears to be stubbornly resistant to improvement. Over 40% of childcare provision judged satisfactory at its previous inspection remains so, and maintained schools and colleges present a similar picture

* schools with a high proportion of pupils from deprived backgrounds are still more likely to be inadequate. Moreover, 4% of previously outstanding schools and 17% of previously good schools were found to be satisfactory or inadequate at inspection in 2008/09

* there is a 'stubborn core' of inadequate teaching; furthermore, too much teaching is just satisfactory and fails to inspire, challenge and extend children, young people and adult learners

* of the 30 academies inspected by Ofsted in 2008/09, while over half were rated good or outstanding, eight were judged to be satisfactory and another five inadequate; for the latter, raising standards and establishing a settled ethos remain a considerable challenge

* a small but increased minority of councils are performing poorly overall, principally because they are making an inadequate contribution to ensuring that children and young people are as safe as possible

* there is unacceptable variation in the quality of individual children's homes from one inspection to another

* private fostering arrangements remain a concern, with six out of 36 rated inadequate this year

* there is still much inadequate practice in the work of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. The improvement that is taking place is not fast enough; nor is the extent of the change sufficient. These weaknesses exacerbate the risk of harm within families already facing crisis or breakdown.

Outstanding provision in challenging circumstances

Much can be learned from inspection evidence about excellence. This year, for example, Ofsted published reports on the characteristics of outstanding schools in challenging circumstances. The schools described in the reports demonstrate that excellence does not happen by chance. It is found in schools which have leaders of vision, courage and conviction; leaders who have the ability to inspire teams whose members work consistently for each other, as well as for the students and the communities they serve. There is a strong personal connection between individual children and young people and the adults in the school. These schools spare no efforts in their search for ways of doing things better, and high aspirations and expectations underpin all they do. They show a dogged determination to prove that every child can succeed, no matter how long that takes.

Several common features of these exemplary schools stand out. Above all, there is a passionate and ambitious belief that all young people can be helped to progress, achieve and become successful. No challenge is regarded as insurmountable; indeed, they generate innovative and effective responses to problems and difficulties. High standards of work and behaviour are set and kept; there are no exceptions and no excuses. The schools have the hard-won respect and confidence of their communities because of what they do, not just what they say.

For these schools, 'every child matters' is an everyday objective which is understood, planned for and achieved, not just a worthy ambition. Outstanding providers are forensic in their assessment of the needs of each of their children and learners; they personalise the care, support and learning they provide, and they are rigorous in evaluating the impact of what they do on progress and outcomes. A variety of approaches is taken to the curriculum, but they all provide balance and breadth. These schools use data to shine a spotlight on themselves so they can honestly and with precision make use of strategies that work, and ruthlessly excise those activities which deflect children and staff from the core business of teaching and learning. The children and young people who attend these schools emerge as confident and capable young people, well equipped for the next stage of their lives.

A focus on literacy and numeracy

A key element in bringing about improvement is ensuring that children, young people and adults have the literacy and numeracy skills they need in their everyday lives and which will enhance their employability and their performance once in work. The infant and primary years are key, but weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy remain, despite the early achievements of the national strategies. Inspectors continue to report a lack of focus on basic literacy for lower attainers, limited opportunities for some pupils to use, extend and enrich vocabulary, and insufficient attention given to the skills of writing at length. Many schools identify problem-solving in mathematics as a priority for improvement, but few tackle it really well. For older students, evaluation of the implementation of Diplomas shows that, even in some successful consortia, the teaching of functional skills is less engaging and of poorer quality than the vocational elements.

The national strategies have been at the forefront of improving teaching in the core subjects and have been influential in providing a national focus on raising standards. Nevertheless, improvements in standards and progress have been too slow over the last four years and the potential effectiveness of the strategies is much diminished.

The recent White Paper signalled a radically different strategic approach to raising standards of literacy and numeracy, with greater devolution of funding and responsibility for improvement to schools.[1] At the same time, there must be clarity at national level about what needs to be done professionally to maintain and improve literacy and numeracy and the extent to which schools are to be held accountable for this. We now have to look back on what has been gained and learned from the national strategies and use this reflection to understand what more needs to be done to generate improvement. It is vital that gains in professional expertise are not lost, and the central importance of the acquisition of good basic skills is not diluted.

In the adult learning sector, significant barriers remain to supporting better acquisition of skills for life. There are shortages of staff suitably qualified in delivering skills for life; and employers remain reluctant to address basic skills issues with employees, which limits the extent to which support can be provided to those who may need it most.

Safeguarding

Last year's Annual Report said a good deal about the safeguarding of children and young people. Without apology, I am turning to the issue again; it is too important to leave until we can be confident that everything possible is being done to keep children and young people safe. Events such as the Baby Peter tragedy have clearly shown we are not there yet. This year's report is clear where weaknesses remain, including problems in a minority of local authorities and children's homes. To remedy these deficiencies, it is important to recognise the successful alternatives, so this year I shall comment on what we see in outstanding social care services. While responsibilities for safeguarding rest with a much wider range of people and services, it is social care services that bear the brunt of public scrutiny and media disapprobation when things go wrong.

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[1] *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century school system,* Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.

Outstanding children's services have outstanding systems of performance management. They develop and use robust systems that ensure as far as possible that every child gets a good service, and they check to make sure this is happening in practice. They focus on a child's interests. They take the views and feedback of the young people, parents and carers they serve very seriously. Elected members and senior managers have a clear grasp of the challenges in providing good safeguarding practice. They know what good social care looks like, both in terms of policy and practice, and they question, check and challenge to improve both.

Partnerships are mature and effective, and include rich contributions from the voluntary sector. Management and leadership are strong at all levels, with even the most senior managers knowing the issues facing front-line workers and receptive to feedback from them. Communication is transparent and forms an unbroken thread that not only runs through and across each level of the organisation, but also links with key partners. This means they are able to draw together a comprehensive picture of each individual, their needs from different services and their development and progress. Accountabilities and responsibilities are absolutely clear; everyone knows where 'the buck stops'.

Important though they are, processes are only a means to an end for outstanding services; the acid test is whether they support staff effectively to ensure children thrive. This Annual Report indicates that such practice is far from universal.

Skills for life in an economic downturn

Lord Leitch's review of world-class skills made clear the significant challenge of improving the baseline of literacy and numeracy for our adult population and of raising overall adult skills levels. It also identified the trend towards a greater proportion of jobs requiring higher level skills.

Last year's Annual Report included a section on 'Skills for working lives', focusing on the critical importance of preparing young people and adults effectively for the world of work. Twelve months later the context in which providers of further education, work-based learning and employability training operate has changed dramatically. This year has seen a significant rise in levels

of unemployment and redundancies. The recession is particularly affecting young people leaving school or college and seeking their first jobs and, although the number of young people in education is going up, the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training is also rising. The current economic climate is placing an increasing importance on having good levels of literacy and numeracy for those entering the job market or seeking to move within it. Yet there is continued resistance from employers, adults and young people to taking up skills for life training; adults in employment require particularly high levels of personal support and encouragement to tackle their basic skills needs effectively.

Alongside the challenges imposed by changed economic circumstances, the Government has set stretching targets to achieve the ambition of world-class skills by 2020. Developing these skills is even more important during a time of economic downturn; a more highly skilled workforce has the capacity to adapt to changing demands, learn quickly and improve productivity and efficiency, and thereby make a key contribution to economic recovery. Beyond this, the skills sector plays a vital role in increasing confidence and giving greater opportunity for social mobility, for example by supporting progression to higher education.

Two initiatives are of particular interest and importance within this context: the progress of the 14 to 19 reforms and the preparations for the raising of the school leaving age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. Early indications are that students are motivated and challenged by the applied style of learning in Diplomas. However, work to develop their functional skills frequently lacks coordination, and the quality of the teaching and learning of these skills varies considerably.

Undoubtedly there are tensions in the skills sector. The sector is complex and funding streams are changing; colleges are increasingly required to fulfil the roles of national experts, local community resource, collaborators with local partners, and competitors for resources. Nevertheless, the sector has a good track record of responding to changing needs, circumstances, funding and partnership arrangements. There has never been a better time to capitalise on the new and varied learning routes and the need of the population to learn. The best leaders

10

are holding their strategic course through the current uncertainty, focusing on the needs of learners and making the most of their strengths, including strong links with employers. They are also clear about how to deploy their resources to have the greatest impact.

Ofsted's role: raising standards and improving lives

In his report on the protection of children in England, Lord Laming wrote of inspection needing to embrace both challenge and support: 'inspection should not be a stand-alone activity… an isolated snapshot.' I agree. Inspection should drive improvement and Ofsted must be an agent for change, not just of scrutiny and challenge. I believe Ofsted can do more to promote further improvement through rigorous assessment and critique, well-crafted and precise recommendations, identifying and sharing good practice to inform professional development, and by celebrating success as well as exposing failure.

Fundamental to any regulatory and inspection system is the tension between stick and carrot. Fear of exposure is a powerfully motivating force, but this will only bring about improvement to the level of 'good enough'. So to be recognised for excellence has to be another powerful motivator. Ofsted celebrates success, principally to help others learn the lessons from it.

This Annual Report includes a section on the quality of services for children and young people in public care. There is evidence in some children's homes that insufficient priority is given to education: for example, some young people are not attending school regularly and staff take little action to address this. For these children, better support could transform their futures. This support has to be mediated through stable and close relationships with the professionals in their lives and it has to be both joined-up and of high quality. Inspection must focus on the needs, interests and voices of the people who rely on the services that we inspect, and we must focus on the detail of the professional practice, be that in social care, early years development or education and skills. Underpinning all this must be the highest aspirations and expectations; no limit should be imposed on the capacity of children,

young people and learners to improve, develop and achieve. Inspection supports improvement so long as it is focused on what actually matters: outcomes for children, young people and adult learners.

As I look to how inspection should develop over the next 12 months, several priorities stand out. First, inspection must engage with users and stakeholders at all levels; we need to ensure that the experiences of children, young people and adult learners are at the centre of everything we do. Second, we must do more to disseminate effective practice and what might be learned from it. Third, we must focus our work on what is happening on the ground, continuing to take performance data into account, but spending more time, for example, talking to social workers and observing teaching in classrooms. The presentation of local and national outcome data is accepted as routine now and enables the close scrutiny of absolute and relative performance. However, data must be corroborated by professional judgement. Direct observation of practice, talking to front-line staff and feedback from users are the core of our new approach to the inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services; and the annual assessment of children's services gives more emphasis to findings about services on the ground, and less to traditional performance indicators, such as those used in the Annual Performance Assessment, which it has replaced.

Fourth, we are putting in place a more systematic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of our own work, especially in the inspection of social care. In other words, I intend to put Ofsted's strapline of 'raising standards and improving lives' to the test. What difference do we make, and could we make more of a difference if we did things differently? Too many weaknesses identified in this report echo those found in previous annual reports. We must challenge those responsible for improvement to do even more – and we must challenge ourselves to do more too. But we must do that by keeping a tight focus on value for money.

Finally, when difficult decisions have to be made about the deployment of finite resources, I shall have no hesitation in demanding that Ofsted champions those for whom life is an uphill struggle, and especially those at risk of harm or failure. Too often they rely on poor services and they need Ofsted, on their behalf, to say so.

Quality and standards in care, early education, schools, colleges, adult learning and skills, and children's services

Childcare

Key findings

✳ The proportion of good and outstanding childcare inspected this year is higher than in 2007/08. However, the quality of childcare is lower overall in deprived areas than in others.

✳ In deprived areas the quality of childcare on non-domestic premises is higher overall than the quality of childminding.[2] In areas which are not deprived there is little difference in quality between the two kinds of provision.

✳ Most childminders have been able to implement the new Early Years Foundation Stage and a large majority are using it well to support children's learning and development.

✳ Childcare providers who take part in quality assurance schemes are much more likely to be good or outstanding.

✳ 73% of childcare providers who were outstanding at their previous inspections have sustained this high level of effectiveness. Of those that were found to be inadequate, 87% had improved by their inspections in 2008/09.

Introduction

1 Ofsted is responsible for both the regulation and the inspection of childcare provision. Those providers caring for children between birth and the 31 August following their fifth birthday are on the Early Years Register, unless they are specifically exempt from registration. For this provision, inspectors focus on the experience of the child in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Providers caring for older children who are under eight must be enrolled on the Childcare Register.[3] For this provision, inspectors judge whether or not the requirements of registration are met. Childcare within schools will now be inspected as part of school inspections.

2 In addition to the compulsory part of the Childcare Register referred to in the last paragraph, there is a voluntary part on which some childcare providers who are exempt from compulsory registration can choose to register with Ofsted. The providers who may register in this way include:

✳ those providing home-based care in the home of the child (nannies)

✳ activity-based settings such as sports coaching or tuition

✳ short-term care such as crèches

✳ care that is only for children aged eight and over.

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[2] For further information about the different forms of childcare, please refer to paragraph 3.

[3] The requirements for the Childcare Register are different from those for the Early Years Register. For further information about the Registers and about the distinction between inspection and regulation see the Glossary, p 156.
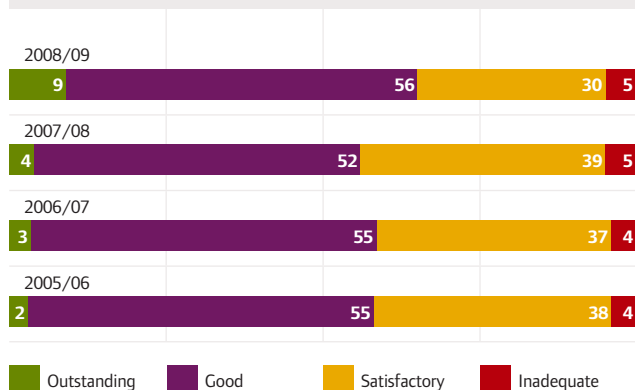
Childcare continued

3 In addition to the overall quality of services, this section reports separately on the quality of childminding and the quality of childcare on non-domestic premises, which are the two largest areas of childcare provision. Childminders care for children in a home other than the children's own. They work with no more than two other childminders or assistants. Childcare providers on non-domestic premises care for children but not in someone's home; they include nurseries and pre-school and play groups. Many were previously called day-care providers. Home childcarers are employed to care for children in the children's own homes.

The quality of provision in the childcare sector: inspections of providers on the Early Years Register

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of childcare providers inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2009: all types of childcare provision (percentage of providers)

2008/09
| 9 | 56 | 30 | 5 |

2007/08
| 4 | 52 | 39 | 5 |

2006/07
| 3 | 55 | 37 | 4 |

2005/06
| 2 | 55 | 38 | 4 |

■ Outstanding　■ Good　■ Satisfactory　■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Annual figures relate to inspections carried out between 1 September and 31 August each year, and so differ slightly from those published in previous Annual Reports where alternative reporting periods were used. For the years 2005/06 to 2007/08, figures relate to the quality of care judgement.

4 Most childcare provision (95%) is at least satisfactory in its overall effectiveness, and nearly two thirds (65%) is good or outstanding.[4] Of the providers inspected in 2008/09, 9% are outstanding, a considerably higher proportion than in 2007/08 when the figure was 4%. Levels are also higher in the provision of good and outstanding support for children to stay safe, be healthy and make a positive contribution.

5 The level of inadequate provision has remained the same as last year at 5%. However, there has been a higher level of inadequate provision for children to enjoy and achieve, which was below 1% in 2007/08 and is now 3%. This may be a reflection of the increased focus of inspection on children's learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

6 Of the 22,400 providers inspected who are on both the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register, 83% meet the requirements of the Childcare Register.[5] Where requirements were not met, typical actions set by inspectors included: staff gaining knowledge about, and confidence in, how to safeguard children from abuse or neglect; and ensuring children are looked after safely on outings.

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[4] A further 567 inspections were completed without making a judgement on quality because no children were on roll.

[5] These requirements cover children's welfare, arrangements for their safeguarding, suitability of persons involved, qualifications and training, suitability and safety of premises and equipment, organisation, complaints procedures, records, information to parents, information to Ofsted, insurance and display of the registration certificate.

Changes in the effectiveness of providers between inspections

Figure 2: Comparison with previous inspection: overall effectiveness of childcare providers inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Outstanding at previous inspection
73 | 25 | 2

Good at previous inspection
13 | 67 | 18 | 2

Satisfactory at previous inspection
3 | 45 | 44 | 9

Inadequate at previous inspection
1 | 23 | 63 | 13

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
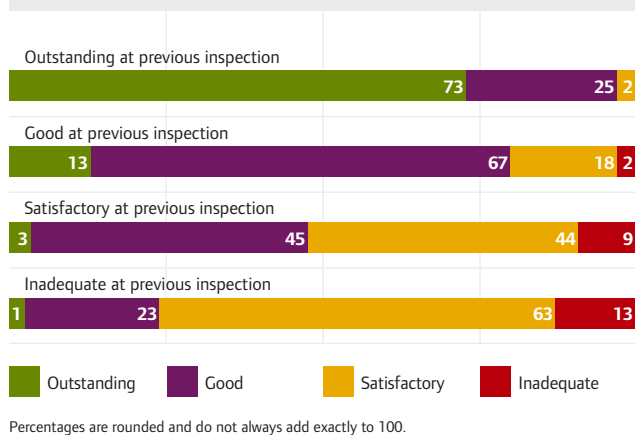
7 Of childcare providers inspected in 2008/09, 67% had also been inspected under the previous inspection framework. Figure 2 shows that 73% of providers that were outstanding at their previous inspections have sustained this high level of effectiveness. Nearly half the providers previously judged satisfactory have improved to become good or outstanding, and 13% of formerly good providers are now outstanding. Of those that had previously been inadequate, 87% had improved by their inspections in 2008/09. However, 53% of the providers that were satisfactory at their last inspections did not improve between inspections, and 13% that were inadequate did not improve either. Furthermore, 2% of previously good providers and 9% of previously satisfactory providers are now inadequate.

8 During 2008/09, 1,300 settings were judged inadequate. Over 150 (13%) of these inadequate settings have now closed. Ofsted monitors inadequate provision and reinspects it within a year. Ofsted continues to carry out monitoring visits to inadequate settings until the actions required to bring about improvement are successfully completed or the setting closes. Ultimately, where a provider fails to make the required improvements, Ofsted may decide to cancel registration.

> Children in deprived areas receive poorer provision overall. The proportion of good or outstanding childminding is 53% in areas of high deprivation, compared to 66% in the least deprived areas.

The quality of provision in deprived areas

9 Children in deprived areas receive poorer provision overall.[6] Figure 3 shows that the proportion of good or outstanding childminding is 53% in areas of high deprivation, compared to 66% in the least deprived areas. The gap is narrower for childcare providers on non-domestic premises in deprived areas; 60% offer good and outstanding provision compared to 68% elsewhere.

Figure 3: Good or outstanding childcare inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009, by deprivation (percentage of providers)

Childminders Childcare on non-domestic premises

■ 20% most deprived areas ■ 80% least deprived areas

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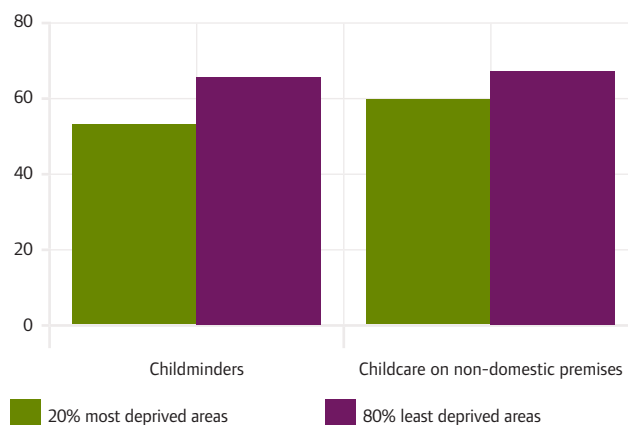
[6] The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index shows the percentage of children in each Super Output Area that live in families who are income deprived – defined as those in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Families' Tax Credit or Disabled Person's Tax Credit below a given threshold. To reflect the level of income deprivation, the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index provides a deprivation rank for each Super Output Area.

10 In deprived areas the average quality of childcare on non-domestic premises is higher than the quality of childminding. In areas which are not deprived there is little difference in quality between the two kinds of provision.

Quality assurance schemes

11 Quality assurance schemes help providers work towards specific standards of provision. Around 1,500 of the providers inspected participate in such schemes, run by a local authority or an independent professional body; this represents 4% of childminders and 11% of childcare providers on non-domestic premises.

12 Providers taking part in quality assurance schemes are much more likely to be good or outstanding. Of the small proportion who are scheme members, 87% are either good or outstanding, compared with 64% of those who are not members. The difference is even more marked among childminders than childcare providers on non-domestic premises.

The accuracy of providers' self-evaluation

13 By 31 August 2009, 5,100 childminders and 4,900 childcare providers on non-domestic premises had submitted self-evaluation forms to Ofsted. These figures represent a very small minority of providers, although the number is rising every month. A large majority stated they fully met the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The main gaps reported were in requirements relating to children's learning and development, staff qualifications and organisation.

14 Outstanding providers evaluate their work rigorously as the basis of planning for improvement. In the majority of cases, there is broad agreement between providers' own assessments and those of inspectors. Of providers inspected in 2008/09 who submitted a self-evaluation form to Ofsted, 62% judged their overall effectiveness to be the same as did inspectors. A further 15% evaluated themselves less positively than inspectors. However, 23% rated their work more highly than Ofsted, indicating that more needs to be done to build a culture of rigorous self-assessment in a considerable number of providers. This is particularly the case for satisfactory providers, most of whom do not evaluate their provision well enough to identify the specific areas in which improvement is needed. Of the 400 judged satisfactory by inspection in their overall effectiveness, 77% had evaluated themselves as good or outstanding.

The quality of childminding

Figure 4: The quality of childminding inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	9	56	31	5
Leadership and management	9	54	32	5
Children's learning and development	12	53	32	3
Children's welfare	10	58	28	4

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
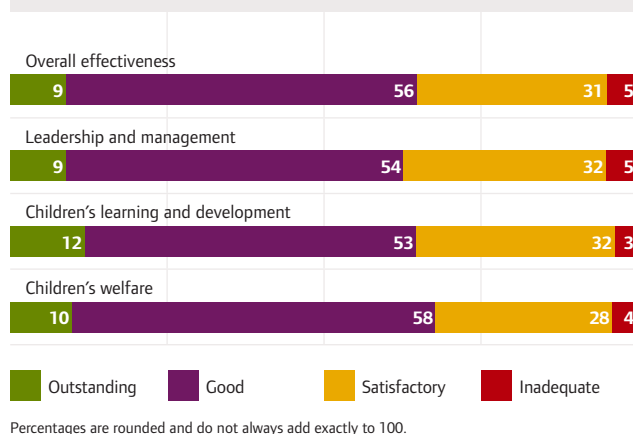
Effective practice

15 Of the childminders inspected this year, over 1,500 (9%) are outstanding. They are highly skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic, with a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They analyse their own work critically, continually strive for further improvement, and as a result they help all children make good progress. They develop productive partnerships, using parents', carers' and children's views and welcoming support from local authorities and other agencies.

16 Providers caring for children between birth and the 31 August following their fifth birthday must now meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, including those for learning and development. Given the scale of this change, it is encouraging that almost two thirds (65%) of childminders are good or outstanding in helping children to learn and develop in line with the new requirements.

17 Effective practice involves using the Early Years Foundation Stage materials to plan for children's progress without creating unnecessary paperwork. Good and outstanding providers cover all areas of learning effectively and encourage children to make their own choices. They promote high-quality learning and development through play and, by observing and assessing children's achievements and interests, they are able to match activities to the needs of each. As a result, children are eager to take part, enjoy what they do, are motivated to learn and make good progress.

18 These childminders promote children's health by providing daily opportunities for exercise, appetising and healthy meals and a clean environment. They help ensure children stay safe through effective practice in safeguarding, comprehensive risk assessments and careful supervision, on and away from the premises, without restricting suitable and adventurous activities.

Inadequate practice

19 Since September 2008, the care provided by almost 800 childminders (5%) has been found to be inadequate at their most recent inspections. Weaknesses include poor evaluation of practice and failure to recognise areas for improvement. These childminders do not always identify children's individual abilities and needs when they first arrive. Typically, they lack knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, how to support children's progress and how to use observations and assessment to plan appropriately for each child. The environment lacks interest and challenge, boundaries relating to behaviour are inconsistent or there is too little encouragement to parents to support their children's development.

20 These providers may also have a limited understanding of how to ensure children's safety and protect them from harm and abuse. Hazards to children's safety and security are neither identified nor minimised, and essential documents for the safe management of children are incomplete. Not all recently registered childminders have had training in first aid. Occasionally, there is a failure to arrange the vetting of an adult living at the premises. In these cases, Ofsted draws attention to the seriousness of the situation and ensures the provider has the necessary checks carried out promptly.

The quality of childcare on non-domestic premises

Figure 5: The quality of childcare on non-domestic premises inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Overall effectiveness

| 10 | 57 | 29 | 5 |

Leadership and management

| 11 | 56 | 29 | 4 |

Children's learning and development

| 11 | 56 | 30 | 3 |

Children's welfare

| 12 | 60 | 25 | 4 |

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
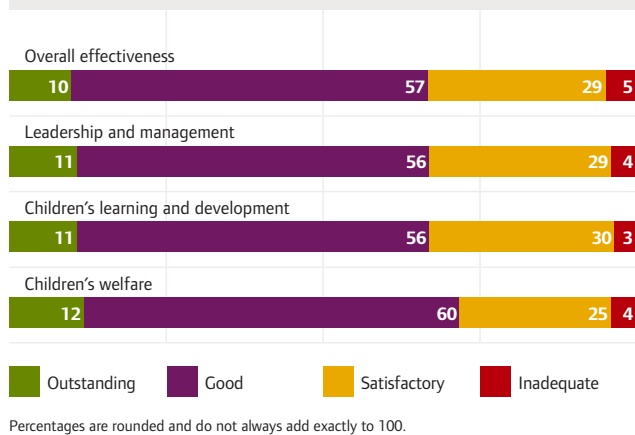
Effective practice

21 Of the childcare providers on non-domestic premises (premises other than a private home) inspected this year, over 750 (10%) are outstanding. In these settings, children make excellent progress. They are engaged, confident and given opportunities to make choices for themselves. Managers and staff share a clear vision and high expectations for children. Staff are enthusiastic, skilled and know the children well. Planning is responsive to each child's abilities and interests. Staff recognise their important role in protecting children and follow safeguarding procedures with great care. Reflection on practice is well established, so staff and managers evaluate their work accurately and find ways to improve outcomes for children.

22 These providers give high priority to ensuring all children are included in activities. Staff value each child as unique, with particular talents, interests and learning needs. They work closely with parents and professionals such as therapists, family workers and health visitors. Staff actively support children and families who are learning English as an additional language, and books, toys, photographs and signs reflecting different cultures and languages are used to promote inclusion.

23 Where provision is most successful, skilled staff inspire, engage and challenge children to extend their learning. Adults provide stimulating environments indoors and outside, allowing children to follow their interests and explore activities fully through play and through more structured experiences. They use regular and spontaneous observations to assess progress and devise the next steps in learning. They prioritise the development of vocabulary and communication skills and help children gain a secure grounding in literacy and numeracy.

24 In these settings, children learn to take responsibility for their safety. They understand the reasons for good hygiene, physical exercise and healthy eating. They generally behave very well and are involved in negotiating simple rules. Children show respect and concern for each other, often benefiting from opportunities to mix with others of different ages. Their self-esteem is promoted, as their work is displayed and staff listen and respond to them.

25 An individual staff member, known as a key person, is appointed for each child and is responsible for working with her or him. In the best settings, key people perform extremely well, liaising with parents and building close relationships with children, who seek them out for support or reassurance.

Inadequate practice

26 In the 360 inadequate childcare providers on non-domestic premises inspected (5%), weaknesses are typically found in: risk assessment; teaching children to keep themselves safe; upholding hygiene routines; arrangements for key people; and outdoor learning and play. Common problems include the failure of managers and staff to reflect systematically on how well they are promoting outcomes for children and to seek ways to improve. They may have little understanding of inclusion and do not consider sufficiently the needs of children who are learning English as an additional language. Planning does not reflect individual learning needs nor give children opportunities to learn about other cultures.

27 In these settings, children make insufficient progress because of weaknesses in staff skills, poor assessment and monitoring of progress and failure to identify ways to promote the next steps in learning. Activities do not challenge or engage children, leading to poor behaviour and inconsistent routines. Limited access to resources restricts children's opportunities to make choices. Too often, the providers fail to involve parents in their children's development, and to work with other settings locally to ensure continuity in learning.

28 In some cases, providers do not adhere consistently to safe recruitment and vetting procedures. Whenever this occurs, Ofsted reminds the provider of the seriousness of the situation, takes action and follows it up to ensure the provider arranges for all adults to be vetted promptly.

> Where provision is most successful, skilled staff inspire, engage and challenge children to extend their learning.

Compliance, investigations and enforcement

29 During this period, Ofsted issued 32,300 actions for improvement where inspection revealed providers were not meeting registration requirements. Typical actions for childminders included:

- planning and provision of experiences appropriate to each child's stage of development
- requesting written permission from parents for emergency medical treatment
- ensuring all required records are available.

30 For childcare providers on non-domestic premises, actions included:

- ensuring all adults are suitable to work with children
- allocating each child a key person with special responsibility for her or him
- ensuring at least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the site at all times
- understanding how to manage behaviour effectively.

31 An important part of Ofsted's regulatory role is to investigate any concerns about a childminder's continuing suitability for registration or about providers who may be caring for children without being registered. Ofsted assesses each concern and decides the best means of investigation. This is based on the seriousness of the concern, any previous complaints, past inspection findings and the due time for the provider's next inspection. Ofsted takes urgent action if there appears to be immediate risk of harm to a child. An inspection may also take place sooner than originally planned.

32 During 2008/09, parents and the general public raised 7,200 complaints about registered childcare provision, including 2,400 about childminding and 4,700 about childcare on non-domestic premises, relating to approximately 5% of registered providers. A further 600 complaints related to unregistered childcare.

33 In 69% of cases investigated, Ofsted found that requirements were met and no further action was needed. In 31%, letters were issued requiring providers to take action to meet their registration requirements. Ofsted issued 25 formal warnings confirming that the provider had failed to comply with regulations and indicating that any further breach would be likely to result in prosecution. Enforcement action was taken, including:

- 142 welfare or other statutory requirement notices, which require providers to comply with the conditions of their registration and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- five enforcement notices, which notify unregistered childminders that Ofsted has evidence that they may be childminding and, if they continue to do so without registration, they will be failing to comply with the law.

Size of sector

34 New arrangements, introduced by the Childcare Act 2006, began on 1 September 2008. Childcare providers can be enrolled on either or both of the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. Some other childcare providers, for example those caring for children over the age of eight, or caring in the children's own home, are not required to register, but may voluntarily join the Childcare Register.

35 The very large majority (84%) of providers are listed on both the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register (including the voluntary part); a further 6% are on only the Early Years Register; and 9% are on only the Childcare Register. Home childcarers account for around 6,300 (7%) providers and are registered on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register.

Figure 6: Registered childcare providers in August 2009 (numbers of providers)

Legend: Both registers · Childcare Register · Early Years Register
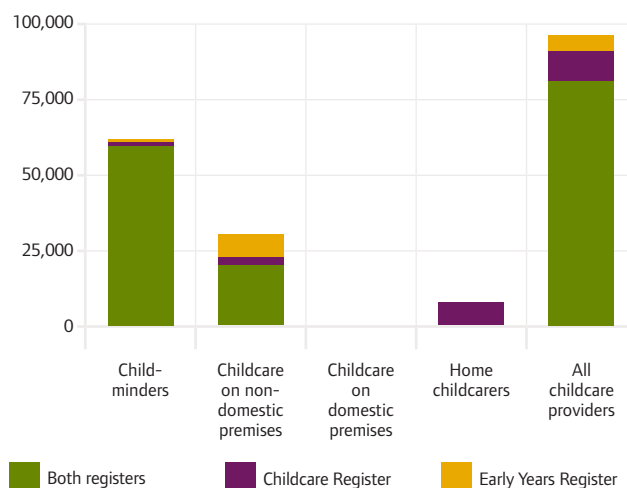
36 This year, the number of childcare places covered by Ofsted's registration has fallen, from the 1,500,000 registered places reported last year to 1,300,000 this year. The number of registered providers has also fallen, from 99,900 to 94,800. However, some of this decrease in places and providers is accounted for by the removal of providers who are not currently looking after children and by changes in the requirements for registration.

37 About 360 childminders who had not looked after any children during the three years to 31 August 2008 left the sector, removing around 1,500 notional places for children. Around 1,500 childcare providers were counted in the figures before September 2008 but they are no longer required to register, accounting for 48,500 places. Finally, numbers of places offered are not collected for providers who are registered only on the Childcare Register.

Figure 7: Number of childcare providers joining and leaving the sector between 31 August 2008 and 31 August 2009

Joiners

Leavers excluding exempt/not transferred
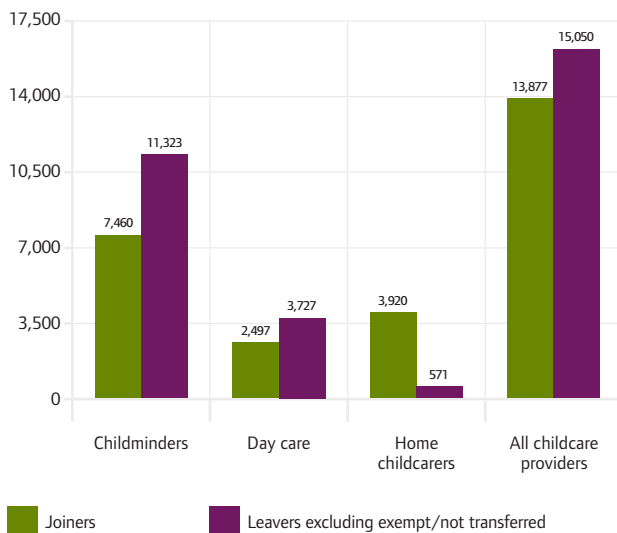
Day care includes day-care providers registered on 31 August 2008, childcare providers on non-domestic premises and childcare providers on domestic premises.

38 The sector is fluid, with many providers joining and leaving. This affects all types of provision (Figure 7). The quality of provision that has closed varied widely: 49% provided good or outstanding care at their last inspection, 46% were satisfactory and 5% were inadequate. Overall, this represents a less positive profile than for the sector as a whole, in which proportions of good and outstanding, satisfactory and inadequate provision are 65%, 30% and 5% respectively.

Maintained schools

Key findings

* Over the cycle of maintained school inspections that started in September 2005, there has been a steady increase each year in the proportions of good and outstanding schools and this figure reached 69% of schools inspected in 2008/09.

* The large majority of schools that have been inspected twice under the arrangements introduced in 2005/06 have improved since their first inspection or have sustained good or outstanding overall effectiveness.

* However, nearly half the schools that were satisfactory when previously inspected remain no better than satisfactory at their latest inspection. Ofsted's school inspection arrangements will now focus more attention on satisfactory schools.

* In 2008/09, 4% of all maintained schools inspected are inadequate, a slight decrease on last year's figure. At 6%, the proportion of inadequate secondary schools is still too high.

* Improvements in school effectiveness are linked to stronger leadership and management, resulting in teaching and curricular provision of higher quality.

* In addition to a large gap between the effectiveness of the best performing and weakest schools, there are also variations in the effectiveness of different types of schools. As in 2007/08, the very large majority of nursery schools and special schools inspected are good or outstanding.

* Maintained schools have sustained the generally high quality of provision for the youngest children, following the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008.

* Schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals are more likely to be inadequate than those in more favoured contexts. However, a small number of schools demonstrate that it is possible to overcome challenging circumstances and are outstanding for at least a second time.

* The number of schools in categories of concern has reduced from 471 in 2007/08 to 360 this year.

* The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation are good or outstanding in 76% of schools inspected; this figure has risen steadily over the years. There remains a strong link between the accuracy and effectiveness of self-evaluation, the quality of leadership and the capacity of schools to improve.

Introduction

39 Between September 2008 and August 2009, 7,065 inspections were carried out in 5,323 primary, 1,071 secondary, 340 special and 147 nursery schools, and in 184 pupil referral units. Of the total number of inspections, 27% were lighter touch one-day inspections for schools judged good or outstanding at their previous inspections. This year Ofsted also conducted 411 pilot inspections to test and refine the new inspection framework for September 2009. The outcomes of these pilot inspections are included in the inspection data in this section. Inspectors also carried out 783 visits to schools in categories of concern, including 598 to schools in special measures and 185 to schools that had received a notice to improve. In addition, 139 monitoring visits were made to schools which had been judged satisfactory overall at their most recent inspections. Evidence is also drawn from over 1,300 schools selected for survey inspections of subjects and aspects of the provision.[7]

Overall effectiveness

Figure 8: The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of all schools)
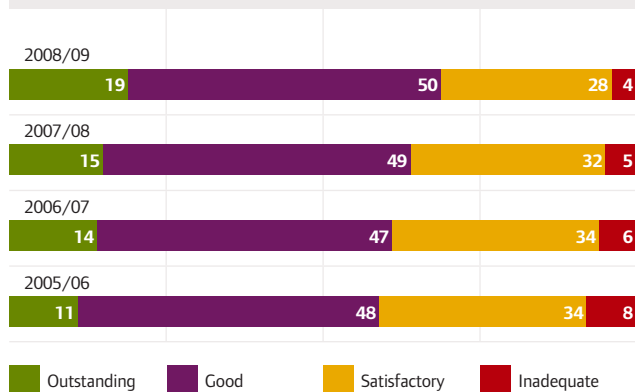
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

Figure 9: The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of schools)
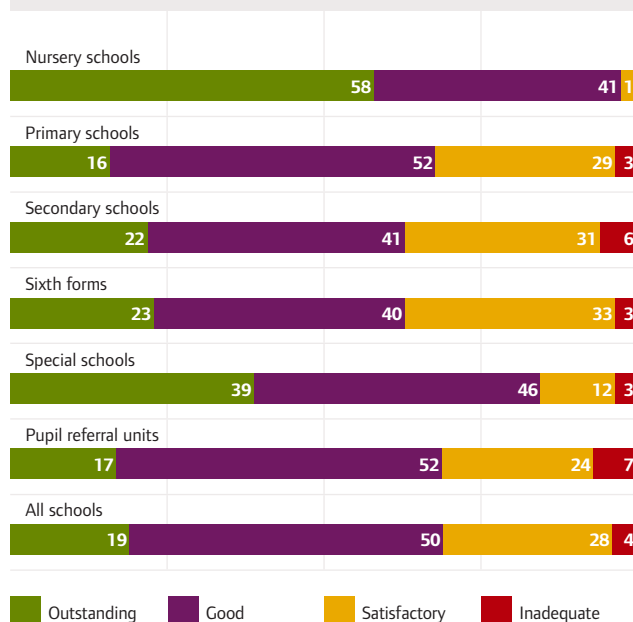
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

40 Figures 8 and 9 show changes in the overall effectiveness of maintained schools over the cycle of inspections that started at the beginning of the academic year 2005/06, and the effectiveness of schools by type in 2008/09. Three key points stand out from these data:

- the proportions of good and outstanding schools have shown a steady increase each year

- there are considerable variations in the overall effectiveness of different kinds of school; high proportions of nursery schools and special schools are good or outstanding

- although the proportion of inadequate secondary schools has reduced from 9% in 2007/08, at 6% it is still too high.

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[7] The data in this section refer to inspection outcomes from whole-school inspections carried out during 2008/09. They do not include outcomes of subject inspections.

Maintained schools continued

Figure 10: Comparison with previous inspection: overall effectiveness of maintained schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Outstanding at previous inspection: 78 | 19 | 3 | 1

Good at previous inspection: 22 | 62 | 15 | 2

Satisfactory at previous inspection: 4 | 49 | 40 | 7

Inadequate at previous inspection: 1 | 15 | 75 | 10

Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
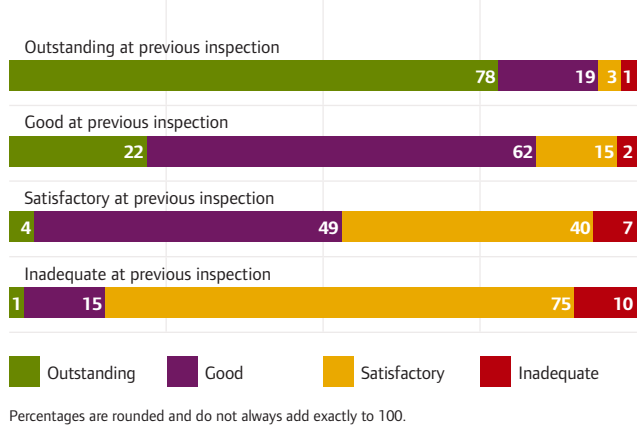
41 The overall trend indicates that many schools have responded to priorities for improvement identified at their previous inspections. Of the 167 schools placed in special measures in 2005/06, 19 had closed while in special measures by 31 August 2009.[8] Of those remaining, 96% were judged at least satisfactory at their most recent inspections, and 26% were good or outstanding. Of schools inspected in 2008/09, 82% had previously had an inspection under the framework which was introduced in 2005. Figure 10 shows that over half the schools previously judged satisfactory have improved to become good or outstanding, and over a fifth of formerly good schools are now outstanding. Over three quarters of schools that were outstanding at their previous inspections, and have been reinspected in 2008/09, have sustained this very high level of effectiveness.

42 However, 3% of schools that were previously outstanding and were reinspected in 2008/09 have now deteriorated to satisfactory, and 1% to inadequate, while 15% of previously good schools are now satisfactory and 2% are now inadequate.[9] Of those schools that were reinspected in 2008/09 and had previously been inadequate, 10% have remained in a category of concern. Moreover, 47% of the schools that were satisfactory when last inspected under current arrangements have remained static or declined. Ofsted's new school inspection arrangements will focus more attention on satisfactory schools from September 2009.

43 Improvements reflect more effective leadership and management, which have strengthened the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They are also linked with improved self-evaluation, which is good or outstanding in 76% of schools inspected. This is a slightly higher figure than in 2007/08, when the proportion was 72%, and continues the long-term rising trend noted in last year's Annual Report.[10] Better provision has raised pupils' achievement and has had a positive impact on their behaviour, attendance and other aspects of their personal development.

44 The schools that have declined in their overall effectiveness since their last inspection under the current framework are more likely in the interim to have had a change of headteacher than the schools that have improved. Of schools previously judged good or outstanding, 55 are now inadequate. Many of these have been through a period of turbulence, for example prolonged staff absence, sometimes of the headteacher.

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8   This includes three schools which had been placed in special measures for a second consecutive time.

9   For more information on inadequate schools, see p 34.

10   *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08*, Ofsted, 2008.

45 Overall, the inspection judgements for school sixth forms are slightly better than for secondary schools overall. While the proportion of good and outstanding provision is similar in secondary schools overall and school sixth forms, the proportion of inadequate sixth forms is considerably lower at 3%. In a large majority of the 11–18 schools judged inadequate overall, the sixth form is at least satisfactory. Although post-16 provision in schools is generally strong, there is a tendency for managers to evaluate it too generously. This is because they often compare the performance of the sixth form with that of the main school, rather than benchmarking the quality of the provision and outcomes with those of other post-16 providers, such as colleges.

46 In 2008/09, 85% of special schools inspected are good or outstanding. The 11 inadequate special schools have weaknesses in care, guidance and support for pupils and, in some cases, in safeguarding. Since 2007/08 the proportion of good or outstanding pupil referral units has increased considerably, from 62% to 69% in 2008/09. The proportion of inadequate pupil referral units decreased substantially between 2006/07 and 2007/08, and remains at the same level this year. However, at 7% this is too high.

47 Primary schools have maintained a very high quality of provision for the youngest children following the introduction of the framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008.[11] Of those inspected, four fifths are good or outstanding in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, while an even higher proportion of nursery schools are good or outstanding. In general, schools have been well supported and have managed successfully the transition to the new requirements. Children's personal development and well-being, and the effectiveness with which their welfare is promoted, are particular strengths; they are good or outstanding in more than nine in 10 primary schools inspected.

48 While the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is typically the same as that of the school overall, it tends to be better in satisfactory and inadequate schools inspected in 2008/09. It is very rare for the Early Years Foundation Stage to be inadequate in isolation; in a large majority of cases, the school is also inadequate in its overall effectiveness.

49 There continues to be variation in the overall effectiveness of schools according to certain contextual factors. There has long been an association of poverty with educational outcomes, because children from deprived backgrounds face considerably greater barriers to achievement than others, particularly where community expectations of achievement are low. Schools with high proportions of pupils from deprived backgrounds, as measured by eligibility for free school meals, are more likely to be inadequate than those in more favoured contexts. It has already been noted on page 15 of this report that childcare provision is also weaker overall in areas of high deprivation.

50 Nonetheless, a small number of schools facing very challenging circumstances have been judged outstanding on at least two inspections. They have demonstrated that, despite the scale of challenge they face, by putting their pupils first and having the highest expectations of them, investing in their staff and engaging their communities, disadvantage need not be a barrier to achievement.[12]

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[11] The Early Years Foundation Stage framework sets the standards for care, learning and development for children aged between birth and the 31 August following their fifth birthday.

[12] *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds* (080240), Ofsted, 2009.

Achievement and standards

Figure 11: Pupils' achievement in schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of all schools)

Nursery schools
| 60 | 39 | 1 |

Primary schools
| 15 | 53 | 29 | 3 |

Secondary schools
| 19 | 43 | 32 | 6 |

Sixth forms
| 19 | 43 | 35 | 2 |

Special schools
| 39 | 47 | 13 | 2 |

Pupil referral units
| 17 | 54 | 25 | 4 |

All schools
| 18 | 51 | 28 | 3 |

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate
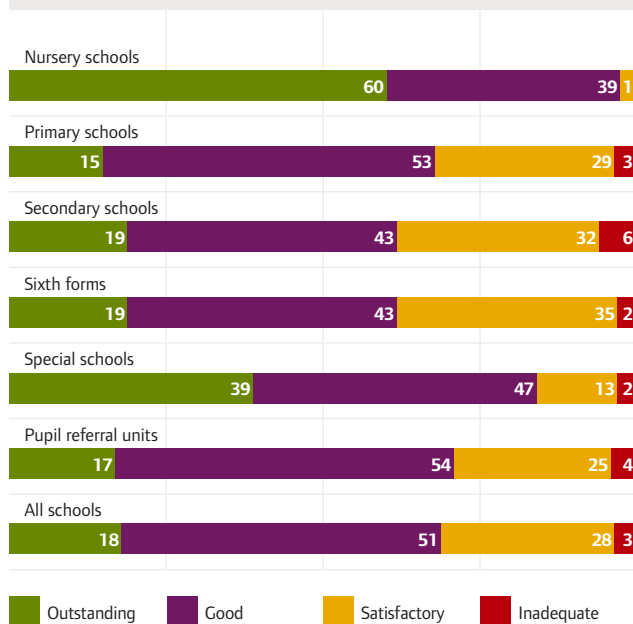
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

51 The inspection judgement made on pupils' achievement takes account of the progress they make relative to their different starting points. This judgement tends to be closely linked to that of the overall effectiveness of the school. It should not be confused with the judgement on attainment, which is concerned with the standards pupils reach compared with the national expectations for their ages. Pupils' achievement is good or outstanding in over two thirds of schools inspected, a slightly higher proportion than in previous years. In these schools, the various groups of learners, for example of different ethnicity, ability or gender, all achieve well. However, in three in 10 schools, pupils make progress which is no better than satisfactory. In schools in which achievement is inadequate, there is significant underperformance by pupils in general or by particular groups. Pupils of White British heritage from deprived homes are still particularly at risk of underachievement.

52 Achievement is inadequate in a higher proportion of secondary than of primary schools; it is also outstanding in a greater proportion of secondary than primary schools. Analysis of samples of inspection reports for inadequate schools and those judged satisfactory overall at their two most recent inspections shows that inconsistency in the quality of teaching and in the progress made by pupils is a recurrent area for improvement. There is variability in the quality of teaching between subjects, and also in the progress made by groups of pupils; the provision and levels of challenge are not always suited to pupils' ages and differing levels of attainment. In a small proportion of primary schools, inspection shows that achievement is constrained by weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science, coupled with a lack of consistency in the quality of subject leadership.

53 Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good or outstanding progress in 74% of schools, a higher proportion than in 2007/08. In 38% of special schools inspected, progress is outstanding. Pupils with particular learning needs make accelerated progress when lessons are well matched to their abilities, additional support is provided at key points and teachers' assessment is accurate.

54 The proportion of pupil referral units in which achievement is good or outstanding is higher than last year. However, many of these potentially very vulnerable pupils, often with a legacy of poor progress, are still at risk of underachievement, and outcomes remain poor for most young people in pupil referral units. Achievement is limited in weaker pupil referral units by ineffective use of assessment to track pupils' progress and as the basis for effective intervention to improve it. Raising levels of achievement in units in which it is inadequate must be a priority for the local authorities responsible for them.

55 In school sixth forms, students' achievement is variable between and even within individual schools. However, in nearly two thirds of sixth forms, progress is good or outstanding; it is inadequate in very few (2%). This overall pattern of success often masks differences between subjects and courses. As at other key stages, pupils' progress and achievement reflect the quality of provision and of leadership.

> In schools in which there have been improvements in pupils' achievement, these have often been accompanied by rising attendance. There is a positive link between the quality of provision and the levels of pupils' attendance.

Personal development and well-being

Figure 12: Pupils' personal development and well-being in schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of all schools)

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	83	17		
Primary schools	40	53	7	
Secondary schools	35	48	16	1
Sixth forms	43	44	13	
Special schools	66	28	6	1
Pupil referral units	28	54	16	2
All schools	41	50	9	
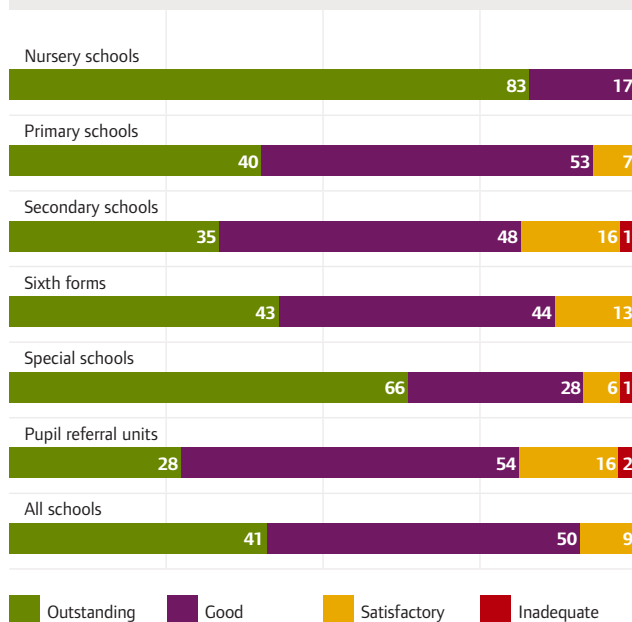
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

56 Pupils' personal development and well-being are good or outstanding in 91% of all schools. This is an increase on the 2007/08 figure of 88% and is higher than those for other main inspection outcomes. Personal development is better in primary than in secondary schools and is also strong in nursery and special schools. This positive position reflects schools' emphasis on strengthening the five Every Child Matters outcomes by good communication, building strong relationships and giving increasing priority to pupils' health, safety and enjoyment.[13] This is especially well fostered where there is an imaginative curriculum that is well adapted to pupils' needs. However, the development of skills that contribute to pupils' future economic well-being continues to be the weakest of the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

57 Schools generally work well with external partners, including other providers of education and training, for the benefit of their pupils. Of schools inspected, 91% are good or outstanding in this aspect of their work, a higher proportion than in 2007/08. The proportion of secondary schools that work outstandingly well with external partners is markedly higher at 43% than that of primary schools (33%).

58 Pupils' attendance was judged good or outstanding in 58% of primary and in 54% of secondary schools inspected. These are higher proportions than for those inspected in 2007/08, when the figures were 55% and 52% respectively. Attendance is particularly high in special schools, being good or outstanding in 77%. In schools in which there have been improvements in pupils' achievement, these have often been accompanied by rising attendance. There is a positive link between the quality of provision and the levels of pupils' attendance. For example, attendance is inadequate in only 1% of schools in which teaching and learning are good or outstanding but it is inadequate in 34% of schools in which teaching and learning are also inadequate.

Figure 13: The behaviour of learners in schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of schools)

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	80	20		
Primary schools	43	52	5	
Secondary schools	29	51	19	1
Special schools	59	34	6	1
Pupil referral units	26	60	12	2
All schools	42	50	7	

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.
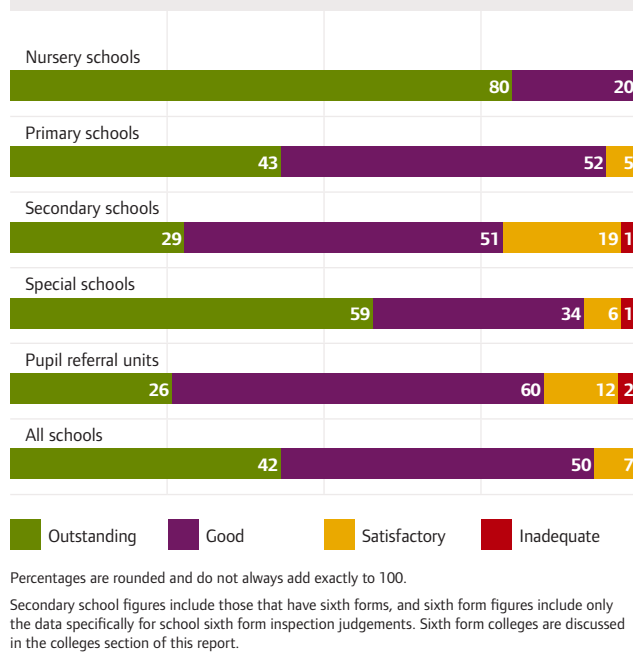
59 Pupils' behaviour is better overall in primary and special schools than in secondary schools but it is nevertheless good or outstanding in 80% of secondary schools. These figures indicate that the very large majority of schools manage behaviour well and engage pupils effectively. As in the case of attendance, standards of behaviour are linked with the quality of teaching; pupils' behaviour often varies between different teachers, particularly in the secondary phase. Pupils are less inclined to lose concentration and disrupt learning in lessons in which teaching is lively, challenging and engaging. Improvements in behaviour are brought about through strengthening the quality of teaching; consistent implementation of a clear policy for managing behaviour; high expectations of pupils' conduct, shared by all staff; recognition and rewards for positive contributions from pupils; and tailoring the curriculum to meet differing needs.

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[13] For more information about the Every Child Matters outcomes, see the Glossary, p 156.

60 Although behaviour is inadequate overall in a very small number of schools, it is no better than satisfactory in about one in five secondary schools; in these cases there is room for improvement. However, behaviour can be outstanding even in the most challenging contexts, particularly when schools have strong values; effective teaching and learning; high expectations of both staff and pupils; and policies, and procedures that are consistent, fair and rigorous. Such schools are also highly inclusive, with a strong focus on the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every pupil.

Teaching and learning

Figure 14: The effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of schools)

Nursery schools: Outstanding 58, Good 41, Satisfactory 1

Primary schools: Outstanding 14, Good 55, Satisfactory 29, Inadequate 2

Secondary schools: Outstanding 12, Good 52, Satisfactory 33, Inadequate 3

Sixth forms: Outstanding 16, Good 55, Satisfactory 28, Inadequate 1

Special schools: Outstanding 36, Good 50, Satisfactory 13, Inadequate 1

Pupil referral units: Outstanding 16, Good 56, Satisfactory 25, Inadequate 3

All schools: Outstanding 16, Good 54, Satisfactory 28, Inadequate 2

Legend: Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate
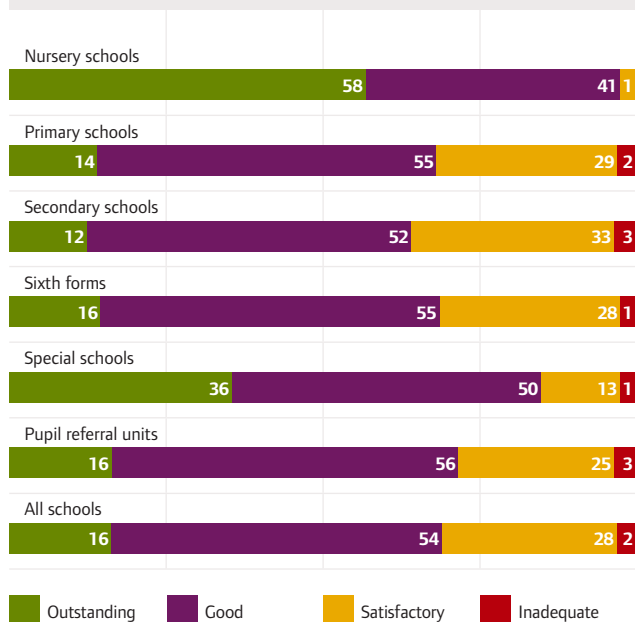
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

Primary schools

61 Teaching and learning are good or outstanding in 69% of primary schools inspected, an increase on the 64% reported in 2007/08. The best teaching is based on stimulating interaction and engagement with pupils, well-considered choice of resources and secure subject knowledge on the part of teachers. Skilful questioning is used to monitor pupils' understanding and to encourage them to deepen it through reflection, discussion and justification of their answers. Productive teamwork between teachers and skilled teaching assistants is a characteristic of the best primary practice. Inspection reports for outstanding primary schools provide evidence of the importance of the systematic teaching of phonics in promoting rapid progress in early reading.

62 While the overall picture of teaching and learning is positive, evidence from survey inspections indicates that, where there are weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, they are most likely to be found in mathematics, information and communication technology and science. Other weaknesses include insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend and enrich their vocabulary, infrequent use of open and challenging questions and too little attention to writing skills, particularly those needed to write well at length. In mathematics, the best teaching develops pupils' conceptual understanding, through skilful questioning and the use of practical and visual resources. In weaker mathematics lessons, however, teachers' checking of pupils' understanding is ineffective and misconceptions are not identified and corrected.

63 The curriculum is good or outstanding in almost three quarters of primary schools, a similar proportion to that reported in 2007/08. The use of new technologies to promote a more ambitious and stimulating curriculum is now more widespread and where they are used well they motivate pupils who may otherwise be at risk of disengagement. Too frequently, however, new technologies are used in pedestrian and routine ways and the impact on pupils' learning is diminished. Primary teachers adapt the curriculum most effectively when they feel secure in their subject knowledge. In science, for example, those with confidence in their knowledge are much more likely to promote investigative work. Their pupils often cite science as a favourite subject but its popularity drops where the approach is more routine or paper-based.

64 Modern foreign languages will become an entitlement for pupils within the primary curriculum in 2010. In just over half of a sample of primary schools surveyed, the curricular provision in the subject was good or outstanding. In these schools, the study of languages is making a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development, largely because of their excitement about and enjoyment in speaking a new language.

Secondary schools

65 Teaching and learning are good or outstanding in 64% of secondary schools inspected, a higher proportion than in 2007/08, when the figure was 58%; they are inadequate in 3%, compared with 5% last year. Even in the most challenging circumstances, some schools show that teaching can be outstanding. They operate with a very high degree of internal consistency, working as a learning community, sharing their expertise, reflecting on practice and linking it to professional development. The best schools constantly seek further improvement and rigorously and relentlessly evaluate their work. Outstanding teaching in secondary schools is characterised by high levels of challenge for pupils and engagement with them, promoting rapid progress towards ambitious goals.

66 Leaders in these successful schools ensure that staff engage with each other in regular discussion about their practice. Subject teachers, as well as senior managers, routinely observe others' lessons and offer helpful feedback. Professional development is a continuing programme for staff, giving teachers the opportunity from the start of their careers, and in each succeeding year, to extend the range of their skills. There is a clear understanding that the school is a place in which staff and pupils alike are engaged in the business of learning. Teachers are well supported by absolute clarity in school policy about the behaviour that is expected of pupils and that which will not be tolerated.

67 Improvement in provision is often linked with better use of assessment as a key element of teaching and learning and also with good tracking systems so that pupils at risk of underachievement are identified and supported early. Careful marking of pupils' work provides clear guidance for improvement. Survey findings indicate, however, that the quality and use of assessment are inconsistent both within and between secondary schools.[14] They also emerge frequently from inspections as an area for improvement.

68 In schools in which the curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement and the realisation of their ambitions, it is flexible and evolves to take account of pupils' differing needs. There is scope for the higher attainers to move ahead quickly, sometimes by taking external examinations early. The balance between academic and vocational courses is well planned to broaden the appeal of the curriculum to the full range of pupils' aspirations. Programmes and teaching arrangements are carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a strong emphasis in these successful schools on a rich variety of opportunities outside the classroom, including sporting, cultural and creative activities.

69 The low take-up in many schools of modern foreign languages beyond the age of 14 is a continuing cause for concern. Some of the schools surveyed, however, are dealing with this by introducing a wider choice of languages, changing timetabling arrangements to facilitate the study of languages and improving the quality of subject teaching in Key Stage 3.

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[14] *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (070244), Ofsted, 2008.

Special schools

70 The quality of teaching and learning is good or outstanding in a very large majority (86%) of special schools, an increase on the proportion in 2007/08 (80%). Teaching is best where staff have the necessary skills to identify and help pupils overcome possible barriers to learning. There is great emphasis on enhancing pupils' communication skills by different means that are appropriate to their needs and development. Support staff are deployed in ways that enable pupils to become more independent; references to the contributions of highly skilled teaching assistants are recurrent in inspection reports for the best special schools. Detailed assessment and tracking of pupils' progress across the five Every Child Matters outcomes ensure that high expectations of achievement and a consistent approach among staff are maintained. Nevertheless, even in outstanding schools recommendations for improvement emerging from inspection sometimes refer to the need for better assessment and tracking of progress. The use of accreditation to recognise achievement for older pupils and provide a sound basis for progression to the next stages of their education and training remains inconsistent.

Pupil referral units

71 The proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning in pupil referral units inspected is higher at 72% this year than in 2007/08 when it was 64%.[15] Comparisons should be made with care, however, given the relatively small number of units inspected. The proportion of units in which teaching and learning are inadequate is slightly higher than that for mainstream schools. Successful teaching in pupil referral units is based on the swift assessment of pupils' needs on arrival and lesson planning which takes full account of their social and academic starting points. The staff recognise that many pupils will not have been successful in mainstream schools and structure their teaching to enable them to achieve success in small steps. Innovative approaches, interesting content and positive relationships are also key to motivating pupils. Good classroom management swiftly extinguishes any emerging disruption and keeps pupils focused on their learning, with judicious use of rewards and a focus on individual targets.

72 In nearly three quarters of pupil referral units inspected, the curriculum is good or outstanding; it is inadequate in 4% of those inspected. In successful units, the provision is flexible, often individualised, and effectively meets the needs of the changing pupil populations. Pupils are well prepared to return to mainstream settings or move on to vocational or further education, usually within a year or less. There is an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, as a result of which pupils leave with much improved basic skills. These units have been successful in addressing pupils' behavioural and social difficulties, which have previously impeded their learning. The pupils gain confidence in their ability to learn and, as a result, their progress and motivation improve. Productive links are made and maintained with mainstream schools to support early reintegration and prevent future exclusions. Importantly, successful pupil referral units offer Key Stage 4 students a range of relevant accredited courses, including GCSEs. The best units for secondary-age pupils have a highly flexible curriculum, enabling those who are placed there for only a short time to gain accreditation.

73 In pupil referral units in which teaching and learning are inadequate, pupils' opportunities and prospects for their future economic well-being remain limited. Three of the pupil referral units inspected were providing too few teaching hours each week. This is despite the fact that where local authorities place pupils who have been permanently excluded from school in pupil referral units, they have a statutory responsibility to ensure that suitable full-time education is provided from the sixth day of the permanent exclusion. A small-scale survey by Ofsted this year involved visits to 16 units, of which 10 reported that they did not receive information about the pupils that was adequate or timely enough to support them in starting suitably planned learning programmes.[16]

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15 Pupil referral units are short-stay centres for pupils who are educated other than at maintained or special schools, and they vary considerably in size and function. They admit pupils with behavioural difficulties and others who can be identified as potentially vulnerable because of their health or social and emotional difficulties. Some units educate and support school-aged mothers.

16 *Day six of exclusion: the extent and quality of provision for pupils* (080255), Ofsted, 2009.

Leadership and management

Figure 15: The effectiveness of leadership and management in schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of schools)

School type	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	41	1	
Primary schools	17	54	27	2
Secondary schools	25	46	26	3
Sixth forms	25	46	27	2
Special schools	39	47	12	2
Pupil referral units	18	52	23	6
All schools	20	52	25	2

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate
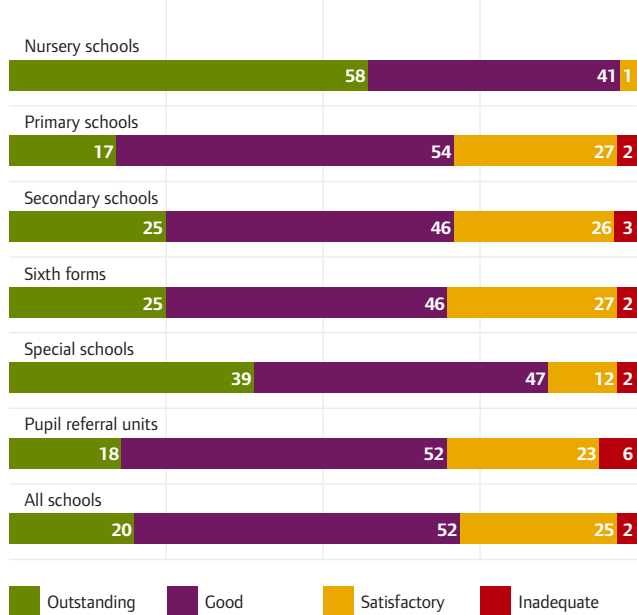
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for school sixth form inspection judgements. Sixth form colleges are discussed in the colleges section of this report.

74 Effective leadership is central to school improvement and to sustaining high levels of performance. The proportion of schools in which leadership and management are good or outstanding is higher than for those inspected in 2007/08; this is particularly evident in secondary schools, where leadership is outstanding in a quarter of those inspected this year. There have also been increases in the proportions of nursery and special schools and pupil referral units in which leadership and management are outstanding, although the numbers inspected in each case are much smaller than those for primary and secondary schools.

75 The common characteristics of the best leadership include an ability to communicate high aspirations, while setting clear and ambitious expectations of performance for pupils and staff. A strategic approach to improvement, allied to practical and rigorous action to remedy weaknesses, is typical of the most effective leadership. Inspection reports on outstanding schools note the impact of sustained high-quality leadership, evident through well-founded and honest self-evaluation; a high priority given to the views of pupils and parents in shaping action; and effective systems for monitoring and challenging the performance of staff and pupils. The most successful schools demonstrate that achievements do not happen by chance, but by highly reflective planning and consistent implementation of strategies, policies and practice. The development of well-distributed leadership and of close links with the surrounding community is also important in sustaining improvement.

76 The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation are good or outstanding in 76% of schools inspected; this figure has risen steadily since 2005/06 when it was 65%. Self-evaluation is inadequate in only 2% of the schools inspected. There remains a strong link between the accuracy and effectiveness of self-evaluation, the quality of leadership and the capacity of schools to improve, which is good or outstanding in 77% of all schools.

77 Since September 2007, schools have had a duty to promote community cohesion and this is the first year that Ofsted has published separate judgements about this aspect of their work. A large majority of schools inspected make a good or outstanding contribution to promoting community cohesion, with very few that are inadequate. Of primary schools inspected, 68% are good or outstanding in this respect, while the figures for secondary and special schools are 72% and 84% respectively. Outstanding schools have considered carefully the specific needs of their own communities and how each of the key strands of faith, culture and the socio-economic aspects should be developed to shape a clear strategy. Where the provision is inadequate, however, schools have either failed to plan an appropriate set of actions to promote community cohesion or have had too little impact on the cohesiveness of their own school communities.

78 More than a quarter of schools inspected are outstanding in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination and a further half are good. A very small proportion of schools are inadequate overall in this aspect of their work.

79 The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities is good in 52% of schools and outstanding in 18%. Governance in special schools is generally more effective than in mainstream schools and is better in secondary than primary schools. Increasingly, governors are holding schools to account. However, this is not consistently the case and not all governors are fully involved in shaping their school's strategic direction or in evaluating school performance. The effectiveness of self-evaluation is closely linked with that of the governing body, reflecting its key role in monitoring, challenging and improving the work of the school. In inadequate schools, governors are often ill-informed about the school's performance and do not provide sufficient challenge.

80 The inspection of safeguarding remains a high priority for Ofsted, in judging both the extent to which pupils feel safe and whether procedures for safeguarding them meet requirements. Almost all schools inspected are fully aware of current government requirements and implement all proper procedures. This is an improvement on previous years, although a very small number of schools inspected have been found to be non-compliant. Twelve schools that were otherwise at least satisfactory did not meet the requirements and were given a notice to improve.

Academies

Figure 16: Overall effectiveness of academies inspected between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2009 (number of academies)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Outstanding	1	3	5
Good	1	5	12
Satisfactory	6	2	8
Inadequate	0	0	5
Total	**8**	**10**	**30**

81 Of the 30 academies inspected in 2008/09, more than half are good or outstanding. However, five were judged inadequate: three of these require significant improvement and two have been made subject to special measures.

82 In the majority of cases, academies have taken advantage of their fresh start and additional resources; they have demonstrated flexibility in strengthening their provision and curricula and making a positive impact on raising standards. Where new academies have developed strong and effective links with other education providers, they have been able to use their combined resources and collective expertise to very good effect, particularly in strengthening 14 to 19 provision.

83 However, inadequate academies have been unable to improve outcomes for pupils sufficiently in their first two or three years of operation. They have, or had, weaknesses in strategic leadership and they have not made good use of partnership arrangements to address the considerable challenges they face. They have been unable to establish a settled ethos and calm behaviour and there has been too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching to accelerate the pupils' progress.

84 Of the 30 inspections of academies in 2008/09, 10 were reinspections. Five of these 10 academies have improved their overall effectiveness, including one that was satisfactory at its previous inspection and is now outstanding. A considerable number of academies remain below the government GCSE floor target for at least 30% of pupils to achieve five or more higher-grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. However, the most successful academies have made notable improvements and are beginning to have a positive impact on their wider communities through working in partnership with other local schools, and making learning opportunities available to adults and young people in the area.

Maintained schools continued

Schools causing concern

Figure 17: Numbers and proportions of schools in different categories of concern at 31 August 2009

		Primary		Secondary		Special		PRU		Total	
		07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09
Special measures	No.	156	131	50	44	14	7	11	11	231	193
	%	0.9	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.7	2.4	2.4	1.0	0.9
Notice to improve	No.	167	115	70	45	2	5	1	2	240	167
	%	1	0.7	2.1	1.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.1	0.7

Figure 18: Numbers of schools placed in, and removed from, each of the categories of concern in inspections in 2008/09, and those that closed while in these categories at 31 August 2009

		Primary		Secondary		Special		PRU		Total	
		07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09	07/08	08/09
Special measures	In	102	81	34	26	7	5	8	9	151	121
	Out	120	97	27	27	2	11	3	8	152	143
	Closed (while in SM)	6	9	4	5	0	1	3	1	13	16
Notice to improve	In	153	99	68	41	1	6	2	3	224	149
	Out	183	145	74	64	6	3	8	1	271	213
	Closed (while in N to I)	5	6	5	2	0	0	2	1	12	9

85 In 2008/09, 6% of secondary schools, 3% of primary schools, 3% of special schools and 7% of pupil referral units inspected are inadequate. Overall, the proportion of inadequate schools is smaller than in 2007/08. Of the schools inspected this year, 121 have been placed in special measures and 149 given a notice to improve, while 356 schools were removed from categories of concern.[17] This means that 360 schools are now in categories of concern, compared with 471 in 2007/08. Around 150,000 pupils are currently being taught in schools in which overall effectiveness is inadequate, compared with approximately 200,000 in 2007/08.

86 Despite a reduction in the proportion of inadequate schools, particularly in the secondary phase, schools in areas with the highest levels of deprivation are more likely to be inadequate than those in more favoured contexts. Of the 81 primary schools placed in special measures this year, for example, 27 are among the most deprived schools and only three are among the least deprived.[18] Schools causing concern often have high staff turnover and a majority of both primary and secondary schools in special measures have high levels of pupil absence.

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[17] Inadequate schools are placed in one of two categories of concern: they are made subject to special measures or they are given a notice to improve. For further information on Ofsted's categories of concern, see the Glossary, p 156.

[18] The most deprived are defined here as the 20% of schools nationally with the highest proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Conversely, the least deprived are the 20% of schools nationally with the lowest proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals.

87 There are common reasons for schools being judged inadequate. In a very large majority of cases, the pupils' progress is inadequate. Underperformance is also linked with weaknesses in leadership and management and in provision, primarily in the quality of teaching and learning. In almost half of schools in categories of concern, self-evaluation is inadequate. Pupils' behaviour is inadequate in only a small minority of cases, reflecting improvements in the way that schools are managing it.

88 Strengthening leadership and management is central to school improvement, particularly in schools that lack the capacity to improve their own performance. Increasing the rigour and effectiveness of monitoring and self-evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels is an essential step towards sustained improvement.

89 During 2008/09, 194 schools which had been given a notice to improve in the previous year were reinspected. Of these, just over nine in 10 had made at least satisfactory progress overall, 28 had improved sufficiently to be good overall and one is now outstanding. However, a very small minority had declined and were made subject to special measures.

> During 2008/09, 194 schools which had been given a notice to improve in the previous year were reinspected. Of these, just over nine in 10 had made at least satisfactory progress…

90 Schools that have previously been in Ofsted categories of concern are sometimes judged inadequate for a second time. Since September 1998, 54 schools have been placed in special measures twice and one – which has now closed – three times. Of 948 schools issued with notices to improve since September 2005, 103 had previously been removed from a category of concern since September 1998, but had failed to sustain progress. Key factors that prevent sustained improvement include disruption in staffing caused by absence or vacancies, the length of time taken to appoint permanent senior leaders and a failure to address high levels of absence among pupils.

91 In 2008/09, five schools that were outstanding and 50 schools that were good at their previous inspections under the existing framework are now inadequate.[19] These cases illustrate the importance of local authority support and of the watchfulness of the governing body in detecting and halting the symptoms of decline. They also demonstrate the need to build strength in depth so that success and progress are maintained even when key individuals move on. The factors contributing to the decline in these schools were: weak leadership, including overly generous self-evaluation; changes in or vacancies for leadership posts; difficulties in recruitment and retention of effective staff; and failure to monitor closely pupils' progress as the basis for effective action to deal with underachievement.

92 Most schools improve rapidly enough to be removed from special measures within two years, and six schools monitored in 2008/09, including two in the secondary phase, were removed from special measures within just 12 months. Of the 143 schools that have been removed from special measures in 2008/09, 19 are now good and 107 satisfactory. Leadership is good or outstanding in 70 of these schools.

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19 The framework in use for inspections of maintained schools in 2008/09 was introduced in September 2005. New arrangements came into operation at the beginning of September 2009.

Maintained schools continued

93 Improvement is less rapid in some schools in Ofsted's categories of concern, particularly secondary schools. In some cases local authorities have responded to a school's slow improvement by replacing the governing body with an Interim Executive Board.[20] Interim Executive Boards frequently make a strong contribution to the recovery of the schools with which they work, providing rigorous challenge and ensuring a clear focus on the priorities for improvement. Effective Interim Executive Boards understand the school's context well and draw on valuable knowledge and experience. This was well illustrated in one school which was removed from special measures this year. In this instance, the Interim Executive Board provided training and mentoring for the new governing body, which took up office as the school prepared to move forward from special measures.

94 In 2008/09, 35 warning notices have been issued to schools by local authorities, a considerable increase on the 17 that were issued between April 2007 and August 2008, although still few overall. Effective use of warning notices means that a local authority can take direct and decisive action to improve schools which otherwise would be likely to become inadequate, even though an inspection may not be due. Such notices have been issued this year to schools in which standards were low or there was a serious breakdown of leadership and management. Notices were issued to four schools in which both of these weaknesses were evident.

95 Although the use of warning notices has increased in 2008/09, of the 152 local authorities in England, 98 have never issued one. This latter figure includes 20 local authorities in which at least one school has been judged inadequate during an inspection this year, including some in which this has applied to three or more schools.

96 In 2008/09, Ofsted made 139 monitoring inspections to 138 schools which were satisfactory overall but with some weaknesses. Of the schools visited, 49 were making good or outstanding progress while 81 were making satisfactory progress. Eight schools had made inadequate progress and one of these was made subject to special measures after a second monitoring visit.

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[20] Interim Executive Boards are transitional governing bodies for underperforming schools, typically in Ofsted categories of concern, where the existing governing body is ineffective. An Interim Executive Board will usually be in place for between six months and two years, depending on the circumstances of the school and its rate of improvement. For example, an Interim Executive Board may support a school until it has improved enough to be removed from special measures.

Quality and standards
Independent schools

Key findings

* There has been a strong improvement in the proportion of non-association independent schools meeting all regulations and a significant reduction in poor practice.

* The quality of education is good or outstanding in a higher proportion of non-association independent schools inspected than in 2007/08. Independent schools make very good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

* One in six independent schools do not fully meet all the safeguarding regulations; there has been an improvement in 2008/09 but this figure is still far too high.

* The proportion of inadequate care provision in boarding schools, both independent and maintained, is too high at one in 10 of those inspected.

* Most non-maintained special schools inspected are at least good overall, with over a third outstanding.

> The quality of education is good or outstanding in a higher proportion of non-association independent schools inspected than in 2007/08.

Introduction

97 Ofsted inspects educational provision in non-association independent schools. Ofsted does not inspect independent schools that are members of associations affiliated to the Independent Schools Council, Focus Learning Trust or most of those affiliated to the Christian Schools Trust or the Association of Muslim Schools UK. These schools are inspected, according to the type of school in each case, by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, the Schools Inspection Service or the Bridge Schools Inspectorate.

98 Ofsted has reinspected schools first inspected between 2004 and 2006. In the intervening period there have been some changes in regulation, including the strengthening of safeguarding regulations and the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As part of Ofsted's efforts to reduce the burden of inspection, 'light touch inspections' were introduced from April 2008. Non-association independent schools that met at least 90% of the regulations at their previous inspection, including all those regulations which apply to the quality of education and the safeguarding of children, received light touch inspections which focused on the quality of education, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and safeguarding their welfare, health and safety.

99 This year Ofsted inspected 394 non-association independent schools, 74 of which were newly registered. These schools vary in size and character and include large boarding and day schools, children's homes offering education, and provision for single pupils in public care. They also include faith schools, stage schools, tutorial colleges and schools that cater for the children of nationals of another country and provide their curriculum in a foreign language. Around a third of the schools cater wholly or mainly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

100 Inspectors made 176 visits to schools in connection with registration at the request of the Department for Children, Schools and Families. These covered assessing applications for registration from new schools or for material changes to existing provision, and included 42 visits to investigate concerns or complaints.

Independent schools continued

Non-association independent schools

Figure 19: Inspection outcomes for non-association independent schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of schools)
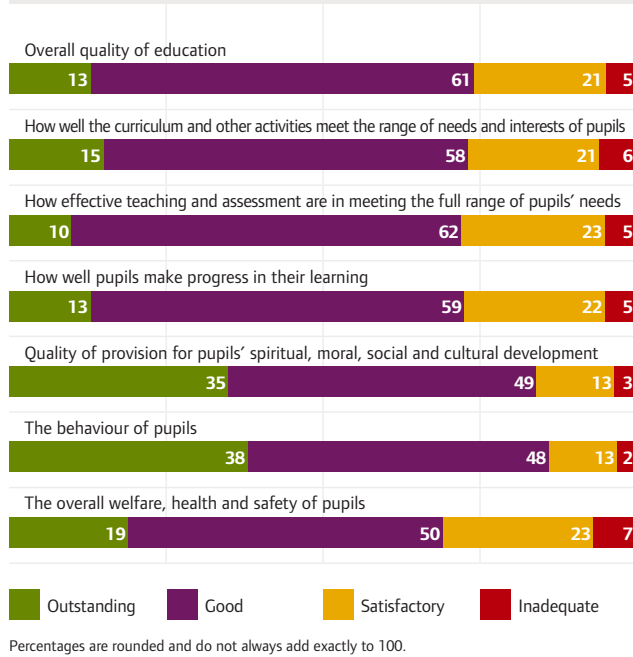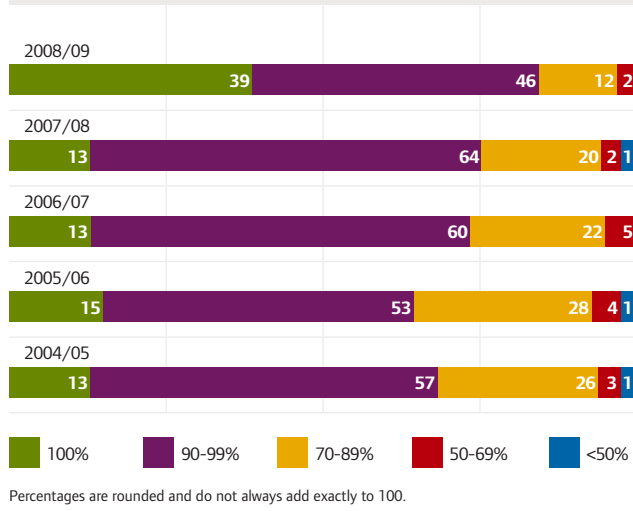
Overall quality of education
| 13 | 61 | 21 | 5 |

How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils
| 15 | 58 | 21 | 6 |

How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs
| 10 | 62 | 23 | 5 |

How well pupils make progress in their learning
| 13 | 59 | 22 | 5 |

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
| 35 | 49 | 13 | 3 |

The behaviour of pupils
| 38 | 48 | 13 | 2 |

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils
| 19 | 50 | 23 | 7 |

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Figure 20: Inspections of non-association schools 2004/05 to 2008/09 (percentages of schools meeting regulations)

2008/09
| 39 | 46 | 12 | 2 |

2007/08
| 13 | 64 | 20 | 2 | 1 |

2006/07
| 13 | 60 | 22 | 5 |

2005/06
| 15 | 53 | 28 | 4 | 1 |

2004/05
| 13 | 57 | 26 | 3 | 1 |

■ 100% ■ 90-99% ■ 70-89% ■ 50-69% ■ <50%

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

101 Considerably more non-association independent schools are now meeting all, or a high proportion of, the regulations. This reflects a pattern of continual improvement and a notable reduction in poor practice, particularly in the past year. Of schools inspected this year, 39% now meet all the regulations, compared with 13% last year; and 85% of the schools meet at least 90% of the regulations, compared with 77% last year.

102 In 2007/08, Ofsted identified important weaknesses in procedures for safeguarding pupils in around one third of non-association independent schools. To address this issue, Ofsted held national seminars for headteachers and proprietors. Those who attended these meetings were given explanation and clarification of the safeguarding regulations. In 2008/09, the proportion of schools inspected in which there were important weaknesses in safeguarding procedures has been much reduced.

103 Nevertheless, the proportion of schools that do not meet safeguarding requirements fully is still far too high at 18%. Most weaknesses arise because most but not all staff have been trained in safeguarding, or because those who are leading on safeguarding have not received training at the appropriate level. In other instances, schools have carried out the required checks on most but not all their staff; others have completed the checks but not put them on a single central record. While most of the weaknesses identified are procedural, they have the potential to put children at risk.

104 A particular strength of independent schools continues to be the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding in 35% of schools inspected. Good levels of supervision and effective systems for managing behaviour, tackling bullying and providing individual support ensure that pupils are able to make a positive contribution and develop in confidence and self-esteem. In almost all schools inspected, behaviour is at least satisfactory, while in around four in 10 it is outstanding. This is particularly important as it also applies to schools which cater for potentially vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities or looked after children who have had a disrupted school history.

105 The quality of education is good or outstanding in 74% of non-association independent schools inspected, compared with 57% of those inspected in 2007/08. In almost all these schools the curriculum emphasises basic skills well and meets the needs of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in almost all the schools. This year, teaching is outstanding in 10% of schools inspected; this is double the proportion seen in 2007/08. Moreover, teaching is at least good in 72% of schools.

106 Despite this positive picture, some weaknesses persist. Some schools fail to use assessment well enough, and 6% of schools lack satisfactory curriculum plans or adequate classroom resources. These weaknesses occur more frequently in very small schools and those which cater for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is a matter of concern that children's homes offering education are twice as likely to be inadequate as other schools. Around one in eight schools are still failing to fulfil their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, often as a result of not having considered plans for improving access.[21] Of the residential schools inspected, 4% do not make adequate provision for the welfare of children living there. In these cases, there may be weaknesses in accommodation, procedures for vetting staff for their suitability to work with children, or medical arrangements.

107 Inspectors made 105 visits to follow up the progress of schools which had been judged inadequate. Whilst most of these schools had implemented satisfactory plans for improvement, 15 had not, and action concerning their continued registration will be taken by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

108 Independent schools were also required to implement the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework from September 2008 and have done so successfully.[22] As in the maintained sector, non-association independent schools continue to make very good provision for the youngest children. This year the overall effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good or better in 78% of independent schools inspected, with pupils' personal development and well-being outstanding in over a third. The provision is well led and managed in over nine in 10 schools, ensuring that young children are well cared for and have a secure start to their education.

Boarding schools

Figure 21: Quality of care in boarding schools inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of active providers)

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
16	43	30	11

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

109 During the year, care was inspected in 157 boarding schools, both independent and maintained; it was good or outstanding in 59%, compared with 76% in 2007/08. A further 11% were inadequate, compared with 9% last year. This level of inadequate provision is too high.

110 Outstanding and good boarding schools offer young people a safe and stimulating environment, which is also well suited to their individual needs. In these schools, young people enjoy what they do and achieve well. They thrive in a structured and secure setting, which offers leisure and sporting opportunities, as well as carefully planned learning and homework support. These schools also fully embrace and often exceed the baseline expectations of the national minimum standards and they respond well to recommendations from previous inspections.

111 The safety and well-being of children living away from their homes, which in some cases are overseas, are of the utmost importance. Good and outstanding boarding provision has thorough recruitment procedures and staff who are fully trained in safeguarding. There are enough suitably trained staff to supervise the young people effectively at all times.

112 In inadequate boarding provision staff do not fully understand the national minimum boarding standards and how to apply them in practice. There is inadequate health provision. Weaknesses include poor arrangements for administering and storing medicines; correct recruitment procedures not being followed for all staff; and insufficient care being given to the standard of accommodation.

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[21] All schools must meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

[22] The Early Years Foundation Stage framework sets the standards for care, learning and development for children aged between birth and the 31 August following their fifth birthday.

113 Good and outstanding schools promote positive behaviour through rewards and ensuring that children are suitably occupied in their spare time. Inadequate settings often do not have effective systems for managing behaviour or recording incidents. In outstanding schools, staff promote equality and diversity by supporting young people's cultural values and enabling them to attend appropriate places of worship. The staff involve them in celebrations of their own and others' cultures and respond well to their specific needs.

Non-maintained special schools

114 There are 72 non-maintained special schools, which have charitable status and are registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families. They make specialist provision for pupils with complex needs, including, for example, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. In 2008/09, 31 of these schools were inspected, under the same arrangements as maintained schools.

115 Most non-maintained special schools are at least good overall and over a third are outstanding. A particular feature is the way in which professionals from different disciplines work well together to support pupils' progress. Good and outstanding schools use their specialist expertise very well in tailoring the curriculum to suit pupils' needs, interests and aspirations, often with extensive enrichment activities. Teachers help pupils to overcome individual barriers to learning, for example visual impairment or autism. Learning objectives are clear and pupils know how to improve their work. However, not all schools use assessment data well to raise standards further. Two thirds of these schools have sixth forms and in most the provision is good or outstanding, with high-quality teaching, personalised programmes and a broad and relevant curriculum, including a wide range of accredited courses that prepare students well for further or higher education.

116 While care, guidance and support are strong in most non-maintained special schools, in others some safeguarding procedures, such as staff recruitment, are not as rigorous as they should be. Governors are generally supportive of their schools but they do not always challenge them rigorously about pupils' achievements. Nearly all non-maintained special schools are residential and in just over two thirds of those inspected this year the quality of boarding provision is good or outstanding.

> While care, guidance and support are strong in most non-maintained special schools, in others some safeguarding procedures, such as staff recruitment, are not as rigorous as they should be.

Independent inspectorates

117 In 2008/09, Ofsted has monitored a sample of inspections and reports by approved inspectorates operating in the independent sector, including the newly approved Bridge Schools Inspectorate which inspects some of the best-performing independent faith schools. Each of the three inspectorates met the requirements agreed with the Department for Children, Schools and Families for the quality of their inspections and their work was judged to be of good quality overall. The annual reports on the work of the other inspectorates are published on Ofsted's website.

Learning and skills

Key findings

* Of the colleges inspected in 2008/09, 63% are good or outstanding.[23] The level of employer engagement, rates of student progression to higher education or employment and provision for students aged 14 to 16 are strengths of the sector.

* In nearly half of the colleges judged to be satisfactory, performance has not improved since the last inspection and their capacity to improve is no better than satisfactory.

* Where teaching in colleges is no better than satisfactory, it is sometimes judged too generously by managers, and findings from lesson observations are not used sufficiently well to improve practice.

* In satisfactory and inadequate colleges, there are particular subject weaknesses in: construction; leisure, travel and tourism; preparation for life and work; and information and communication technology.

* Only 5% of the work-based learning providers inspected this year are outstanding in their overall effectiveness and just 37% are good.

* Leisure, travel and tourism provision is a weaker subject area in the work-based learning inspected, as is business administration.

* The vast majority of good or outstanding work-based learning providers this year are specialist providers or employers with provision in one or sometimes two sector subject areas.

* Employers are generally very supportive of the Train to Gain programme, highlighting improvements in work practice and staff retention.

* Adult and community learning providers are continuing to have difficulty recruiting suitably qualified tutors for adults who need to develop basic skills.

* Despite a greater degree of volatility in the labour market, participants' progression into employment has improved in the providers of contracted employment provision funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and inspected this year.

* Of the prisons inspected in 2008/09, the proportion in which education and training are at least satisfactory is higher than in 2007/08, including for the first time one prison in which education and training are now outstanding.

* Relatively few offenders under supervision in the community are being required to undertake basic skills education but where they are participating, much of the provision is good.

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[23] This figure does not include inspection outcomes for independent specialist colleges.

Learning and skills continued

Introduction

118 Ofsted inspects provision in a wide range of settings in the learning and skills sector. In each year, over four million people of all ages attend government-funded courses in further education colleges and centres of adult and community learning, or participate in apprenticeships or other training in the workplace. Providers receive funding for the latter programmes from the Learning and Skills Council.[24] In addition, Ofsted inspects education and training in secure settings, funded by the Learning and Skills Council, and welfare to work provision, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

119 The sector is expected to work closely with employers and is characterised by the need to work flexibly to meet diverse individual, social and economic needs.

> In the best colleges, learners achieve significantly higher grades than might be predicted from their prior attainment.

Colleges

120 Ofsted has continued to focus inspection resources according to the performance of each college at its last inspection, data on learners' achievements and outcomes from annual monitoring visits. High-performing colleges have received 'light touch inspections' lasting only two days. A more intensive approach is used for those colleges previously judged satisfactory or inadequate.

121 In 2008/09, inspections were carried out in 59 of 234 general further education or tertiary colleges, 27 of 93 sixth form colleges and three of 20 specialist further education colleges in England.

Overall effectiveness

Figure 22: Overview of colleges, excluding independent specialist colleges, inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of colleges)

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
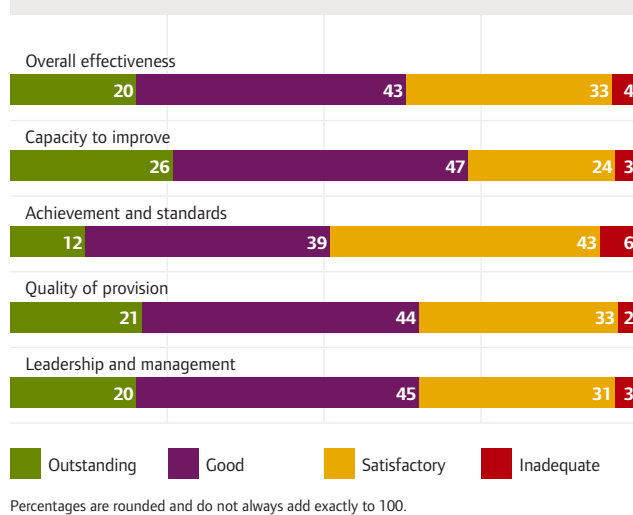
Figure 23: Overall effectiveness of colleges inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of colleges)

These figures exclude independent specialist colleges and higher education institutions.
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

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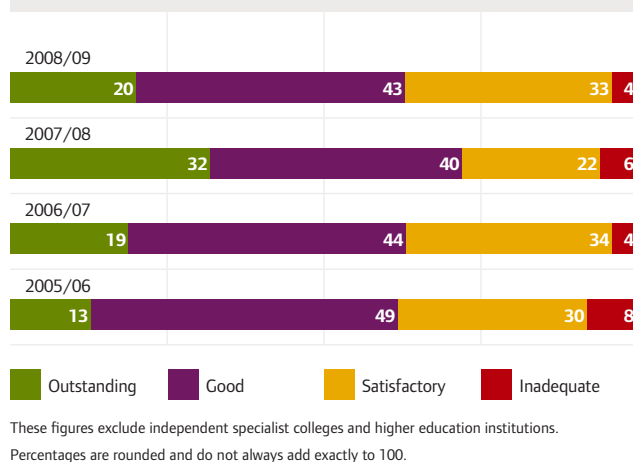
24 Providers may receive funding from other sources but Ofsted inspects only the provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council.

122 The proportion of good or outstanding colleges inspected this year is 63%, compared with 72% in 2007/08. In 2008/09, Ofsted has carried out 16 short inspections of colleges judged to be good or outstanding at their previous inspections; in 2007/08, the corresponding figure was 32. The reduction in the number of inspections of this kind needs to be taken into account when making year-on-year comparisons between inspection findings. The proportion of colleges inspected and judged inadequate is lower this year than in 2007/08.

123 A third of colleges inspected are satisfactory; in nearly half of these, performance has not improved since the last inspection and their capacity to improve is no better than satisfactory. Of the six colleges that were inadequate at their previous inspections and reinspected a year to 18 months later, five are satisfactory and one remains inadequate. A further three general further education colleges are now inadequate.

Figure 24: Overall effectiveness of colleges inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2009 by type of college (percentage of colleges)

General further education/tertiary colleges

| 17 | 46 | 29 | 7 |

Sixth form colleges

| 37 | 40 | 22 | 1 |

Specialist further education colleges

| 14 | 52 | 33 |

Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Where colleges have been inspected twice, only the data from the first inspection have been included.

These data are based on inspections carried out in 248 general further education/tertiary colleges, 97 sixth form colleges and 21 specialist further education colleges.

124 Generally, sixth form colleges remain effective institutions. This year, 19 of the 27 inspected are good or outstanding, and none is inadequate. However, the proportion of satisfactory sixth form colleges has risen this year to just under a third. In the best sixth form colleges, challenging and stimulating teaching and learning enable students to make excellent progress in relation to their prior attainment. In these colleges, a culture of the highest expectations and aspiration has been established and students develop the skills needed to become independent learners. In less effective sixth form colleges, success rates are not consistent across groups of learners and levels of study. This is often associated with a lack of rigour in the arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
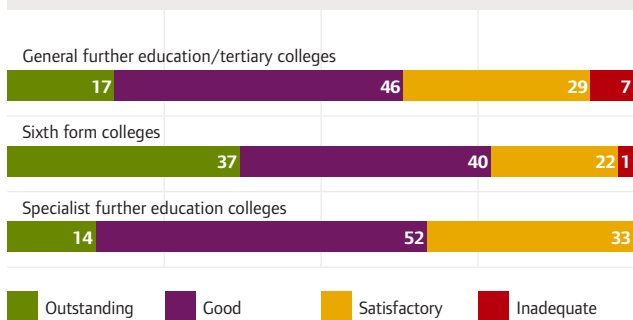
Achievement and standards

125 Achievement and standards are at least satisfactory in most colleges inspected; they are good or outstanding in 51%. In the best colleges, learners achieve significantly higher grades than might be predicted from their prior attainment. These colleges share a relentless focus on excellence and the highest aspirations, regardless of learners' prior attainment or educational background. Attendance is monitored rigorously; learners at risk of not completing their courses successfully are identified early and effective action is taken to support their progress.

126 Most work-based learning in colleges is at least satisfactory. Success rates in work-based learning are good or outstanding in just over half of the provision inspected. In most work-based programmes, learners in employment improve their vocational skills and further develop confidence in carrying out job roles. In the most effective provision, learners enhance their literacy and numeracy skills and move on to further levels of learning.

127 Progression to higher education or related employment is a significant strength across the sector. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 continues to be a successful aspect of colleges' work, including some high rates of progression at the age of 16 into further education.

128 The majority of colleges have improved their identification and analysis of the performance of different groups of learners, including those of different ethnic heritage and gender. In good and outstanding provision, underperformance by a particular group is often tackled through actions which include individual mentoring and staff training. However, in a minority of colleges, the underperformance of particular groups is not recognised fully, or is noted but without action to rectify it.

129 A large proportion of colleges in which achievement and standards are satisfactory overall have wide variations in the outcomes from different curriculum areas or between levels of study. Success rates in the key skills of communications, numeracy and information technology are often low and learners' performance may be limited by poor attendance and punctuality. Learners in these skill areas generally make only satisfactory progress overall and too often do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. Focusing on reducing variation in progress and outcomes must be a priority for colleges that are no better than satisfactory. In colleges where achievement and standards are inadequate, too little attention is paid to learners' progress or the risks attached to their leaving early. Managers' expectations of learners are too low and individual target-setting is unambitious.

130 The five Every Child Matters outcomes also apply to adult citizens, and colleges continue to perform well in relation to most of these outcomes. However, performance is not as strong for the enjoying and achieving outcome, in which 69% of colleges demonstrate good or outstanding practice, whereas for the other four outcomes the proportion of good or outstanding practice increases to over 80%.

Quality of provision

131 The quality of provision is good or outstanding in 65% of further education and sixth form colleges. In the best colleges, observation of teaching and learning by managers is rigorous and the findings are well used in planning training and development for staff. Successful colleges have focused on improving satisfactory teaching so that it becomes good or outstanding, while the best practice is shared effectively. Learners are stimulated and challenged by high-quality learning materials, including information learning technology. In these colleges, teaching successfully meets the needs of learners of widely differing abilities.

132 Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, some of it is judged too generously by managers whose expectations are not high enough. There is too little emphasis on learning and progress and on meeting individual needs through suitable teaching methods. In colleges in which the teaching is largely satisfactory, findings from observations of lessons are not used sufficiently well to improve practice.

133 In good and outstanding sixth form colleges, the extensive range of advanced level courses on offer is increasingly being enhanced by the addition of vocational options. Key features of sixth form colleges are their highly effective pastoral and academic support and their approach to educational and social inclusion. Initial assessment is effective, and the follow-up provision of additional support to help learners to succeed is often excellent. A common area for improvement in less effective sixth form colleges is the use of work experience opportunities for learners.

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134 Some sixth form colleges are also working effectively with local 14 to 19 consortia to expand the opportunities available for learners. As in general further education colleges, the use of information learning technology is increasing. At its best it enhances teaching, engages students and supports independent learning. However, when used less creatively, it can fail to add value to learning.

135 In 2008/09 inspectors carried out 280 inspections of sector subject areas in satisfactory and inadequate general further education and sixth form colleges. In the colleges visited, over half the provision was judged good or outstanding in health, public services and care; languages, literature and culture; retail and commercial enterprise; and arts, media and publishing. Poorer areas included construction; leisure, travel and tourism; preparation for life and work; and information and communication technology, in which less than a third of the provision was good.

136 Colleges are generally effective in forming productive partnerships with schools, employers and the community. This has led to an increasingly flexible and diverse curriculum. Commonly found strengths include good transition arrangements for students leaving school; success in widening participation; and learners making an increasingly positive contribution to the community. Colleges have significant success in promoting social inclusion, attracting diverse groups of learners and creating a safe and harmonious learning community. Employers' needs continue to be met well by most colleges and many have productive and flexible links to support the local economy. In the best cases, employers are involved actively in the design of programmes to suit their specific needs.

137 Colleges are effective in providing learners with helpful initial advice, personal guidance and support and additional learning support. However, individual target-setting and the use of individual learning plans remain inconsistent and are areas for improvement. Where these are less effective, targets are not specific enough, they do not provide learners with a clear understanding of what they need to do to succeed and they often fail to specify the time within which they are expected to be reached.

Leadership and management

138 There is a close link between the judgements for leadership and management, overall effectiveness and the capacity to improve. Leadership and management are good or outstanding in 65% of colleges inspected, demonstrating clear strategic vision, a strong focus on raising achievement, accurate self-assessment and rigorous college-wide quality improvement. Equality of opportunity is good or outstanding in 76% of cases. The best colleges promote community cohesion well through programmes which meet the linguistic and cultural needs of learners newly arrived in the United Kingdom, as well as those from established communities; the facilitation of inter-faith dialogue; and the promotion of tolerance and intergenerational understanding. The characteristics of effective governance include clear vision, appropriate skills and experience, the capacity to challenge and an unrelenting focus on outcomes for learners.

139 Self-assessment is well established and the best providers appraise honestly both progress and areas for improvement. However the use of self-assessment and quality assurance to monitor performance is no better than satisfactory in 42% of colleges and inadequate in 4%. These colleges frequently evaluate themselves too generously, particularly in relation to their capacity to improve. Judgements are often based on the actions taken rather than the outcomes, whereas in the best colleges the monitoring of actions to assess impact is highly systematic. Lengthy and overly descriptive self-assessment is also a weakness. Target-setting can be underdeveloped and poorly monitored. Where practice is best, learners' views are used to improve provision but this is not consistent across all colleges.

> Colleges are generally effective in forming productive partnerships with schools, employers and the community. This has led to an increasingly flexible and diverse curriculum.

Social care provision in further education colleges

140 As at 31 August 2009, 50 further education colleges offer social care provision to cater for the specific needs of groups of learners.[25] Social care is inspected in those colleges, including independent specialist colleges, in which there is residential provision for learners. Ofsted inspects social care provision for young people in further education colleges at least once every three years. In 2008/09, social care was inspected in 17 further education colleges, of which five provide outstanding residential support for young people, while in 12 support is good.

141 Management and staff meet individual needs well, working in close partnership with young people and their families. Some of the colleges have effective student councils, which promote a collaborative approach to learning and enhance both college life and social cohesion. In some instances young people are actively involved in the recruitment of staff and in the revision of policies. Approaches of this kind foster inclusion and equality well.

142 Good and outstanding services have a competent, skilled and knowledgeable senior management team with a clear vision of the services they wish to provide and how they are to be delivered. Investment in staff development promotes effective performance and staff retention. Managers are approachable and encourage a culture of partnership.

143 All further education colleges inspected have robust procedures to guide staff and learners in eliminating discrimination. Equality and diversity are discussed with each young person as part of induction into college life, when it is made clear that discrimination will not be tolerated.

144 The colleges inspected provide suitable training for staff in safeguarding. They have systems to counter bullying, including cyber-bullying, and provide relevant information in different forms to broaden its accessibility. All colleges have clear complaints processes and young people are supported in making their concerns known.

Further education in higher education institutions

145 According to Learning and Skills Council data, close to 45,000 learners were enrolled on further education courses in higher education institutions in 2007/08. Ofsted has focused its inspection activities on the 13 institutions that account for over 85% of this provision. Most of these higher education institutions have acquired further education provision as a consequence of merging with one or more colleges over the last 10 years.

146 In 2008/09 there were four monitoring visits by inspectors, four inspections and one reinspection. These indicate that high standards are being maintained in those higher education institutions that were good or outstanding at the time of their last inspections. Further education provision has improved to become satisfactory in one higher education institution on reinspection. There has been no improvement, however, in three institutions that were satisfactory at the time of their last inspections. In two of these, the further education provision remains satisfactory overall; in the third it is inadequate and this institution will be subject to a full reinspection. Provision is also inadequate in a recently created higher education institution, where managers have yet to address successfully a wide range of problems associated with the further education courses they inherited from different organisations.

147 In the best provision, the further education curriculum is closely aligned with the institution's expertise and experience in higher education. Where there has been a merger of higher education institutions with general further education colleges that are satisfactory or inadequate in their overall effectiveness and capacity to improve, it has not led to significant improvement in the institutions inspected. The rationale for such mergers seems attractive, offering learners flexible opportunities to progress through basic, intermediate and high-level skills and between vocational and academic education. In reality, it has been difficult for some institutions to realise this vision and improve standards.

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[25] These colleges are defined by section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as further education colleges and provide or arrange accommodation for one or more students aged under 18. They must meet the national minimum standards for further education colleges in respect of students under the age of 18.

Independent specialist colleges

Introduction

148 Independent specialist colleges provide education for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Ranging in size from those with fewer than 10 learners to those with nearly 300, these colleges provide for some of the most potentially vulnerable learners. Over recent years there have been changes in the types of learners catered for within independent specialist colleges. Most now admit more learners with complex disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

149 There were four independent specialist college inspections this year and one reinspection. Two colleges are good in their overall effectiveness. The remaining two are satisfactory, having not improved in their overall effectiveness since their last inspections. Both have experienced changes in their senior management but the improvements needed to enable the colleges to move from satisfactory to good overall have not been implemented. One of these colleges is inadequate in its leadership and management. The college that was previously inadequate has been reinspected and is now satisfactory: learners' needs are met more effectively through a more appropriate curriculum, greater use of specialist support and the use of individualised learning programmes.

150 In the two colleges which are good in their overall effectiveness, achievements are also good, with learners gaining appropriate external awards and improving their personal skills. Very good links with other providers enhance individual learning programmes. Enrichment activities are good in most cases, with effective multi-disciplinary support for all learners. Areas to be improved in the three satisfactory colleges include the use of target-setting, the slow response to recent equalities legislation and the inadequate opportunities for staff training in safeguarding.

Work-based learning

Figure 25: Inspection outcomes of work-based learning providers, including Train to Gain and Entry to Employment, inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
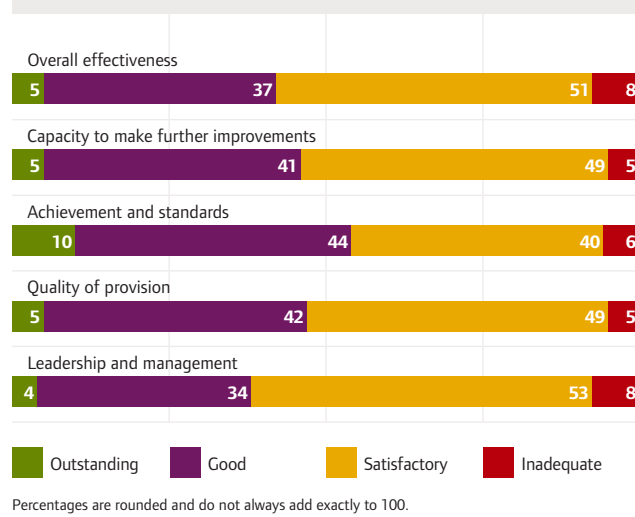
Figure 26: Overall effectiveness of work-based learning providers inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of work-based learning providers)

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
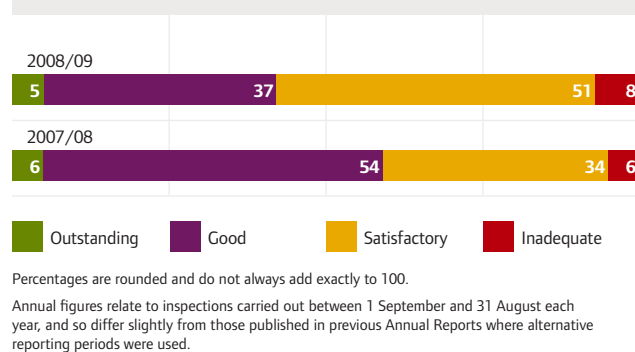
Annual figures relate to inspections carried out between 1 September and 31 August each year, and so differ slightly from those published in previous Annual Reports where alternative reporting periods were used.

151 Ofsted became responsible for the inspection of adult learning and skills in April 2007. Figure 26 shows the overall effectiveness of work-based learning providers inspected in the first two full years of Ofsted's inspection of this provision.

152 This is a diverse sector which includes providers of apprenticeships, Train to Gain programmes and Entry to Employment. Train to Gain is a major government initiative to meet the skills needs of employers by providing a tailored advice and brokerage service and funded training for employees, primarily those without level 2 or level 3 qualifications.[26] Entry to Employment programmes are designed for young people aged from 16 to 18 who require specific and tailored support to enable them to progress to further learning, an apprenticeship or employment. These young people frequently face a number of complex challenges.

153 This year there have been 242 inspections of work-based learning, including providers of apprenticeships, Train to Gain, and Entry to Employment programmes. The most recently available data for the numbers participating in apprenticeship programmes show an increase between 2006/07 and 2007/08, particularly among adults aged between 19 and 24. The number of learners undertaking Train to Gain programmes rose significantly in the first six months of 2008/09.[27]

154 The growth in Train to Gain has meant that almost half of the inspections this year have been of providers offering Train to Gain only; the sample inspected this year includes a larger proportion of new providers than in 2007/08.

155 Only 42% of the work-based learning providers inspected this year are good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness, compared with 60% of those inspected in 2007/08.[28] Only 5% of work-based learning is outstanding, and only 5% of providers inspected have outstanding capacity to make further improvements. The proportion of inadequate provision is 8%, compared with 6% in 2007/08. Comparisons between inspection outcomes for 2007/08 and 2008/09 should be viewed with caution, however, as different samples of providers were inspected in each year.

Train to Gain and Apprenticeships

156 While there have been improvements in the average success rates for apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes, these still remain too low. The national average for learners' completion of full apprenticeships rose from 49% in 2005/06 to 64% in 2007/08.[29] This is an encouraging improvement but more than a third of all apprentices are still failing to achieve their programmes fully. For Train to Gain programmes, the national average success rate in 2007/08 was the same as the completion of full apprenticeships at 64%. Many learners achieve their target qualifications but do so slowly and fail to complete them within the expected time frame. Where learners are making slow progress in the completion of their qualifications, progress reviews are insufficiently frequent and target-setting is ineffective.

157 Nonetheless, nearly 79% of the work-based learning providers inspected develop learners' work-related and social skills well. For many Train to Gain learners this is their first opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. Most extend their work-related knowledge and understanding and so improve the standard of their work. Train to Gain is engaging a wider range of employers than previously, and they are generally very supportive of the programme, highlighting improvements in work practice and staff retention. However, while providers are often effective in promoting opportunities for training and in responding to the requirements of employers, the programme as a whole has been less successful in stimulating self-directed and independent requests from employers for training.

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[26] For definitions of national qualification levels, see the Glossary, p 156.

[27] *Post-16 education & skills: learner participation, outcomes and level of highest qualification held*, Statistical First Release (DS/SFR3), The Data Service, 2009.

[28] These figures are based on inspections that took place between September 2007 and August 2008.

[29] *Post-16 education and skills: learner participation, outcomes and level of highest qualification held*, Statistical First Release (DS/SFR3), The Data Service, 2009.

158 The vast majority of good or outstanding providers this year are specialist providers or employers with provision in one or sometimes two sector subject areas. The quality of provision in sector subject areas is good or outstanding in half the work-based learning providers inspected. However, there are marked differences in the quality of provision between different subject areas. The highest proportion of good or outstanding provision is to be found in engineering and construction, whereas inadequate provision is most common in business administration and leisure, travel and tourism. Of the largest subject areas inspected in work-based learning, only engineering has no inadequate provision.

159 Programmes are good or outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers in two thirds of providers inspected. The better providers go to considerable lengths to devise flexible arrangements for training and assessment, taking account of shift patterns and work demands. However, guidance and personal support for learners are not as strong, being good or outstanding overall in just 44% of provision and satisfactory in a further 53%. Initial assessment is often ineffective at identifying learners' literacy and numeracy needs and even where these are recognised, they are not always tackled nor are learners supported effectively.

160 Leadership and management are satisfactory in 53% of providers and inadequate in 8%, and this remains an important area for development. Leaders and managers are generally good at setting a clear strategic direction and working productively with employers, other providers and agencies to increase recruitment to learning programmes and improve prospects for progression and employment. However, just over a third of providers inspected this year need to develop their capacity for self-assessment and action-planning, the processes integral to continuous improvement of their provision. Too many providers do not integrate their self-assessment into an overall quality improvement strategy; improvement plans are not monitored thoroughly; and the collation and use of management information are poor.

161 In too many cases, providers fail to meet current government requirements for procedures for safeguarding: 11% of those inspected this year. In these cases arrangements for safeguarding are often still being developed, and there is typically a need to raise awareness of the issues among managers, staff and employers. In a very few cases providers inspected were unclear about their safeguarding responsibilities.

162 Nine out of 10 providers promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination satisfactorily but 10% are inadequate in this aspect of their work, a higher proportion than last year. While most providers have appropriate procedures, the better ones go well beyond this and actively promote, check and reinforce understanding of equality and diversity among staff, learners and employers. They are successful in attracting under-represented groups onto their programmes, catering for diverse needs and closely monitoring the performance of different groups of learners.

Entry to Employment

Figure 27: Overall effectiveness of Entry to Employment providers inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009, (number of providers)

	Entry to Employment
Outstanding	1
Good	10
Satisfactory	13
Inadequate	2
Total	**26**

163 Entry to Employment aims to help young people take the initial steps from inactivity towards further training, apprenticeship programmes, further education or employment. It is funded for an average of 22 weeks but learners may spend more or less time on programmes, depending on their individual needs.

164 Of the work-based learning inspections this year, 26 were inspections of Entry to Employment provision. Ten providers, including some large providers and a consortium, are good and one, a large national provider, is outstanding. Most are effective in developing learners' personal, social and employability skills. The better providers make arrangements for accreditation in a range of qualifications and awards at entry level and levels 1 and 2. In two thirds of the providers inspected, the majority of learners progressed to further training or employment. In the remaining third, progression was poor.

165 Many learners have multiple social and personal barriers to their participation in training and employment. Good mentoring often provides effective support to those in danger of dropping out or being excluded. Where teaching and learning are less effective, lesson planning is poor, work is not well matched to the learners' varying abilities and progress is impeded. In half the providers inspected, initial assessment of the learners' needs is not used effectively to plan individual training programmes; target-setting and reviews are poor. Leadership and management are at least satisfactory in 23 of the 26 providers inspected, but over a third of providers are insufficiently thorough in their approach to quality improvement.

Adult and community learning

Figure 28: Overall effectiveness of adult and community learning providers inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Adult and community learning providers
Outstanding	4
Good	30
Satisfactory	32
Inadequate	2
Total	**68**

166 Adult and community learning is a generic term for post-16 education and training that aims to engage adults in the communities it serves. Learning takes place in a wide range of locations and at times to suit learners, including evenings and weekends. Many follow courses provided by local authority adult learning services. In addition to local authorities, various private, voluntary and public sector providers are also involved.

167 The overall volume of adult and community learning provision is falling. Five main sector subject areas now make up the majority of provision: health and social care, visual and performing arts, information and communication technology, preparation for life and work, and family learning. The amount of health and social care provision has increased markedly over the last two years, as providers have identified opportunities to offer accredited provision to meet the Government's and employers' targets for qualified staff in this area. Providers have been generally successful in realigning their curricula to meet the challenges arising from the current economic climate.

168 Of the curriculum areas most frequently inspected, health and social care performs best: 13 out of the 16 providers inspected are good or outstanding and none is inadequate. The quality of provision in preparation for life and work, primarily literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, poses the biggest challenge: only 37 of the 72 programmes inspected are good or outstanding and one is inadequate. In these subject areas, there are difficulties in recruiting specialist staff.

169 The most frequently identified areas for improvement are low success rates on accredited programmes and attendance. Many more affluent adults fund a substantial part of their courses themselves. Learners often have particular expectations of the courses on which they enrol and may see some of the informal adult learning in this sector as a recreational activity. They do not always value the possibility of gaining accreditation, progressing to other courses or recording their progress and achievement. In some cases, learners are encouraged to enrol on accredited courses and then choose not to complete external assessments.

170 There are many examples of good teaching but, overall, too much is no better than satisfactory. Providers are increasingly thorough in their monitoring of teaching and learning, and evaluation of lessons is more realistic than in previous years. The management of assessment for non-accredited learning is inadequate in 22 of the providers inspected.

171 In 42 of the 68 providers inspected, self-assessment is no better than satisfactory and quality improvement arrangements are still very inconsistent, leading to wide differences in quality within providers. Only about a quarter of those inspected use management information effectively to evaluate their provision.

172 Safeguarding arrangements are inadequate in 10 providers, a high proportion of the 68 inspected. Some have been slow to ensure they have all the correct procedures for the protection of vulnerable adults and children. Many are not rigorous enough in ensuring Criminal Records Bureau checks for staff or in carrying out risk assessments or training in safeguarding.

New Deal and Programme Centres

Figure 29: Overall effectiveness of New Deal prime contractors and Programme Centres inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	New Deal (prime contractors)	Programme Centres
Outstanding	1	0
Good	7	2
Satisfactory	19	8
Inadequate	6	2
Total	**33**	**12**

173 Fifty-three New Deal prime contractors manage New Deal programmes over wide geographical areas, working with sub-contracted partners. Fifty Programme Centres provide a voluntary programme that includes advice on searching for jobs and opportunities for work-related training. Most contracted employment provision funded by the Department for Work and Pensions is mandatory for those who have been in receipt of benefits for a period of six months or more.

174 Six of the 33 New Deal prime contractors inspected are inadequate. The proportion that is good is similar to that for 2007/08, although the figures should be interpreted with caution in the light of the small numbers of inspections each year. Of the three New Deal prime contractors reinspected, one is good and the other two are satisfactory. One of the three specialist Self-Employment New Deal prime contractors is outstanding, with high success rates and excellent provision for participants who aspire to set up their own businesses. Two of the 12 Programme Centres inspected are good and two are inadequate. One Programme Centre that was inadequate at its previous inspection was judged still to be inadequate on reinspection.

175 Although most providers inspected have yet to achieve their contract targets for job outcomes, since the previous contract year the majority have improved the job outcome rates for participants to a satisfactory level, particularly for those aged 18 to 24. Because of the economic downturn, providers inspected this year have experienced a sharp rise in the number of referrals of people recently made redundant, including those with higher-level skills. Of those who do not enter employment, a greater proportion than last year are achieving their agreed learning aims and gaining valuable personal and work-related skills. Compared with previous years, an increasing number of providers offer a range of additional qualifications, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

176 In the best provision, participants receive good personalised coaching and support to overcome barriers to employment and have opportunities for work placements. Improving motivation, raising expectations and reversing the demoralising effects of long-term unemployment are common threads running through the work of more successful providers, as are activities which are well matched to the needs of those recently made redundant and seeking a new direction. Ineffective provision can mean that participants are unsupported, for example being left alone to complete repetitive jobsearch activities.

177 Initial assessment is now more established as a key to identifying barriers to employment and providing targeted support and training to get participants back to work. However, not all individual learning plans are informed by the improved initial assessment. Providers generally carry out progress reviews regularly but some fail to set meaningful individual actions and targets to promote participants' further development.

178 Leadership and management are good or outstanding in 11 providers, satisfactory in 27 and inadequate in seven. Better providers make good use of sub-contractors and external partners to offer a wide range of additional training and opportunities for work placements. However, the performance of subcontractors remains inconsistent and formal quality improvement systems are too often incomplete.

179 Most contractors have appropriate procedures to meet their legal obligations but not all comply fully with their duty to promote equality in relation to race, gender and disability. Where this is done well, providers reinforce participants' understanding of equality and diversity and their relevance to workplace practice is made clear. They also actively challenge employers' perceptions about the reasons for longer-term unemployment and are successful in supporting disabled participants, those who are older and those from minority ethnic heritages to find employment.

Workstep

Figure 30: Overall effectiveness of Workstep providers inspected between September 2008 and August 2009 (number of providers)

	Workstep
Outstanding	0
Good	13
Satisfactory	15
Inadequate	5
Total	**33**

180 The Workstep programme supports adults with complex disabilities to build independence, learn everyday coping skills and develop the confidence to reach their potential. In 2008/09, 33 providers were inspected including provision in 19 local authorities. Two inspections of large national providers accounted for approximately two thirds of the Workstep provision in England. Both are good in terms of their overall effectiveness. Two council providers that were inadequate at their previous inspections were reinspected and judged to be satisfactory.

181 Workstep participants generally develop good personal, social and employment skills, a key strength in nearly three quarters of inspections. Many achieve useful vocational qualifications as part of their programmes. Employers and participants confirm that they benefit from increasing self-confidence in the workplace leading to, for example, greater responsibility or wider job roles. The final step of progression into unsupported employment, however, continues to be in need of improvement in too many providers.

182 Participants generally benefit from good personal and practical support. In the better providers, participants are carefully matched to employment opportunities within a wide range of work placements. Many receive good job coaching and training. The arrangements for assessing and meeting literacy and numeracy needs remain, as last year, mostly satisfactory but they are not made relevant to the workplace often enough. In many providers, development planning and reviews of participants' progress are satisfactory but target-setting remains a common area for improvement.

183 Leadership and management are satisfactory or better in 28 of the 33 providers inspected. While self-assessment is appropriately self-critical, too many providers still have key areas for improvement in their monitoring of quality. This year, the promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory or better in most providers. However, many have been slow to implement safeguarding arrangements; although this is not currently a formal requirement, it would be good practice for them to do so.

Adult prisons and young offender institutions

Figure 31: Overall effectiveness of learning and skills in adult prisons and young offender institutions inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Learning and skills in prisons
Outstanding	1
Good	14
Satisfactory	16
Inadequate	2
Total	**33**

184 Learning and skills provision in adult prisons and young offender institutions is inspected by Ofsted in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. In 2008/09, Ofsted inspectors completed 33 inspections of custodial establishments.

185 This year has seen a higher proportion of prisons judged satisfactory or better for overall effectiveness in education and training than in previous years. Of the establishments inspected this year, 31 out of 33 are satisfactory or better, including the first outstanding adult prison. Inspectors make recommendations for improvement in learning and skills on the basis of their findings. Progress in implementing these recommendations is evaluated during unannounced follow-up inspections; the evidence of these follow-up visits in 2008/09 shows that 76% of the recommendations have been at least partially addressed.

186 In 2008/09, inspections were carried out in four adult prisons in which some young adults are accommodated and five young offender institutions. Of these establishments, three are good, five are satisfactory and one is inadequate in their overall effectiveness.

Learning and skills continued

187 Achievement and standards in employability training were inspected in 33 prisons and found to be good or outstanding in 22 of these. The achievement of vocational qualifications is high for those learners who complete their programmes. Too many learners, however, fail to do this as a result of transfer to other prisons or release at the end of their sentences. In some cases, insufficient consideration is given to providing modular courses to enable learners to receive accreditation for skills gained in more than one institution. The lack of coherent management information systems results in failure to provide accurate records of learners' achievements as they move around the prison system.

188 Opportunities for relevant vocational training have improved in most of the prisons inspected. The integration of key skills and vocational training into work activities has become more widespread.[30] Provision in physical education is generally good. However, the activity undertaken in many prison workshops is often mundane and too little linked to accreditation.

189 Prisoners released on temporary licence undertake valuable work in the community. They learn the importance of reliability, commitment and punctuality. Employers speak highly of their competencies and their positive attitudes to work. In many cases, however, offenders are unable to gain work experience because of the limitations of release under temporary licence arrangements.

> Opportunities for relevant vocational training have improved in most of the prisons inspected.

190 The effectiveness of literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision to meet the full range of learners' needs has improved. The quality of ESOL teaching has risen in line with improved information and communication technology facilities, the employment of specialist tutors and better integration of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Support is now accessible in most work areas in prisons. Weak ESOL provision, however, remains a concern in too many establishments.

191 Generally, arrangements for the provision of information, advice and guidance and the initial assessment and diagnosis of learning needs have improved. However, initial testing of literacy and numeracy is still completed routinely on arrival and too many prisoners repeat the process each time they are transferred. More offenders with low-level skills, including those in language and literacy, are being referred to education programmes. Access to learning and skills has improved and is available to all prisoners, regardless of legal status.

192 Teaching and learning are good in 17, satisfactory in 15 and inadequate in one of the prisons inspected. In the better sessions, tutors plan and use time very creatively to support individual learning. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning to assure quality and to support improvement, however, are not fully established. Many prisons and the Learning and Skills Council have made considerable investment in information and learning technology and learners, especially those with poor skills, are being greatly helped by computer-aided learning. Access to prison libraries is satisfactory but too many libraries are dull and uninspiring. The promotion of family learning through family days and courses, some of which are accredited, is generally good.

193 The provision for personal development and social integration has improved. These programmes contribute greatly to offenders' improved behaviour and increased personal effectiveness. The popular courses frequently have lengthy waiting lists. The range of programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council remains narrow but appropriate programmes are also offered by voluntary sector providers. A range of courses underpins the core curriculum well. Where courses are accredited, success rates are good but, too often, skills gained are not recognised or recorded.

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[30] Depending on prior qualifications, learners can follow programmes at an appropriate level in communications, application of number and information and communication technology, in addition to their main programmes.

194 Poor punctuality and attendance in learning and skills sessions remain a problem in weak provision. Prison activities are often arranged at times which clash with offenders' learning schedules so that they miss sessions without prior notice to tutors. This means learning is disrupted and planning for progression is made difficult.

195 There has been significant improvement in the way prisons use data about learners' participation and achievements to evaluate trends in participation, the quality of provision and the success of different groups of learners. More prisons are making effective use of data to monitor progress and to plan the next stages of individuals' learning, including target-setting. In a few prisons, however, there is not enough emphasis on using assessment data to track and support learners' progress.

196 Generally, there has been an increase in the availability of education, training and pre-release programmes, providing preparation for work skills and information, advice and guidance. There has also been greater integration of the support for offenders from entry to release. However, for many, resettlement programmes start too close to the end of their sentences to be of much benefit.

197 Leadership and management are good or outstanding in just over half (18) of the prisons inspected, compared with around a quarter of those inspected last year. In these prisons, senior managers demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting learning and skills within strategies for resettlement and reducing re-offending. In many establishments, collaborative working between senior prison managers and offender learning providers is strong and focused on addressing offenders' resettlement needs.

198 Links between prisons and employers are at least satisfactory in all but one of the prisons inspected. Employers' open days and job clubs provide good opportunities for prisoners to seek employment on their release. Overall, however, links are too reliant on individual members of staff using their initiative to introduce employers to learners.

199 Prisons' arrangements for equality of opportunity are good in over a third of the prisons inspected. In all prisons inspected, safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

Probation areas

200 For the second year, Ofsted has worked jointly with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in 11 probation areas. Each year the probation service supervises some 175,000 new offenders.[31] Ofsted inspects education, training and employment arrangements for offenders under supervision in the community.

201 A high proportion of offenders are identified as having poor literacy and numeracy skills and would benefit from participation in learning and skills training. Most of those who attend learning and skills provision do so voluntarily, as relatively few are required to do so by the courts. However, offenders are frequently unaware of provision for education, training and employment or whether it forms part of their sentence plan.

202 Much of the teaching for literacy and numeracy is good and there is effective individual tuition. Increasingly, skills for life provision is an integral part of employability training, through which offenders develop appropriate personal and social skills that support them in job applications and interviews. Arrangements for referral have improved, although the sharing of offenders' initial assessment results with offender managers in the probation service remains an area for improvement.

203 High non-attendance rates at education, training and employment provision remain a concern, and the actions taken in the event of a breach of formal requirements to attend this provision and for managing offenders' absences are inconsistent. However, where targets for outcomes in education, training and employment have been introduced, more offenders are completing programmes and achieving qualifications. There is greater cooperation in sentence planning between offender managers and education, training and employment staff.

204 Offenders work on a wide range of community service activities and charitable projects, through which many develop a good level of skills and pride in their work. Too often, however, unpaid work is not used well to provide opportunities for offenders to gain recognised qualifications. Records of the skills acquired by offenders to support job applications remain poor.

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[31]   Source: The National Probation Service website: www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Learning and skills continued

> A high proportion of offenders are identified as having poor literacy and numeracy skills and would benefit from participation in learning and skills training.

205 Information, advice and guidance services have improved. Advisers work with offenders to help reduce their likelihood of re-offending and advise them on local training and employment opportunities.

206 Partnerships between probation areas, training providers and local authorities have also improved. Joint action plans between some probation areas and the local area teams of the Learning and Skills Council have resulted in clearer objectives and shared priorities for offenders' learning and skills. Strategies to provide opportunities for probation service staff and training providers to engage with local employers are becoming more effective.

207 Quality assurance arrangements are underdeveloped and do not ensure good standards or consistency across the probation areas. As a result, offenders too often receive an uneven quality of service, especially during the initial phase of supervision. Data are not used effectively to identify trends or to set realistic targets to improve the quality of provision. There is not enough use of feedback from stakeholders and offenders are not systematically asked for their views; opportunities are therefore missed to use this evidence to inform improvements.

Immigration removal centres

208 Immigration removal centres are required to provide a secure environment for people subject to immigration control. Education and training in immigration removal centres are inspected by Ofsted in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

209 Provision of education and training in five immigration removal centres for male detainees was inspected in 2008/09. Most educational arrangements cater satisfactorily for short-term detainees, who are resident for a month or less. Typically the provision offers discrete literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages, computing and arts and crafts. Where there is better provision, detainees work individually or in small groups at a pace and level suited to their abilities. Initial assessment is satisfactory and the monitoring of individuals' learning is effective.

210 However, none of the centres provided a full range of purposeful activities, and the range available was unsatisfactory overall, especially for detainees spending prolonged periods in the centres. Provision for longer-term detainees and those with higher skill levels does not meet their needs and is insufficiently challenging.

211 Work-related activities are insufficiently planned. Opportunities for detainees to engage in work have increased but it remains menial and low-skilled. Recreational activities in most centres are good and facilities for sports and games are at least adequate. Frequently, centre staff organise well-attended events celebrating cultural and religious festivals.

Initial teacher education

Key findings

✺ Most providers inspected in 2008/09 are good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness. By the end of their training, most trainees meet the professional standards at a level which is at least good.

✺ Those training to teach in primary schools have a good knowledge of the teaching of early reading.

✺ Trainees' use of assessment is the least well developed of their competencies and this is critical for achieving good progress for pupils.

✺ Trainees have good awareness of equality and diversity issues but there are too few opportunities for them to teach diverse groups of pupils.

Introduction

212 In September 2008 a new framework was introduced for the inspection of initial teacher education. The principal changes include the introduction of a single framework to support the consistency of judgements across all types of provision; a prominent focus on the outcomes for trainees; and more explicit account taken of the views of trainees, and of former trainees and their employers. The framework also introduces greater emphasis on the provider's self-evaluation and the capacity of leadership and management to drive sustained improvement. A major focus for inspections in 2008/09 was the quality of employment-based routes for teaching in schools.

213 In total, there were 14 inspections of primary provision, 14 inspections of secondary provision and 58 inspections of employment-based routes to qualified teacher status in schools in 2008/09. The inspection of further education teacher training included 10 higher education-led providers and 56 of their partner further education colleges.

Overall effectiveness

Figure 32: The overall effectiveness of initial teacher education providers inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory
20	68	13

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

214 Trainees generally demonstrate good or outstanding professional standards. Typically they have high expectations of learners, teach well-planned lessons, explain concepts well, use questioning techniques skilfully and draw upon a good range of resources and other materials. Their ability to use assessment to focus more closely on personalised learning continues to be the least well-developed competency. As a result of well-focused training, in general primary trainees in the providers inspected have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of early reading.

215 Trainees' understanding of how to teach learners from different faith, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and to cater for the needs of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall but too variable. All providers raise trainees' awareness of issues relating to equality and diversity but there are often insufficient opportunities for trainees to experience teaching different groups.

216 Completion rates are generally good and are improving, reflecting the increasing attention given to deciding whether applicants have the characteristics needed to become good teachers. Trainees generally feel valued, well supported and safe, and trust that any concerns will be handled effectively. All providers are committed to widening participation of trainees from under-represented groups. Despite the best efforts, and some success in increasing the proportions of men training to teach in primary schools, many providers have been unsuccessful in increasing the numbers of trainees from minority ethnic groups.
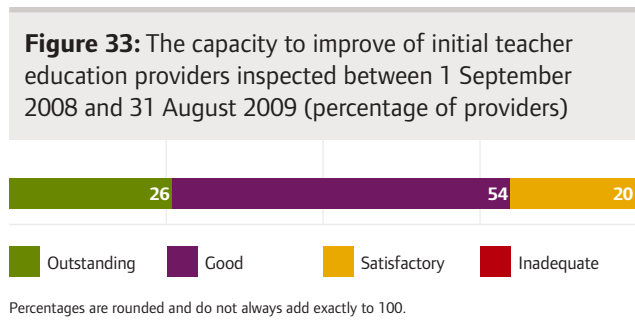
Initial teacher education continued

217 The quality of communication and the coherence of links across partner institutions are crucial influences on trainees' progress. In a fifth of programmes inspected, trainees make outstanding progress. However, trainees do not always receive sufficient subject-specific feedback from mentors to enable them to know where improvements are needed. This is the case across all providers, and especially within programmes for the further education system and employment-based routes for teaching in schools. In addition, too many of the targets for trainees' development are neither sufficiently focused nor directly related to the impact on learning of the trainees' teaching.

218 In further education teacher training, the quality of support and training in the workplace was identified as an issue in the previous inspection cycle and continues to present challenges for some providers. Furthermore, despite notable improvements, there are still too many trainees who qualify with only a narrow range of teaching experience, especially those who are training to teach in contexts other than further education colleges.

219 The majority of providers offering employment-based routes into teaching were judged good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness. However, there is often a need for closer coordination between centrally provided training and the work in schools, so that the two elements complement and reinforce each other. This is especially important in the acquisition of subject knowledge for teaching, and particularly for graduates on secondary programmes where the content of their first degrees is not matched well to the requirements of the subject curriculum.

Capacity to improve and/or to sustain high-quality outcomes

Figure 33: The capacity to improve of initial teacher education providers inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of providers)

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory
26	54	20

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

> Trainees' use of assessment is the least well developed of their competencies and this is critical for achieving good progress for pupils.

220 Just over a quarter of providers inspected have outstanding capacity to improve. Across all sectors, they have responded promptly to previous inspection findings. The majority have well-established systems for monitoring and review, including gathering trainees' views. Nevertheless, among all providers, but especially those offering employment-based routes for teaching in schools, the quality of self-evaluation is variable. For about a fifth of providers, it is overly descriptive, neither sufficiently analytical nor evaluative of the impact of past actions and it fails to engage all partners fully in self-review. These providers need to gather more evidence about trends in improvement. There is further scope for providers to analyse and use benchmarked data on the outcomes for individuals, groups and whole cohorts of trainees.

221 Providers are responsive to national demands and the needs of local communities and learners. The best providers anticipate change well and make the necessary adaptations to training programmes. For some providers, leadership and management responsibilities are not distributed widely enough and there is not enough focus on planning ahead.

222 The large majority of providers produce credible evidence of continuous improvement in training programmes and the successful impact of actions. Nevertheless, for about a fifth, overall improvement planning consists of short-term actions to improve processes and is not well focused on longer-term developments to ensure better outcomes for the trainees. The capacity to improve of a third of the employment-based providers inspected was judged to be no better than satisfactory.

Quality and standards
Children's services in local authorities

Key findings

✳ The large majority of councils provide good children's services overall, often in challenging circumstances. However, even in some of the councils judged to be performing well overall there are pockets of underperformance.

✳ Nine councils are performing poorly, principally because they are making an inadequate contribution to ensuring that children and young people are adequately safeguarded.

Figure 34: Annual children's services ratings 2009 (percentage of providers)

| 7 | 61 | 26 | 6 |

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Inadequate
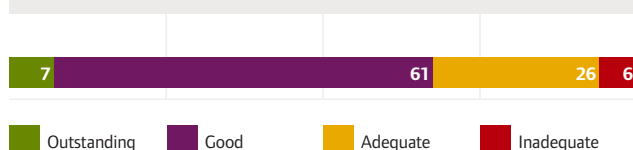
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Changes to the assessment of children's services in 2009

223 Children's services include the full range of provision made within a local authority area, from universal services such as education through to specialist services for children and young people whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, for example those for looked after children. Local authorities have a lead role both in providing services for children and working with their partners to improve outcomes for children and young people. However, a range of public agencies share responsibility for improving outcomes for children and young people, including the health service and the police.

224 During 2008/09 there have been a number of significant changes in how the quality of performance in children's services is assessed and reported. In 2008, Ofsted completed its final year of Annual Performance Assessments of local authority services for children and young people. These assessments reported on the contribution that council services made towards improving outcomes for children and young people in each of the five Every Child Matters outcome areas, together with their overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. Assessments were based on a range of published evidence, including inspection data and performance indicators, which were considered alongside the councils' reviews of their progress. A summary report on the outcomes from these assessments was published in April 2009.[32]

225 In 2009, Ofsted introduced a new annual rating of local authority children's services, which replaces the Annual Performance Assessment.[33] The annual rating is derived from a performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local authority area. The profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant Every Child Matters indicators in the new National Indicator Set. This rating also contributes significantly to the organisational assessment score for each local authority as part of the arrangements for the Comprehensive Area Assessment.[34]

32 *Annual performance assessment 2008: report on outcomes* (080138), Ofsted, 2009.

33 *Comprehensive Area Assessment: annual rating of council children's services for 2009: arrangements and guidance for local authorities and their partners on the new Ofsted annual rating of council children's services* (090024), Ofsted, 2009.

34 *Comprehensive Area Assessment: framework document*, Audit Commission, 2009.

Children's services in local authorities continued

> ...in the best councils there are many examples of strong quality assurance and performance management in children's social care.

226 This first year of the new rating system for children's services is a transitional year prior to the full application of the new system in 2010. In assigning councils to performance bands and in arriving at an overall rating, in line with the published guidance, Ofsted has given prominence to the findings from the frontline inspection and regulation of services, settings and institutions.

227 Much of the inspection evidence presented elsewhere in this Annual Report informs the children's services rating; this includes inspections of childcare, maintained schools, children's social care and provision within the learning and skills sector. However, the performance profile gives information about Ofsted inspection and regulation across multiple years as well as showing trends between different financial years. This provides a more comprehensive view of the quality of services and settings than reporting only on the services, settings or institutions inspected in each local authority area within a particular year.

228 A particular emphasis is given to evidence derived from inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children, including the new annual unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral for children in need introduced in June 2009. In some local authority areas where these inspections have yet to take place, the outcomes of safeguarding investigations carried out through joint area review inspections after April 1 2007 have also informed the performance profile. In addition, Ofsted's evaluation of serious case reviews continues to form part of the evidence base for assessing the quality of child protection in local authority areas.

Children's services ratings for 2009

229 The large majority of councils and their partners provide children's services of generally good quality, often in challenging circumstances. The children's services performance ratings for 2009 show that over two thirds of councils are performing at the highest two levels overall, with 10 being outstanding. Despite this generally positive picture, it is of concern that too many councils (49 out of 152) are delivering children's services that are no better than adequate.[35] Even in some of the councils judged to be performing well overall there are pockets of underperformance. In addition, a very small but increasing minority of councils' children's services are performing poorly overall. In 2009, nine councils were judged to be in this category, compared to four in a broadly comparable category in the previous year's Annual Performance Assessment.[36]

230 In the best-performing councils, the overall effectiveness of a very large majority of inspected services and settings is good or outstanding. Children in these council areas generally get off to a good start in early years settings and most continue to do well throughout their education, achieve well post-16 and are successfully engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 17 and beyond. Inspection evidence shows that in the best councils there are many examples of strong quality assurance and performance management in children's social care, of engaging effectively with children and families, of successful strategies to maintain placement stability, and of creative and innovative ways of involving children and young people in decision-making about their lives.

231 An additional characteristic of these councils is the high level of good or better provision for children and young people whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable, including those who are looked after. The most effective local authorities, for example, have rigorous systems for monitoring the progress of looked after children closely, ensuring personal support is available when required and holding schools to account for their outcomes.

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[35] These figures are correct at 5 November 2009. Changes to the 2009 children's services ratings for individual local authorities, for example as a result of the outcomes of inspection, may be made up to 10 December 2009.

[36] As at 5 November 2009.

232 Councils where children's services are rated as performing adequately overall are characterised by more mixed performance. In these councils, too much early years, primary or secondary school provision is often no better than satisfactory and there is considerable variation in the quality of fostering and adoption services and children's homes. Performance across services which support children and young people whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is also mixed.

233 Of the 40 unannounced inspections of referral, contact and assessment services in individual councils completed by 5 November 2009, at least one area for priority action was identified in half of them. These included the need to tackle delays in the timeliness of assessments; the quality of supervision and managerial oversight; the quality of assessment, including risk assessment; and the promptness of response to referrals. In seven councils, unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral centres have identified priority actions of sufficient concern to limit their annual children's services performance rating to 'performs adequately'.

234 Councils where children's services perform poorly overall are all characterised by serious weaknesses in aspects of social care provision for children and young people, who are therefore not adequately safeguarded. In every case, serious safeguarding concerns have been identified, either through joint area reviews, unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment centres, inspections of services for looked after children or as a result of inadequate serious case reviews. In addition, only one of these councils has more than half of the outcomes for the national indicators for staying safe in the upper or upper middle national quartiles of performance. Common areas of weakness include: inadequacies in performance management for social care services and in making these systems work across agencies; deficiencies in quality assurance processes and the quality of assessments of children's needs; and a slow response to referrals. In some of these councils, children's views are not consistently reflected in the assessment process and there are insufficient numbers of permanent and experienced social workers.

Engaging young people – local authority youth services

235 Ofsted completed its four-year inspection programme of local authority youth work at the end of 2008. Each of the 11 local authorities inspected this year is introducing new integrated youth support arrangements, whereby previously separate services are expected to work more closely together to respond more effectively to the needs of young people. Of the youth services inspected, five are good and six are adequate.

236 The most effective youth work makes a valuable contribution to young people's development in very practical ways: helping them to make and maintain relationships and become active citizens; as well as supporting them towards independence, and building their capacity to assess risks and act accordingly. Obstacles to achievement include too little action by managers to tackle underlying weaknesses, including inconsistent quality of youth work, often found across a single service, and workers being insufficiently skilled in key areas of youth work practice.

237 The local authority landscape is changing quickly with long-established service boundaries fading in favour of multi-agency working or locality teams of which youth workers are members. In the best local authorities, managers are well informed about the contribution of youth work to local priorities and communicate this well. The informal but educational role adopted by youth workers is important as part of the broader services for young people.

Children's social care

Key findings

✱ Although inspection outcomes for children's homes are similar overall to those for 2007/08, the proportion judged inadequate is slightly lower than in 2007/08.

✱ The quality of individual children's homes fluctuates too much and improving the recruitment, retention and development of staff, particularly managers, is a key priority.

✱ Almost all fostering agencies and services inspected during 2008/09 are at least satisfactory and the majority have improved since they were last inspected.

✱ The vast majority of adoption agencies and services inspected during 2008/09 are at least satisfactory and almost all have improved since they were last inspected.

✱ The proportion of local authorities that are inadequate in carrying out their duties in relation to private fostering arrangements is still unacceptable at six of the 36 inspected this year. In the best authorities, all staff understand and promote the requirement for all private fostering arrangements to be notified to the local authority.

✱ The proportion of residential special schools in which social care is good or outstanding is lower this year at 79%, compared to 89% in 2007/08. Moreover, the proportion judged inadequate is higher at 3%, compared to 1% last year.

Introduction

238 The children's social care sector includes a wide variety of services. These are mainly for children but include some for adults. The services are either residential settings or agencies and local authorities which provide services. For example, children's homes provide direct care and support for children, while adoption support agencies provide services to adults and children who have been adopted.[37]

239 Ofsted regulates some types of social care providers and services and both regulates and inspects others. In its regulatory role, Ofsted is responsible for the registration of providers and for ensuring that they meet the relevant regulations and national minimum standards. In its inspection role, Ofsted evaluates the quality of services or provision in relation to published criteria.[38]

Children's homes

Figure 35: Quality of care at most recent inspections of children's homes inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of children's homes)

2008/09

| 10 | 54 | 29 | 7 |

2007/08

| 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |

■ Outstanding   ■ Good   ■ Satisfactory   ■ Inadequate
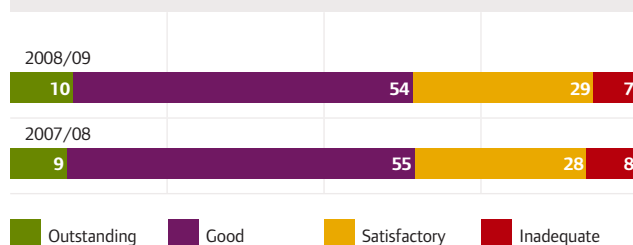
Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

2007/08 figures represent inspections carried out between September 2007 and August 2008. The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08 showed children's homes inspection outcomes between July 2007 and August 2008.

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[37] In addition to the services and provision covered in this section, Ofsted inspects care for children in boarding schools, the findings of which are set out in the 'Independent schools' section on p 37. Ofsted also inspects social care in further education, the findings of which are in the 'Learning and skills' section on p 41.

[38] For further information about the distinction between inspection and regulation, see the Glossary, p 156.

240 As at 31 August 2009, there are 1,958 children's homes in England, providing care for children and young people under the age of 18. They are diverse in type and may accommodate children who are looked after by a local authority, either as a short-term measure or on a more long-term basis. They may care for children and young people who have, for example, physical or learning disabilities, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, a mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol addiction. Residential schools that provide accommodation for pupils for more than 295 days each year, including specialist and mainstream schools, must also register as children's homes. Ofsted carries out inspections of all children's homes at least twice each year, the majority of which are unannounced.[39]

241 Overall, 64% of children's homes are good or outstanding, the same proportion as that for 2007/08. Figure 36 shows that 58% of children's homes which were outstanding at their first Ofsted inspection remain outstanding in 2008/09; 76% of previously good children's homes have stayed good or improved to outstanding. The proportion of inadequate homes has fallen slightly, from 8% in 2007/08 to 7% this year. Of the 151 homes that were inadequate at 31 August 2008, 31 have closed, 34 are now good and 60 are satisfactory. However, 26 remain inadequate. Furthermore, 16% of children's homes that were inadequate at their first Ofsted inspection have not improved in 2008/09.

Figure 36: Children's homes: most recent inspection judgement compared to first inspection after April 2007 (percentage of providers)

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
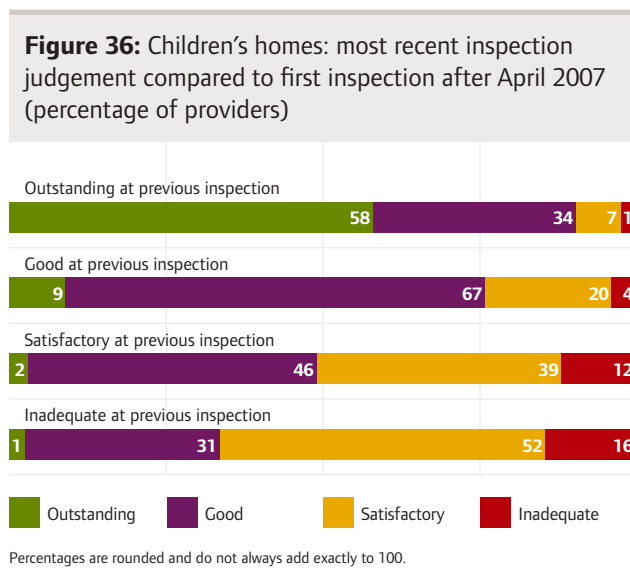
242 The quality of individual children's homes fluctuates too much. Of the 1,644 that have been inspected at least three times since April 2007, the quality in 46% has remained static; in 25% there has been a steady improvement; in 18% there has been a decline; and in 11% the quality has varied at each inspection. In nearly a third of these children's homes, therefore, the quality is inconsistent or has deteriorated. The instability of staffing, particularly management, is a significant contributory factor. Improving the recruitment, retention and development of core staff is therefore a key priority for providers.

243 There are no major differences between the quality of provision in homes run by local authorities and those run by independent providers.

Effective practice

244 Outstanding homes work closely with individual children to ensure they thrive, develop well, and both are and feel safe. Children in such homes feel engaged in decisions that affect them and are consulted in the development of safe practices and the promotion of good behaviour. In these very effective homes, there are well-established systems for monitoring and supporting each young person through to the time when she or he leaves the home. Staff work to promote healthy outcomes and support young people to cope with life's challenges, including avoidance of drug and alcohol abuse.

245 In these homes, placement plans provide extensive details about the young people's learning needs and the means by which they are to be met. The achievements of young people are recognised and rewarded, which helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Priority is given to promoting the best learning outcomes by ensuring the young people attend school regularly and have the necessary support and facilities to complete homework; regular contact is maintained between care staff and teachers. Links between the children's home and local colleges and employers enable the young people to benefit from suitable work experience and training opportunities. Staff are effective in promoting the practical skills and experience needed for the transition to adulthood and independence.

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[39] Children's homes have at least two inspections each year. At least one is a full inspection; the other may be an interim inspection, usually covering issues and recommendations from the previous inspection, or any other issues of which Ofsted has been notified. All inspections evaluate the staying safe outcome.

Children's social care continued

246 Skilled and committed managers ensure consistently high standards of care, using rigorous monitoring to make improvements. Staff are well trained and supported, and all have been fully vetted for their suitability to work with children. Staff act consistently and the level of turnover is low, contributing to the continuity of care.

247 Since September 2008, all full inspections of children's homes have reported specifically on equality and diversity. There are strong links between the overall effectiveness of a home, its ability to promote equality and diversity and the outcomes for its young people.
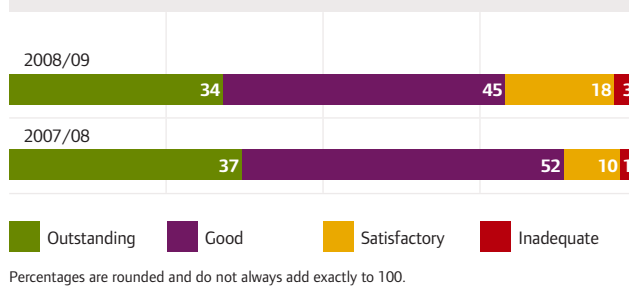
Areas for improvement in children's homes

248 Around 6% of children's homes do not meet all the standards required to ensure the safety of children. These children's homes may fail to identify properly the needs of the children in their care; rather than promoting positive experiences, staff tend to respond to negative situations. Such homes are ineffective in dealing with matters such as bullying and children and young people leaving the home without permission. There are, however, fewer concerns this year about vetting procedures for new staff, including arrangements to ensure Criminal Records Bureau checks.

249 Weaknesses seen this year include lack of training for behaviour management and recording of incidents; lack of appropriate staffing or flaws in staff training; ineffective child protection systems; and insufficient maintenance checks of the home. Some young people do not have access to services that are necessary to ensure equal treatment; for example, there may be a lack of interpreters. Overall, Ofsted has set over 6,500 actions this year to ensure homes reach the required standards and a further 9,000 recommendations to bring about improvement.

Residential special schools

Figure 37: Quality of care at most recent inspection of residential special schools inspected between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2009

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
2008/09	34	45	18	3
2007/08	37	52	10	1

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

250 There are 214 residential special schools in England. Ofsted inspects social care in residential special schools at least once a year. Comparisons can therefore be made between the quality of provision from one year to the next. In 2008/09, it is not as effective as it was last year, with 79% of the 198 schools inspected good or outstanding and 3% inadequate; the corresponding figures in 2007/08 were 89% and 1% respectively.

Effective practice

251 In good and outstanding residential special schools, staff and young people share a clear sense of purpose. There is a comprehensive induction and training programme for staff, and managers support staff through formal and systematic supervision and personal development. In these settings, there are sufficient trained staff to ensure that the complex needs of children are met. Children are individually supported, are involved in decisions about their lives and are active in improving the school.

252 Enjoyment and achievement are at least satisfactory in all the schools. Where they are good or outstanding, information about children is shared through excellent communications and working relationships between care staff and teachers. Children benefit from participation in a range of positive recreational activities that contribute to their physical, mental and social well-being. In successful schools, there is respect for children's privacy and personal information is secure. They are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends outside the school.

64

Inadequate provision

253 In inadequate residential special schools, safeguarding and organisation are the areas most in need of improvement. The school's purpose is not clearly defined nor is it presented in a way that is easy for children, parents or carers to understand. Although staff in these schools may report that they feel supported, there is no systematic supervision nor assessment of their performance. Development opportunities are limited. Monitoring is ineffective, with the potential to compromise the safety of children. These aspects of provision are in need of urgent improvement.

254 In addition, the recruitment process fails to meet requirements in these inadequate schools. Procedures to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children are not fully embedded and some checks are not carried out before the start of their employment. Staff have not always been fully trained in child protection and although most children feel their concerns are listened to, not all of them know how to make a complaint. Guidance on what to do if a child goes missing is unclear. There are weaknesses in the supervision and safeguarding of children's welfare at night.

Fostering services

Figure 38: Overall effectiveness at most recent inspection of fostering services inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Local authority fostering services	Independent fostering agencies	All fostering agencies
Outstanding	5	4	9
Good	16	27	43
Satisfactory	13	23	36
Inadequate	0	2	2
Total	**34**	**56**	**90**

255 The most recent national data show that 73% of looked after children are in foster care.[40] Fostering services are responsible for approving people to become foster carers for temporary and long-term care for children. Fostering services fall into two types: local authority fostering services and independent fostering agencies. Independent fostering agencies are regulated by Ofsted but local authority fostering services are not. Both independent fostering agencies and local authority services are inspected by Ofsted.

256 There are many types of fostering, including placements for children and young people who have physical disabilities or learning difficulties, short breaks, remand fostering and placements with family or friends, otherwise known as kinship care. Fostering services differ in size; some agencies cater for small numbers of children, while local authority fostering services may support placements of around 1,000 children and young people.

257 Ofsted inspected all fostering services and agencies between April 2007 and August 2008. From 1 September 2008 each local authority fostering service and independent fostering agency will be inspected at least once every three years.

258 Almost all the agencies and services inspected during 2008/09 are at least satisfactory. Of the 34 local authority services inspected, 21 are good or outstanding, while 31 of the 56 independent agencies are good or outstanding. The majority of individual services inspected in 2008/09 have improved since they were last inspected.

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[40] *Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009* (SFR 25/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, October 2009.

Effective practice

259 Outstanding leaders and managers of fostering services are clear about the aims of their services and continually identify ways to improve. They ensure effective assessments, approvals and reviews of carers. Their services have well-developed procedures for safeguarding, risk assessments and handling complaints. They support carers in the prevention of bullying and the management of behaviour, and respond effectively when children go missing from home. Their quality of provision is enhanced through robust recruitment practices, mandatory training and effective supervision of staff and carers.

260 The educational needs of each young person are determined as part of the admission process and carers attend thorough training to enable them to support the young people's progress. Any issues concerning attendance, exclusions or extra help that may be needed with homework are monitored and managed by education support workers. Educational progress is recognised and celebrated. Effective fostering services also ensure that communication between the foster home and school is good, and foster carers know how the children and young people in their care are progressing. The best services consult, inform and involve children well.

261 Stability in placements is a high priority for all looked after children as it increases the possibility of good relationships for them. It is achieved through good planning and timely identification of children's and young people's needs; the information is used to match them with suitable foster carers and ensure appropriate levels of support. Foster carers are offered individualised support of good quality so that children's personal needs are met. While this is a strength in outstanding fostering services, the stability of placements in foster care remains a challenge nationally.

262 Outstanding and good services promote equality and diversity well through their practice and training for staff, carers and panel members. Some services have specific recruitment officers to engage carers from a range of backgrounds. When children or young people are placed with foster carers whose cultural or ethnic heritage is different from their own, resources are available to ensure that they are not disadvantaged and, where necessary, adult mentors or independent visitors from the young people's own cultures are used.

Areas for improvement

263 Inadequate services have made slow progress in improving areas of greatest weakness, which include the monitoring and evaluation of their own work, quality assuring services and managing records. In 2008/09 Ofsted set over 250 actions for agencies and services to reach the required standards and over 450 further recommendations for improvement.

264 Safeguarding is inadequate in two of the 56 independent fostering agencies inspected and is satisfactory or better in all of the local authority fostering services. In the two services in which safeguarding was judged inadequate, failings included: ineffective processes to match children with foster carers; lack of rigour in the assessment of prospective foster carers; fostering panels that were not legally constituted and were administered poorly; and incomplete files on allegations against staff.

Private fostering[41]

Figure 39: Overall effectiveness at most recent inspection of local authority private fostering arrangements inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009

	Local authority private fostering arrangements
Outstanding	1
Good	12
Satisfactory	17
Inadequate	6
Total	**36**

Children subject to a private fostering arrangement can be very vulnerable, especially if the arrangement is not notified to the local authority.

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41 For further information see *Inspection of local authority private fostering arrangements 2007–08* (080298), Ofsted, 2009. This publication reviews 82 inspections carried out by Ofsted between 1 April 2007 and 11 December 2008.

265 A private fostering arrangement is one in which a child who is under 16 years of age (or 18 for a child with special educational needs or disabilities) is cared for by someone other than parents or close relatives, with the intention that the placement should last for 28 days or more. Private fostering differs from foster care in that the placements are made without the involvement of the local authority. They are usually made by the parent or parents of the child or another adult, but sometimes by the young person. In these circumstances, it is the responsibility of the parent, carer or anyone else involved in making the placement to notify the local authority of the private fostering arrangement.

266 Children subject to a private fostering arrangement can be very vulnerable, especially if the arrangement is not notified to the local authority. Data published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families on private fostering show that, at the end of March 2009, 1,530 children were reported by local authorities as being cared for in private fostering arrangements.[42] However, because of low levels of awareness of the notification requirements, the real figure is likely to be much higher. There is also high turnover in private fostering arrangements, with most children and young people staying for less than a year.

267 In this reporting year, Ofsted carried out 36 inspections, evaluating how well local authorities carry out their duties in relation to private fostering arrangements. This completed the three-year inspection cycle of this activity in all local authorities begun by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.[43]

268 In the period since April 2007, Ofsted has undertaken 102 inspections of local authority work in relation to private fostering. Only 3% of these inspections have resulted in an overall judgement of outstanding. Provision in a further 36% of cases was judged to be good and in 38% it was satisfactory, while a very high proportion, 23%, was found to be inadequate.

269 In 2008/09, the level of inadequate provision, at six out of 36 local authority services inspected, remains unacceptable. Where monitoring of private fostering arrangements is inadequate, levels of notification are low, and leadership and management are ineffective in publicising the need for appropriate and timely notifications. In some cases in which children are known to be privately fostered, procedures to assess and meet their needs are not widely understood nor fully implemented. A common feature of inadequate arrangements, and of some that are satisfactory overall, is delay in obtaining Criminal Records Bureau clearance for private foster carers and their households.

270 Local authorities must actively and consistently promote public awareness of the need to notify them of these arrangements. Crucially, they must ensure that their Local Safeguarding Children Boards review the ways in which they safeguard and promote the welfare of children placed in private fostering arrangements in their areas.[44]

271 Where arrangements are effective, all staff in the authority understand the duty to promote public awareness of the notification requirements and actively promote them. Specialist trained workers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the authority's duties. Children, young people and the adults involved should all have the same level of attention and support as in fostering arrangements for children in the care of the local authority. Importantly, in effective services, action is taken quickly where private fostering arrangements are unsuitable.

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[42] *Private fostering arrangements in England: year ending 31 March 2009* (SFR 17/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, July 2009.

[43] Ofsted became responsible for these inspections in April 2007; before that date they came within the remit of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

[44] The legal responsibility for promoting awareness lies with local authorities (The Children Act 2004).

Children's social care continued

Adoption services

Figure 40: Overall effectiveness at most recent inspection of adoption services inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009

	Local authority adoption services	Voluntary adoption agencies	All adoption services
Outstanding	5	1	6
Good	34	13	47
Satisfactory	18	4	22
Inadequate	0	1	1
Total	**57**	**19**	**76**

272 As at 31 August 2009, there are 203 adoption services in England. Adoption services recruit, assess, prepare and approve adopters and make adoptive placements for children. They also provide support and help to children in adoptive placements, to adoptive parents, and to birth parents and birth families. Adoption services fall into two types: local authority adoption services and voluntary adoption agencies. Ofsted regulates voluntary adoption agencies but not local authority adoption services. Ofsted inspects both kinds of adoption services; all adoption services are inspected at least every three years.

273 Of the 76 agencies inspected this year, 57 are local authority services and 19 are voluntary adoption agencies. In total, six are outstanding, 47 are good, 22 are satisfactory and one voluntary service was judged inadequate. Almost all of those inspected in 2008/09 have made improvements since their previous inspections. Around seven in 10 services inspected make good or outstanding provision for keeping children and young people safe; one was judged inadequate in this respect.

Effective practice

274 Good and outstanding adoption services and agencies have committed, high-quality management teams who use their resources efficiently to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. Their work is underpinned by good planning and effective assessments of the needs of both prospective adopters and potential adoptees. They ensure ongoing support for adoptive parents, and involve birth parents fully. They engage children and young people well in the adoption process, providing good-quality information in different formats.

275 In good and outstanding services, the breakdown of adoptive placements is at a very low level but when it occurs it is dealt with effectively; there is a full analysis of the circumstances, appropriate action is taken and lessons are learned. These services ensure that safe recruitment practice is followed for all staff, and that all staff with direct contact with children and young people have an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau and have satisfied the agency of their appropriateness to work in such a context. They receive suitable training in child protection, with regular updates to ensure continuing good practice. These agencies also consistently apply safe recruitment and assessment practices for prospective adopters, as well as for members of the extended family and regular adult visitors to the home.

Areas for improvement

276 Although there have been improvements in leadership, in most services quality assurance can be improved further. Strategic planning is weak in services that are no better than satisfactory. Specific problems include a lack of a permanent manager to provide advice and support; vacancies for fieldwork staff, leading to high caseloads for other team members; and overstretched support services for adopters. In 2008/09, Ofsted set over 100 actions for agencies and services to reach the required standards, and over 400 further recommendations to improve.

Adoption support agencies

277 There are 48 adoption support agencies in England. Adoption support agencies do not make placements but provide services to adults, families and children who are involved in the adoption process. They also provide assistance to adopted children and adults, for example through counselling and helping adopted children if they seek information about their adoption or wish to trace their birth relatives. Adoption support agencies may also provide assistance to adoption agencies in preparing and training adoptive parents. All adoption support agencies are regulated and inspected at least once every three years. In 2008/09, seven adoption support agencies were inspected. Five are good, while two are satisfactory.

278 All the agencies inspected provide a satisfactory or good service, based on sound principles of working in partnership and taking an open and honest approach. Services are tailored to meet the individual needs of families and children. It is made clear, before the service is provided, what help is available and to whom and users are routinely asked to evaluate the service they receive.

279 Policies work effectively and demonstrate an understanding of equalities and diversity issues. For example, accessible children's guides, produced in different formats, contain a wide range of information for young people, including contact details for offices and support workers; guidance about how to complain; and examples of the experiences of adoptive children, detailing some of the issues they have faced and how they responded. All the agencies inspected have clear procedures to safeguard young people from abuse.

Residential family centres

Figure 41: Overall effectiveness at most recent inspection of residential family centres inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Residential family centres
Outstanding	0
Good	3
Satisfactory	8
Inadequate	3
Total	**14**

280 As at 31 August 2009, there are 50 residential family centres in England. A residential family centre is any establishment that provides residential services for parents and their children in order to monitor and assess parents' ability to respond to their children's needs and to safeguard and promote their children's welfare. Residential family centres can also provide advice, guidance and counselling to parents, who are sometimes themselves young people. Residential placements are usually arranged and paid for by the local authority and will sometimes be ordered through the courts. Ofsted inspects and regulates each residential family centre at least once every three years.

Good and outstanding adoption services and agencies… engage children and young people well in the adoption process, providing good-quality information in different formats.

281 Of the 14 residential family centres inspected this year, three are good and eight are satisfactory, while three are inadequate. Most of the providers inspected have responded positively to the issues identified at their previous inspections. Only one provider has made no improvements. The more effective aspects of the work of residential family centres include: good communication between managers, staff and families; involving parents in assessing their own parenting skills; clear lines of accountability and definitions of roles and responsibilities; and staff who are properly qualified to assess families.

282 Where staff use the *Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families* to support their work, it is helpful in improving the quality of assessments.[45] Families are treated with respect and dignity and are fully involved in the assessment. Suitable strategies to assist them are identified, within a safe and nurturing environment. Staff are motivated and teach parenting skills, child protection and risk management effectively.

283 Most residential family centres are satisfactory or good in promoting children's safety. However, where safeguarding is inadequate, centres lack basic routines to ensure that all families' needs are well met. There are ineffective guidelines on what should be done when concerns about safeguarding are identified. There is a failure to address issues affecting vulnerable adults and guidance on the reporting of adult protection concerns is deficient. Recruitment practices fail to assess the suitability of staff and to ensure that Criminal Records Bureau checks are made. Risk assessments are weak and unsound procedures can hinder the identification of unsafe situations and therefore the safeguarding of children's welfare.

284 In inadequate centres, vacancies at management level have a negative impact on staff training and development. Staff are not always sufficiently skilled to carry out accurate assessments, and care plans and records can lack sufficient detail, so clear and accurate records are not always available. These are all necessary to put in place the right support to promote better parenting. This year, Ofsted has set over 100 actions for residential family centres to reach the required standards, and over 50 further recommendations for improvement.

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[45] *Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families* (ISBN 0 11322 310 2), issued jointly by the Home Office, the Department of Health and the former Department for Education and Employment, 2000.

Care and education for children and young people in secure accommodation

Key findings

* Care for children and young people is good in 14 of 17 secure children's homes, a higher proportion than in 2007/08.

* However, in one home the quality of care has declined since the last inspection and is now inadequate.

* In all four secure training centres, the quality of care is at least satisfactory; it is outstanding in one and good in two.

* Education and training are good or outstanding in nine of the 11 secure children's homes and secure training centres in which they were inspected. They are satisfactory in the remaining two.

* Young people achieve a range of qualifications and there is an appropriate focus on basic skills; however, activities are not always as challenging as they should be.

* Secure establishments report an increase of placements of young people with mental health problems but are not always able to access appropriate child and adolescent mental health services.

Introduction

285 Ofsted inspects the care and educational provision for children and young people in secure training centres and secure children's homes. Ofsted also inspects educational provision for children and young people in young offender institutions and in immigration removal centres, where children may be accommodated with their families for short periods.[46]

286 Four secure training centres provide places for children and young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been remanded or sentenced by the courts. The centres are under contract to the Youth Justice Board, which monitors their compliance with requirements. Ofsted does not regulate secure training centres but inspects them annually under an agreement with the Youth Justice Board.

287 Ofsted regulates and inspects annually secure children's homes, of which there are currently 17. Secure children's homes provide care and support for some of the most vulnerable children and young people aged between 10 and 17. These homes must meet the national minimum standards and regulations for all children's homes and the additional approval standards for secure children's homes. Secure homes work with some young people to tackle offending behaviour and the attitudes that go with it. However, some children are placed in secure children's homes for their own safety rather than for having committed offences.

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[46] In 2008/09 none of the immigration removal centres inspected by Ofsted had children on the site at the time of inspection. Further information about inspections at these centres can be found on p 56. The outcomes of Ofsted's inspections of young offender institutions can be found on p 53.

Care and education for children and young people in secure accommodation continued

Care for children and young people in secure children's homes and secure training centres

Figure 42: Overall effectiveness at most recent inspection of care provision in secure children's homes and secure training centres inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Secure children's homes	Secure training centres
Outstanding	0	1
Good	14	2
Satisfactory	2	1
Inadequate	1	0
Total	**17**	**4**
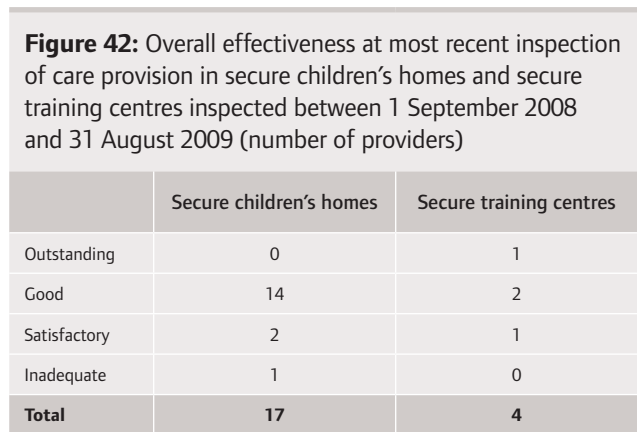
288 The number of secure children's homes in which care provision is good or outstanding is higher than in 2007/08, when the figure was 13. However, one that was satisfactory when it was last inspected has deteriorated to become inadequate. Problems are most often related to a lack of planning and intervention to support young people. Unsatisfactory arrangements for the dispensing of medication and associated records are recurrent. Other weaknesses include too little detail in the recording of interventions to manage behaviour and insufficient supervision of young people by staff. Where behaviour management is weaker, it is sometimes associated with unimaginative use of sanctions, which do not encourage young people to learn from their poor behaviour.

289 The secure training centre which is outstanding excels in managing behaviour, safeguarding, education and attention to the health needs of young people. The variety and quality of enrichment activities have improved across the range of secure accommodation. These programmes are key components in good and outstanding settings. However, in a small number of settings access to positive and developmental activities is inconsistent for young people, as a result of poor planning and coordination. This limits the opportunity for them to develop their social skills and self-esteem, and to continue to learn outside formal education.

290 The 2007/08 Annual Report recorded that one of the secure training centres inspected was inadequate.[47] The experienced management team which was placed in this centre has tackled the issues effectively and it was found to be satisfactory at the last full inspection. There has been significant progress in the management of behaviour, the quality of education and ensuring the safety and security of residents and visitors.

291 Young people tell inspectors that staff help them with the issues that brought them into a secure setting. The Children's Rights Director's recent report on the experience of young people living in secure children's homes showed that children and young people value the support and care they receive to help them deal with their chaotic lifestyles and behaviour and to re-engage in education.[48] The better settings are making progress in supporting young people to re-integrate effectively into their communities on release. However, in some settings supporting resettlement for young people remains in need of further development.

292 The management and organisation of almost all secure establishments are at least satisfactory; in one they are outstanding. Inspection reports reflect continuing improvements in quality assurance and action taken by managers to improve performance. The majority of secure units now seek useful evaluative information by asking young people, before their discharge, for their views on the care and service they have received. However, some secure units have yet to demonstrate fully that systematic self-evaluation informs their practice and development. For example, not all units ensure that they learn from incidents involving restraint and develop strategies to reduce the need for such interventions.

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47   *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08,* Ofsted, 2008.

48   *Life in secure care* (080241), Ofsted, 2009.

293 More secure establishments report an increase in placements of young people with mental health problems this year. Secure units struggle to meet the complex needs of these young people, to keep them safe and to safeguard other residents. Some secure establishments employ their own psychologists and psychiatrists, while others benefit from very good links with the child and adolescent mental health service. However, a substantial minority have limited input from this service and have to argue strongly for resources for young people in need of them.

> For many young people, their achievements while in custody provide their first experience of educational success.

Educational provision for children and young people in secure accommodation

Figure 43: Overall effectiveness of educational provision in secure children's homes and secure training centres inspected between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (number of providers)

	Secure children's homes	Secure training centres
Outstanding	0	1
Good	5	3
Satisfactory	2	0
Inadequate	0	0
Total	**7**	**4**

294 In 2008/09 Ofsted inspected educational provision in all four secure training centres and in seven of the 17 secure children's homes. Young people gain a range of qualifications and accreditation in essential skills during their time in secure accommodation. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing skills in literacy and numeracy. However, in a minority of institutions, the learners are not challenged enough and do not value the provision.

295 For many young people, their achievements while in custody provide their first experience of educational success. The initial assessment of and subsequent support for learners are generally good. Many benefit from additional support with their reading, writing and numeracy, and most lessons include a variety of interesting and challenging activities. Effective establishments monitor learners' progress closely and more rigorous lesson observations by managers have helped improve teaching and learning. However, vocational and practical training generally remains better than teaching in classroom-based subjects.

296 The behaviour of the young people is generally good in most establishments and policies for rewards and sanctions are becoming more effective.

297 The use of data in the monitoring and evaluation of provision and the young people's progress is an area of weakness in satisfactory providers. Overall, however, leadership and management continue to improve; managers are now more focused than in the past on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

298 Most young people experience some work-related or vocational training. However, the range of vocational programmes is often too narrow in secure children's homes. Careers advice remains too variable and links to promote successful resettlement are too tenuous. Many young people and staff report difficulties in resettlement planning. Some establishments have made progress but more work is needed, with the help of external agencies, to ensure preparation for release back into the community.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

Key findings

✳ Overall the pace of improvement in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is too slow and the extent of change is insufficient. Front-line practice is inconsistent so that minimum standards, including safeguarding, are not always met.

✳ However, Cafcass is taking seriously the scale of the improvements needed and key strategic building blocks are being put in place. It has introduced good systems for managing the performance of its workforce and is tackling long-standing issues of accountability.

Introduction

299 Cafcass works with children and their families and then advises family courts on what is in the best interests of individual children. Cafcass is a national organisation, currently arranged into a number of service areas across England.

Findings from inspection

Figure 44: Cafcass inspection outcomes between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009

Cafcass service area	Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve	Safeguarding
Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Avon	December 2008	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Birmingham and the Black Country	January 2009	Inadequate	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Durham and the Tees Valley	February 2009	Inadequate	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Cornwall, Devon and Somerset	June 2009	Inadequate	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
North Yorkshire and Humberside	July 2009	Inadequate	Inadequate	Satisfactory

300 Cafcass has made some limited progress during 2008/09. However, the pace of improvement is too slow and the extent of change is not sufficient. Pilot inspections were undertaken in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Avon (December 2008), Birmingham and the Black Country (January 2009), Durham and the Tees Valley (February 2009), Cornwall, Devon and Somerset (June 2009) and North Yorkshire and Humberside (July 2009). Four out of five of these services were found to be inadequate overall. In addition, Durham and the Tees Valley is also inadequate in terms of safeguarding. Capacity to improve is satisfactory in each of the service areas inspected, except North Yorkshire and Humberside.

301 Post-inspection monitoring visits have continued following last year's inspections. These took place in the South East in March 2009, in the East Midlands in May 2009, in South Yorkshire in June 2009 and in Birmingham and the Black Country in August 2009.

302 Recent inspection shows that Cafcass is taking seriously the scale of the challenges it faces to bring about improvement. It is tackling long-standing issues of accountability and consistency in the quality of practice. The organisational restructuring of Cafcass has strengthened the capacity of its management arrangements to bring about improvements, but there is still a long way to go before Cafcass consistently ensures high-quality outcomes for all the children and families who receive its service.

303 Key strategic building blocks are being put in place within the service, such as an assessment framework for private law work based on the *Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families*.[49] Cafcass has introduced a comprehensive performance management system to enable managers to monitor progress and raise standards. However, the quality of service delivery is currently not consistent enough, and in too many instances, it is not of a satisfactory standard.

304 Cafcass works with children and families at times of crisis and family breakdown, factors that can lead to increased vulnerability and risk of emotional and sometimes physical harm to children. Safe recruitment practice is good. However, in each recent inspection, cases have been encountered in which risks have been identified or alleged, including that of domestic violence, but have not been responded to appropriately.

305 There is increased awareness across the Cafcass workforce that safeguarding is its primary duty and this is evident in greater compliance with requirements to complete safeguarding checks in a timely way, undertake risk assessments and, where necessary, refer safeguarding concerns to the local authority.

306 Positive steps have been taken by the Cafcass children's rights service to increase the involvement of children and young people in the work of Cafcass, particularly at a strategic level. The members of the Children and Young People's Board have produced impressive young inspectors' reports to help improve the service.

Review of inspection arrangements

307 Ofsted has consulted widely on changes to Cafcass inspection, seeking the views of family justice partners, a wide range of stakeholders and the Cafcass Children and Young People's Board. The consultation resulted in broad agreement with the proposed new inspection framework and arrangements for post-inspection monitoring. These have resulted in new inspection arrangements with a greater focus on outcomes for children and young people, more frequent inspections and considerable reductions in both the notice period for inspection and the time before reports are published. The new arrangements are being implemented from 1 September 2009.

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49 *Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families* (ISBN 0 11322 310 2), Home Office, Department of Health and the former Department for Education and Employment, 2000.

Serious incidents and serious case reviews

Key findings

- The number of serious case reviews evaluated by Ofsted has increased greatly this year.

- The high proportion of inadequate serious case reviews is still a cause for concern. There is, however, a general picture of improvement in overall quality.

Figure 45: Quality of serious case reviews evaluated between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009 (percentage of reviews)

28	43	29

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Inadequate

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.
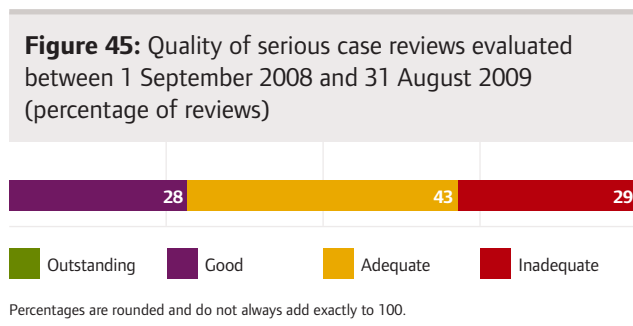
308 Local Safeguarding Children Boards commission serious case reviews when a child dies or sustains significant harm and where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor. The boards use the criteria laid down in Chapter 8 of the statutory guidance contained in *Working together to safeguard children* to determine whether a serious case review should be instigated.[50]

> The high proportion of inadequate serious case reviews is still a cause for concern. There is, however, a general picture of improvement in overall quality.

309 Ofsted receives notifications from councils of serious incidents involving children and evaluates the quality of serious case reviews. Where serious case reviews are found to be inadequate, the Government has asked Local Safeguarding Children Boards to submit an action plan to Ofsted, showing how the inadequate aspects have been addressed. Ofsted evaluates the quality of such action plans, particularly the degree to which the proposed actions address the shortcomings identified and have therefore the capacity to support learning.

310 Ofsted evaluations are conducted to assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards to improve the quality of serious case reviews and ensure that lessons are learned. The responsibility to support and challenge the review process rests with the regional Government Offices.[51] Ofsted provides feedback to the Local Safeguarding Children Boards about its evaluation findings to enable them to make improvements in future reviews.

311 The number of serious case reviews evaluated by Ofsted has increased greatly this year. This is despite the numbers of children killed or seriously injured, where abuse or neglect is suspected, remaining stable. Between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009, the number of serious incident notifications received was 414. During the same period, Ofsted evaluated 199 serious case reviews, of which 56 were judged good, 86 adequate and 57 inadequate. Between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2008, Ofsted evaluated 90 serious case reviews. While the high number of inadequate serious case review evaluations is still a cause for concern, there is a general picture of improvement in quality. Local Safeguarding Children Boards are generally carrying out serious case reviews more quickly, they are cooperating more readily in undertaking a joint review where the history of a case spans more than one area, and they are becoming more rigorous in their scrutiny of individual management reviews produced by the agencies involved.

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[50] *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (13 978 0 11 271187 2), Department for Education and Skills, 2006; the revised Chapter 8, *Serious case reviews consultation draft,* was published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in July 2009.

[51] For more information about the work of the Government Offices, see the Government Offices website at: www.gos.gov.uk/national.

312 Where serious case reviews have been judged inadequate, it has often been because the key components of the review, such as the terms of reference, have not been robust. This can mean that the review does not focus on the most important issues, and the learning from the review can be too limited.

313 Ofsted has been responsible for the evaluation of serious case reviews since 1 April 2007. A report analysing the issues raised by the evaluation of the first 50 serious case reviews was published by Ofsted in 2008. It has recently been followed up by a further report outlining the key issues from serious case reviews evaluated between April 2008 and March 2009.[52] These included many of the same aspects of poor practice, in the cases reviewed, as were identified in last year's report: for example, the failure of staff across agencies to identify and report signs of abuse, poor recording and communication, and a failure to consider the situation from the child's perspective. Too often professionals took the word of parents at face value without considering the effects on the child.

314 Factors related to drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, mental illness and learning difficulties were often not properly taken into account in assessing risk and considering the impact on the child. Agencies were found to be particularly poor at addressing the impact of chronic neglect on children and intervening at an early stage to prevent problems from escalating. For a number of older children the problems in the family had been evident for some years. The report also found that issues of race, language, culture, religion and disability were not covered well in the way professionals had worked with the families. This meant lessons were not learned and vital issues were missed.

> Where serious case reviews have been judged inadequate, it has often been because the key components of the review… have not been robust.

315 A small number of local areas have made no notifications of serious incidents nor instigated any serious case reviews since Ofsted took responsibility for this work in 2007. Where this is the case, Ofsted has alerted the relevant Regional Government Office with whom responsibility rests to ensure notifications are made and serious case reviews are initiated when appropriate.

316 The report by Lord Laming, *The protection of children in England: a progress report*, made recommendations for Ofsted to report more frequently on the findings of serious case review evaluations.[53] It also recommended that Ofsted should work more closely with other inspectorates so that the information and the issues arising can be incorporated more fully into inspections across all services for children and young people. Ofsted has liaised with the relevant inspectorates and the Department for Children, Schools and Families to respond to the Laming recommendations and to revise its framework for evaluating serious case reviews accordingly.

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[52] *Learning lessons from serious case reviews: year 2* (090101), Ofsted, 2009.

[53] *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report* (HC 330),
The Lord Laming, The Stationery Office, 2009.

Welfare and duty of care during Armed Forces training

317 In a continuing cycle of inspections commissioned by the Ministry of Defence, Ofsted has inspected the effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care arrangements in Armed Forces training and recruitment. Inspectors visited 12 training establishments in England, none receiving more than 24 hours' notice of the inspection visit. Inspections lasted from two to four days.[54]

318 Arrangements are satisfactory overall. In the majority of establishments visited, welfare and duty of care arrangements are integral to training. Most recruits reported they feel safe and well supported. Procedures for selecting military training instructors are in many cases much improved, although too few arrive at their establishments having already undergone mandatory instructor training. Recruit and trainee 'at risk' registers are increasingly used well in all training establishments, but there is no service-wide agreement about the levels of confidentiality that should be adhered to when using the registers.

319 The majority of training personnel provide recruits with a fair and challenging programme, while taking into account concerns that might affect an individual's health, well-being or progress. However, some findings echo those of previous reports. There is still a need to improve the consistency of recruiting practice, including that for overseas entrants. Instructors' workloads at all the Army training establishments inspected that provide initial training for recruits are exceptionally high. The Army has made very slow progress in clearing a large backlog of Criminal Records Bureau checks. Good practice is not consistent across all services and establishments.

Key themes
Improving outcomes for looked after children

Improving outcomes for looked after children

Introduction

320 The Government's White Paper, *Care matters: time for change*, published in June 2007, set a clear challenge to the education and care system.[55] It set out how outcomes for children and young people in care had not improved sufficiently, and showed that the task of improving the quality of their lives required urgent and sustained action.

321 Two years on, outcomes for children and young people in care have improved, but these gains have been modest compared to the scale of the challenge. Despite increased investment, greater focus, and a more comprehensive legislative framework, significant barriers remain to improving the lives of looked after children and young people.

322 The purpose of this section is to understand, through inspection evidence and the voices of children and young people, what the most effective providers are doing to address the barriers that looked after children face and what lessons can be learned to support better outcomes for them in the future.

Context

323 As at 31 March 2009, around 60,900 children were looked after by local authorities, a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 59,400. The large majority (73%) lived with foster carers, and a further 10% lived in children's homes, hostels and secure units. The remaining 17% were placed for adoption, placed with parents or placed in other residential schools or settings. The profile of looked after children and young people remains very diverse, and many children will be vulnerable for a range of reasons, not just one. Over 60% of looked after children have experienced abuse or neglect, 20% are taken into care as a result of family dysfunction or the family experiencing acute distress, 4% are looked after because of a parent's illness or disability and 4% are themselves disabled. There are also 3,700 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children currently in care.[56]

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[55]   *Care matters: time for change*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007.

[56]   *Looked after children in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009*, Statistical First Release (SFR 5/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

324 Not only will looked after children have had different experiences, but they will also be affected by them in different ways. The long-term impact of loss, trauma and separation will be different for individual children, depending on their understanding, resilience and perception of their care environment. Looked after children are 10 times as likely to have a statement of special educational need as all children. Those who work with these children need to refresh their skills, knowledge and understanding of children's development continually. Such diversity also places a demand on the social care system in terms of the range and suitability of placements, and the ability of social workers and carers to assess children's needs accurately and respond to them as individuals.

325 The latest published outcome measures for looked after children and young people show some improvement over the last three years. Between 2006 and 2008 there have been reductions in the percentage of looked after children permanently excluded from school; the percentage missing 25 or more days of school in the year; and the percentage convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand from the police. There were also increases in the percentages of looked after children with up-to-date immunisations; health and dental checks; achieving Level 4, the standard expected for their age, at Key Stage 2; and achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*–C. The reductions in exclusions, convictions, final warnings and reprimands, and improvements in education outcomes at age 11, have led to a small but encouraging narrowing of the gap with all children.[57]

326 However, comparisons with outcomes for all children make clear the scale of the challenge that remains. Data for 2008 show that looked after children are still twice as likely as their peers to be convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand, four times as likely to be unemployed at the end of Year 11, and five times as likely to be permanently excluded from school. Just under 5% of looked after children were identified as having a substance misuse problem in 2008, and over one third of looked after children with a substance misuse problem who were offered an intervention refused it. At GCSE, the percentage of looked after young people achieving five or more A*–C grades is 14%, compared to 65% of all young people, and although these results for looked after children represent a slight improvement on the previous year, the gap with their peers has widened.

327 There has been increasing interest in recent years in how outcomes for looked after children in England compare with those in other countries and whether the significant disparity experienced here is mirrored elsewhere. However, a lack of comparable international data, and considerable differences in both the percentage of children who are taken into care and the type of settings in which children are cared for, frustrate any simple benchmarking.[58] Nevertheless, in response to research which highlighted the effectiveness of residential care in Denmark, the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee undertook a study visit to children's homes in Denmark as part of its recent investigation into looked after children.[59]

328 The Committee was struck both by the high level of qualifications held by staff working in residential homes in Denmark and by their approach to working with children, which emphasises the importance of building a close, empathetic and trusting relationship with a child or young person and their family. The themes of professionalism and training of care staff, stability of relationships, engaging children and young people, and focusing on education are all identified by inspection as components of effective provision and are explored in detail later in this section.

> The themes of the professionalism and training of care staff, stability of relationships, engaging children and young people, and focusing on education are all identified by inspection as components of effective provision.

[57] *Outcome indicators for children looked after, twelve months to 30 September 2008*, Statistical First Release (SFR 07/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

[58] YIPPEE project – young people from a public care background: pathways to education in Europe. Available from: http://tcru.ioe.ac.uk/yippee.

[59] Children, Schools and Families Committee, Third Report of Session 2008–09: Looked-after children, 20 April 2009.

How the education and care system can raise outcomes for looked after children and young people

329 The care system can have a transforming and positive influence on the lives of some children and young people. Indeed, 'being looked after properly' was cited as one of the best things about being in care by those children and young people surveyed for the recent *Care and prejudice* report.[60] However, we also know that in terms of education, health, employment and other indicators of success, the gap between looked after children and their peers remains very wide, and on some criteria it is getting wider.

330 The implementation plan of the Department for Children, Schools and Families for the Care Matters programme sets out a vision for improving outcomes for children based on:

- high aspirations and supporting looked after children to achieve

- ensuring looked after children enjoy stable relationships

- taking time to listen to the voice of the child.[61]

331 The purpose of this section is to examine how well these three overarching aims are being met and suggest clear priorities for what the system must focus on in the future to promote more rapid improvement, based on practice in outstanding providers.

Having high aspirations and supporting looked after children to achieve

332 Looked after children and young people are often acutely aware that society's expectations of them are typically low, and that public perceptions of them are frequently poor. In a recent survey from the Children's Rights Director, almost half the looked after children who responded thought they were seen as bad and uncontrollable by the general public, and almost one quarter thought they were seen as troublemakers.[62] Children also reported that teachers treated them differently because they were in care. In many cases, this difference was a positive thing. For example, receiving extra help with education was one of the main ways in which children who responded said they had had better treatment as a result of being in care. However, a small number of children also reported more negative experiences. For example, in one discussion group that took part in the survey, children reported that teachers or tutors made assumptions that children in care were not intelligent or that they would be aggressive, violent and rude.

333 The views of looked after children and young people articulated above suggest that nationally, in local areas, and in individual schools and placements, more must be done to combat the corrosive impact of low aspirations. This section explores how high aspirations for looked after children are promoted and what support is required to help them to achieve their potential. It focuses on three specific dimensions:

- leadership that makes improving outcomes for looked after children a priority

- a clear and consistent focus on education

- support that enables looked after children to overcome the barriers to achievement.

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[60] *Care and prejudice* (080279), Ofsted, 2009.

[61] *Care matters: time to deliver for children in care* (DCSF-00279-2008), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

[62] *Care and prejudice* (080279), Ofsted, 2009 (based on answers from 229 out of 316 children in care surveyed).

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

Leadership that makes improving outcomes for looked after children a priority

334 Setting and maintaining high aspirations for looked after children depend on a sharp focus provided by local leaders. However, a lack of strategy and clear vision, and a failure to make corporate parenting a priority, are still barriers to improving outcomes in some areas. By contrast, local authorities that have been judged as providing outstanding services for looked after children at their most recent joint area review ensure that having and communicating high aspirations are key elements of their corporate parenting role. This is reinforced by senior managers knowing individual looked after children and young people well, and being known by them. In these areas, there is an absolute commitment from the most senior officers and elected members to improve outcomes for looked after children. The aspirations set out by the organisation's leadership positively reinforce the attitudes of staff and partners, and interventions from senior managers are focused on removing the barriers to success and helping to solve problems.

335 Establishing a high priority for and commitment to outcomes for looked after children is not a one-off activity. It requires sustained focus and constant renewal. In one outstanding local authority, the profile of looked after children is maintained at a high level through a programme of events and information sessions for local authority staff and partners from key agencies, the use of regular internal audits to assure quality, work with a local university to develop the research base underpinning the authority's approach, and taking part in regional or national pilot schemes to move practice forward. The authority sees these actions as part of a deliberate strategy to ensure that attention remains focused on outcomes for looked after children as a matter of course.

> …local authorities that have been judged as providing outstanding services for looked after children… ensure that having and communicating high aspirations are key elements of their corporate parenting role.

336 A strong lead from a local authority is necessary to improve outcomes, but alone it is not sufficient. All looked after children come into contact with a wide range of services, so the same vision, high expectations and commitment need to be embedded in all of them. One local authority providing outstanding services for looked after children described how it has implemented a deliberate strategy of expecting senior practitioners responsible for health and education to take the lead on outcomes for looked after children, rather than assuming that this will always be done by social care staff. Investment in sharing information about looked after children and building trust across the partnership has led to high levels of involvement and engagement by key statutory agencies. For example, senior health professionals, including the community paediatrician, see it as their responsibility to make the health of looked after children as good as that of all children.

337 Similarly, the aspirations and expectations held by carers are vital in helping children to achieve. This is particularly well illustrated by one outstanding children's home caring for children with severe learning disabilities. A strong leader, who is himself disabled, motivates staff to strive for success for the children. Staff in turn reinforce the belief that children can achieve and enjoy life despite severe learning disabilities. Children therefore take part in a broad and active range of leisure activities, they experience being in the community, their education is a priority, and care plans are focused on helping them achieve good outcomes. The home is a learning organisation for both staff and children.

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A clear and consistent focus on education

338 Helping looked after children to succeed in their education is essential if the care and education system is to break the cycle of deprivation, abuse and under-achievement that blight the lives of too many. Feedback from looked after children and young people shows a generally positive picture of how they see their education. The *Children's care monitor*, which reports annually on how children and young people in care view issues that are important to them, shows that 84% of children and young people who responded to the survey in 2009 thought their education was good or very good, and 79% thought they were doing well or very well in their education.[63] However, the outcomes achieved by looked after children tell a different story. In 2008, fewer than one in eight looked after young people achieved five or more higher-grade GCSEs, which is the platform for success in further education and employment.[64]

339 The role of the local authority is critical in ensuring that looked after children receive the best education possible. The most effective local authorities have rigorous systems for monitoring the progress of looked after children closely, ensuring personal support is available when required and holding schools to account for the outcomes looked after children achieve. The following extract describes a comprehensive approach to tracking and monitoring which resulted in a substantial increase in one year in the percentage of young people leaving care with one or more GCSEs, rising to over 70%, which is above the national average for looked after children.

Excellent data retrieval from schools and regular tracking of progress, by education workers in the looked after children team and teachers in schools, ensure that concerns are swiftly identified and addressed. Young people receive good individual tutoring in schools, their home and other settings. This support continues into higher education. All looked after children have personal education plans to which they contribute. Very good collaboration exists between the educational psychology services, school improvement and behaviour support staff, education welfare and the education support worker for looked after children. Regular monitoring meetings, involving teachers and education workers for looked after children, are held to discuss individual progress and to review programmes to ensure that the full potential of this cohort is being met. Social workers and multi-agency workers also attend these meetings when necessary. Tailored provision to address specific needs has also increased, which includes a new 14 to 16 skills centre where strong improvement regarding motivation, attainment and attendance has been recorded.

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63   *Children's care monitor 2008/09* (080280), Ofsted, 2009 (based on answers from 888 and 887 children in care respectively out of 1,054 who were surveyed).

64   *Outcome indicators for children looked after, twelve months to 30 September 2008*, Statistical First Release (SFR 07/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

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Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

340 There is emerging evidence that establishing a 'virtual headteacher' to oversee the education of looked after children in a particular authority makes liaison with schools and the monitoring of progress more effective. The 'virtual headteacher' is a new initiative which has been piloted in a number of local authorities following the publication of *Care matters: time for change* and has been taken up in some authorities outside the pilot. The role of the virtual headteacher, or specialist education officer, provides an essential link between children's homes, foster carers and schools, with a focus on raising attainment, reducing absence, tackling exclusions and ensuring provision meets individual learning needs. In one authority, the virtual headteacher also provides support and training to foster carers and staff in children's homes.[65]

341 Schools that are successful in improving outcomes for looked after children are adept at fine-tuning lessons to meet the needs of pupils; offering swift, well-targeted and discreet interventions; rigorously assessing, tracking and monitoring progress; adapting teaching and joining up support through a key worker or designated teacher. Looked after children and young people tell Ofsted that they want better support at school, but also that this should be provided in a way that does not stigmatise them. For example, they value extra lessons in key subjects but prefer these to take place after school so that it is not obvious where they are going. Effective schools also ensure that looked after children have a strong say in the targets set out in their own personal and educational learning plans. This supports them in understanding their strengths and areas for development and in taking responsibility for their own learning and progress.[66]

342 The following example from a secondary school demonstrates how the best schools are able to bring many of these qualities together in a coherent and comprehensive approach.

Looked after children in a secondary school benefited from a personalised approach whereby they all had individual educational plans. They particularly appreciated the way the staff had successfully won over their trust through high-quality care, consistency of approach and regular communication, and contact with them and their carers. The school worked well with a virtual headteacher from the local authority in partnership with heads of year and the designated teacher in successfully raising levels of attendance. The learners were supported consistently from Year 7 to 10 with the same allocated support staff. They were carefully tracked from primary school so that, by the time they joined the secondary school, a programme of work had been put together to cover any gaps in their experience or knowledge. Parents and carers were regularly involved and invited into school. All looked after children were given regular opportunities for one-to-one meetings to review their progress and discuss any issues of concern.

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[65]   *Moving through the system: preparation for economic well-being and for life and work* (080273), Ofsted, forthcoming.

[66]   *Looked after children – good practice in schools* (070172), Ofsted, 2008.

343 For looked after children, the support that they receive for education outside school, from staff in children's homes and foster carers, is also essential. Children and young people have told the Children's Rights Director that getting support from staff in their residential placement was the most important way in which life in a children's home supported their education. In the main, the support they valued was routine and individual: ensuring they got up in time to get to school; speaking to the school or college if they were having problems; attending parents' evenings; making sure that children who missed school had educational work to do; setting expectations about completing homework; and helping when homework was problematic.[67] The effect of good support for education in one foster care placement is illustrated below.

'My foster carer really helped me. I used to struggle with my school work and I was shy, but she got me into youth clubs and helped me with my coursework. She helped me so that I passed my GCSEs and I'm now in college doing a youth work and photography two year course. I plan to be a youth worker and a photographer.'

344 These are examples of simple rather than complex support, and they need to be done consistently and systematically. At present, this type of support is not found in all placements. In one children's home visited by Ofsted, daily attendance at school was not the norm and only one of the six children cared for attended school regularly. There were no plans in place to offer constructive support or develop strategies with which to manage the children or meet their needs.[68] Even among inadequate children's homes, education for looked after children is generally a focus for staff. However, in a small number there is little priority given to education, no consistent approach across the home to supporting young people's achievement, and no evidence of appropriate routines on school days, such as getting up at the right time.

345 Carers of looked after children do not always have the knowledge, skills and understanding to make education a high priority or to provide effective support for education outside the school. It is a real concern that training for staff to encourage educational achievement and raise aspirations is not always sufficient in children's homes and fostering services. Knowledge about careers, sources of information, advice and guidance and the range of options at age 16 can also be poor. Where training is good, as in the following example, it can have a transforming effect.

A foster carer of a child in one of the primary schools visited had attended a programme of 10 sessions on raising awareness of the importance of education and ways to support foster children in school. She said that it had been a revelation in how to support children in their education. It had not only been useful for her foster child but also for her own children.

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[67] *Life in children's homes* (080244), Ofsted, 2009.

[68] *Moving through the system: preparation for economic well-being and for life and work* (080273), Ofsted, forthcoming.

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

346 However, training is only part of the solution. Local authorities also need to identify and remove any barriers for carers in communicating with schools and getting involved in the education of the child they are looking after. One outstanding local authority identified that many foster carers were finding it difficult to engage effectively with their child's school. They set up early evening sessions dedicated to foster parents to enable them to meet key staff and established direct phone contact arrangements between the foster carer and the school.

347 Many of the best providers and carers offer support for education that goes beyond the routine. For example, in one children's home, staff spent time in the school of a young person who found it hard to cope in group situations, offering support which was unobtrusive and intermittent as necessary. Good placements also work hard at establishing a culture of high expectations and celebration – establishing relationships, recognising and praising success, however small, while maintaining high aspirations for the future. The following example shows how a focus on education in one care home is translating into better outcomes for looked after children.

In one children's home, there was an education room for the young people to use to complete their homework. It was also a working room for those excluded from school. They followed a school day and worked in the room from 9.00am to 3.00pm. The resources included two laptops with internet access, a range of reference books, revision guides and sample worksheets. Staff worked with the children. All looked after children in the local authority had a dedicated teacher from the National Teaching & Advisory Service to support them. One young person had predicted GCSE grades of D and E. With the additional support, he achieved nine grades at B and C. The home has created ambition and enthusiasm for learning, built up confidence and trust and encouraged progression to further education and work.

348 The focus of this section so far has been on supporting the progress of looked after children during their school years, but progress beyond compulsory education is just as critical. In particular, the support provided for looked after young people to continue into higher education can be a key determinant of their future life chances. In one local authority in which services for looked after children were judged outstanding, the numbers of looked after young people entering university increased (from three to 13) between 2005 and 2007. This increase was built not only on increases in attainment at GCSE, but also very effective planning for the young people's journey towards adulthood, and additional support for those who did not achieve the required level at Key Stage 4 but maintained an ambition to enter higher education. In the same local authority an Education Guardian scheme has been established involving members and senior managers. All Year 10 looked after young people have a guardian whose role is to promote their aspirations with regard to examinations and their educational future.

Support that enables looked after children to overcome the barriers to achievement

349 The needs of looked after children and young people tend to be diverse, complex and individual. It is therefore vital that the right support is available, and that this is part of the child's care plan. Direct feedback from looked after children and young people recognises the significant impact of well-planned and joined-up support on helping them achieve better outcomes. The children surveyed as part of the recent report *Care and prejudice* identified the support they received as one of the best things about being in care. They recognised that for them support meant help not just with everyday problems, but also to turn their lives around.[69]

350 Ensuring that there is a holistic understanding of the needs of each individual child, and joining up a bespoke offer of support to meet those needs, are essential to improving outcomes. The most effective local authorities plan and broker comprehensive support for children in care, personalise the support available, and work well across professional and geographical boundaries. Local authorities exercise this role most successfully when their work:

* starts with a thorough understanding and assessment of the needs and emotional well-being of the individual child

* is informed by high-quality information and data about the child

* engages children, young people and, where possible, their families in both assessment and decisions about aspects of provision

* involves expert practitioners across a range of services, including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), housing, health, the leaving care team, education, Connexions, the drug and alcohol services and clinical psychologists.

351 Good assessment, which also addresses a child's emotional and physical needs, is critical to achieving the right package of support. Inspections of children's homes, fostering services and joint area reviews have found too much inconsistency in the quality of assessments of the needs of looked after children. Assessments that describe the history and experiences of the child well can fall short on analysis of the impact of key events such as loss, trauma and separation on the child's well-being, capacity for forming trusting relationships or on their perception of the world around them. In outstanding authorities, assessments are comprehensive in content and analysis and provide a proper foundation for planning the individual care of the child.

352 It is estimated that around 45% of looked after children aged from five to 17 suffer from poor mental health.[70] Swift access to good-quality CAMHS is therefore vital for many children in care. Local authorities providing outstanding services for children have flexible and responsive CAMHS provision to ensure that looked after children get the help that they need in a timely, accessible and effective way. Comprehensive assessments, clear arrangements for how support can be accessed, strong communications between mental health professionals and care staff, and consultation with young people about their treatment are some of the factors that underpin the most successful provision of mental health services for looked after children. Joint training for children's home staff with other professionals, including CAMHS, also has a positive impact on outcomes for young people. The impact that good mental health support can have on looked after children can be profound, as shown in the following two examples.

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[69] *Care and prejudice* (080279), Ofsted, 2009.

[70] *Child and adolescent mental health: a guide for healthcare professionals*, British Medical Association Board of Science, June 2006. The data on mental health are drawn from an Office of National Statistics report published in 2003.

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

> The service has been working with one young person for over a year. The young person's mental health has stabilised dramatically. There is no self-harm, there is contact with the family, the young person is in full-time education and no restraints or sanctions are being used. Success has been achieved through working closely together to give the same message and through quick feedback and good communication.

> Through CAMHS involvement there was a marked stabilisation in the young person's mental health issues. Depression and anxiety became manageable without medication, and there were no further expressions of self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

> Young people may experience a good service, delays or no service depending on local agreements with CAMHS and where the young person lives.

353 However, for looked after young people aged from 16 to 18 in residential care the key components of good practice are not consistently in place. Young people may experience a good service, delays or no service depending on local agreements with CAMHS and where the young person lives. This variation is particularly pronounced for young people placed outside their local authority area.

354 Delays, of between three and 12 months, in some children's homes in accessing CAMHS are a major concern. These delays are a result of high demand, failure by social workers to make prompt referrals, inadequate assessment at the point of admission, lack of clear access arrangements, or insufficient resources. Some children's home managers report subverting normal referral routes, for example taking the young person to accident and emergency departments, in order to access mental health support. Even where clear systems for accessing mental health support are in place, there can still be a considerable period of time between identification of need and the first appointment, as shown in the example below.

> After a settled period, there was a steep and rapid decline in the young person's mental health; the young person became parasuicidal, self-harming and displayed manic behaviour. In cases such as these a referral to CAMHS is made through the social worker. The referral is then discussed at a panel meeting, which happens every two or four weeks, and then the case is allocated to a CAMHS worker. The process can take between eight and 12 weeks.

355 Until effective, non-stigmatising and supportive counselling, therapy and mental health treatment are available to all looked after children and young people at the time that they need them, poor emotional well-being and untreated mental health needs are likely to remain serious barriers to improving outcomes.

Ensuring looked after children enjoy stable relationships

356 The Children, Schools and Families Committee report on looked after children concluded that the greatest gains in reforming the care system are to be made in identifying and removing whatever barriers are obstructing the development of good personal relationships, and putting in place all possible means of supporting such relationships when they occur.[71] Here we explore three aspects which are important in supporting the stability of relationships:

* achieving placement continuity

* managing the continuity and quality of carers and staff

* security for young people who are leaving care.

Achieving placement continuity

357 The continuity of care experienced by a child or young person is essential to establishing good relationships and achieving good outcomes. Frequent moves, poorly planned placements, and inadequate contingency or support when placements become difficult disrupt education and access to specialist services. Maintaining contact with family members, friends and other trusted adults can also become more difficult. This reduces the likelihood of children or young people developing a stable attachment to, and relationship with, a principal carer and other key adults in their lives. The following contrasting quotations from looked after children illustrate the significance of stable relationships.

'I feel like I'm part of the family and not just a foster child. I think it is important to feel like this.'

'I have been moved around a few times and all the other places that I have lived are not as good as where I am living. And now I have realised where I live is brilliant… I wish I'd moved here earlier.'

'I feel I should have had more say about being moved out of borough into various children's homes. I understand that I kept absconding and was maybe at risk. However, I wanted to stay in my own environment. As I didn't have a choice it frustrated me even more.'

358 It is therefore an issue of considerable concern that, among the children and young people who responded to the 2009 *Children's care monitor* survey, the average number of placement changes was four.[72] These findings indicate that, despite the focus on maintaining stability of placements, some looked after children experience considerable turmoil within the care system. The large majority of children (68%) felt that the change of placement had been in their best interests, but this turns the spotlight on whether the right initial placement decision was made or whether enough support was available to enable the placement to succeed.[73]

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71 Children, Schools and Families Committee, Third Report of Session 2008–09: Looked-after Children, 20 April 2009.

72 Although the children who took part in the *Children's care monitor* had most often just had one change of placement in their life in care, the average was four changes due to the very high number of changes for some children.

73 *Children's care monitor 2008/09* (080280), Ofsted, 2009 (based on answers from 649 out of 863 children in care surveyed).

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

359 Authorities with outstanding services for looked after children show the way to achieve greater stability in placements. These authorities have a proactive approach to placement planning which contributes to continuity and reduces the occurrence of placement breakdown. This includes:

* understanding and developing the supply of placements locally to meet children's and young people's identified needs

* careful admission planning that is effective in preventing emergency placements

* good-quality assessment and investing in matching young people to carers at the initial placement

* contingency planning which foresees potential difficulties and puts appropriate support in place from the start of the placement

* regular reviews to ensure relationships are good and the placement is working well and meeting the child's needs, drawing on the views of looked after children and their parents

* developing robust quality assurance mechanisms as part of the commissioning process.

360 One local authority with outstanding services for looked after children focused on recruiting a large number of local foster carers, and developed very strong relationships between the family placements team and the foster carers. This has involved induction and networking events for foster carers, as well as including foster carers on the workforce development strategy group. Learning from local research on young people who were subject to frequent breakdowns in placements, they are now much more successful in matching the needs and behaviours of particular young people to the strengths and skills of certain carers. This individualised approach requires expert knowledge, rigour and scrutiny: 10% of placements proposed are rejected at the start, and every failed placement is subject to forensic analysis to understand what went wrong, both in terms of the placement and the decision-making process which led to it. The strategy overall is paying dividends in terms of long-term stability and continuity for young people.

361 Even local authorities judged as outstanding identify the challenges associated with maintaining stable placements for young people during the teenage years. This is a period in which young people become more independent, question their experiences and can present more challenging behaviour. This can be a particular issue in foster care, where carers may have a good relationship with a child for a number of years but then struggle to cope with their changing behaviour as they get older. Looked after children and young people report that they feel they are less likely to be moved on from a children's home than from a foster home. One child commented: 'In a foster home as soon as you are naughty they move you – in a children's home you can stay there even if you have been naughty'. Consultations with children and young people also show that having arguments is one of the most common things that lead to the breakdown of a foster placement.[74]

362 Examples of good practice in maintaining placements show the value of direct, personal and flexible support that involves both carers and young people. In one outstanding local authority, real emphasis is placed on making sure that young people themselves are fully engaged in agreeing how the placement will work, and signing up to what they must do. Frequent tracking meetings, held with all those involved in a child's care, ensure that progress is monitored and planned for, which avoids the need to be constantly reactive. In another authority, foster carers have a dedicated link into the CAMH service which allows them to access support and advice, informally over the phone, whenever they need it.

363 Fostering agencies also have an important role to play. Effective strategies include working directly with children and young people on anger management techniques and working with groups of carers on attachment issues, to support the emotional well-being of children and develop relationships. A particular issue for some disabled children is maintaining continuity between the time they spend in residential short-break services and time spent with their families or in other care settings. The most effective services establish excellent partnership working with parents, schools, transport and other specialist services to ensure that children benefit from consistent routines, ways of communicating and quality of care.

[74]   *Life in children's homes* (080244), Ofsted, 2009.

Managing the continuity and quality of carers and staff

364 Feedback from looked after children and young people consistently shows the value they place on being supported by good-quality carers and staff. Of children surveyed for the *Care and prejudice* report, 22% said that having good carers and staff was one of the best things about being in care.[75] In a more detailed survey of children living in residential homes, children cited staff working in the home as the main aspect that could make living in a children's home a good experience, and had far more positive than negative comments about staff. They valued staff who were caring, supportive, non-judgmental, fun and understanding. This extended not just to care staff but also to other adults working in children's homes such as cooks or cleaners. Continuity in staffing arrangements was particularly important to some children, both in terms of establishing meaningful relationships and in ensuring that rules, boundaries and promises remained consistent.[76]

365 Despite this positive feedback, other evidence indicates that ensuring continuity in staffing arrangements, and maintaining the quality of staff, remain a challenge in many areas. The Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy report showed that the vacancy level for social workers was 9.5%, compared to 0.6% for teachers, and that two thirds of local authorities indicated difficulties recruiting field social workers. Residential managers and care staff were also difficult to recruit.[77] In addition to recruitment difficulties, research underlines the relatively lower levels of qualification held by residential care staff in England compared to other European countries such as Denmark and Germany.[78]

366 The most successful local authorities have taken action to address these challenges, with comprehensive approaches to retention and staff development, based on the provision of high-quality training, careful monitoring of training take-up and feedback on how training could be improved. One outstanding authority has included a module on looked after children in the induction training for all staff. In many of the best residential homes there is very low turnover of staff, a high degree of involvement of senior managers and young people in staff recruitment decisions and an active commitment to ongoing training and reviewing of staff skills. The example below illustrates how one outstanding short-break service for disabled children made an ongoing investment in developing professional skills and qualifications to ensure that it was meeting the varied and complex needs of the children in its care.

> **In one outstanding short-break service for disabled children, the emphasis on developing skills to inform the professional practice of staff was very clear. A rolling programme of training was offered to staff every month, including sessions on communicating with children with cognitive and emotional impairment, medication awareness, end-of-life training, autism training and managing challenging behaviour. All members of staff had a personal training plan, and training was coordinated through one of the staff team. All but three staff had attained NVQ level 3 and other staff were working towards a level 4 qualification.**

[75] *Care and prejudice* (080279), Ofsted, 2009.

[76] *Life in children's homes* (080244), Ofsted, 2009.

[77] 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy report, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

[78] *Implementing the social pedagogic approach for workforce training and education in England – a preliminary study*, Thomas Coram Research Institute, 2007.

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

367 However, the large majority (73%) of looked after children live in foster care, not residential homes. For these children, their foster carer is likely to be the adult with whom they have the most contact, and the challenge for foster carers of developing the skills demanded by the diverse and complex range of needs of looked after children should not be underestimated. A feature of some local authorities and independent fostering agencies judged good and outstanding in their provision for looked after children is their strong focus on training foster carers and making them feel part of the professional team. In these areas, a range of training and support is offered to both new and experienced foster carers. This can include both informal guidance and support, and more formal accredited training, as described in the following example of an outstanding independent fostering agency.

The agency runs a foster carers' support group that meets monthly and has implemented the Childcare Workforce Development Council training programme. This has involved setting up a series of 10 core courses. All foster carers are expected to attend. Other in-service training offered has included mental health, preventing placement breakdown, attachment and attunement, safer caring, drug awareness, managing challenging behaviour and safe restraint, dealing with allegations and first aid. The agency is offering some weekend training for those who cannot attend during the week. Six foster carers have completed NVQ level 3 training and six are currently doing so.

Security for young people who are leaving care

368 For young people preparing to leave care and make the journey towards independence, the security of trusted relationships is extremely important. Ofsted found that few of the young people spoken to in a small survey felt really confident about leaving care. The greatest concerns were about where they might live, and how they would manage spending time on their own after the experience of group or family living.[79] The comment from one 17-year-old sums up these anxieties:

'I've still got questions, such as where am I going to live. I'll find it strange sleeping in a place alone.'

369 Care leavers value the continuity provided by a good care worker and emphasise the importance of being able to turn to workers they know and trust. The best leaving care services do not just 'make contact' with care leavers; they provide the levels of support and assistance individual care leavers require to make their transition successful, and help limit feelings of loss and loneliness by arranging social events and other communications. Good authorities recognise that progress for care leavers is not a linear process; like other young people, care leavers change their minds and make mistakes. In the best authorities, flexible support gives care leavers the greatest chance of success.

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[79] *Support for care leavers* (080259), Ofsted, 2009.

'When I had to move out from my foster carers to independence I was scared. The advocate sat down and really talked with me. It helped me see the good things about independence like not relying on others. Then a company called 'Moving On', who help children leaving care, helped me look for a flat and took me to see it. It's small but OK for just me. They still give me support, like budgeting for shopping. I'm now fine with living on my own and still feel supported.'

Care leavers are supported through staged, tailored programmes of accommodation, where mistakes can be made. This allows them to make progress towards council-allocated permanent tenancies, which are then successfully sustained. A good range of staffed, shared and individual accommodation, floating support, training flats and supported lodgings are offered through private and social landlords.

371 A strategy which has proved effective in some areas gives care leavers the opportunity to remain with their foster family on a 'supported lodgings' basis. For foster carers in receipt of benefits, the change in status of the placement can have an adverse financial effect, but the impact for individual young people to make a supported transition into adulthood can be great. The following quotation from a 19-year-old young person illustrates this.

370 An area of particular concern to young people leaving care is their accommodation. This is, therefore, an issue which requires focus and attention if young care leavers are to thrive as independent adults. Local authorities which are successful in finding the right accommodation for care leavers prioritise their needs and create supported living environments which enable the transition process.

'I didn't like it when my worker talked about me leaving care; it has been agreed that I can stay on at my foster carers with my sister. It's now 'supported lodgings' and not 'foster care' but it isn't really different and I am just glad I am staying where I am. I am staying as long as I like and going when I feel ready, probably about 22 or 23.'

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

372 For looked after young people with additional needs, the transition to independent living and securing a job can be particularly daunting. There are good examples of where authorities have combined semi-independent living with targeted and comprehensive support to help young people secure work or further training. The following example illustrates how this can work in practice.

In one home, five young people over 16 lived in self-contained bedsits. The young people had usually lived in children's homes and had additional needs or vulnerability such as mental health issues or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The staff supported the young people in preparing for interviews by providing suitable clothes, helping with curricula vitae, application forms and practising interview techniques. All the young people were in education, employment or training. The staff worked with a range of agencies to support the young people. A therapeutic counselling course was available, if needed, before commencing work or training. The local authority supported the home with a specialist post-16 team.

373 Some local authorities, however, still struggle to access a sufficient stock of suitable long-term, independent housing options for their care leavers. This issue must remain a focus nationally if we are to help young people leaving care achieve the futures they deserve. The following two quotations from young people leaving care illustrate the personal impact of poorly planned accommodation.

'Being a care leaver has to be the most pressure I've been under in my life. One minute I was 12 and living at home then I'm 21 and find myself being homeless!'

'Ever since I moved in there I have gone downhill. I have rent arrears and I'm being taken to court. Social services won't help and I feel that I'm on my own. Within a couple of weeks I can feel that I'm going to be on the streets and another number.'

Taking time to listen to the voice of the child

374 The education and care system as a whole does not involve looked after children well enough in decisions about their own care and futures. According to the 2009 *Children's care monitor*, around 16% of children and young people in care who responded to the survey report that they are never, or not usually, asked for their opinions on things which are important to them, and 18% say that their opinions never, or do not usually, make a difference to decisions about their lives. Just over a quarter of looked after children who responded are not sure or do not know how to make a complaint and 39% are not sure or do not know how to make a suggestion for improvement.[80] The extent to which placement providers, social workers and others in the system listen to children and young people, and act on what they hear, is critical to improving the quality of life for children and young people in care and must be a continued area of focus in improving services in the future. The contrasting experiences of two looked after children are illustrated in the following quotations.

> 'Being in care, you often do not have any influence on decisions to do with you.'

> 'In the children's home where I live the staff, especially the manager, always keep us informed and involved about everything.'

375 In local authorities, the accessibility of senior managers and elected members to children in care, the use of well-established and mature reference groups to consult on service developments that have a direct impact on the lives of children, clear advocacy and support arrangements, and the use of arts, drama and other media to help children tell their stories are all aspects of excellent provision. It is an area of concern that, according to responses to the 2009 *Children's care monitor* survey, disabled children are less likely than other looked after children to know how to get in touch with an independent reviewing officer or to know what an advocate is.[81] This suggests that there is more to be done to ensure that disabled children are able to access the specialist and independent advocacy, and support in communicating their views, that they may need.

376 In some outstanding local authorities, looked after children and young people are engaged in shaping and, in some cases, delivering services for their peers. For example, well-developed action groups for looked after children, meet regularly and directly feed ideas for delivering services differently to senior leaders within the council. The impact of these groups on improving services is attested in inspection reports. The involvement of looked after young people acting as mentors to other children in care, in recruiting staff and contributing to the inspection of looked after children's services, with the support of the local authority, is also a feature of some outstanding authorities. This is illustrated by the example below.

> There is a strong and outstanding culture of both seeking and acting on the views of young people who are looked after. Mechanisms are very effective, formalised at strategic level and embedded in practice. Their views inform decision-making and the range, shape and quality assurance of services, as well as the appointment of officers that run them. Young people themselves provide a successful drop-in service for others and for care leavers, act as peer educators and train officers and members on their particular circumstances. They also formally inspect services and report their findings to the council.

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80 *Children's care monitor 2008/09* (080280) Ofsted, 2009 (based on answers from 1,177, 1,171, 1,181 and 1,170 children respectively, out of 1,195 children in care surveyed).

81 *Children's care monitor 2008/09* (080280), Ofsted, 2009.

Improving outcomes for looked after children
continued

377 Good engagement is not just a product of formal consultation. It should be happening every day in a child's placement. In the best children's homes and foster care placements, listening and involving take many forms. At the simplest level, outstanding placements establish a culture of openness and accessibility in which staff or carers make time to engage children directly and individually. Often, listening to children and young people need be no more complicated than this, as illustrated in the following example.

> **Foster carers understand the need to explore openly the wishes and feelings of children and young people and this is achieved sensitively and consistently. Children and young people indicate that they spend much of their time speaking with their carers and that the focus of many of these conversations is about their happiness and well-being.**

378 Many placements have also developed more structured methods of engagement which overlay good day-to-day communications. One important facet of this is the involvement of young people in the running of the home, as illustrated in the following extract from an outstanding children's home.

> **Staff understand the importance of securing children's participation and personal decision-making. Through an open and positive rapport, and in providing good role models, staff encourage children to develop their confidence to contribute to the way the home is run. Children's meetings and key worker sessions are held regularly and children can speak with staff at any time, including senior staff who are readily available. Work is in progress to seek ways to involve children more in staff recruitment.**

379 Many specialist residential placements cater for children and young people who have difficulty in expressing their views. Some of the most innovative practice is found in those placements which have pioneered a range of ways to engage children and young people whose views may otherwise be overlooked. The use of independent advocates is an important component in supporting children and young people to express themselves. In some cases this is accompanied by experimentation by staff and carers in developing communication methods that engage children and young people who are not able to communicate orally. The following example, from an outstanding provider of residential short-break services, illustrates this.

> **Excellent systems are in place to help young people communicate their wishes and feelings to staff. Communication boards have been made with specific young people in mind to help and encourage them to develop their communication skills by using signs and symbols. For example, young people are able to place signs on the board which indicate that they would like to go to the park or the cinema. The boards are used to consult young people about their stays and also show which staff are on duty. Staff are consistent in their approach and they take time to understand individual needs and ways of expression.**

Conclusion

380 The evidence from inspection shows how some of the most effective carers, providers of services and local authorities are improving the life chances of children and young people in their care. High aspirations, stable relationships, and listening to looked after children and young people are the bedrock of improving outcomes for them.

381 A number of key barriers remain. These include inconsistency in how education is promoted and supported by carers; a lack of joined-up and holistic support; insufficient mental health provision in some areas; difficulty in maintaining placements, particularly as children mature; challenges of retaining and developing staff; a lack of suitable accommodation options for care leavers in some areas; and variability in the extent to which children and young people feel able to influence decisions made about their lives.

382 There are also examples of good and outstanding providers that have systematically addressed these barriers. In some of the most effective services for looked after children there are:

- excellent training for carers to enable them to support the education of the children for whom they care, and a sustained focus on removing the barriers for carers in engaging with their child's school

- planned, good-quality and timely mental health provision that ensures children's mental health needs do not become a barrier to their progress or happiness

- detailed placement planning and well-judged support for carers which reduce the need for young people to change placements and enable them to achieve stable relationships with the key adults in their lives

- a focus on increasing the quality and retention of social work and care staff through structured continuing professional development

- creative approaches to engaging children and young people in decisions about their lives, built on a foundation of good day-to-day communication.

383 These elements of good practice are all highly transferable, but focus, ambition for children, clarity of purpose, and robust follow-through are required if there is to be a transformation in outcomes. *Care matters: a time for change* provides the legislative platform and national commitment to deliver this transformation.[82] The three priorities of high aspirations, stable relationships, and taking time to listen to children and young people are strong unifying themes for the sector to work towards. The findings of inspection can help those working with looked after children and young people to deliver consistently on these priorities, and to provide the care, education and support that enable these most vulnerable children and young people to succeed.

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[82] *Care matters: time for change*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007.

Key themes

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems

Introduction

384 This year has seen the current cycle of inspections for schools and colleges come to an end. The quality of teaching and learning or provision is now good or outstanding in 70% of maintained schools and 65% of colleges, which is an increase on the proportion at the beginning of the inspection cycle. In terms of early years provision, 81% of maintained schools are good or outstanding in how effectively they help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn and develop.

385 Despite this progress, outcomes for children and young people from disadvantaged groups remain too low, too many young people are entering adulthood without the skills and knowledge they need and the progression of adults in learning is not keeping pace with that seen in our economic competitors. This narrows life chances and blights the quality of life for both young people and adults. If we aspire to provide an education that rivals the best in the world, then our performance needs to improve still further.

386 An international study, published by McKinsey in 2007, of how the world's most successful education systems succeed identified the following three characteristics that underpin good performance:[83]

✳ they get the right people to become teachers

✳ they develop these people into effective teachers who teach consistently well

✳ they establish systems and targeted support to ensure every learner is able to benefit from excellent teaching.

387 These three characteristics of high performance provide a powerful lens through which to view our education system and the progress that we are making towards excellence. Although England was not in the top 10, it was included in the international study as a system with a strong improvement trajectory, based on performance in the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study*, 2007. This section identifies our successes against the three criteria set out above and what we need to do to compete with the best-performing education systems internationally.

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[83] *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Co., 2007.

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

Getting the right people to become teachers

388 There are indications that the current economic climate is attracting greater numbers of applicants into teacher training, and this is likely to continue the downward trend in vacancies. Figures published by the Training and Development Agency for Schools indicate that between 1 September 2008 and 3 February 2009, applications for teacher training were up 10.7% on the same period one year before.[84] The most recent school workforce data also show that the overall number of teacher vacancies dropped by 280 to 2,240 between January 2008 and January 2009. This represents less than half the total vacancies at the peak in 2001, although a slight increase on the level reached in 2007.[85]

389 If there is to be a period of rising applications and falling vacancies, it is critical that the education system capitalises on this to get the best people to become teachers. This will depend on the ability of initial teacher education providers to select the right applicants for training and to prepare those trainees well for their first job in teaching.

Selecting the right applicants for teacher training

390 McKinsey's international study shows that the top performing education systems have rigorous processes to ensure that the right people become teachers. The report states that, typically, these processes include marketing and recruitment initiatives to make teaching an attractive profession, good starting salaries and routes into teaching for graduates and experienced professionals. However, perhaps most significantly, the study shows that almost all top education systems have developed effective mechanisms for selecting the right people to train as teachers.[86]

391 In England, the growth in the choice of training routes to qualified teacher status has had a major impact on recruiting graduates into the profession. Intensive courses designed to support prospective trainees in acquiring the necessary subject knowledge before they embark upon initial teacher education have led to increased recruitment of prospective mathematics and science trainees, although shortages remain in these areas. Training providers are committed to widening participation from under-represented groups, but so far few have been really successful in doing so.

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84 Training and Development Agency News Direct, 2 March 2009.

85 *School workforce in England (including local authority level figures), January 2009 (revised)*, Statistical First Release (SFR23/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.

86 *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Co., 2007.

392 With more applicants to choose from, the question is how effective training providers are in selecting and recruiting trainees. Inspection evidence from this year shows that recruitment and selection procedures are good or outstanding in 93% of providers, and that this is one of the strongest aspects of provision. The characteristics of good recruitment and selection procedures include:

- the provision of good-quality pre-application materials so that applicants fully understand course requirements and how they can best prepare themselves

- assessment of a candidate's potential proficiency in the classroom as part of the interview process, as well as considering their academic record

- a rigorous audit of subject knowledge at interview stage

- the use of subject knowledge booster courses, and pre-course activities to prepare trainees for beginning initial teacher education. According to the annual survey of newly qualified teachers by the Training and Development Agency for Schools, these were highly valued by applicants.

393 One London-based initial teacher education programme, Teach First, has been particularly successful in recruiting highly motivated graduates who would not otherwise have considered teaching. Key features of the recruitment and selection process include strong promotion of the programme, in particular by universities and through ambassadors who have completed the two-year programme themselves; a clear focus on the personal competencies required by the scheme; and use of an online subject knowledge audit and assessment centre. The online application form is particularly well designed and requires candidates to analyse both their motivation for teaching and their experiences and qualities that make them suitable for selection.[87]

Preparing teachers for their first teaching job

394 Trainees generally demonstrate good or outstanding professional standards. They have high expectations of learners, plan their lessons well drawing on a good range of resources and are skilled in explaining concepts and asking questions. Inspection evidence in 2008/09 shows that the proportion of initial teacher education that is good or outstanding is very high. However, a number of common challenges for trainees and newly qualified teachers remain.[88] Meeting these challenges is important in ensuring that all trainees are fully prepared for the classroom.

395 In schools:

- trainees in all phases and subjects tend to be relatively less adept at assessing learning and adapting their lessons to respond to assessment findings than they are in many other aspects of teaching

- despite well-focused training that takes account of the implications of the Rose Review of early reading, and trainees' good understanding of early reading in general, some trainees lack a clear understanding of the place of systematic phonics in supporting weaker readers at Key Stage 2[89]

- trainees' understanding of how to teach learners from different faith, cultural and linguistic backgrounds is too variable

- too few trainees are well prepared to work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They gain experience in the areas of specific concern to the schools in which they are working, but too few have experience of the full spectrum of special educational needs and/or disabilities. This leaves them ill-prepared to meet the needs of all such pupils.

[87] *Rising to the challenge: a review of the Teach First initial teacher training programme* (070170), 2008.

[88] *The initial training of further education teachers* (080243), 2009; *How well new teachers are prepared to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (070223), 2008; *Teacher trainees and phonics: an evaluation of the response of providers of initial teacher training to the recommendations of the Rose Review* (070257), 2008.

[89] J. Rose, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading* (0201-2006DOC-EN), Department for Education and Skills, 2006.

103

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

396 In the further education sector:

- ✳ trainees are not systematically dealing with the literacy, numeracy and language needs of their learners and some are constrained by their own weaknesses in these areas

- ✳ too many trainees are exposed to a very narrow range of teaching opportunities, such as teaching on one course, at one level and with one age group

- ✳ not all trainees are developing the skills to tackle the poor behaviour of a minority of students early enough in their training.

397 The 2008 survey of newly qualified teachers by the Training and Development Agency for Schools indicates areas in which new teachers feel less well prepared. There were four areas in which less than half of newly qualified teachers, in both the primary and secondary phases, said that their training was good or better. These were:

- ✳ preparing them to teach learners from minority ethnic backgrounds

- ✳ preparing them to work with those learning English as an additional language

- ✳ preparing them to work with other professionals such as social workers, health workers and police officers

- ✳ preparing them to work in an extended school.

398 Overall, in assessing our ability to get the right people to become teachers, Ofsted's evidence shows that recruitment and selection procedures are good or better in most of the initial teacher education institutions inspected this year, and that those trainees who are selected are in general well prepared for teaching. But, if we are to compete with the best in the world, there is more to do to equip all trainee teachers with the skills and experience that they need to be effective in the classroom. This includes their ability to assess learning effectively, adapt their teaching appropriately, and work well with learners from a wide range of backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Developing effective classroom teachers, who teach consistently well

399 The international study produced by McKinsey reports that the most successful education systems have an unwavering focus on improving the quality of teaching, and that this is centred on the practice of individual teachers in classrooms. The study argues that for teaching to improve, teachers need to identify their own areas for development; have a secure understanding developed through demonstration in classroom settings of what outstanding practice looks like; and have high expectations and a shared sense of purpose so that they are motivated to change.

400 Although inadequate teaching is rare, the quality of teaching and learning is no better than satisfactory in 30% of schools and 38% of colleges inspected in 2008/09. The challenge now is to get more teachers to teach consistently well and, in particular, to reduce the variation in teaching within providers and to tackle the teaching that is dull, lacking in challenge and failing to engage learners. In order to promote the skills, attributes and behaviours that deliver good-quality teaching, there needs to be a strong focus on two key areas:

- ✳ being clear about what good teaching looks like

- ✳ providing the support, professional development and performance management to drive continuous improvement.

> Although inadequate teaching is rare, the quality of teaching and learning is no better than satisfactory in 30% of schools and 38% of colleges inspected in 2008/09.

What good teaching looks like

401 Inspection evidence continues to provide very clear and precise evidence of the components of good teaching. These have changed relatively little over the years and appear consistently across phases and subjects. In shifting more teaching from satisfactory to good and outstanding, so that learners are engaged, challenged and inspired to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills, four factors stand out:

✳ the application of good subject knowledge

✳ clear direction and good lesson structure that provide the right pace and high expectations for all learners

✳ skilful questioning and opportunities for independent and exploratory learning to develop learners' understanding

✳ the effective use of assessment for learning.

402 The following sections explore these four aspects of good-quality teaching and learning in detail. The characteristics are mutually reinforcing, and without each key element in place, teaching and learning as a whole is diminished.[90]

Good subject knowledge

403 Good subject knowledge, alongside pedagogic skills, is an essential prerequisite for good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers combine deep knowledge and understanding of the subject with a well-informed appreciation of how children, young people and adults learn. Teachers anticipate and deal with barriers to learning, such as learners' likely misconceptions, and are skilled in choosing resources and particular examples to check that their understanding and progress are secure. Many of the best teachers make real educational value out of misconceptions by exploring them and discussing why a mistake has been made.

404 Good subject knowledge enables teachers to select a rich variety of examples, exercises, practical activities, problems and extended investigations that challenge and extend learners' understanding. It also enables teachers to focus on the big ideas in the subject, to know how much depth is appropriate for groups of varied ability and to make links between different aspects of the subject. Crucially, it enables the teacher to probe understanding, informally assess learners as they work, and adapt the lesson accordingly, as well as stimulate enjoyment. It is a prerequisite for knowing what the next step for each learner should be, and therefore underpins reliable assessment. Conversely, teachers whose understanding of the subject is weak are liable to pass on their own confusion and misunderstanding to the learner.

405 Teachers who are confident specialists in their subject are better at demonstrating how learning in that subject might be applied in the outside world and in forging links to other areas of the curriculum. A consistent theme from surveys of good and outstanding vocational provision in colleges is that teachers who have specific industry-level expertise, which they are able to apply in practical activities and learning opportunities, are better able to engage students.

406 Good subject knowledge is a critical ingredient of good teaching, but on its own it is not enough. Without the ability to plan teaching and learning effectively, to engage learners, to listen, to ask questions, to excite and to communicate well, the value of good subject knowledge is wasted. The next sections explore some of these teaching skills in more detail.

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90 *Mathematics: understanding the score* (070063), Ofsted, 2008; *English at the crossroads: an evaluation of English in primary and secondary schools 2005/08* (080247), Ofsted, 2009; *Physical education in schools 2005/08: working to 2012 and beyond* (080249), Ofsted, 2009.

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

Structure, pace and high expectations

407 Good teaching provides a clear direction and structure that ensure the right pace and expectations for all learners. Learners are clear about what they are doing and why, and are fully engaged. They build on their existing knowledge and extend their understanding through carefully planned opportunities.

408 Lesson structures will typically vary with the subject area and the age of the learners, yet all well-structured, well-paced lessons share some key characteristics. The first is having a clear purpose that the learner understands. The second is that they support learning that is active and cumulative. A well-planned lesson will build on earlier learning and enable learners to make connections with their existing knowledge and understanding. Sequencing learning, through progressively more challenging tasks, is a feature of some outstanding lessons. The example below demonstrates how learning was built up incrementally in an information and communication technology lesson in a further education college.

> **The learners started the day with little practical experience of computer networking and ended it by setting up three sub-networks and sending signals to each other through them. The sessions were well-structured to develop the learners' understanding in cycles, building each exercise on an extension of the previous one, so that complex principles about how to set up networks, allocate addresses to the computers and give users access to domains (particular areas of the network that users could share) were demonstrated in practice. Learners were in the class all day, but were still enthusiastic at the end of the afternoon. This was a highly realistic simulation of the sort of work that they would experience in the information technology industry.**

409 A third characteristic is a variety of well-chosen activities which are suitable for developing the desired skills and understanding of learners. Ofsted's review of childcare and early education, *Leading to excellence*, highlights the importance of varied and exciting experiences that enrich children's development, particularly in terms of discovering new ways to communicate through writing, pictures and telling stories.[91] Similarly, older learners are motivated and inspired to learn when presented with a broad variety of activities, with engaging stimuli and opportunities for discussion. Conversely, two common characteristics of teaching that is no better than satisfactory are, first, too much explanation from the teacher, significantly limiting the opportunity for learners to work through problems themselves and, second, over-reliance on activities or exercises which, being too similar in nature, fail to expose misconceptions or weaknesses in understanding.

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[91] *Early years: leading to excellence* (080046), Ofsted, 2008.

410 Finally, vital ingredients are pace and challenge. The best teachers set high expectations for all their learners. Critically, they are able to adapt and adjust their teaching during the course of a lesson to respond to how well their pupils or students have understood a particular concept. The most skilful teachers build in mechanisms for quickly checking the progress made by every learner at the beginning of activities to ensure that barriers to learning are identified early and tackled, and to increase the level of challenge for those who have grasped the content quickly. This is also a key aspect of assessment for learning, which is explored later in this section. The example below, of a weaker Year 7 mathematics lesson, demonstrates how the teacher's failure to check progress and adapt the lesson accordingly led to learning in which pace and challenge, for both high- and low-attaining pupils, were inappropriate.

> A low-attaining Year 7 class was given a worksheet as a quick lesson starter. It contained several questions of the form 300 + 400 = 600 + … The teacher did not circulate to check anyone's work so did not realise that some students had written 1,300 and attempted the remaining questions incorrectly as additions. While some students finished very quickly, others had managed only a few questions. The speed of responses showed that students who already knew how to do the work were not extended and those who did not know gained little benefit.

411 In contrast, the next example shows how a teacher skilfully structured a lesson with pace, a variety of well-chosen activities and challenge for a Year 10 English class.

> The aim was for the students to develop a personal, emotional response to poetry and to provide textual evidence to support it. The three poems were 'Education for leisure' by Carol Ann Duffy, 'Hitcher' by Simon Armitage and 'My last duchess' by Robert Browning, all of which presented characters who had committed a crime. The teacher posed a problem: 'You are a prison psychologist and, because of pressure on the prison system, you need to release a prisoner.' The task was to argue for the release of one of the characters described in the poems.
>
> Varied approaches to each poem captured the students' interest. For the first one, the teacher used drama effectively, dimming the lights as she went into role, and bringing the poem to life skilfully. The students were asked to question her in role. They responded enthusiastically, posing searching questions and noting her responses. A high-quality video clip introduced the second poem, followed by discussion in pairs. The students read the third poem on their own, before working together, first in small and then larger groups, to present their case and justify their choice. At the end of the lesson, they explained their views to the rest of the class, making excellent use of evidence and articulating their arguments confidently. The lesson's good pace and effective time management meant that the students made very good progress, both in understanding the poems' themes and in using spoken language.

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

The use of questions and opportunities for independent and exploratory learning

412 Good and outstanding teaching enables learners to develop a deep understanding of the subject. They are then able to apply the principles, concepts, methods and skills they have learned to new and unexpected tasks and problems. They are able to forge links between different aspects of a subject and are challenged to think through the implications of what they have learnt.

413 The skilful use of well-chosen questions to engage and challenge learners and to consolidate understanding is an important feature of good teaching. In the best early years settings, children learn to think and understand for themselves, inspired by adults' open questions. In schools and colleges, the best teachers use carefully phrased questions that are pitched appropriately to challenge pupils and students. Good teachers support learners by providing time for thinking and discussion, encouraging them to justify their answers and deepen their understanding. Employing a broad range of questions enables teachers to test which aspects of a topic have been understood and where weaknesses remain.

414 An important component in developing learners' understanding of a subject is providing the opportunity for them to work independently or in small groups on longer and more complex tasks. Ofsted's recent survey report on mathematics shows clearly how the best teachers give pupils and students time to think and to 'have a go' with unusual or open-ended problems which require application of mathematical concepts.[92] For example, pupils might be asked to investigate the truth of the statement: 'Adding two odd numbers together always makes an even number', and through their investigation deduce the reason why. However, such teaching is still too rare. Too often, learners' understanding is limited by teachers moving on from a topic too quickly, stepping in and providing the answer too soon, or simply not devoting enough time in the lesson to more discursive and exploratory learning. Interestingly, primary-aged pupils interviewed during the mathematics survey were more ready to attempt a complex and unusual problem than older students, suggesting that learners do not always become more confident to apply the skills they have learnt as they progress through education.

415 The extract below exemplifies how skilful questioning, supplemented by open discussion, cemented pupils' understanding.

> In a Year 7 mathematics lesson with a lower attaining class, the teacher ensured that all students had time to think through their answers. She expected them to be able to explain their ideas to the other students. She used labelled pegs to ensure questions were asked equally of all those in the class. She took a name label and gave the student notice that he would give his answer, to a question about shape, in 30 seconds and reminded him that he would need to give reasons for his answer. During the 30 seconds, all the students discussed the question in pairs to establish the response they expected so that they could either help or challenge the answer. When asked, the student gave a clear answer with detail of how his previous learning had helped him to work out the problem. The students were used to justifying their answers and were at ease when challenged by the teacher or their peers.

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[92] *Mathematics: understanding the score* (070063), Ofsted, 2008.

Assessment for learning

416 Assessment for learning is formative; it takes place continually in the classroom; and it is a focused joint activity between the teacher and the learner. The purpose of assessment for learning is to close gaps in learners' understanding and to support them to make progress to the next stage of learning. The role of the teacher is to use all the information available to assess how learners are progressing, support them to assess their own work and adjust the teaching in the light of the information gained from the assessment.[93] Despite the significant national focus on assessment for learning, evidence from inspection and survey work suggests that it is still not consistently embedded in teaching across phases and subjects and it remains a comparative weakness in provision. The national Assessment for Learning Strategy (2008/11) is being implemented to strengthen assessment for learning in schools.

417 In many good and outstanding providers, effective assessment for learning starts with an early and accurate diagnosis of a learner's needs and abilities, and setting clear learning objectives. In the best early years settings, thorough initial and ongoing assessment identifies what children can do and what they need to do to progress. There is good liaison with parents through the assessment process and this information, coupled with a secure understanding of child development, informs planning for each child's learning, play and exploration. In schools, outstanding teachers are clear about how and what they want pupils to learn. They plan carefully, using information from assessment to set objectives which are appropriate to pupils' understanding and attainment, they regularly revisit and reinforce objectives at key points in the lesson and they are skilful in drawing learning together. Effective assessment for learning is usually supported by detailed and constructive marking of written work in which learners are made aware of what they have achieved, what they need to do to improve and how to go about it.[94] In good and outstanding colleges, effective initial assessment, opportunities for learners to review their progress, constructive feedback and clear objectives support students' progress and independent learning.

418 For assessment to lead to learning it must translate into teaching which is adapted to learners' needs, not just occasionally but on a continual basis. Evaluating the impact of learners' experience is, therefore, a critical element.

The ability to adapt lessons in response to assessment for learning is a particular feature of the outstanding secondary schools surveyed in Ofsted's report *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds*.[95] In these schools, lessons are closely matched to the students' varied needs and starting points, and clearly identify the steps required to achieve well. Activities are differentiated so that the students are challenged but successful, which in turn builds confidence for more independent work.

419 The example below shows how teachers use the information gained from assessment in the classroom to adapt teaching during the course of the lesson.

> **An infant school which drew its pupils from a socially disadvantaged area had a common approach to reviewing learning. Lessons had regular 'learning stops'. These were short breaks during independent activities when some groups were asked to talk about how well they were meeting the success criteria for the lesson. The pupils were asked to give reasons for their assessments and to provide examples. Sometimes pupils assessed their own work and sometimes they assessed the work of other members of the group. Pupils talked fluently about what they had achieved and what they still did not fully understand. The teacher responded by suggesting one or two practical steps they could take. Pupils generally made very good progress.**

420 The other key element of assessment for learning is the sharing of assessment and learning goals with the learners themselves to enable effective self-assessment to take place, as in the example above. When this is done well, it enables learners to understand what is expected of them and to check and evaluate their own work. Survey evidence shows that, in schools where the impact of assessment for learning is outstanding, pupils are involved in setting their targets and evaluating their understanding and progress. As a result, they are usually confident and independent learners who generally make outstanding progress.[96] The following example, from a middle school which improved from satisfactory to outstanding, clearly shows this approach.

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[93] *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (070244), Ofsted, 2008.

[94] *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (070244), Ofsted, 2008.

[95] *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds* (080240), Ofsted, 2009.

[96] *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (070244), Ofsted, 2008.

> At the end of lessons, pupils knew that they had responsibility for assessing what they had learnt and setting themselves targets for the next lesson. This strategy helped them to focus on what they were trying to achieve and reflect on the next steps in their learning. A pupil wrote, for instance: 'I was able to complete my graph but I need help on interpreting the data.' These self-assessments provided valuable information which teachers used in planning subsequent lessons. They helped pupils to build an overall picture of their progress. A Year 7 girl said: 'I can look back at my self-assessments and know where my strengths and weaknesses are.'

> A key feature of good and outstanding providers is the consistency that they achieve across the institution. This applies to their values, expectations of behaviour and attitudes, and how learning and teaching are conducted.

421 As the quality of teaching and learning in more schools moves from satisfactory to good and outstanding, these characteristics of excellent teaching are becoming more prevalent. However, inspection evidence demonstrates that these practices are not applied systematically, and that there is wide variation both between and within schools and other providers.

Providing the support, professional development, and performance management to drive continuous improvement in teaching

422 A strong focus on ensuring consistency in teaching, and reducing variation in quality, is essential to further progress, and is a hallmark of the most successful providers. A common quality of the most effective settings, schools and colleges is their attention to developing staff and refreshing their knowledge, skills and understanding. This was a key feature of the 12 outstanding schools, surveyed this year, which regard the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and pedagogy as their most important activity.[97] The combination of direction, challenge and support provided by senior leaders is critical to improving the quality of teaching in any setting, school or learning provider. The following approaches underpin effective action to support continuous improvement in teaching:

* setting a consistent approach for all staff and students

* establishing a culture of continuous improvement, through identifying the professional development that is most needed

* monitoring and evaluation of teaching, focused on improving practice and rooted in observation.

Setting a consistent approach for all staff and students

423 A key feature of good and outstanding providers is the consistency that they achieve across the institution. This applies to their values, expectations of behaviour and attitudes, and how learning and teaching are conducted. A characteristic of colleges which improved their performance between the first and second cycles of Ofsted inspections was the unity of purpose achieved throughout the organisation.[98] This depended on the clarity of vision developed by the college leadership team, a culture of accountability based on universally understood indicators of success, highly effective arrangements for sharing information and managers at all levels in the organisation leading by example to create an atmosphere of mutual respect among staff and learners alike. Expectations of learners, in terms of what they can achieve and become, are critically important.

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97   *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds* (080240), Ofsted, 2009.

98   *How colleges improve: a review of effective practice* (080083), Ofsted, 2008.

424 The 12 outstanding secondary schools, featured in Ofsted's report of the same name, are characterised by the consistency with which staff uphold a clear organisational culture. This ensures that students do not receive mixed messages about what is expected of them or what they can expect from others. In one outstanding school, the teaching and learning policy is sharp and deliberately prescriptive – the word 'must' is continually used. An accompanying index of good practice provides a rich array of ideas but the main purpose is to set down very clearly what must happen in every classroom, while at the same time enabling teachers to build on their strengths. Sir Alan Steer's review of behaviour in schools recommended that all schools should be required to produce a written policy identifying their key learning and teaching aims, strategies and practices.[99] Based on the survey evidence cited above, Ofsted believes this will be a positive development, but will need to be implemented consistently well to have an impact.

Establishing a culture of continuous improvement, through identifying the professional development that is most needed

425 Successful providers establish a culture of continuous improvement through in-house debate about teaching and putting steps in place to sharpen and update the professional skills of staff. In many good and outstanding providers, there is an effective whole-organisation focus on developing professional skills, supported by developmental lesson observation. Teachers undertake peer observations across departments so that good practice is shared widely. Time is protected for staff to work in teams, engage in productive discussion about pedagogy and plan lessons that inspire learners.

426 This culture of dialogue and professional debate is reinforced through well-planned and targeted training that balances individual needs with those of the institution. Colleges which have improved significantly have a clear and sustained focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning, supported by an effective programme of staff development with a strong focus on updating knowledge and sharing best practice. Several of the 12 outstanding schools described their training as providing a continuum of development, as illustrated in the following example.[100]

> **Newly qualified teachers receive a tailored training programme. In addition to a subject mentor and professional mentor, they also have a personal coach, usually someone in their third year of teaching. Teachers in their second year also have their own training programme, heavily based on action research into their own teaching. As well as being coached themselves, they are trained as coaches and begin to coach each other. The programme for third year teachers is increasingly tailored to the progress, needs and aspirations of individual staff. In many cases they work as coaches for newly qualified teachers or as buddies for new teachers. As a result, teachers joining the school are very well trained, but also highly accustomed to working with each other and able to talk about learning and pedagogy.**

427 The ability to look outside the organisation and share good practice across and between providers is another important facet of establishing a culture of continuous improvement. For example, in the early years sector good and outstanding providers prioritise learning from others through networks, professional associations and support provided by local authorities. Providers who run more than one setting are active in sharing best practice between them, through staff exchanges and other vehicles.

428 In order to increase the impact of professional development on learners' achievement, it must be properly evaluated so that the relationship between training and outcomes is well understood. Even in good and outstanding providers, this remains a relative area of weakness. Those institutions that evaluate training carefully are able to provide evidence of how professional development has led to improvements in teaching, has played a key role in retaining staff and has helped to raise standards. It provides staff with new opportunities, responsibilities and challenges, and contributes to higher morale and commitment.

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[99] *Learning behaviour: lessons learned – a review of behaviour standards and practices in our schools* (ISBN: 978-1-84775-426-4), Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.

[100] *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds* (080240), Ofsted, 2009.

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Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, focused on improving practice and rooted in observation

429 Monitoring and evaluating teaching, through well-planned lesson observation, is a critical ingredient in continuous improvement. Ofsted's report into how colleges improve found that where improvement in teaching was most marked, lesson observations took place within the context of a search for quality, and informed development for both individuals and groups of staff. Linking lesson observation to appraisal, staff development and action planning was also a common theme among the most improved colleges.[101]

430 In successful schools, senior leaders or peer observers regularly visit classrooms to evaluate the quality of teaching and help diagnose what teachers need to do to improve further. Lesson observation is also a process owned and carried out by staff themselves, as the following example demonstrates.

Traditionally, the only way that this secondary school had evaluated its work was through lesson observations by senior managers, as part of the formal processes for performance management. In order to extend the involvement of staff, a parallel process was introduced, with curriculum teams taking on responsibility for identifying and tackling key areas for improvement in teaching and learning.

For one week every year, each curriculum team focused on an area of teaching and learning, agreed at a meeting attended by the school's staff development coordinator. During the week, each member of the team observed and gave feedback on at least two of their colleagues' lessons. A newly qualified teacher's views had the same status as those of a head of department. Each observer was required to identify three strengths and three areas for development. This overcame any reluctance on the part of less experienced colleagues to identify weaknesses. At the end of the week, the team met for a twilight session to discuss their findings before an extensive written report was completed by the head of department. On the Friday, the whole team discussed the review with the headteacher over a buffet lunch.

The best review reports from the teams referred extensively to data on students' performance and included a rigorous analysis both of lessons observed and the team's performance in the focus areas. They also related this information to the particular courses and other forms of training undertaken by staff.

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[101]   *How colleges improve: a review of effective practice* (080083), Ofsted, 2008.

431 Survey and inspection evidence also reinforces the importance of rigorous performance management in identifying the priorities for professional development at individual, subject, faculty and whole-institution level. In the best providers, these are translated into well-resourced training plans which focus on raising standards.

Establishing systems and targeted support to ensure every learner is able to benefit from excellent teaching

432 A high-performing education system delivers for every learner. The McKinsey study indicates that the most effective education systems monitor and intervene at the level of the individual learner, and actively address the consequences of a poorer learning environment at home experienced by some children.[102] Ofsted's inspection evidence continues to show that schools with high levels of pupils from disadvantaged homes are more likely to be inadequate, as described on page 34. There is clearly more that needs to be done to break the cycle between deprivation and low achievement.

433 Good-quality whole-class teaching is essential to ensuring all learners achieve their full potential. However, given the level of disadvantage and nature of challenge that some children and learners face, a range of additional strategies is used to support the most vulnerable. Three broad ways in which our system and our schools are strengthening the focus on the achievement of every child are explored here:

* support for younger children to ensure they get the best possible start, particularly with early speaking, listening and reading

* identification of learners who are falling behind and putting in place high-quality interventions to improve performance

* raising aspirations and engaging learners.

Support for younger children to ensure they get the best possible start, particularly with early speaking, listening and reading

434 Outstanding childcare providers have effective strategies for establishing secure speaking and listening skills for children in the early years. In some of the best providers, adults model spoken language well by explaining activities, naming objects and continually encouraging young children to repeat, expand and explain. Many outstanding providers for pre-school children build on these speaking and listening skills by introducing letters and sounds each day through activities, drawing attention to sounds at the beginning of words and correcting mispronunciation when it occurs.

435 Understanding the context of reading is also critical. In outstanding settings, children have access to a wide range of books which they enjoy reading together with adults, and story sessions provide children with opportunities to join in repeated phrases and talk about the pictures. Well-presented displays and labels help children to understand that print has meaning. The following example shows how children's early familiarity with sounds and letters supports the acquisition of reading skills.

> A childminder provided magnetic letters as part of the everyday activities. Frequent 'playing' with the shapes and naming them enabled the four-year-old child to recognise and say the sound each shape represented. As he found letters in his own name, he built up his name by laying down the correct shapes in the right order.
>
> Another childminder was observed with a four-year-old boy. The child sounded the letters as he handled the plastic letter shapes. He knew that when some letters were placed together they made new sounds: 'oo' and 'th'.

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[102] *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Co., 2007.

436 At the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the Rose Review of early reading has highlighted the critical importance of a structured phonics programme in the teaching of reading and writing, and has been a key stimulus for change in schools.[103] Of the 20 schools visited in Ofsted's survey on responses to the Rose Review, all but one had a systematic phonics programme in place.[104] Those schools which had been teaching phonics for some time had taken the opportunity to review and strengthen their provision and, most importantly, children were deriving evident enjoyment from their ability to master new skills in reading. Where good phonics teaching has been put in place, a virtuous circle is created: children's increasing command of phonic knowledge and skills is raising the expectations of teachers. This in turn is improving the pace and demand of teaching, leading to further success for children.

Identification of learners who are falling behind and putting in place high-quality interventions to improve performance

437 The McKinsey international study argues that the Finnish education system has gone further than most others in ensuring high performance across all schools and for all learners. One of the key contributing factors identified in the study is the development of a highly effective system of intervention in schools based on special education teachers working with small groups of learners or providing one-to-one tuition. In England, early years providers, schools, and adult learning providers use a range of interventions to support those who have fallen behind in their learning. Furthermore, one-to-one tuition is a high profile government initiative currently being rolled out across the country.

438 Survey evidence of the impact of intervention in schools shows that there is no single blueprint for an effective programme. Most of the schools in the survey adapted and mixed available intervention programmes, for example those provided through the National Strategies, and used them in ways which met the needs of their school. Intervention programmes which were successful in one school led to only limited progress in another, which underlines the importance of the quality of implementation. The survey found the key determinants of successful implementation were clear direction by senior leaders and the detailed preparation, training and knowledge of those responsible for putting intervention into practice.[105]

439 Although successful intervention is not as simple as adopting an off-the-shelf programme, there are some very clear ingredients of good-quality intervention programmes in school. They must be:

* based on a clear assessment of learners' needs, high expectations for what learners can achieve and a secure knowledge of what can be done to bridge the gaps in learning

* tightly focused on improving the progress of the learner

* delivered by well-trained staff who have good knowledge of the subject and the intervention programme, and the ability to adapt and tailor the programme to the specific needs of the learners

* coherent and well coordinated, so that they integrate seamlessly with the rest of the child's or young person's experience in school and reinforce rather than detract from their other learning.

440 The important role that highly skilled and motivated teaching assistants can play in supporting and delivering effective intervention is attested by Ofsted's survey of the deployment, training and development of the wider school workforce.[106] The survey found that teaching assistants had a beneficial impact on pupils' achievement and helped to narrow the gap between the highest and lowest performing pupils when:

* their work was effectively guided and supervised by teachers

* they had received relevant training that developed the specialist skills and subject knowledge to ensure continuity for pupils' learning in lessons

* there was effective and regular communication with teachers and pupils that focused on reviewing pupils' progress and identifying next steps

* there was robust evaluation of the impact of the support on pupils' progress.

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[103] J. Rose, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading* (0201-2006DOC-EN), Department for Education and Skills, 2006.

[104] *Responding to the Rose Review: schools' approaches to the systematic teaching of phonics* (080038), Ofsted, 2008.

[105] *An evaluation of National Strategy intervention programmes* (070256), Ofsted, 2009.

[106] *The deployment, training and development of the wider school workforce* (070222), Ofsted, 2008.

441 However, Ofsted has also observed less effective use of teaching assistants, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Inspections find that pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools in which support from teaching assistants is the main type of provision are less likely to make good academic progress than those who have access to specialist teaching in those schools. Well-trained teaching assistants do provide valuable support, but this is not a substitute for focused and highly skilled teaching.[107] The example below shows how a teacher and an experienced teaching assistant worked together effectively to support intervention.

> **In one infant school, around half the pupils in Year 1 required additional, high-level support for a wide range of needs. It formed a group of these underachieving pupils whose needs had been identified through observation initially during their time in the Foundation Stage. These assessments identified precisely each pupil's combination of social, emotional and physical needs, as well as her or his learning needs.**
>
> **The school chose not to provide a small intervention group for each different category of need. This would have resulted in an unmanageable number of separate groups, creating problems for timetabling, for providing appropriate support and for maintaining coherence with the mainstream curriculum. Instead it formed the single 'high-support' group led by a teacher who was very skilful in removing barriers to learning. The teacher taught this group for the whole of every morning, teaching the pupils for all of their English and mathematics work. An experienced teaching assistant worked with her.**

442 In contrast to the ingredients of successful intervention outlined above, learners frequently do not make progress when standard intervention programmes are simply delivered without reference to their particular needs or abilities; when they are withdrawn from lessons so that any gains they make are offset by the effect of missing important new learning; when teaching assistants lack the subject knowledge and skills to bridge gaps in learners' understanding; and when the intervention is not connected to other learning.

443 Survey evidence shows that good schools recognise that intervention is not a remedy for ineffective class teaching, and will often develop sophisticated intervention programmes which combine whole-class teaching, small group work, and individual support, based on careful planning by teachers and teaching assistants together.[108] For older learners, successful adult providers adapt and individualise the support to tackle a range of personal, domestic and work challenges.

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[107] *Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught?* (HMI 2535), Ofsted, 2006.

[108] *An evaluation of National Strategy intervention programmes* (070256), Ofsted, 2009.

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

444 The following example shows how the skilful use of targeted intervention supports independent learning and develops understanding.

> The advanced skills teacher in mathematics ran after-school revision sessions for GCSE. The teacher took the class through the stages of a complex question which required the use of Pythagoras' theorem. His approach was to give a pupil the responsibility for going through each stage of the question in turn. He recorded each stage as they reported it on the interactive whiteboard and made sure others checked and commented. Pupils understood what was expected because the working model was very clear. They enjoyed the challenge of having to complete a whole section of the question and responded well to the teacher's prompting if they hesitated. At no stage did he do any of the work for them. If a pupil was stuck, others were asked to help but only with the next step. Within the small group of seven pupils, all contributed in detail over a period of 15 minutes. After tackling a sequence of varied questions, they showed their clear understanding of how to apply Pythagoras' theorem.

Raising aspirations and engaging learners

445 Creating a culture of high aspirations begins with an unwavering determination from leaders that all learners will succeed. Establishing an ethos of high expectations which permeates the organisation ensures that learners and teachers alike believe that success is within their grasp. Critically, external factors and personal difficulties faced by learners are not allowed to become excuses for failure, but simply represent barriers to be overcome. Colleges with a successful track record of improvement have a clarity of vision and mission based on improving skills and attainment; they raise aspirations of learners and staff with a strong belief that 'satisfactory is not good enough'; and they give prominence to the views of learners and provide feedback to raise motivation and engagement.

446 Similarly, in schools which have achieved and sustained excellence there is a strong focus on the needs, interests and concerns of each individual pupil. Staff talk to pupils both as individuals and as a group, listen to what they have to say, consult them on decisions that matter and value their views. This also extends to ensuring that conversations about learning regularly happen with all pupils. One outstanding school introduced a system of regular interviews with a senior leader or head of year for every child to focus on learning, their progress and their experience in lessons. A targeted approach to intensive mentoring is described in the following example.

At one outstanding school, the Director of Achievement selects underachieving students at the end of Year 9, focusing on mathematics and English. She and a learning mentor then mentor 40 students between them and diagnose issues related to their learning. The main aim of the support is to ensure that all Year 10 students are fully up to date with their course work by the end of the year. One-to-one interviews help to identify problems in particular subjects, and staff can then decide what action to take. Every student is treated individually. The emphasis for all interventions is on achieving success and on the pride that accompanies it. No stigma is attached to having a learning mentor. One of the students who refused at first changed his mind and asked for one after seeing the enthusiasm of his peers.

…it is clear from outstanding schools that excel against the odds that approaches to raising expectations and engaging learners are most powerful when they are brought together in a coherent strategy across an organisation.

447 Senior leaders are not the only people in a school who can be effective mentors. Support staff and teaching assistants can make a very valuable contribution to improving pupils' attitudes to learning because they bring skills, knowledge and expertise from diverse backgrounds, from the community and from their life experiences, to the mentoring relationship. In schools which have had success in tackling the disengagement of learners, young people are also often involved in peer mentoring.[109] This is most effective when needs are well matched so that both young people benefit from the mentoring relationship.

448 Finally, it is clear from outstanding schools that excel against the odds that approaches to raising expectations and engaging learners are most powerful when they are brought together in a coherent strategy across an organisation. The following words of a senior school leader describe a school's concerted approach to raising aspirations, mentoring, intervention and a commitment to a culture of success in order to focus on every young person and narrow gaps in achievement.

'The ability of leaders, teachers, assistants and volunteers to help pupils believe in their own ability to succeed forms the very root and branch of this school's success. The different layers of intervention have a very positive impact on standards and contribute significantly to the emotional 'buying in' of the school's ethos.

Mentoring groups, one-to-one conversations at the school gate or in the corridor, as well as in lessons, are all opportunities to engage with pupils. The pupils now expect great things of the school, as do parents. Therefore, we have created a cycle of high expectation. We keep on believing and we don't give up. The school constantly creates new solutions to emerging problems. Teachers will search for 'the hook', be it through table tennis or music, the pupils have to taste success.'

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[109] *Good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools* (070255), Ofsted, 2008.

Teaching and learning – measuring up against world-class education systems continued

Conclusion

449 The evidence set out confirms that our most successful schools and providers combine that focus on recruiting and retaining excellent teachers, sustaining high-quality teaching, and supporting every child, which define 'world-class' education. There is a clear and shared understanding of what works. But if our system as a whole is to rival the best in the world, it will require sustained and accelerated improvement. Key to this will be the focus on consistently high-quality teaching and effective learning which require tenacity, determination and skill to achieve.

450 A key message from the evidence in this section is the importance of precision in achieving further gains. In recruiting the best teachers, providers must be really clear about the qualities they are looking for and audit applicants carefully to identify these. In the classroom, teachers need to be more alert to how children are progressing and how their understanding is developing. Support for teachers to be more focused in their judgements, and more differentiated in their subsequent teaching, will enable faster progress. Increasingly, early years settings, schools and colleges are focusing on every learner and identifying rapidly when they are falling behind. We need to ensure that well-planned interventions are precisely targeted and excellently executed. In terms of professional development, precise observation, leading to detailed comment and professional dialogue, will build self-awareness, an appetite for progress and a culture of continuous improvement. If we can do all this, our system as a whole will be genuinely world class. Our children and young people deserve nothing less.

118

Key themes

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment

Introduction

451 Developing skills for working lives was a key theme of the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in 2007/08. A number of strengths of successful provision were identified, especially the central importance of providers working with employers to make programmes more relevant and therefore more motivating and productive for learners. However, the report also turned the spotlight on emerging challenges such as achieving coherence for young people in the new 14 to 19 qualifications and, for adult learners, the importance of developing skills to a higher level rather than just accrediting existing learning.

> In this environment of change and uncertainty, the best providers are combining increased flexibility with a steady commitment to their core purpose.

452 The last two years have seen a significant deterioration in the economic context in which providers of further education, work-based learning and employability training are operating. This has increased expectations placed on the sector to support people who have recently been made redundant, as well as continuing to focus on those who are seeking to enter the labour market or to improve their skills at work. In this year's Annual Report we are therefore returning to the critical issue of developing skills for employment in order to understand the key challenges faced by the sector and the ability of providers to meet these challenges.

453 In this environment of change and uncertainty, the best providers are combining increased flexibility with a steady commitment to their core purpose. They continue to focus on offering provision that meets learners' and employers' needs; on supporting learners with good advice and guidance; and on making learning relevant to the workplace in a way that supports employment and progression in the labour market. They are resourceful in their approaches and aim to build strong and cohesive communities through a focus on improving the economic skills base.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

Context

454 The learning and skills sector seeks to meet the diverse needs of learners through a wide range of providers and programmes. This complexity places a premium on the ability of providers to respond innovatively to changes in demand from employers and changes in the needs of learners. Within this environment, leaders and managers have to balance the opportunities to operate effectively in partnership with other organisations with the need to compete for contracted work. In this section we focus on three groups of learners: young people developing the skills for their first employment; adults in employment seeking to improve and adapt their skills; and adults entering or re-entering the labour market.

455 Over the last two years, the economic context in which providers of further education and adult learning operate has changed dramatically. Labour market statistics published in October 2009 show the total number of people in employment for the year up to August 2009 fell by 677,000.[110] The impact of the economic downturn is particularly hard on young people. At the end of 2008, 10.3% of 16 to 18-year-olds were not in education, employment or training, up from 9.7% at the end of 2007.[111]

456 Alongside the challenges imposed by changed economic circumstances, the Government has set stretching targets to achieve its ambition of world-class skills by 2020. The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006, set a vision for the United Kingdom to become a world leader in skills by 2020, benchmarked against the upper quartile of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.[112] The importance of developing the skills of the workforce is even greater during a time of economic downturn. A more highly skilled and adaptable workforce has the capacity to improve productivity and efficiency, and support movement into new and growing occupational sectors, and thereby make a key contribution to economic recovery.[113]

457 There is no doubt that the sector is making progress towards these stretching targets. The percentage of adults qualified to level 2 increased from 65% to 71.2% between 2001 and 2008. Similarly, the percentage of adults qualified to level 3 increased from 44.7% to 50.8% over the same period. The proportion of 19-year-olds qualified to level 2 has risen from 66.3% in 2004 to 76.7% in 2008.[114] The number of people taking up apprenticeships rose to 225,000 in 2007/08; an increase of 40,000 on the previous year. The completion rate of full apprenticeships now stands at 64%, significantly improved from 49% in 2005/06. Performance in the numbers of people achieving entry level and first level literacy and numeracy qualifications has also been strong.[115] However, our OECD top quartile competitors are also raising their levels of qualification, which threatens the United Kingdom's relative position and increases the level of challenge.[116]

458 Within this context, the sector is also facing a high degree of organisational and policy change. Colleges and many training providers are pivotal in the implementation of the new 14 to 19 Diplomas, and making preparations for raising the participation age.[117] Work-based learning providers have seen a rapid expansion of Train to Gain provision and 16 to 19 apprenticeships, with many new providers entering the field. The creation of the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency will also change commissioning and funding arrangements and the administration of funding. Providers will therefore have to be innovative in developing their provision to meet new priorities and manage future uncertainties around resourcing effectively.

110 The Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Statistics, National Statistics Online, October 2009.

111 NEET statistics quarterly brief, Department for Children, Schools and Families, August 2009.

112 Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, Leitch Review of Skills (ISBN-10: 0-11-840486-5; ISBN 13: 978-0-11-840486-0) published with the

permission of HM Treasury on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2006.

113 Leitch targets are: 95% of adults to achieve the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy; exceeding 90% of adults qualified to at least level 2; shifting the balance of intermediate skills from level 2 to level 3 with 1.9 million additional level 3 attainments over the period and boosting the number of apprenticeships to 500,000 a year; and exceeding 40% of adults qualified to level 4 and above.

Responding to the leadership and management challenge

460 Leaders in the learning and skills sector are now facing both policy and resource challenges. The establishment of two funding agencies, and the planned shift of responsibility for commissioning 16 to 18 provision to local authorities, will affect all providers. For those working with young people, the introduction of the 14 to 19 reforms, while offering many opportunities, poses considerable leadership and management challenges associated with working effectively in consortia.

461 In parallel, uncertainty regarding contracts, government revenue and capital funding has exacerbated difficulties in planning, establishing and improving the quality of provision. The changes in commissioning of flexible New Deal and employment programmes by the Department for Work and Pensions have led to uncertainty for some providers; the Train to Gain and 16 to 19 budgets are under pressure in some areas; and colleges that have been unsuccessful in securing central government capital support are grappling with the financial and logistical consequences. Providers are also continuing to manage shifts in funding and are making tough decisions about the balance and affordability of different types of provision. While providers in this sector have always had to manage multiple funding streams, some colleges report that this is now becoming more difficult to do and that their ability to meet local needs, particularly through entry and level 1 provision, is being stretched.

459 The best providers in the learning and skills sector are agile in their response to changing demands, a quality that will be critical in the next period. This section explores how leaders and managers in the learning and skills sector can best meet the current systemic challenges while continuing to improve outcomes for learners by:

* responding to the leadership and management challenge

* developing a learning programme that is responsive and supports progression

* giving learners the right information, advice, guidance and individual support

* making learning relevant to the workplace and supporting learners into employment.

462 The best colleges are navigating these challenges and maintaining their strategic focus. They are thinking outside the normal parameters about how resources can best be used to meet learners' and employers' needs. However, some colleges are concerned that provision for learners who are not part of an employment or employability-based scheme, and those benefiting from community schemes, for example programmes designed to support adults with mental health needs or learning difficulties and/or disabilities, will suffer as a result of funding changes. To mitigate this risk, and the potential social consequences, successful colleges are building on their strengths in working with communities, engaging employers, using labour market information to plan provision, and adapting to meet changes in funding and in local or national priorities.

[114] *Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in England using matched administrative data: attainment by 19 in 2008 (provisional)*, Statistical First Release (SFR04/2009), Department for Children, Schools and Families, March 2009.

[115] *Departmental Report 2009* (ISBN 978-0-10-175962-5), Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2009.

[116] *Ambition 2020: world class skills and jobs for the UK*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2009.

[117] In 2013 all young people in England will be required to continue in education or training to 17. In 2015 they will continue in education or training to 18.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

463 Similarly, effective work-based learning providers are mitigating the risk of funding changes by maintaining strong relationships with employers and balancing a focus on the quality of day-to-day provision with accurate long-term planning. Department for Work and Pensions providers are participating as both contractors and sub-contractors and allying themselves with other strong business partners to maintain stability during this period. Successful providers are maintaining a focus on the needs of the learner and on delivering public value from the funding available. A clear view from the sector is that allowing greater flexibility in how funding is spent, combined with rigorous accountability for outcomes, will better enable providers to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities.

464 Some providers are better equipped than others to maximise the opportunities arising from changes in the sector. A very clear strategic direction, combined with capacity to innovate and improve, good governance and strong decision-making processes are the hallmarks of providers who are responding well to the current challenges. These are also the strengths in leadership and management which support rapid and sustained improvement. The following factors are important in enabling colleges to maximise the opportunities on offer:

- a clear strategic direction focused on skills development

- skilled senior management, supported by governors who have experience of business and relevant employment sectors, as well as local knowledge

- a commitment to make a contribution to the economic and social regeneration of the area, and to develop partnerships with key agencies and employers

- capacity within the organisation at senior and middle management levels to develop partnerships and respond innovatively to new funding and policy opportunities

- sound decision-making processes so that the focus remains firmly on activity that will deliver the college's key objectives and is not diverted into chasing initiatives and funding that are a poor fit with core work.

465 Although observed in colleges, these characteristics have wider resonance and applicability across the learning and skills sector. Strong strategic leadership and management are essential in maintaining quality and coherence during a period of change. This forms the bedrock for delivering learning in a way which equips young people and adults with the skills they need to succeed in employment.

Developing learning programmes that are responsive and support progression

466 Demand from learners is evolving. There has been an increase in referrals to Department for Work and Pensions employability programmes, with a growing number of participants who would previously not have needed such support but whose participation reflects the greater difficulty in finding work. As has been the case in previous recessions, colleges are seeing a growing demand for full-time programmes from students aged 16 to 19, and the introduction of Diplomas is opening up new routes to learning for some 14 to 19-year-olds. There is also evidence that Train to Gain has helped raise employees' expectations of training.

467 Good and outstanding providers are responsive to the needs and demands of the communities they serve and make a strong contribution to social mobility. Those who achieve this most successfully draw upon analysis of labour market and demographic information; they listen to learners and act on their views; they work with partners, including schools and community-based groups, to identify and target those least likely to engage with learning; and they engage employers directly in the design and content of the learning on offer. Many successful providers also take learning out into the community, delivering from a range of venues that make learning accessible and non-threatening to those who have little history of engagement. Successful providers serving disadvantaged communities adapt their provision well to target those at risk of exclusion, working with families and developing the role of community learning champions. The example below shows how one successful college developed its learning programmes to cater for community needs.

> **Through a range of activities to engage parents, the college successfully ran courses to help them to support their children at home and at school. For example, coffee mornings with crèche facilities attracted many parents and enabled outreach workers to identify those who needed help with particular skills, especially English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy. Since 2005/06, the college has run such courses at the school and the number of parents enrolled has increased since then. Most of the learners have been Bangladeshi women, with low levels of skill in English, living in the United Kingdom for many years and often isolated in their homes. As a result of the courses, many learners progressed to further learning. Some took courses to become teaching assistants and are now employed in that role. Many spoke of having increased their confidence in their daily lives and of feeling empowered.**

> The best providers use new qualifications and learning routes to allow learners to work at a pace and level that suit them.

468 Widening participation, while also increasing attainment, is a continuing challenge. The best providers use new qualifications and learning routes to allow learners to work at a pace and level that suit them. Well-established consortia are taking the opportunity presented by the 14 to 19 reforms to drive up both participation and achievement through offering a wide and imaginative range of provision, tailored to the needs of individual learners.[118] In these areas, Diplomas are not seen as an isolated initiative but form part of a coherent approach to raising outcomes for all young people. This includes consortium partners working together to identify young people at risk of disengagement, track their progress and help them make a successful transition to further learning. The example below illustrates how one school has developed its provision to meet the needs of learners as part of a 14 to 19 consortium.

> **Contextual value-added measures place the school in the top 1% nationally in terms of the progress its students make. The curriculum is expertly tailored to meet the students' diverse needs and the range of courses is under constant review. In consultation with local employers in the building trades, a multi-crafts course was devised in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form; students achieve relevant qualifications and in the sixth form they combine work with study. The option of studying university modules on the tourism and hospitality advanced level course encourages students and gives them the confidence to apply for higher education.**

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[118] *Implementation of 14–19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas* (080267), Ofsted, 2009.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

469 For adults, the growth in work-based learning, in particular Train to Gain provision, is enabling people who would not normally access learning of any kind to do so. This marked increase in participation, with many new providers entering the market, is one of the most striking developments in the work-based learning sector in recent years. It is therefore important to ensure that this new provision is of consistently high quality. In good providers, expectations of employees have been raised, leading to increased professionalism and skills levels in some sectors. The best providers are able to harness this increase in interest and aspiration to support employees into higher levels of learning. Some good and outstanding colleges report that Train to Gain is transforming their provision for the better: curriculum areas, for example the 14 to 19 curriculum, have been enriched by the business model that Train to Gain has brought in. However, they also report that the stop-start nature of Train to Gain funding experienced by some providers presents a barrier to the long-term progression of learners and can devalue the training in the eyes of employers and employees.

470 The best providers, across the learning and skills sector, are very clear about learning pathways, and provide a good range of courses from entry level through to higher-level learning. These are offered in a way that combines theoretical and practical learning. For adult learners, progression is often not easy to predict. While most learners progress upwards into higher levels of learning or employment, sideways progression, for example between different areas of learning or subjects, can also be important and could well reflect a changing local economy. Nonetheless, a key challenge is to ensure that the system is sufficiently ambitious for adults in work-based learning. Survey evidence of Train to Gain, for example, shows that too few providers are giving employees the chance to progress to higher levels of learning, even where they have the motivation to do so.[119]

471 Strong partnerships with other learning institutions and community groups are essential to supporting the progression of learners. Some good and outstanding colleges report that Jobcentre Plus contracts to train those who have been out of work for six months or more are providing opportunities to form new and productive partnerships, both with Jobcentre Plus and with other colleges and providers in their sub-region. The implementation of the 14 to 19 reforms is also opening up greater possibilities for innovative partnership working, for example in securing pathways into higher education and, in some cases, progression agreements through the engagement of universities in consortia arrangements. In some partnerships, students on advanced level courses have the opportunity to study university modules which give them the appetite to go on to study at a higher level. In adult and community learning and work-based learning, effective links with local groups, including faith groups, parents' groups, children's centres and voluntary organisations help support the learning of individuals in the community. The example below, from a work-based learning provider, shows the contribution that partnership working makes to progression for learners when it is done well.

> **One work-based learning provider worked with several local partnership groups to promote progression onto its apprenticeship programmes and to help learners progress further following successful completion of their training. These groups included consortia of local authorities, work-based learning provider partnerships, health and social care provider networks and other strategic groups. In addition, learners benefited from a Centre of Vocational Excellence for health and care in partnership with five local colleges.**

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[119] *The impact of Train to Gain on skills in employment: a review to follow up the 2007/08 survey* (090033), Ofsted, 2009.

472 Providers in the learning and skills sector have a long-standing strength in responding to the needs of employers, as well as learners. Those who do this successfully are identifying skills shortages in the local workforce, ensuring that courses are in place to meet those needs and are looking to develop new areas of provision as patterns of employment shift. The range and flexibility of qualifications available are key factors in enabling – or inhibiting – such provision. This is particularly critical during a period of economic instability.

473 Employers continue to be impressed by the responsiveness of providers in delivering Train to Gain: in some cases employers are able to influence the range of skills areas, qualifications or training topics on offer. Some of the best providers of work-based learning use business development officers and training consultants to gain a thorough understanding of employers' business needs and offer advice on how employees could benefit from training. However, although Train to Gain has driven up demand from employers it is not, in general, stimulating employers to invest in further training. Moreover, the impact of the brokerage service in engaging employers who have shown little interest in training and development in the past remains limited.[120]

474 The track record of successful colleges in working with local businesses brings direct benefits to learners; they enjoy a greater range of industry-specific work-related learning and additional routes into employment. Some of the most successful colleges take this collaboration a stage further and work alongside particular employers to integrate learning into commercial projects with direct benefits to both students and the industry. The example below, from the arts and media sector, describes how this worked in practice in one college.

> **The college worked closely with a local corporate media company serving a diverse range of clients. Its scale and type of operation represent one of the likely employment routes for students of media at the college. The company approached the college with a request to use college facilities and premises to make a corporate DVD for an external client. The college agreed terms for this work, but part of the agreement was that students should be able to work alongside company staff to learn how such work was managed and executed and to see how the brief was carried out. During the process, students were recruited to undertake some film shooting for the company's brief and they received professional critical feedback on the work they produced. Students were able to follow the crew throughout the job and discuss with them their background, training and working conditions, and the wider world of media production.**

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[120] *The impact of Train to Gain on skills in employment: a review to follow up the 2007/08 survey* (090033), Ofsted, 2009.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

Giving learners the right information, advice, guidance and individual support

475 The quality of information, advice and guidance offered to learners is too variable and, in some sectors, too much is mediocre at best. Although many colleges do this well, among providers of work-based learning, adult and community learning and Department for Work and Pensions funded training inspected this year, 64% of information, advice and guidance offered is no better than satisfactory. This is in a period when the value of good-quality information, advice and guidance is arguably more critical than ever. The profile of learners is changing, the breadth and flexibility of the curriculum are increasing, and the labour market into which learners are moving is not stable. These trends make it even more important to help learners make the right choices and to provide the right level of ongoing support to maximise their chances of success. Effective information, advice and guidance also contribute to value for money. They reduce the chance of learners withdrawing from their programmes, saving both their time and public funds.

Pre-course information and induction

476 The quality of pre-course information and induction is a particularly important aspect of information, advice and guidance. The best providers make available comprehensive information about course requirements which is easy to access and understand. They carry out good-quality initial assessments that can pinpoint particular needs, followed up with the swift offer of additional support where required, and they ensure that programmes are carefully matched to learners' needs. The involvement of subject specialists in interviewing learners before enrolment on college courses can be an important component in reducing the number of learners who fail to complete their course, by making clear the requirements of the course and the work expected.

477 For young people, Diplomas present a new option in addition to more familiar routes. Therefore, the need for dedicated support to help them decide whether to choose a Diploma and, if they do, to secure a successful start on their chosen course, is particularly acute. Well-established consortia have put in place taster days, open evenings, assemblies and roadshow presentations, available to both learners and their parents. They have also established induction arrangements which make clear the expectations of students. Despite evidence of good practice, however, even well-established 14 to 19 consortia need to get better at making additional information about Diplomas available to all learners, rather than just those who have expressed an interest in them. The marked tendency for learners to choose courses along traditional gender lines suggests that more could be done to challenge stereotypes.

478 Good induction processes for learners who have previously disengaged from education are particularly critical. Providing learning for offenders serving short custodial sentences poses a unique set of challenges around achieving continuity of learning between short spells in different institutions or in moving back into the community. Some of the best providers can demonstrate early engagement with offenders, quick identification of learning needs and supported entry into the next stage of learning. However, too often initial assessments vary in quality and timeliness, and individual learning plans are not used well enough to identify meaningful, challenging and achievable targets.[121]

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[121] *Learning and skills for offenders serving short custodial sentences* (070233), Ofsted, 2009.

> **All the providers visited saw the initial assessment period as critical in identifying what learners could do, and what they aspired to achieve…**

479 Good initial assessment and induction are also vital for young people accessing Entry to Employment programmes as their first step to further learning or employment. Around half of the Entry to Employment providers visited for a forthcoming survey received little or no information from schools, Connexions, or previous training providers about the skills and abilities of the young people they were trying to support.[122] All the providers visited therefore saw the initial assessment period as critical in identifying what learners could do, and what they aspired to achieve, as described in the example below.

> **In one provider, the six-week initial assessment was well planned and structured, with a wide range of activities and well-produced learning materials. It focused on employability skills, health and safety, motivational activities and personal and social development. The Connexions personal adviser met all the learners at the start and then again at the end of the six weeks. She saw a tremendous change in the maturity of the learners. They were now ready to discuss their options and also consider alternative plans if the first option did not work out. Learners enjoyed the initial assessment and commented on how different it was from school. 'We are treated like adults here.' 'The staff respect us and listen to what we have to say.' 'I am always on time because I don't want to miss anything.'**

Ongoing support for learners

480 Some work-based learners have been particularly hard hit by the recession, and for them the support to continue with their learning is critical. This year's Train to Gain survey found that where employees' progress had been affected by redundancy or fewer opportunities for training and assessment, for example as a consequence of reduced working hours, providers responded flexibly by helping employees to gain their qualification more quickly or by providing unit accreditation.[123] Similarly, there are examples of individual providers acting quickly to help learners find new employment following redundancy. One outstanding college took very swift action to support 18 electrician apprentices who were made redundant by using additional funding from the Learning and Skills Council to underpin their support, ensuring unfinished assessment evidence requirements could be completed in college and supporting them to gain new employment, in which 16 were successful.

481 The challenge for providers of reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is, similarly, particularly acute during this period of economic uncertainty. Local authorities acknowledge the need for earlier intervention and stronger multi-agency work to identify young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training. Although many areas have well-considered policies in place, the impact of local strategies and the effectiveness of information, advice and guidance in tackling the underlying barriers which prevent young people re-engaging in education, employment or training are very variable. However, projects which focus strongly on the motivation of young people and clearly support individual learning goals are having an impact, as illustrated in the following example.

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[122] *Moving through the system: preparation for economic well-being and for life and work* (080273), Ofsted, forthcoming.

[123] *The impact of Train to Gain on skills in employment: a review to follow up the 2007/08 survey* (090033), Ofsted, 2009.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

An out-of-hours support project had been significantly expanded to identify and work with young people in danger of becoming not in education, employment or training. Very well-managed partnership working involved local employers, schools, Connexions and work with specialist groups, such as the gifted and talented, young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young mothers and young offenders. Activities were based within the local football stadium and provided outstanding facilities, including welcoming and varied rooms for group work and a wide range of IT equipment. Activities involved developing literacy, numeracy and IT skills and visiting speakers to talk about potential future careers. A new project involved three strands: mentoring from a professional footballer, participating in online courses and work experience placements within the club, including areas such as grounds work, retail and administration. All primary and secondary schools were visited by the project manager. This assisted the smooth referral process when young people or groups of young people were identified as being able to benefit from the project. At the heart of the project, information, advice and guidance and exploration of future individual goals were integral to individual planned programmes.

Alongside the development of new learning routes and qualifications is the growth in work-based learning.

482 For learners accessing new and sometimes more complex combinations of qualifications, the ability of providers to offer support which clarifies and brings together the learning offer is very important. In colleges, the tutor is key to providing that support. Where guidance and support are outstanding, tutors are active in reviewing learners' progress in one-to-one sessions, setting individual targets and agreeing action plans to support improved attainment. They liaise consistently with student services to secure the right individual support, and tutorials are well integrated within courses. In the example below, the role of the form tutor, carried out by a support teacher, is critical in continually reviewing individual learners' progress. This makes an important contribution to increased success rates.

One further education college restructured its National Diploma in digital applications to deal with a poor success rate of 40%. The college realised that the timetabling of a tutor for each unit, all starting at the same time and all finishing at the end of the year, was wrong for its students. Students dropped out because they got confused with so much new work to learn. They could not see how well they were progressing because there was no assessment until halfway through the unit. In the restructured course, teachers worked together on units to improve the consistency of experience for the students, and taught one unit at a time to reduce the complexity of the course. A support teacher acted as the form tutor who mapped the students' progress individually each session, so that they had early feedback on their progress. The standard of work and the variety of tools being used were outstanding. Following these changes, the success rate improved to 89%.

483 Alongside the development of new learning routes and qualifications is the growth in work-based learning. For employees, the need for good assessment which underpins a clear analysis of their abilities, aspirations and any barriers to learning is just as important. However, for support to be really effective, providers must also ensure that employment requirements are understood. In one outstanding work-based learning provider, for example, training consultants shadow learners at work to ensure that they fully understand their work demands and circumstances. For adults in employment, learning and support must also be flexible. Good providers take account of work and family commitments in shaping their offer. They offer coaching in the workplace, either individually or in small groups, delivered at times and locations to meet employees' needs. This will often extend to delivering coaching at evenings and weekends to accommodate learners' shift patterns. They also make good use of e-learning and e-portfolios to support remote learning.

Making learning relevant to the workplace, and supporting learners into employment

484 Providers in the learning and skills sector have a critical role to play in developing a more highly skilled workforce, capable of increasing the nation's competitiveness and productivity as envisaged in the Leitch Review of Skills. Maintaining this momentum through a period of uncertainty, and preparing learners to enter a labour market which is changing rapidly, constitute a real challenge. The best providers are continuing to focus successfully on the fundamentals: equipping learners with skills for work that are transferable and meet future demand, ensuring a good basis in literacy and numeracy as a minimum for all learners, and actively supporting learners into employment.

Equipping learners with skills that are directly applicable to the workplace

485 The effective use of employers in both assessing learners' progress and performance and contributing to provision is a strong factor in supporting work-based learners to acquire the skills that will be most relevant to them in the workplace. It helps ensure both the currency and the immediacy of learning. One company, for example, created its own teaching materials to ensure that apprentices could understand the direct relevance of learning to their work and how it related to progression through the company. Professionals from within the organisation carried out all the training.

486 Previously, there have been concerns, as highlighted in last year's Annual Report, that in too many cases Train to Gain provision is accrediting employees' existing skills rather than supporting them to develop new skills. This year's evaluation, in conjunction with feedback from good and outstanding providers, suggests that, although this remains a concern, there has been improvement. The emerging benefits for businesses, as a result of employees' increased technical skills, include greater efficiency, better customer service, greater competitiveness in tendering for contracts, and improved awareness of health and safety.

487 For young people pursuing vocational qualifications, making learning relevant to industry and the workplace is vital. In the most successful Diploma courses, for example, the teaching is characterised by realistic contexts and activities linking the theoretical and practical aspects of learning effectively. Assignments that involve employers are used effectively and, in some of the best provision, employers are directly engaged in delivering the courses. Across subject areas, the better lessons are characterised by teachers being able to enhance the topic by providing illustrations and exemplars based on their recent industrial or work experience.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

488 Young people preparing for the world of work need the opportunity to apply their learning frequently in a variety of real work-based settings. At best, these assignments are well structured and integrated with other elements of teaching, and the goals of the project are clear. The range of opportunities now available for young people varies widely. These can extend from more traditional work experience placements through to joint projects with employers and established commercial enterprises run within the college or consortium in order to provide services to the local community.

489 These placements provide not only an excellent opportunity for young people to put industry-relevant skills into practice, but also expose them to the wider range of transferable skills such as team working, customer service, leadership, negotiation and prioritisation, which are critical for making a successful transition into employment. In some of the most successful provision, employers are closely engaged in developing, assessing and giving feedback on projects or placements, which in turn helps to inform and develop teaching and learning. The following example shows how a highly effective provider of learning in the hospitality and catering sector structures work placements for learners.

A college paid particular attention to the type of work placements that it offered learners. Before the placement, teachers and placement officers thoroughly reviewed learners' skills, abilities and aptitudes and matched these factors to the employer. The arrangements were particularly effective in taking account of learners' individual learning needs when on placement. The college placed the more confident learners with employers who operated in more testing environments – with standards for professional cookery and food and drink service – that could extend the learners' skills and provide opportunities for them to use their own initiative. Often the establishments that offered these opportunities were not close to the learners' homes. In these situations, the college supported the learners financially so they could benefit from the placements, which, without such assistance, would not have been available to them.

490 There is anxiety in the sector that employers may begin to limit the number of placements or projects that they are willing to provide as a result of the economic climate. Evidence from inspections of work-based learning indicates that the difficulty in finding long-term places for apprentices is starting to have an impact on provision, for example in the construction sector. Where employer-based learning opportunities are becoming scarcer, some providers are turning to public sector employers or developing volunteering programmes to make up for any shortfall in opportunities. Nonetheless, evidence of decreasing employment-based opportunities is by no means universal and, at present, the level of employer engagement in many areas remains high.

> It is a continuing concern that, among providers of adult learning and vocational learning for young people, developing skills in literacy and numeracy remains a relatively weak area of provision.

Ensuring a good level of literacy and numeracy

491 With increased levels of unemployment, there is growing competition for vacancies, and even lower-level entry jobs are attracting significant numbers of applicants. To be competitive in such a market, individuals need to be able to demonstrate competence in the core skills. It is a continuing concern that, among providers of adult learning and vocational learning for young people, developing skills in literacy and numeracy remains a relatively weak area of provision. Even some senior managers of outstanding colleges highlight the resistance of younger learners and employers to taking up and benefiting from skills for life training. Moreover, the functional skills agenda is becoming increasingly complex as the multiple 14 to 19 pathways lead to learners arriving at colleges with very different levels of these skills.

492 For some young people working towards the new Diplomas, a key barrier to the acquisition of good literacy and numeracy is the poor integration of functional skills, which are being piloted, with other aspects of learning. At present, the teaching of functional skills is very varied across providers and, too often, different providers within a consortium do not work together sufficiently to support learners. In many cases, functional skills are taught separately from the rest of the course with the result that opportunities to apply those skills in a practical context are limited. This can have a negative impact on students' motivation and engagement.[124] In contrast, the following example illustrates particularly effective practice in which functional skills are well integrated with students' principal learning.

> A successful functional skills lesson was taught jointly by an English and a mathematics specialist to a mixed group of Diploma students from construction and the built environment (CBE) and society, health and development (SHD). The mathematics content, on measurement, drew effectively on computer-aided design work undertaken by the CBE students on standard fittings for doors and windows, and on the monitoring of blood pressure, heart rates, height and weight carried out by SHD students to identify early signs of disease. Very good discussion took place on the importance of accuracy and estimation, and ICT was used extremely well by the teachers to support learning. The English content of the second part of the lesson was based on the students' writing of a report on the work done earlier in the lesson, with a focus on connectives and action verbs. The students worked in pairs and then assessed each other's reports against agreed criteria, with follow-up questions to identify strengths and weaknesses in the reports.

493 Learning provision for adults in employment offers a similarly mixed picture of the development of literacy and numeracy. Over 60% of the lead inspectors contributing to the 2008/09 Train to Gain review agreed that insufficient Skills for Life provision was offered by providers.[125] This issue is not just limited to Train to Gain but is also found in other work-based learning provision. The barriers to better skills for life provision in Train to Gain are varied, but include shortages in staff appropriately trained and qualified in offering skills for life courses, the geographic dispersal of a small number of learners requiring this provision, and some reluctance among employers and providers to raise shortcomings in basic literacy and numeracy with employees. In some cases it is seen as a personal issue and choice rather than an imperative.

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[124] *Implementation of 14–19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas* (080267), Ofsted, 2009.

[125] *The impact of Train to Gain on skills in employment: a review to follow up the 2007/08 survey* (090033), Ofsted, 2009.

Skills for employment – responding to a changing and challenging environment continued

494 However, there is good practice to build upon in motivating learners to embrace skills for life opportunities. Often this is achieved through embedding or integrating skills for life with other learning. In some outstanding colleges, skills for life training is combined with confidence-building sessions and workplace learning to make it more attractive for young people. For adult learners, it is critical to make sure that they understand the purpose of what they are learning. Some outstanding colleges, therefore, link skills for life with engagement in vocational learning and citizenship, emphasising its importance in helping economically inactive people escape from poverty and supporting community cohesion.

Supporting learners into employment

495 The most effective providers demonstrate how establishing clear, strategic and responsive relationships with employers, coupled with practical and industry-specific careers advice, can have a real impact on learners' ability to secure sustainable employment and career progression.

496 Surveys of good and outstanding college provision in a range of vocational subjects identify how colleges are able to draw on their relationship with and knowledge of industry to help young people enter employment.[126] Initiatives include involving local employers in mock interviews to prepare learners for the process of applying for a job, negotiating guaranteed interviews for learners with relevant employers if they are successful in completing their courses, and structuring their courses to meet the recruitment patterns of particular industries, for example finishing aviation courses at the spring holiday. Providers also draw on teaching staff with relevant and recent industry experience to provide careers advice which is well informed, practical and pertinent to the aspirations of the learner.

497 Despite the adverse economic environment, the majority of New Deal contractors and programme centres this year have improved job outcome rates for participants compared to the previous year, although these rates are still falling short of targets. Inspections of Department for Work and Pensions provision have found that the most successful providers are those that work effectively with local employers to identify needs and give their participants a competitive edge in the job market. A particular challenge remains, however, even for good and outstanding providers,

of how best to support 'revolving door' participants; these, despite the best endeavours of the provider, are unable to sustain employment and are consequently referred back into training. A key challenge for the system will be to ensure that the new Department for Work and Pensions contracted training for those who have been out of work for six months or more has a sustainable impact on the employability of those who access it.

498 Lessons in helping the most vulnerable learners to access and sustain employment can perhaps be drawn from the most successful Workstep providers. Workstep is one aspect of employment provision contracted by the Department for Work and Pensions, which is specifically for disabled people who need additional support to enable them to sustain work. The best providers demonstrate that helping a learner to secure employment is not a one-off exercise: often, it is the quality of the ongoing relationship between the provider and the employer that enables a work placement or employment to be sustained. Successful providers are quick to intervene with programme participants and employers in order to resolve issues that could jeopardise employment. This might involve helping employers understand specific adaptations needed to the workplace, or supporting them to address issues around poor performance or absence.[127] This is underpinned by detailed training and coaching for participants, as illustrated in the example below.

> One provider used a detailed task analysis in which participants were trained very carefully to the standards required by the employer to help participants become effective in work. Workstep advisers adopted a 'jobs first, place and train' approach that was particularly effective. A detailed job analysis identified core routines in job tasks, matched to the specific needs of participants. Good individual training plans showed how support would be provided to meet company productivity targets and help participants gain the skills they would need to be successful. Much realistic, practical training supported by mentors or job coaches was clearly focused on the workplace skills to be achieved.

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[126] See Bibliography, p 136, for details of these surveys.

[127] *The impact of strategies in Workstep provision on increasing progression to unsupported employment* (080243), forthcoming.

499 Entry to Employment programmes for young people also support learners for whom getting and sustaining a job are often very challenging. In programmes where good links with employers exist, they contribute to the development of vocational areas of learning and the offer of work tasters and placements. Well-planned placements, with preparation sessions, individual targets and reviews that involve the employer, can lead to employment or apprenticeships. But such opportunities are by no means universal. Inspection evidence shows that progression rates from Entry to Employment programmes are very varied and, in around a third of providers, they are poor. A common issue affecting progression is the high number of learners recruited with considerable support needs who are not ready to access Entry to Employment provision.[128] For these young people, pre- and post-Entry to Employment courses are proving successful in helping them to get a job or move into further training or education, as described in the example below.

One local Learning and Skills Council funded a pre-Entry to Employment programme, with learners moving onto Entry to Employment where appropriate. The retention rates on Entry to Employment increased significantly as learners were ready to follow the structured programme. The post-Entry to Employment programme focused specifically on employment and any additional vocational training required to progress. This programme contributed an additional 7% to the Entry to Employment local progression rate into further education, employment with training, or employment.

Conclusion

500 Effective providers of skills training have positioned themselves well to withstand and respond to the challenges they face, maintaining their strategic focus and continuing to meet the needs of learners and employers well. In many of the best providers, links with employers are well developed. This means that curricula are increasingly responsive to the needs of the labour market, skills developed by learners are directly relevant to the workplace, and progression through learning and into employment, for adults and young people alike, is increasingly well managed. Getting these aspects of learning right requires precision and attention to detail in assessment and planning, a real commitment to partnership working, and creativity and innovation in addressing organisational and funding complexity. This is dependent on effective leadership that builds on the sector strengths of flexibility and responsiveness.

501 This section also identifies a number of weaknesses, found even in some of the most successful providers. The most striking area for development across the system is the continued need to support better the acquisition of the core skills of literacy and numeracy for both adult learners and young people. This has been a focus in previous Annual Reports and will continue to be an area of attention for Ofsted.

In many of the best providers… curricula are increasingly responsive to the needs of the labour market, skills developed by learners are directly relevant to the workplace, and progression through learning into employment is increasingly well managed.

[128] *Moving through the system: preparation for economic well-being and for life and work* (080273), Ofsted, forthcoming.

Ofsted publications referred to in this report

i *An evaluation of National Strategy intervention programmes* (070256), January 2009

ii *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (070244), October 2008

iii *Day six of exclusion: the extent and quality of provision for pupils* (080255), May 2009

iv *Early years: leading to excellence* (080046), August 2008

v *English at the crossroads: an evaluation of English in primary and secondary schools, 2005/08* (080247), June 2009

vi *Equalities in action* (080272), forthcoming

vii *Good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools* (070255), October 2008

viii *How colleges improve: a review of effective practice* (080083), September 2008

ix *How well new teachers are prepared to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (070223), September 2008

x *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in arts and media* (070234), February 2009

xi *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy* (070247), March 2009

xii *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in hospitality and catering* (080302), March 2009

xiii *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in information and communication technology* (080299), January 2009

xiv *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in leisure, travel and tourism* (070245), January 2009

xv *Implementation of 14–19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas* (080267), August 2009

xvi *Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught?* (HMI 2535), July 2006

xvii *Learning and skills for offenders serving short custodial sentences* (070233), January 2009

xviii *Learning and skills for the longer-serving prisoner* (070249), January 2009

xix *Learning lessons from serious case reviews: year 2* (090101), October 2009

xx *Learning lessons, taking action: Ofsted's evaluations of serious case reviews 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008* (080112), December 2008

xxi *Looked after children – good practice in schools* (070172), May 2008

xxii *Mathematics: understanding the score* (070063), September 2008

xxiii *Moving through the system: preparation for economic well-being and for life and work* (080273), forthcoming

xxiv *Physical education in schools 2005/08: working towards 2012 and beyond* (080249), April 2009

xxv *Rising to the challenge: a review of the Teach First initial teacher training programme* (070170), January 2008

xxvi *Support for care leavers* (080259), July 2009

xxvii *Teacher trainees and phonics: an evaluation of the response of providers of initial teacher training to the recommendations of the Rose Review* (070257), June 2008

xxviii *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08* (ISBN 978 010295809 6), November 2008

xxix *The deployment, training and development of the wider school workforce* (070222), October 2008

xxx *The impact of strategies in Workstep provision on increasing progression to unsupported employment* (080258), forthcoming

xxxi *The impact of Train to Gain on skills in employment: a review to follow up the 2007/08 survey* (090033), November 2009

xxxii *The initial training of further education teachers* (080243), February 2009

xxxiii *The quality of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees in the Armed Forces* (080194), June 2009

xxxiv *Twelve outstanding secondary schools – Excelling against the odds* (080240), February 2009

xxxv *White boys from low-income backgrounds: good practice in schools* (070220), July 2008

Publications by the Children's Rights Director referred to in this report

xxxvi *Care and prejudice* (080279), August 2009

xxxvii *Children's care monitor 2008/09* (080280), forthcoming

xxxviii *Life in children's homes* (080244), April 2009

xxxix *Life in secure care* (080241), April 2009

Other reports published by Ofsted in 2008/09

Able, gifted and talented pupils in schools (090132), forthcoming

Communities: learning and growing together – how education providers promote social responsibility and community cohesion (080261), forthcoming

Developing young people's economic and business understanding (070096), November 2008

Drawing together: art, craft and design in schools (080245), April 2009

Engaging young people: local authority youth work 2005–08 (080141), March 2009

Family learning (080265), July 2009

Good practice in extended schools (080242), June 2009

How DWP prime contractors manage subcontractors: a summary review of effective practice (080257), forthcoming

Improving primary teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum (070252), June 2009

Inspection of local authority private fostering arrangements 2007–08 (080298), February 2009

Making more of music: an evaluation of music in schools 2005/08 (080235), February 2009

Planning for change: the impact of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum (080262), June 2009

Professional development for citizenship teachers and leaders (070253), February 2009

School leadership: examples of new models in practice (080264), forthcoming

Summary review of further education provision in higher education 2003–09 (090104), October 2009

Support in further education colleges for learners with caring responsibilities (090005), October 2009

Supporting young carers (080252), June 2009

The exclusion from school of children aged four to seven (090012), June 2009

The impact of integrated services on children and their families in Sure Start children's centres (080253), July 2009

The impact of workforce reforms in further education (080268), forthcoming

The importance of ICT: information and communication technology in primary and secondary schools, 2005/08 (070035), March 2009

The National Strategies: a review of impact (080270), forthcoming

Twelve outstanding special schools – Excelling through inclusion (090171), forthcoming

Twenty outstanding primary schools – Excelling against the odds (090170), October 2009

Virtual learning environments: an evaluation of their development in a sample of educational settings (070251), January 2009

Other reports by the Children's Rights Director published in 2008/09

Children's views on getting advice (080274), forthcoming

Future rules (080246), February 2009

Keeping in touch (080275), forthcoming

Life in residential further education (080251), April 2009

Life in residential special schools (080250), April 2009

Annex 1. Definitions

Table 1. Inspection frameworks

Type of inspection	Framework	Effective since	Legislation
Provision on the Early Years Register	Inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage in registered provision	September 2008	Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006
Compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register	Inspection of compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register	April 2007 for providers on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register September 2008 for providers on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register	Sections 60, 61 and 77(2)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006
Maintained schools	Every Child Matters: framework for inspection of schools in England	September 2005	Section 5 of the Education Act 2005
Independent schools	The framework for inspecting independent schools	September 2003	Section 162(a) of the Education Act as amended by the Education Act 2005
Post-16 education and training (FE colleges, independent specialist colleges, work-based learning, adult and community learning, nextstep, learndirect, Department for Work and Pensions employment programmes)	Common Inspection Framework for inspecting education and training	April 2005	The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (123–126) Employment and Training Act 1973
Initial teacher education	Framework for the inspection of initial teacher education 2008–11	September 2008	The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Type of inspection	Framework	Effective since	Legislation
Children's social care	'Inspecting for better lives – delivering change' is the Commission for Social Care Inspection framework, adapted by Ofsted for inspections of social care provision	April 2007	Sections 80 and 87 of the Children Act 1989. Sections 31, 45 and 105 of the Care Standards Act 2000. Sections 146, 147 and 148 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)	Framework for inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) 2009	April 2009	Sections 143–145 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Local authority children's services	Every Child Matters: framework for the inspection of children's services	September 2005	Sections 20–24 of the Children Act 2004

Table 2. Children's social care: frequency of Ofsted inspection

Type of provision	Ofsted's role	Frequency of inspection
Children's homes	Regulates and inspects[129]	At least twice a year
Local authority fostering services	Inspects	At least once every three years
Independent fostering agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Private fostering arrangements[130]	Inspects	Future inspection arrangements currently under discussion with the DCSF
Local authority adoption services	Inspects	At least once every three years
Voluntary adoption agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Adoption support agencies	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Boarding schools	Inspects	At least once every three years
Residential special schools	Inspects	At least once a year
Residential family centres	Regulates and inspects	At least once every three years
Further education colleges that provide or arrange accommodation for one or more students under 18	Inspects	At least once every three years

[129] For further information about the distinction between inspection and regulation, see the Glossary, p 156.

[130] The three-year cycle of inspections ended on 31 March 2009.

Annex 1. Definitions continued

Inspection judgements

Inspectors make judgements using a four-point scale:

Grade 1   **Outstanding**

Grade 2   **Good**

Grade 3   **Satisfactory**

Grade 4   **Inadequate**

Use of proportions in this report

In this report proportions are described in different ways. If sample sizes are small – generally fewer than 100 – scale is expressed using actual numbers of institutions to which particular judgements apply.

Proportions, which are used when sample sizes are large, are expressed in a number of ways: percentages, common fractions and general descriptions such as 'majority', 'minority' or 'most'. Where general descriptions are used, they relate broadly to percentages as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Expressions of proportions in words

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none, very few

Ofsted's powers to investigate complaints about schools

The Education Act 2005, as amended, gives Ofsted powers to consider whether to investigate certain complaints, known as qualifying complaints, made about maintained schools in England. Ofsted may investigate qualifying complaints made by any person. To qualify, a complaint must relate to concerns about a school rather than individual issues, such as when:

✳ the school is not providing a good enough education

✳ the pupils are not achieving as much as they should, or their needs are not being met

✳ the school is not well led and managed, or is not using its resources efficiently

✳ the pupils' personal development and well-being are being neglected.

Ofsted's remit does not include complaints about:

✳ admissions policy

✳ exclusions of individual pupils

✳ individual special educational needs

✳ temporary exceptions to the curriculum

✳ religious education or the religious character of the school.

Ofsted is not in a position to:

✳ investigate incidents that are alleged to have taken place, except where they are part of a pattern that gives rise to concerns about a school

✳ judge how well a school investigated or responded to a complaint

✳ mediate between a parent or carer and a school to resolve a dispute.

More detailed information for anyone who wishes to make a complaint about a school can be found on Ofsted's website: **www.ofsted.gov.uk**.

Table 4. Number of complaints received and handled by Ofsted between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009

Description	Number of complaints
Total number of written complaints received	1,493
Total number of complaints the handling of which has been completed by Ofsted[131]	1,454
Number of complaints considered and referred to more appropriate sources of help or advice[132]	863
Number of complaints examined in greater depth	39
Number of complaints that raised safeguarding issues and were followed up by liaising as appropriate with social services and the police	22
Number of complaints that qualified for further investigation under Ofsted's powers	17
Number of qualifying complaints that raised concerns significant enough to warrant an immediate inspection of the school	1
Number of complaints about schools retained as part of the evidence base for their next scheduled inspections	8

Ofsted has also provided general advice and specific guidance about making a complaint about a school in response to 2,666 enquiries received by its customer service centre between September 2008 and August 2009.

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[131] Written complaints received and 'closed' between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009.

[132] One of the first steps Ofsted takes with a complaint is to analyse it to see whether it raises an issue that falls within the qualifying conditions, and whether it appears to affect the school as a whole. Where this is not the case Ofsted tries to refer the complainant to more appropriate sources of help and advice.

Annex 2. Inspection evidence

Table 5. Number of inspections between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009[133]

	Number of inspections
Childcare[134]	
Childcare on domestic premises	24
Childcare on non-domestic premises	9,100
Childminders	18,000
Total	27,124
Maintained schools and pupil referral units	
Nursery schools	147
Primary schools[135]	5,323
Secondary schools without sixth forms	459
Secondary schools with sixth forms[136]	582
Academies	30
Special schools[137]	340
Pupil referral units	184
Total	7,065
Non-association independent schools	
Section 162A inspections[138]	394
School registration visits	111
Material change visits	23
Emergency visits[139]	42
Total	570
Colleges of further education	
General further education, tertiary and specialist further education colleges	62
Sixth form colleges	27
Further education provision in higher education institutions	5
Independent specialist colleges	5
Total	99

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133 These were the inspections for which Ofsted held data in September 2009.

134 Excludes 695 inspections of providers that were deemed to have no children on roll at the time of inspection, and 270 monitoring visits.

135 Includes two primary schools that had a reinspection.

136 Includes city technology colleges.

137 Includes 32 section 5 inspections of non-maintained special schools.

138 These are full or light touch inspections of independent schools carried out under the section 162A framework.

139 Emergency visits cover announced and unannounced visits, as well as visits to follow up concerns raised at section 162A inspections.

	Number of inspections
Adult learning	
Work-based learning (including Train to Gain and Entry to Employment)	242
Adult and community learning providers	68
New Deal (Prime Contractors) and Programme Centres	45
Workstep	33
Total	**388**
Children's social care	
Adoption support agencies	7
Boarding schools (care only)	160
Children's homes[140, 141]	3,474
Further education colleges (care only)	17
Independent fostering agencies	59
Local authority adoption services	57
Local authority fostering services	38
Private fostering arrangements	36
Residential family centres	16
Residential special schools	212
Voluntary adoption agencies	19
Total	**4,095**
Care for children and young people in secure settings	
Secure children's homes	36
Secure training centres	4
Total	**40**
Education and training for children and young people in secure settings	
Secure children's homes	7
Secure training centres	4
Total	**11**

[140] Children's homes registered at the start of the financial year (April to March) will receive at least two inspections during the year.

[141] Excluding secure settings.

Annex 2. Inspection evidence continued

	Number of inspections
Offender learning and skills	
Prisons (adult and young offender)[142]	33
Probation offender management[143]	11
Total	**44**
Other inspections	
Annual Performance Assessment of children's services in local authorities	150
Joint area reviews of children's services in local authorities	24
Annual performance rating of children's services in local authorities	152
Initial teacher education	152
Inspection of service provision by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to children and families	5
Total	39,919

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[142] Jointly inspected in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

[143] Jointly inspected in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

Annex 3. Other analyses

Table 6. The quality of childcare (all childcare providers)

Aspects of childcare	Percentage of providers[144]			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	9	56	30	5
Leadership and management	10	55	31	5
Children's learning and development	12	54	31	3
Children's welfare	11	58	27	4
Staying safe	12	57	28	3
Being healthy	13	61	24	2
Enjoying and achieving	13	57	27	3
Making a positive contribution	13	58	27	2
Achieving economic well-being	10	57	31	2

Table 7. The quality of childminding

Aspects of childminding	Percentage of providers[144]			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	9	56	31	5
Leadership and management	9	54	32	5
Children's learning and development	12	53	32	3
Children's welfare	10	58	28	4
Staying safe	12	55	30	3
Being healthy	13	60	25	2
Enjoying and achieving	13	56	28	3
Making a positive contribution	12	57	29	2
Achieving economic well-being	10	56	31	2

[144] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Annex 3. Other analyses continued

Table 8. The quality of childcare on non-domestic premises

Aspects of childcare on non-domestic premises	Percentage[145]			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness	10	57	29	5
Leadership and management	11	56	29	4
Children's learning and development	11	56	30	3
Children's welfare	12	60	25	4
Staying safe	13	60	24	3
Being healthy	14	63	22	2
Enjoying and achieving	13	57	27	3
Making a positive contribution	14	60	24	2
Achieving economic well-being	10	58	29	3

[145] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Table 9. Primary schools

There were 5,323 inspections of primary schools in 2008/09, of which 290 were pilot inspections to test and refine the new inspection framework for September 2009. Some inspection judgements were only made during these pilot inspections. Schools receiving a pilot inspection are not representative of all schools: there is an over-representation of schools expected to be good or outstanding. Therefore these data and any comparisons should be treated with caution.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[146]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness					
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	5,323	16	52	29	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	5,323	33	57	9	0
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	5,323	18	58	23	2
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	290	22	48	27	3
Achievement and standards					
How well do learners achieve?	5,033	15	53	29	3
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	290	17	54	25	3
The standards reached by learners[147]	5,323	11	39	46	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variation between groups of learners	5,323	15	53	29	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	5,323	17	57	25	2
Personal development and well-being					
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	5,033	40	53	7	0
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	5,323	37	55	7	0
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	5,323	44	52	4	0
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	5,323	41	54	5	0
How well learners enjoy their education	5,033	45	49	5	0
The attendance of learners	5,323	12	46	39	2

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[146] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

[147] Grade 1 – Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 – Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 – Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 – Exceptionally low.

Annex 3. Other analyses continued

Table 9. Primary schools continued

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[148]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Personal development and well-being					
The behaviour of learners	5,323	43	52	5	0
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	5,323	36	54	10	0
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	5,323	22	47	29	2
The quality of provision					
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	5,323	14	55	29	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	5,323	22	51	26	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	5,323	33	48	18	1
The use of assessment to support learning	290	12	56	30	2
Leadership and management					
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	5,323	17	54	27	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high-quality care and education	5,033	20	51	27	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	5,033	18	52	27	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	5,033	19	55	24	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	5,323	25	51	23	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	5,323	16	52	31	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	5,323	17	53	27	3

[148] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[149]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Leadership and management					
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	5,323	16	53	30	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	290	24	61	14	0
Early Years Foundation Stage					
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4,900	17	64	18	0
How well do the learners achieve?	4,672	16	65	18	0
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	228	15	68	16	0
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4,672	36	58	7	0
How effectively are the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	4,672	17	64	19	0
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	4,672	37	57	6	0
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	228	16	67	17	0
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4,901	18	63	19	0

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[149] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

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Annex 3. Other analyses continued

Table 10. Secondary schools[150]

There were 1,071 inspections of secondary schools (including academies and city technology colleges) in 2008/09, of which 84 were pilot inspections to test and refine the new inspection framework for September 2009. Some inspection judgements were only made during these pilot inspections. Schools receiving a pilot inspection are not representative of all schools: there is an over-representation of schools expected to be good or outstanding. Therefore these data and any comparisons should be treated with caution.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[151]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness					
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1,071	22	41	31	6
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1,071	43	47	10	0
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1,071	27	53	18	3
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	84	32	37	27	4
Achievement and standards					
How well do learners achieve?	987	19	43	32	6
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	84	25	44	27	4
The standards reached by learners[152]	1,071	19	30	45	7
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variation between groups of learners?	1,071	18	45	31	6
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress?	1,070	22	46	29	3

[150] Includes academies and city technology colleges.

[151] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

[152] Grade 1 – Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 – Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 – Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 – Exceptionally low.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[153]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Personal development and well-being					
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	987	35	48	16	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1,071	34	49	16	0
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1,071	36	52	11	0
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1,071	37	52	11	0
How well learners enjoy their education	987	33	50	16	1
The attendance of learners	1,071	20	34	41	5
The behaviour of learners	1,071	29	51	19	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1,071	42	44	14	0
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1,071	29	42	26	3
The quality of provision					
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1,071	12	52	33	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1,071	33	46	20	0
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1,071	38	43	18	2
The use of assessment to support learning	84	13	50	33	4

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[153] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Annex 3. Other analyses continued

Table 10. Secondary schools continued

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[154]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Leadership and management					
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1,071	25	46	26	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high-quality care and education	987	29	44	24	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	987	24	46	26	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	987	26	49	22	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1,071	34	45	20	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1,071	24	48	27	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1,071	25	42	28	6
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1,071	23	50	24	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	84	29	46	25	0

[154] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Table 11. Special schools

There were 340 inspections of special schools in 2008/09, of which 21 were pilot inspections to test and refine the new inspection framework for September 2009. Some inspection judgements were only made during these pilot inspections. Schools receiving a pilot inspection are not representative of all schools: there is an over-representation of schools expected to be good or outstanding. Therefore these data and any comparisons should be treated with caution.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[155]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness					
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	340	39	46	12	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	340	65	30	4	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	340	42	46	10	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	67	25	43	24	7
Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils	21	48	48	5	0
Achievement and standards					
How well do learners achieve?	319	39	47	13	2
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	21	24	71	5	0
The standards reached by learners[156]	340	0	1	18	81
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variation between groups of learners?	340	38	49	12	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	340	38	48	12	2
Personal development and well-being					
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	319	66	28	6	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	340	63	30	6	0
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	340	66	29	4	0
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	340	64	31	5	1
How well learners enjoy their education	319	70	25	4	1

[155] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

[156] Grade 1 – Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 – Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 – Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 – Exceptionally low.

Annex 3. Other analyses continued

Table 11. Special schools continued

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[157]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Personal development and well-being					
The attendance of learners	340	24	53	20	3
The behaviour of learners	340	59	34	6	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	340	59	34	7	0
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	340	48	41	9	2
The quality of provision					
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	340	36	50	13	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	339	44	44	11	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	340	61	30	7	2
The use of assessment to support learning	21	14	71	14	0
Leadership and management					
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	340	39	47	12	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high-quality care and education	319	43	43	11	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	319	37	43	19	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	319	41	45	12	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	340	51	40	8	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	340	39	45	15	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	340	38	49	11	2

[157] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Aspects of the school	Total number of schools inspected	Percentage of schools[158]			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Leadership and management					
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	340	32	46	18	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	21	67	33	0	0
Early Years Foundation Stage					
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	166	52	37	9	2
How well do the learners achieve?	149	52	37	11	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	10	40	60	0	0
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	149	75	21	3	0
How effectively are the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	155	53	37	9	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	155	75	21	3	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11	27	64	9	0
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	166	51	39	10	1

[158] Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Annex 4. Glossary

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide definitions or explanations of some of the key terms that are used in the Annual Report and which may be unfamiliar to readers.

Term	Definition or explanation
Every Child Matters	The five Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people are: ✳ being healthy ✳ staying safe ✳ enjoying and achieving ✳ making a positive contribution ✳ achieving economic well-being.
Inspection and regulation	Ofsted regulates and inspects social care, early years and childcare provision. **Regulation** is for those providers registered by Ofsted. It has four aspects: ✳ registration, for which applicants meet the requirements for registration ✳ inspection includes judgments about the quality of provision as well as a check of continued compliance with requirements for registration (other than inspections of those on the Childcare Register, where Ofsted checks only compliance with requirements) ✳ investigation of any information that suggests non-compliance with requirements for registration ✳ enforcement, whereby Ofsted takes legal action to bring about compliance with requirements for registration; or against those who operate without registration. Those providers who are not required to register with Ofsted may be subject to inspection. **Inspection** involves visiting a provider at regular intervals, usually set out in law, to check the quality of what is provided.
Childcare and early years	
Early Years Foundation Stage	New registration and inspection arrangements against the Early Years Foundation Stage started on 1 September 2008. This single framework sets the standards for care, learning and development for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday.

Term	Definition or explanation
Childcare and early years	
The Early Years Register	All childcarers – such as childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and private nursery schools – providing for children from birth to the 31 August following their fifth birthday (known as the early years age group) must register with Ofsted on the **Early Years Register** and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.
	Maintained and independent schools that are directly responsible for provision for children aged from birth to the age of three, where at least one child is a pupil of a school; or who provide childcare for children in the early years age group, where no child is a pupil of the school, must also register with Ofsted.
The Childcare Register	The **Childcare Register** has two parts: a compulsory part and a voluntary part.
	Compulsory part
	A childcare provider must register on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register if they care for children from the 1 September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight, unless they are not required to register. This is usually six- and seven-year-olds, but could include some five-year-olds.
	Voluntary part
	Some childcare providers can choose to register with Ofsted if they want to provide care that does not need to be registered. This includes:
	✳ home-based care in the home of the child (nannies)
	✳ activity-based settings such as sports coaching or tuition
	✳ short-term care such as crèches
	✳ care that is only for children aged eight to their 18th birthday.
Types of childcare providers	Ofsted registers the following types of childcare:
	✳ childminders, who care for children with no more than two other childminders or assistants in a home that is not the home of a child being cared for
	✳ childcare providers on domestic premises where four or more people work together to care for children in a home that is not the home of a child being cared for
	✳ childcare providers on non-domestic premises, who care for individual children in premises that are not someone's home (many of these were previously called day-care providers)
	✳ home childcarers, who care for children from no more than two families wholly or mainly in the home of a child being cared for.

Term	Definition or explanation
Maintained schools	
Categories of concern	There are two Ofsted categories of concern: (1) a school is made subject to special measures if it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and if the persons responsible for leading, governing or managing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement; (2) a school is given a notice to improve if it is judged through inspection to be: a) failing to provide an acceptable standard of education but demonstrating the capacity to improve, or b) not failing to provide an acceptable standard of education but performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.
Key stages	These are the stages of the maintained school curriculum between the ages of three and 16 years:
	Early Years Foundation Stage: from birth to 31 August following a child's fifth birthday
	Key Stage 1: 5–7 years
	Key Stage 2: 7–11 years
	Key Stage 3: 11–14 years
	Key Stage 4: 14–16 years.
Pupil referral unit (PRU)	Pupil referral units provide education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, exclusion or otherwise, are unable to attend a mainstream or special school.
National qualification levels	
Explanation of national qualification levels	**Level 1** includes qualifications at level 1 and level 'E' (entry level), such as NVQs, foundation GNVQs and other foundation or pre-foundation qualifications.
	Level 2 includes level 2 NVQs, intermediate GNVQs and precursors (BTEC first certificate or first diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at intermediate level), GCSEs and other intermediate level qualifications.
	Level 3 includes level 3 NVQs, advanced GNVQs and precursors (BTEC national certificate or national diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at national level), advanced VCEs, GCE A, A2 and AS levels and other advanced level qualifications.

Term	Definition or explanation
Adult skills	
Adult and community learning	Adult and community learning, provided by councils, the voluntary and community sector, specialist adult education establishments and by some further education colleges, is diverse in character and aims to meet the needs and interests of a wide range of communities and the different groups within them. Provision includes 'First Step' courses for those who have not participated in learning for some years and where progression is a primary aim; courses leading to qualifications, especially those that contribute to level 2 qualification targets; provision for 'Personal and Community Development Learning'; and programmes and projects that specifically target improvements in community cohesion and the contribution that local people make to their neighbourhoods.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes for young people below the age of 25. Learners complete a framework which includes practical training, work towards technical certificates and key skills training. Apprenticeships, which last approximately two years, equate to a level 2 qualification; Advanced Apprenticeships generally last three years and provide a qualification at level 3. Where appropriate, apprenticeships can also be accessed via Train to Gain.
Learning and skills in prisons	Ofsted undertakes judicial service inspections in partnership with HMI Prisons and HMI Probation. Ofsted HMI evaluate the quality of learning and skills in prisons, including young offender institutions and secure units for young people. Learning and skills provision in the community settings with HMI Probation are inspected across a range of work-based learning providers and colleges. Prison and probation inspection findings form part of the reports published by HMI Prisons and HMI Probation, and can be found on each inspectorate's website. Separate reports for prison learning and skills are also placed on the Ofsted website.
New Deal	These programmes, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, are designed to help people improve their employability skills and find work. There are one or more prime contractors in each region, who receive funding and distribute it among a variety of subcontractors. Very much focused on individual need, they comprise a range of elements such as the development of job-seeking skills and the opportunity to work towards relevant qualifications.
Nextstep	Nextstep is the national information, advice and guidance service for adults. There is one main Nextstep contractor in each of the 47 local Learning and Skills Council areas. They subcontract some or all of their provision to a range of specialist providers and agencies. Their main focus is on clients without a level 2 qualification; their target is for at least 45% of clients to enter learning or employment following a Nextstep intervention.

159

Annex 4. **Glossary** continued

Term	Definition or explanation
Adult skills	
Prime contractors	Prime contractors, of which there are 129 in total, receive funding from the Department for Work and Pensions to offer contracted employment provision; they allocate this to a range of subcontractors, according to local need.
Train to Gain	The Train to Gain initiative enables employers to access free training for employees without a level 2 qualification to undertake training towards one. Skills brokers work with employers to identify their training needs and link them with appropriate training providers.
Workstep	This is provision for learners with a disability or learning difficulty. The aim of Workstep is to enable participants to progress to unsupported employment where this is feasible and, where it is not, to help them improve their skills and develop their potential within their existing supported work environment.

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