

82% of providers achieved a good or better inspection outcome in the first 250 reports published under the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

Issue 3 - The Education Inspection Framework: What we know so far

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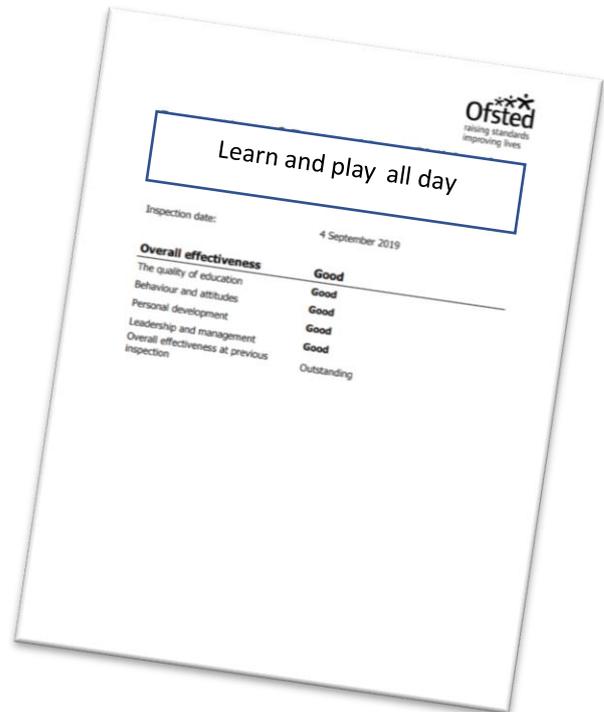
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New look inspection reports

Message from our Managing Director

Welcome to our third newsletter. If you're not familiar with our work, Early Years Fundamental Ltd. is a research, training and consultancy company.

We stress the research part of our work because it's the most important part of what we do; we spend huge amounts of time each term analysing Ofsted inspection reports to provide the sector with information that will help leaders and managers to understand the nature of the issues that lead to inadequate and RI inspection outcomes.

Today we're sharing with you some of our analysis of the first inspection reports to be published under the EIF. In this newsletter we'll explore emerging themes and points of interest, but this is just a starting point. We'll be producing more detailed reports in the months that follow – so watch this space!

Happy reading!

Pennie

An overview of the first 250+ reports published

We've started by providing you with an overview of the inspection outcomes. The information in [Table 1.](#) was taken from the first 254 inspection reports to be published under the new inspection framework.

The reports analysed were from the private, voluntary and independent sector, so after school clubs and childminders are not covered in this table.

Table 1. Analysis of inspection outcomes for the first 254 inspection reports to be published under the EIF.

Inspection outcome	Number of reports	Expressed as a percentage
Outstanding	23	9%
Good	186	73%
Requires Improvement (RI)	27	11%
Inadequate	18	7%
Total number of inspections	254	100%

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

Our normal sample size each term is between 600-800 reports (as you can see in [Table 2.](#)) so the data in the green table really is an emerging inspection picture. What we can say is that what we've seen so far is positive as 82% of providers were able to achieve a good or better inspection outcome.

The burning question is...what does that look like in relation to previous terms?

Table 2. Analysis of inspection outcomes under the Common Inspection Framework (CIF).

Inspection Outcome	Inspection outcomes under the Common Inspection Framework					
	Autumn 2018		Spring 2019		Summer 2019	
	No. of reports	Percentage	No. of reports	Percentage	No. of reports	Percentage
Outstanding	97	12%	92	14%	65	11%
Good	570	73%	467	71%	431	72%
RI	77	10%	52	8%	55	9%
Inadequate	41	5%	43	7%	51	8%
Total number of inspections	785	100%	654	100%	602	100%

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

[Table 2.](#) provides an overview of inspection outcomes under the previous framework and although **we can't make a direct comparison between the two tables** because the EIF sample is too small (it's a third of our normal sample size each term), we can look for early indications of significant differences within the data.

As you can see, the distribution of inspection outcomes in the green table is similar to those in the grey; most settings fall within the area of ‘good’ with very few at the top or bottom end of the inspection scale. This mirrors our autumn, spring and summer term inspection data. This is an encouraging picture as changes to the inspection framework have caused a great deal of concern across the sector. **However**, only time will tell if the spread of data continues to mirror that of the previous terms. The pessimist in me would say that we ought not to count our chickens just yet for a couple of reasons:

1. **Many inspectors will still be finding their feet with the new framework** - Anyone who has ever learnt to drive would say that it took them a while to gain confidence behind the wheel but that their confidence grew with practice. Being more cautious when we’re working with or doing something new is inevitable, therefore, we may see more cautious inspection judgements in the short term which could change in the weeks and months that follow.
2. **We know that there’s a much keener focus on the quality of teaching and learning in the new framework** - Inspectors are taking a good look at what we do, how we do it and more time is being spent observing practice, therefore, as time ticks on we could see an increase in the number of settings receiving an RI judgement as a result of ineffective or inconsistent teaching.

Why is our data different to that of Ofsted?

The Ofsted data that is most frequently quoted in reports and news articles is the figure that provides an overview of the ‘overall effectiveness of active early years providers at their most recent inspection’.

The latest data released in August of this year on the Gov.uk website (**Table 3.**) confirmed that 96% of providers on the Early Years Register currently held a good or better inspection outcome and only 4% of providers were rated less than good (Ofsted, 2019).

This is a 1% increase from the year before and an 11% increase since the introduction of the Common Inspection Framework back in 2015 which shows that the quality of provision has continued to climb over the last 4 years.

Table 3. Ofsted inspection outcomes for the whole of the early years sector.

	Number of providers						Percentage of inspected providers			
	EYR providers	Total number inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
As at 31 August 2019	61,162	49,782	9,842	37,761	1,665	514	20	76	3	1
As at 31 August 2018	63,460	51,202	9,741	38,667	2,256	538	19	76	4	1
As at 31 August 2017	65,422	52,498	9,045	40,121	2,794	538	17	76	5	1
As at 31 August 2016	67,254	55,290	8,121	42,183	4,438	548	15	76	8	1
As at 31 August 2015	71,312	58,809	8,656	41,275	8,211	667	15	70	14	1
As at 31 August 2014	76,131	65,301	7,789	44,541	11,868	1,103	12	68	18	2
As at 31 August 2013	79,992	67,349	7,918	44,061	14,397	973	12	65	21	1
As at 31 August 2012	81,920	66,968	7,813	41,723	16,974	458	12	62	25	1

Source: Ofsted’s Childcare Providers and Inspections Charts and Tables as at 31 August 2019 (Table 5).

The termly releases from Ofsted also helpfully break down the data into the categories shown in the diagram opposite. This means that we can start to make a distinction between providers who work in their own homes, the homes of others and those who work from premises designated for business or educational use.

Diagram 1. The make-up of the Early Years Register.



As we typically work with preschools, playgroups and nurseries, we tend to focus our energies on understanding the inspection outcomes for those working in childcare on non-domestic premises which covers sessional care, full day care and out of school provision.

Table 4. provides an overview of the data that was published in August for childcare on non-domestic premises, but again, the data represents each provider’s most recent inspection outcome which means that settings who were inspected last term appear in the same data set as those who may have been inspected more than 5 or 6+ years ago. This data wasn’t really giving us an understanding of what was happening for providers now, so we decided to undertake our own analysis of Ofsted reports.

Table 4. Ofsted inspection outcomes for ‘childcare on non-domestic premises’.

Provision type: <input type="text" value="Childcare on non-domestic premises"/>											
	Number of providers						Percentage of inspected providers				
	EYR providers	Total number inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	
As at 31 August 2019	24,101	19,916	4,675	14,578	442	221	23	73	2	1	
As at 31 August 2018	24,224	19,990	4,584	14,418	744	244	23	72	4	1	
As at 31 August 2017	24,382	20,015	4,156	14,924	704	231	21	75	4	1	
As at 31 August 2016	24,483	20,755	3,586	16,083	884	202	17	77	4	1	
As at 31 August 2015	25,065	21,670	3,788	14,945	2,660	277	17	69	12	1	
As at 31 August 2014	25,539	23,498	3,543	16,023	3,435	497	15	68	15	2	
As at 31 August 2013	25,570	23,367	3,503	15,610	3,807	447	15	67	16	2	
As at 31 August 2012	25,695	23,227	3,356	14,971	4,786	114	14	64	21	0	

Source: Ofsted’s Childcare Providers and Inspections Charts and Tables as at 31 August 2019 (Table 5).

Reviewing the content of individual reports each term has enabled us to provide the sector with a greater level of knowledge about inspection outcomes and trends. We are not only able to drill down to the level of actions and recommendations, but we can separate data into groups such as out of school clubs, sessional care and full day care.

As out of school clubs do not have a statutory duty to deliver the **learning and development requirements** within the EYFS we have focused our attention on those delivering sessional and full day care for the purpose of this report.

Current and previous inspection outcomes

Inspection outcomes provide a useful overview, but they don’t give us an understanding of what sits behind those figures and percentages.

Although inspection grades are important, the most interesting and revealing data is found in the comparison of previous and current inspection outcomes. Tables such as **Table 5.** allow us to understand whether providers were able to sustain their previous inspection outcome, whether they did better and when grades dropped.

This type of data (when used at regular intervals) provides a valuable insight into how the sector copes when significant changes occur.

So, what have we noticed so far?

Table 5. A map of previous to current inspection outcomes.

		Current Grade under the EIF			
		Inadequate	RI	Good	Out'
Previous Grade	Inadequate	4	4	13	0
	RI	2	3	33	0
	Good	7	8	65	3
	Out'	4	5	36	18
	NPI	1	7	39	2
	Totals	18	27	186	23

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

New providers

We're starting with the bottom of the table because your eyes are likely to be drawn to the letters 'NPI'. NPI stands for 'not previously inspected'. These are newcomers to the sector; they will have opened within the last 30 months and they make up nearly 20% of our EIF sample (which could be attributed to the development of places to meet the '30 hour' demand).

We're pointing this out because the number of closures in the sector can sometimes be masked by the number of new providers opening.

Table 5a. Inspection outcomes for new early years providers under the EIF.

		Current Grade under the EIF			
		Inadequate	RI	Good	Out'
Previous Grade	Inadequate	4	4	13	0
	RI	2	3	33	0
	Good	7	8	65	3
	Out'	4	5	36	18
	NPI	1	7	39	2
	Totals	18	27	186	23

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

Those who maintained the same grade

The orange diagonal line that you can see here is for settings who maintained the same inspection outcome, so outstanding to outstanding, good to good, etc.

The first thing to say is that there will always be a small number of providers who struggle to achieve a good inspection outcome, but it's pleasing to see that such a large number of providers were able to sustain their good grades.

Table 5b. Inspection outcomes for those who maintained their previous grade.

		Current Grade under the EIF			
		Inadequate	RI	Good	Out'
Previous Grade	Inadequate	4	4	13	0
	RI	2	3	33	0
	Good	7	8	65	3
	Out'	4	5	36	18
	NPI	1	7	39	2
	Totals	18	27	186	23

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

The story for outstanding providers in this small sample, however, is very different... only 18 settings out of a possible 63 were able to sustain their previous outcome of outstanding, which is around 7% of our sample. This means that less than a 3rd were able to sustain their outstanding grade under the new framework.

It's far too early to say with any accuracy whether this is due to the fact that outstanding is no longer a best fit judgement (to achieve outstanding in the new framework a provider will need to meet all of the good and outstanding criteria, demonstrating that practice is both secure and consistent) but it is something that we'll be keeping a close eye on.

Those who improved their grade

This part of the table shows all the settings that were able to improve on their previous inspection outcome.

The numbers that immediately stand out are for the settings who were able to move from either an inadequate or RI outcome to good. This is significant because when a setting receives an RI outcome local authorities are strongly encouraged to remove 2-year-old funding where there is an oversupply of provision in an area.

Table 5c. Inspection outcomes for those who improved their grade.

		Current Grade under the EIF			
		Inadequate	RI	Good	Out'
Previous Grade	Inadequate	4	4	13	0
	RI	2	3	33	0
	Good	7	8	65	3
	Out'	4	5	36	18
	NPI	1	7	39	2
	Totals	18	27	186	23

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

The situation is far worse for any setting who receives an inadequate inspection outcome. Local authorities have a statutory duty to withdraw all funding as soon as is practically possible. It is, therefore, pleasing to see that settings have found a way to manage these financial penalties and are riding out the storm to their next inspection point.

Those whose grades dropped

Lastly, is the picture for settings that did less well. The numbers of greatest interest here are for settings that went from a good or outstanding grade to either RI or inadequate.

These settings, by and large, tend to have been inspected toward the beginning of the previous inspection cycle which means that it could have been 5 or 6+ years since they were last inspected; most were not inspected under the Common Inspection framework before receiving an EIF inspection.

Table 5d. Inspection outcomes for those whose grades dropped.

		Current Grade under the EIF			
		Inadequate	RI	Good	Out'
Previous Grade	Inadequate	4	4	13	0
	RI	2	3	33	0
	Good	7	8	65	3
	Out'	4	5	36	18
	NPI	1	7	39	2
	Totals	18	27	186	23

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

Trending areas of practice

The real understanding of what's happening during inspections is found in the actions and recommendations made by inspectors. Analysing this information enables us to better understand where there may be gaps in knowledge across the sector, where large numbers of settings are struggling to implement practice effectively and more interestingly when Ofsted have refocused their energies on a specific area of practice. **Table 6.** highlights areas of practice that have appeared with frequency within RI and inadequate reports over the academic year 2018-2019.

Table 6. Areas that appear with frequency within RI and inadequate inspection reports.

Rank	Inspection areas in autumn 2018	Rank	Inspection areas in spring 2019	Rank	Inspection areas in summer 2019
1 st	Management of staff	1 st	Management of staff	1 st	Management of staff
2 nd	Planning and challenge	Joint 3 rd	Safeguarding knowledge and practice	Joint 3 rd	Safeguarding knowledge and practice
3 rd	Monitoring activities and self-evaluation	Joint 3 rd	Planning and challenge	Joint 3 rd	Planning and challenge
4 th	Safeguarding knowledge and practice	4 th	Monitoring activities and self-evaluation	4 th	Monitoring activities and self-evaluation
5 th	Observation, assessment & next steps	5 th	Suitable people	5 th	Observation, assessment & next steps

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

This is just 3 terms' worth of data, but over the last 9 terms we have tended to find that most of our trending areas stay the same from one term to the next – it's just the order in which they appear that differs. It is through our analysis of actions and recommendations that we are able to pick up subtle changes in the use of language which may highlight a greater level of scrutiny on a specific area of practice or a more rigorous approach from inspectors.

So, the key questions are: are we seeing any early indications that this grouping may change? And have we been able to pick up any changes in language due to the introduction of terms like intent, implementation, impact and cultural capital?

Changes in actions and recommendations?

In this last section, we've provided an overview of where we've seen the most actions and recommendations in this sample (Table 7.). Normally, we'd review between 500 to 600 actions and recommendations per term with our top 3 trends amassing anything from 60-90 individual action points.

So, what have we seen so far?

As in previous terms there continues to be a large grouping of inspection issues around the management of staff and planning and challenge...

Table 7. Areas that are starting to appear with frequency in the EIF.

Rank	Inspection areas under the EIF	No. of actions / recommendations
1 st	Management of staff	38
2 nd	Planning and challenge	31
3 rd	Curriculum knowledge and delivery	29
4 th	Management of behaviour	28
5 th	Safeguarding knowledge and practice	21

Source: Early Years Fundamentals Ltd.

But what is unusual is that we have already seen more issues around curriculum knowledge and delivery and the management of behaviour than we would usually see in a term's worth of data. Our initial thoughts are that this increase is due to the focus on 'Behaviour and Attitudes' and on communication and language.

More information

If you'd like more information on the actions and recommendations made and their focus, we have produced a more detailed report for our members. We hope that this additional information will help leaders and managers to target professional development opportunities and to enhance their monitoring and self-evaluation processes.

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