

# Ofsted gets tough on teaching, safeguarding and safety <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

Ofsted's new early years inspection framework, which comes into force on 4 November, will focus on safeguarding, safety and teaching.

Sue Gregory, national director for early childhood at Ofsted, said the new framework will have a really strong emphasis on teaching.

'I'm not making any apologies for this. All people working in early years are teachers in one way or another,' she said.

Settings must focus on children's learning as well as care, and be prepared to provide 'structure and routine' as well as follow children's interests.

Ofsted will also shortly be carrying out surveys with childminders, pre-schools, nurseries and children's centres, to look at the best examples of teaching. A report on this will be published in April next year.

The new framework will also assess settings on children's readiness to start school.

Ms Gregory stressed that by this she did 'not mean the ability of children to sit down and colour in a worksheet', but whether, for example, 'children are toilet-trained, can write their own name at the age of rising five, [and] are interested in books.'

Under the new inspection regime inspectors will take into account what providers tell them about the setting when making their judgements, 'not just a snapshot of a couple of hours.'

On safety and safeguarding, in future Ofsted will also make sure that inspectors check settings have verified the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children.

'You would be horrified if you knew how many settings had not in the past,' Ms Gregory said.

She added that there had been some 'tragic cases' and that, 'by being tougher about basic requirements we are making things safer for children. If provision for children's learning is good, but if it's not a safe environment and the staff don't have a good understanding of safeguarding issues it's hard to say that's a good setting.'

Following feedback from providers the new judgement for 'requires improvement' will also have some descriptors, and these are now available on the Ofsted website.

Inspectors have been undergoing training in recent weeks in readiness for the new framework.

Pre-schools and nurseries will be monitored by HMI inspectors who will look at their action plans.

If settings are judged to 'require' improvement they will be visited by an inspector after around six months to support them and find out what they are doing to improve and re-inspected again within 12 months.

Inadequate settings will be inspected again after just six months.

Ofsted will also soon be consulting on the inspection of childminding agencies and will develop a framework for inspecting agencies, pending the Children and Families Bill, currently going through Parliament.

Ms Gregory, who was speaking at 4 Children's conference, also shared some statistics from Ofsted's annual report, to be published next month.

Figures from this show that brand new providers were doing better than existing ones, with 74 per cent of new settings inspected in the last year judged as good or better.

Statistics for existing providers show that 33 per cent remained satisfactory, nine per cent declined, but 58 per cent had improved to good or outstanding.

Ms Gregory attributed this to the impact of the Nutbrown review and better training coming into the system.

But she acknowledged that since 2012 there have been more settings graded inadequate and fewer outstanding grades.

'We're making it harder for unskilled people to come into the world of early education and childcare,' she said.

'And I think that's partly why we're seeing the first inspections of new providers are better, because we don't anymore say you can be

registered and then some time in the future you will be trained. Now we say you've got to be trained before you're registered.

'We're giving more support to providers that are not yet good. We'll be doing that from November when we introduce the new inspection framework and we will be tougher on inadequate providers.'

-reprinted from Nursery World

**Region:** Europe <sup>[2]</sup>

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