

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Report to Inner West area committee

Date: 04 March 2014

Subject: Readiness for learning and the inequality gap at age 5

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of ward(s):	Armley, Bramley and Stanningley	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. Ensuring all children have appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes for ‘readiness for learning’ is fundamental to ensuring children have the best start to their primary phase of education. How well children fare in relation to reaching the national expected levels of development, and their dispositions and attitudes to learning, at the end of the foundation years is both a local and city wide issue.
2. Is there common understanding and agreement between partners on what constitutes ‘readiness for learning’?
3. Leeds is ranked 152 out of 152 local authorities for the ‘inequality gap’ measure at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Locally, between a third and just under half of children meet the national ‘good level of development’ measure. This can place children at a disadvantage as they move into key stage one.

Recommendations

4. Within the context of Priority 4 – supporting children to be ready for learning - discuss whether local priorities may be required to improve outcomes for children leaving the end of the foundation stage to ensure children are ready for key stage one.
5. Use existing local partnerships to encourage and support collaborative working between schools and non-school settings to ensure children are meeting age related

expectations at the end of the EYFS. Such 'learning communities' will provide the opportunity to find local solutions to the readiness to learn issue.

6. Provide opportunities for partners across the foundation years to discuss and agree what 'readiness for learning' looks like at a local level. Do partners, across health, education and others, recognise and acknowledge the significant period of growth, development and learning that takes place between the birth of a child and the time they enter school? Ensure they use this as a key driver to improve young children's development through local priorities.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides a brief overview of the statutory assessment outcomes at the end of the foundation stage at both a city wide and local level. It presents information on the composition of early years providers and local outcomes within the area with the aim of stimulating discussion and greater understanding on the notion of 'readiness to learn' as children move into key stage one from their foundation years experience.

2 Background information

- 2.1 A good start in the early years has a major impact on a child's future life chances. It is crucial for their future success that children's early experiences build a secure foundation for learning throughout school and beyond. High quality early years experiences lead to improved early learning outcomes and ensure that children make good, or rapid, progress in their learning from their starting points.
- 2.2 Evidence shows that where children attend an Ofsted judged good or better early education setting, greater progress is made between years 2 and 6 in English and Maths (EPPE 2012).
- 2.3 The early years sector across Leeds is diverse with a mix of childminders, local authority Children's Centre day care, private day nursery provision and maintained, independent and non-maintained schools providing early education and childcare places. Whilst this diversity is beneficial for parental choice, this combination can be complex for the local authority to monitor, challenge and support.
- 2.4 All early years providers, including schools, must adhere to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. The EYFS is a comprehensive statutory framework published in 2012 by the Department for Education. The framework sets standards for development, learning and care of children from birth to the age of five.
- 2.5 The EYFS framework requires all schools to complete a teacher based, best fit assessment for children reaching the end of the foundation stage, generally the Reception year in primary school. This assessment is commonly known as the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).
- 2.6 The assessment framework for early years changed in the 2012/13 academic year and results from previous years are not comparable. In the first year of any assessment against a new framework, results tend to be more volatile than for a framework that has been in place for a number of years, as schools will be making judgements for the first time against a new set of developmental milestones: the early learning goals which are the national, expected level of development children are expected to reach before entering key stage one.
- 2.7 There are two headline indicators when measuring performance in the early years: the percentage of children achieving a good level of development and the Department for Education term the 'inequality gap in achievement' indicator.

- 2.8 The good level of development measure is the percentage of children who achieve at least the expected level in the prime areas of learning and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics. The prime areas of learning are: communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development.
- 2.9 On the good level of development indicator, performance in Leeds is above or in line with all core cities and above or in line with eight out of our ten statistical neighbour authorities. Leeds ranks =67th when compared to all local authorities nationally which places Leeds in the third quartile.
- 2.10 The 'inequality gap in achievement' indicator is measured as the percentage gap in achievement between the lowest 20 per cent of achieving children in a local authority (mean score), and the score of the median across 17 early learning goals taken from the prime and specific areas of learning¹.
- 2.11 On the inequality gap indicator, Leeds is ranked the lowest local authority in the country. Six out of our ten statistical neighbours are also in the bottom quartile for this measure and six out of the ten core cities (including Leeds) are in the bottom quartile.
- 2.12 Table 1 shows how Leeds compares against national data, statistical neighbours and core cities on the two measures.

Table 1 - 2013 Early Years Foundation Stage headline indicators

	Leeds	National	Stat neighbours	Core cities
% good level of development	51	52	48	48
% inequality gap	44.6	36.6	39.0	39.6

Source: DfE Statistical First Release, ref: SFR43/2013

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Clearly, outcomes for Leeds' bottom 20% children are not desirable. Based on these outcomes a significant number of children are not working securely at age related expectations and are therefore not ready to move into key stage one.
- 3.2 Despite a 93-98% take up of Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) across the Inner West area, between 30.6% and 43.8% of children reached a 'good level of development' at the end of the EYFS in 2013, significantly below the Leeds average of 51%.
- 3.3 Variations in the percentage of children scoring 17 points (not meeting expected levels of development at the end of the EYFS) exist across the Inner West area at

¹ The prime and specific areas are: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding the World.

an individual school level. This ranges from no children in one school to 26 children within another.

3.4 An investigation of the achievement gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean in Leeds identified the following which may be reflected in the characteristics of the Inner West area. Further analysis of these characteristics at a local level may be possible if requested for a later date.

3.4.1 Variation in score by Cluster, Reach Area and school

Table 6 shows that children attending schools in the inner areas of Leeds are much more likely to be in the LA bottom 20%. For example, half of the children attending schools in the C.H.E.S.S. cluster are in the bottom 20%. Other clusters with disproportionately high numbers in the bottom 20% are J.E.S.S., Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton, ACES, Inner East, Bramley and Seacroft Manston. NETWORKS and OPEN XS clusters have relatively few in the bottom 20%, despite high levels of deprivation. Investigation at a school level has revealed considerable variation between outcomes in schools in the same area (table 7). Even in areas which have high overall proportions of children scoring only 17 points, some schools have relatively small numbers of children scoring at this lowest level.

3.4.2 Gender

In Leeds, 5.9% of girls scored 17 points compared to 10.3% of boys; nationally only 2.5% of girls and 5% of boys scored 17 points. The gender gap is therefore greater in Leeds than nationally at the bottom score (4.4% in Leeds, 2.5% nationally).

3.4.3 Ethnicity

Outcomes for children with an additional language were significantly worse than for children whose first language is English. Almost 16% of EAL (English as an additional language) children scored only 17 points and 38% of EAL children were in the Leeds bottom 20%. The ethnic groups with the highest proportion of children scoring only 17 points are of Gypsy Roma, Bangladeshi, Kashmiri and Pakistani, Traveller, and White Eastern European heritage.

Local updates

3.5 Table one below presents a summary of the quality of early years providers in the area by Ofsted outcome and provider type. Further early years indicators are available in Appendix 1. Across the Inner West area the majority of 3 and 4 year old places are provided by CC day care and school nursery providers. No early years provision is rated as outstanding. However, 100% of group provision in the Bramley CC reach area is judged as good.

Table one: summary of early years providers by Ofsted outcome and Children's Centre Reach Area

	Armley CC Reach Area			Bramley CC Reach Area			Castleton CC Reach Area			Hollybush CC Reach Area		
	Childminder	Day nursery	OOSC ²	Childminder	Day nursery	OOSC	Childminder	Day nursery	OOSC	Childminder	Day nursery	OOSC
Outstanding												

² Out of School Club

Good	8	1		10	4	2	2	1		5		
RI	2		1	9			2		1	5	1	2
Inadequate				1								

Source: Leeds Family Information Service

3.6 To improve the percentage of providers judged good or better, the Learning improvement team (0-5) are implementing a revised Early Years Improvement Strategy to challenge providers and provide targeted support where the capacity of provider's leadership to improve is limited. This can be challenging where such provision is a private business and not managed by the local authority.

3.7 Three area based Early Years Review Groups, chaired by the Head of Learning Improvement, are also being established to monitor quality and children's learning outcomes from birth to 5. This will include a West area group.

What works well

3.8 Children's centres in the inner west including Armley, Castleton, Farnley, Bramley and Hollybush, are integrated with 2 health visiting service teams covering this area. Armley, Castleton and Farnley with the Thornton health visiting team and Bramley and Hollybush with the Bramley health visiting team.

3.9 The integration of Children's Centres with health visiting services, now known as Early Start teams, has ensured that 100% of children under the age of 5 are known to the service and targeted families identified with the vast majority engaged in services. Early Start managers report improvements across outcomes have been enhanced as a result of this integration based on starting points of both children and families.

3.10 In Bramley, the integration of health visiting services was a natural development to the already established Cluster Family Support Team which included children centre Family Outreach Workers and cluster family support workers working across the 0-19 agenda.

3.11 The impact of the work of the Family Support Team is best evidenced by the reduction in the number of children who are 'looked after', a reduction in the number of children who are subject to a Child Protection and a reduction in referrals to Children Social Work Service.

3.12 Children's centre teachers are reporting a positive impact of the expansion of the funded 2 year old offer to eligible parents. For example, eight children who transferred to primary school in September 2013 from Armley Children's Centre made rapid progress in their learning with all eight working at age related expectations on exit from the Children's centre. Feedback reports all eight have settled well into school and are progressing well in their Reception classes.

3.13 Established and productive 'learning communities' such as the ACES Early Years Cluster Network, work well when they are represented by practitioners from across schools, children's centres and other early years providers. Practitioners from these settings undertake a range of activities such as moderation of assessments, professional development and embedding transition arrangements. These should be encouraged and established across the Inner West area and

strive to include practitioners from private, voluntary and home based early years providers.

- 3.14 Children's centre teachers report that the rate at which children move in and out of the area, and between settings, is high and impacts negatively on children's learning and development. The network is committed to sharing information about children and is working collaboratively to share information about children at the point of transition.

Support needed

- 3.15 Feedback from providers indicated the need for:
- increased understanding of the transient nature of the local community – moving in and out of the area and also moving to new addresses/settings within the area – and the huge impact this has on a child's ability to learn. The settling in process cannot be rushed if it is to be productive;
 - a universal, local authority system for monitoring children's stage of development from birth to the end of the EYFS so that children's progress can be tracked easily across and within settings and
 - support for learning and ESOL courses as increasingly more languages are being spoken across the community. The ability to engage families in the learning process would be invaluable.
- 3.16 At a strategic level, a number of actions have already been put into place to address the poor outcomes seen at a city wide level. A general comment from a recent meeting with youth councillors and Children's Trust Board members highlighted that the importance of pre-school learning and how this supports overall child development, is not always shared. It is hoped the refreshed 0-5 yr Early Education and Childcare Partnership Board will aid an improved awareness and understanding of early learning with our partners.
- 3.17 Although EYFS Profile assessments are undertaken at the end of Reception, the responsibility to improve outcomes for children rests with all early years providers and partners. As there is no national data for attainment on entry to nursery and reception class, no prescribed methods of assessing children when they start school and no standardised expectations for three- and four-year-olds on entry to nursery and reception it is becoming increasingly imperative to revisit the need for a local authority based 'tracking system'. This would enable the local authority to monitor, and providers to intervene in a timely and appropriate way in children's learning as they progress through the EYFS and move from setting to school.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.4 This report is for area committee meetings, which involve a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Consultation and engagement is integral to the work of

Children's Services and the Children's Trust, as evidenced in child friendly city work.

4.2 Equality and diversity/cohesion and integration

4.1 Some of the data highlights equality and diversity that need to be addressed as part of Children's Services response to the readiness to learn agenda.

4.3 Council policies and city priorities

4.3.1 A proportion of the information included in this report relates to the city priorities for children and young people and the outcomes contained in the CYPP.

4.3.2 Resources and value for money

4.3.3 There are no financial decisions arising from this report/

4.4 Legal implications, access to information and call in

4.4.1 This report is not eligible for call in, due to being a Council function.

4.5 Risk management

4.5.1 There are no risk management implications in this report. The priorities reflected in this report are monitored through Leeds City Council performance and, where appropriate, risk management processes.

5 Conclusions

5.1 As a result of an investigation into last years outcomes the local authority has a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of the bottom 20% learners. Timely and direct action is being taken to communicate, challenge and promote appropriate and consistent assessments at the end of EYFS.

5.2 Early years providers and schools are progressively mindful of the need to adjust the curriculum and provision to meet the needs of children to ensure they make better progress in the areas they need to catch up most.

5.3 In order to improve the outcomes of the bottom 20% of learners early years providers are aware of the need of not just focussing on the more traditional areas such as literacy and mathematics but the broader, prime and specific areas which provide the range of experiences and opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge and skills.

5.4 The role of parents and/or carers in supporting their child's learning is a vital element to improving outcomes. It is crucial parents and/or carers are valued and seen as partners to improving children's learning outcomes. Practitioners have a responsibility to share information on children's progress and ideas in order to provide a best start in early home learning.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Within the context of Priority 4 – supporting children to be ready for learning - discuss whether local priorities may be required to improve outcomes for children leaving the end of the foundation stage to ensure children are ready for key stage one.
- 6.2 Use existing local partnerships to encourage and support collaborative working between schools and non-school settings to ensure children are meeting age related expectations at the end of the EYFS. Such 'learning communities' will provide the opportunity to find local solutions to the readiness to learn issue.
- 6.3 Provide opportunities for partners across the foundation years to discuss and agree what 'readiness for learning' looks like at a local level. Do partners, across health, education and others, recognise and acknowledge the significant period of growth, development and learning that takes place between the birth of a child and the time they enter school? Ensure they use this as a key driver to improve young children's development through local priorities.

7 Background documents

- 7.1 There are no background documents to accompany this report.

Appendix one: early years indicators for Inner West area committee

Source: Children's Performance and the Leeds Family Information Service

Table 2: Percentage of under 5's by Children's Centre reach area who live in the 30% most deprived lower super output area

Children's centre reach area	Under 5's resident in 30% most deprived LSOAs
Armley CC	84%
Bramley CC	67%
Castleton CC	65%
Hollybush CC	94%

Table 3: Percentage of 3 and 4 year olds taking up free early education (2011)

Children's centre reach area	% take up
Armley CC	95%
Bramley CC	98%
Castleton CC	93%
Hollybush CC	94%

Table 4: Percentage of settings within each reach area judged good or outstanding

Children's centre reach area	Number of childminders	% of childminders good or outstanding	Number of providers of childcare on non-domestic premises (day nurseries & out of school clubs)	% of providers of childcare on non-domestic premises good or outstanding
Armley CC	10	80%	2	50%
Bramley CC	20	50%	6	100%
Castleton CC	4	50%	2	50%
Hollybush CC	10	50%	3	0%

Table 5: Percentage of children reaching a good level of development by reach area

Children's centre reach area	% reaching a good level of development
Armley CC	36.3%
Bramley CC	42.1%
Castleton CC	43.8%
Hollybush CC	30.6%

Table 6: Proportion of children in each cluster (by school) who are in the Leeds bottom 20%

Cluster	All pupils	Pupils at <=23pts	
		No.	%
ACES	311	101	32.5
Aireborough	397	12	3.0
Alwoodley	350	51	14.6
Ardley & Tingley	222	27	12.2
Beeston, Cottingham and Middleton	437	165	37.8
Bramley	364	115	31.6
Brigshaw	260	25	9.6
C.H.E.S.S.	409	203	49.6
EPOS	406	19	4.7
ESNW	290	41	14.1
Farnley	193	50	25.9
Garforth	261	28	10.7
Horsforth	268	17	6.3
Inner East	657	213	32.4
Inner NW Hub	310	34	11.0
J.E.S.S	607	234	38.6
Morley	510	92	18.0
N.E.X.T.	414	66	15.9
NEtWORKS	270	40	14.8
OPEN XS	204	42	20.6
Otley/Pool/Bramhope	220	27	12.3
Pudsey	628	75	11.9
Rothwell	360	29	8.1
Seacroft Manston	562	160	28.5
Templenewsam Halton	287	71	24.7

Source: NCER KEYPAS (Leeds)

Table 7: Number and percentage of children scoring 17 points, by school, grouped by Cluster

Cluster2013	School	Scoring 17	Total EYSFP Pupils	Percentage of pupils scoring 17
ACES	1	1	26	4%
	2		32	0%
	3	1	28	4%
	4	9	60	15%
	5		29	0%
	6	11	75	15%
	7	12	61	20%
Bramley	1		34	0%
	2	4	36	11%
	3	3	24	13%
	4	5	56	9%
	5	14	54	26%
	6	5	30	17%
	7	4	28	14%
	8		43	0%
	9	8	59	14%

Source: NCER KEYPAS (Leeds)

Table 8: - All Children Scoring 17 points by the Children's Centre Reach Area of their home address

Childrens Centre Reach	Number of children scoring 17	Total number of EYFSP children	Percentage of children in Reach Area scoring 17
Armley Moor CC	23	180	13%
Bramley CC	13	185	7%
Castleton CC	18	159	11%
Hollybush CC	31	209	15%

Source: NCER KEYPAS (Leeds)