



## OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education)

Ofsted is the governmental department responsible for the regulation and inspection of care for children and young people. It is also responsible for inspecting education and training for learners of all ages, including both primary and secondary schools.

With the exception of schools, any provider that regularly cares for children aged under 8 years of age for a period of 2 hours or more must, by law, be registered with Ofsted.

In order to obtain registration, Ofsted will first ensure that a number of requirements have been met. This includes suitability checks on the applicant and anyone else likely to have unsupervised contact with the children in their care, usually in the form of a Criminal Records (CRB) check. The provider must also demonstrate that they have completed training in paediatric first aid and that they hold a childcare qualification and public liability insurance. Furthermore, Ofsted will always visit the premises at which the care will take place to ensure that it is suitable, and to outline to the provider the number of children that they are able to care for within a strict outline of staff to child ratios.

Providers are inspected prior to registration, unless the registration is voluntary.

Since the 1st September 2008, a new registration and inspection framework was introduced in the form of 2 new childcare registers:

- **The Early Years Register (EYR)** for providers of childcare for children from birth until the 31st August following a child's fifth birthday. Providers on this register are required to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- **The Ofsted Childcare Register (OCR)**, which is broken down further into 2 parts:
  - a compulsory register for providers of childcare for children from the 1st September following a child's fifth birthday until 8 years of age, and
  - a voluntary register for those providing childcare for children aged over 8 years of age or who are not required to be registered, for example nannies, activity-based settings like sports clubs, and short-term care such as some crèches.

Providers who care for children in both the 0-5 year and 5-8 year age categories are placed onto both registers. Please note that registration on either of these registers means that parents are able to obtain financial assistance for using registered care in the form of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and/or through employer-supported childcare vouchers.

Ofsted inspects providers registered on the EYR approximately once every 3 years to ensure that they are complying with the requirements of the EYFS. Providers on the OCR are inspected proportionately on the basis of risk, as opposed to a pre-determined cycle. Ofsted aims to inspect approximately 10% of OCR providers every year. Some of these inspections may be triggered by complaints, while the rest will be randomly selected.

Parents and others with an interest in childcare can inform Ofsted if they suspect that a provider is operating without registration, or if they have concerns about the quality of care. Ofsted will always inspect a provider following a complaint relating to the conditions of registration. Contact details for Ofsted can be found overleaf.

## What is the EYFS?

The EYFS is a statutory framework for early learning and childcare for children from birth up until the age of 5. All providers for children of this age group must meet the standards and requirements outlined in the EYFS booklet, which means that parents can be confident that all care provided for children of this age will be inspected against common standards in care and education.

## Inspections

Ofsted inspections usually occur without warning and involve the inspector visiting the setting and talking to parents, the children in the care and staff with regard to the inspection framework and all its requirements.

Following inspection, Ofsted will publish a report on its website and provide a copy to the provider. This report will tell you about the quality of the childcare service, what it does well and what it needs to improve. You can gain a copy of these reports either from the childcare provider directly or on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) by entering the postcode for the area you are looking for. You are also able to find inspection reports for schools on this website. The provider must ensure that it provides a copy of this to parents of children using the provision free of charge.

The reports are categorised into 4 grades:

- Outstanding – exceptional provision with excellent outcomes for children and where inspectors make few, if any, recommendations.
- Good – strong provision, where practice is worth reinforcing and developing
- Satisfactory – sound and acceptable provision, but inspectors will make recommendations for further improvement
- Inadequate, split into 2 categories:
  - Category 1 – weak provision giving cause for concern, but which is likely to improve without outside help. The provider is given a ‘notice to improve’ and inspected again within 6-12 months.
  - Category 2 – poor provision needing urgent attention where the children may not be adequately safeguarded and which is unlikely to improve without external assistance. Re-inspection will occur within an agreed timescale, if the provision is still not satisfactory the provider’s registration may be cancelled.

If you cannot find a report for the provider you are interested in, it could be for the following reasons:

- The inspection may have taken place recently and the report is still being published.
- The provider is newly registered and has not yet had its first inspection.
- The type of care the provider offers does not require registration (e.g. a crèche running for less than 2 hours).

All childcare providers are required to display their registration certificate during their hours of operation so that you can see it easily. Each certificate gives information about the childcare provision and where applicable any conditions of registration. Childcare providers are also required to investigate any written complaint that is made which relates to the registration requirements. They must keep a record of such complaint/s and share the results of any investigation with the person(s) who made the complaint.

For further information, you may contact Ofsted directly by:

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<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>		St Ann’s Square
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