**Early Years Inspection Handbook, August 2015**

*Ofsted grade descriptors for achieving a*

*‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ inspection outcome*

***Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management***

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| **Outstanding (1)**   * The pursuit of excellence in all of the setting’s activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising, highly successful drive to improve achievement or maintain the highest levels of achievement for all children. * Incisive evaluation of the impact of staff’s practice leads to rigorous performance management, supervision and highly focused professional development. As a result, teaching is highly effective or improving rapidly. * Leaders and managers actively seek, evaluate and act on the views of parents, staff and children to drive continual improvement. * Highly effective monitoring identifies where children may be slow to develop key skills so that specific programmes of support are implemented to help them catch up. Gaps in achievement between different groups of children, especially those for whom the setting receives additional funding, are negligible or closing. * The provider has an excellent knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and implements them highly effectively. * Leaders’ deep understanding of the curriculum and how to apply it to meet the needs and interests of children results in all staff planning highly effective activities. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared to move on, including, where appropriate, to school. * Leaders set high standards for children’s behaviour at all times. Exemplary relationships between staff provide an excellent model for children’s behaviour towards each other. * Highly effective partnership working leads to improvement in provision and outcomes for children and their families. * The promotion of equality, diversity and British values is at the heart of the setting’s work. It is demonstrated through all its practices, preventing including tackling any instances of discrimination and being alert to potential risks from radicalisation and extremism. * Safeguarding and welfare meet statutory requirements. Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance where children’s welfare is actively promoted. Children are listened to and feel safe. Staff are trained to identify and support children who may be at risk of neglect or abuse and they report any concerns. Work with partner agencies to safeguard children’s welfare is effective. |
| **Good (2)**   * Leaders and managers are ambitious and communicate high expectations to all. Self-evaluation is accurate and includes the views of parents, staff and children. Actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of provision, as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage, are carefully planned, concerted and effective. * An effective and well-established programme of professional development helps practitioners to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice. Through effective systems for supervision and performance management, practitioners are monitored regularly and under-performance is tackled swiftly. As a result, teaching is consistently strong or improving steadily. * Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides a broad range of interesting and demanding experiences that help children to make progress towards reaching the early learning goals. As a result, children are well prepared to move on, including, where appropriate, to school. * Monitoring ensures that individual children or groups of children who have identified needs are targeted and appropriate interventions are secured so that children receive the support they need, including through effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers. * Relationships between staff provide a good model from which children learn about how to behave towards others. Leaders have high expectations for consistently good behaviour. * Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively to narrow gaps in outcomes. Partnerships with local providers are leading to improvements in provision and outcomes for children in the setting. * Leaders and managers actively promote equality, diversity and British values through all policies and practice. They tackle instances of discrimination effectively. * Safeguarding is effective and the setting meets statutory welfare requirements. The provider ensures that staff have a good understanding of how to manage, and minimise, risks for children without limiting opportunities for their development. Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, including safer recruitment, are implemented consistently; practice is reviewed regularly and clearly evaluated. |

**Grade descriptors for teaching, learning and assessment**

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| **Outstanding (1)**   * All practitioners have very high expectations of what each child can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged. * Teaching is consistently of a very high quality, inspirational and worthy of dissemination to others; it is highly responsive to children’s needs. * Practitioners use their expert knowledge of the areas of learning and deep understanding of how children learn to provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences that enthuse, engage and motivate children to learn. * Accurate assessment, including through high quality observations, is rigorous and sharply focused and includes all those involved in the child’s learning and development. Where appropriate, children are involved in the process. Information from assessment is used to secure timely interventions and support, based on a comprehensive knowledge of the child and their family. * Provision across all areas of learning is planned meticulously and based on regular and precise assessments of children’s achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities. * Highly successful strategies engage parents, including those from different groups, in their children’s learning, both in the setting and at home. * Practitioners provide an exceptional range of resources and activities that reflect and value the diversity of children’s experiences. They actively challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping and help children gain an understanding of people, families and communities beyond their immediate experience. * The extremely sharp focus on helping children to acquire communication and language skills, and on supporting their physical, personal, social and emotional development, gives children the foundations for future learning. |
| **Good (2)**  Practitioners have high expectations of all children based on accurate assessment of children’s skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the setting.  The quality of teaching is consistently strong. Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve.  Practitioners make regular and precise assessments of children’s learning that they use effectively to plan suitably challenging activities. They observe carefully, question skilfully and listen perceptively to children during activities in order to re-shape activities and give children explanations that improve their learning.  Practitioners teach the basics well and support children to learn the communication and language skills and develop the physical, personal, social and emotional skills they need for the next steps in their learning. Where appropriate, early literacy skills and mathematical development are promoted effectively to ensure that children are ready for school.  The key person system works effectively to engage parents, including those who may be more reluctant to contribute, in their children’s learning. Parents contribute to initial assessments of children’s starting points on entry and they are kept well informed about their children’s progress. Parents are encouraged to support and share information about their children’s learning and development at home.  Practitioners provide a wide range of opportunities for children to learn about people and communities beyond their immediate experience. Resources and activities reflect and value the diversity of children’s backgrounds and experiences. |

**Grade descriptors for personal development, behaviour and welfare**

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| **Outstanding (1)**   * The highly stimulating environment and wide range of activities ensure that children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently show the characteristics of effective learning. They show high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. Older children listen intently and are highly responsive to adults and each other. * Children’s health, welfare and well-being are significantly enhanced by the vigilant and highly consistent implementation of robust policies, procedures and practice. High standards of care and hygiene practice support the personal care needs of babies and toddlers. * Practitioners are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children of all ages form secure emotional attachments. This gives children a strong base for developing their independence to explore their world and increases their confidence in their own abilities. * Children increasingly show high levels of confidence in social situations. They develop a positive sense of themselves and their place in the world. They develop a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to manage risks and challenges. * The strong skills of all key persons ensure that all children are emotionally well prepared for the next stages in their learning. Practitioners skilfully support children’s transitions both within the setting and to other settings and prepare them for the move to school. * Children demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others that are appropriate for their age. They do not distract others or become distracted themselves. * Children’s welfare and personal development are central to everything practitioners do. They are very effective in supporting children’s growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. * Practitioners give children a wide range of experiences that promote understanding of people, families and communities beyond their own. They teach children the language of feelings and give them opportunities to reflect on their differences. |
| **Good (2)**   * Practitioners provide a stimulating, welcoming environment, both indoors and out, that keeps children motivated and interested in a broad range of activities. Children are keen learners who regularly display the characteristics of effective learning. They listen carefully to adults and each other. * A well-established key person system helps children form secure attachments and promotes their well-being and independence. Relationships between staff and babies are sensitive, stimulating and responsive. * Practitioners adhere consistently to agreed strategies to promote good behaviour and regular attendance. They provide clear guidance for children about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. * Practitioners help children to become independent in managing their own personal needs. * Key persons ensure children are emotionally well prepared for the next stages in their learning. * Children’s good behaviour shows that they feel safe. They gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment. * Practitioners give clear messages to children about why it is important to have a healthy diet and the need for physical exercise while providing these things within the setting. * Children are learning to respect and celebrate each other’s differences. They develop an understanding of diversity beyond their immediate family experience through a range of activities that teach them effectively about people in the wider world. |

**Grade descriptors for outcomes for children**

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| **Outstanding (1)**   * Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. * Almost all children in the provision, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the setting receives additional funding and the most able, are making substantial and sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement. * Gaps between the attainment of groups of children in the setting, including those for whom the setting receives additional funding, have closed or are closing rapidly. Any differences between outcomes in different areas of learning are closing. * Children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. |
| **Good (2)**   * Children make at least typical progress and most children make progress that is better than typical from their starting points. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the setting receives additional funding and the most able. * Where children’s starting points are below those of other children of their age, assessment shows they are improving consistently over a sustained period and the gap is closing. Any gaps between the attainment of groups, including those for whom the setting receives additional funding, are closing. * Children are working comfortably within the range of development typical for their age, taking account of any whose starting points are higher or any disabled children and those with special educational needs. * Children develop the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning, including, where appropriate, for starting school. |

**Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness**

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| **Outstanding (1)**   * The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. * All other key judgements are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgements may be good as long as there is convincing evidence that this area is improving rapidly and securely towards outstanding. * Safeguarding is effective. * There are no breaches of statutory requirements. |
| **Good (2)**   * The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good. * All other key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgement areas may require improvement as long as there is convincing evidence that it is improving rapidly and securely towards good. * Safeguarding is effective. |

*Taken from ‘Early Years Inspection Handbook’ August 2015 no. 150068. Please refer to the full document on* [*www.gov.uk*](http://www.gov.uk) *for further support and information on the inspection process.*