

PPEL (Parents and Partners in Early Learning) project report

1 PPEL Summary Report

1.1 Executive Summary

The delivery of the PPEL project in Leeds has been spread across a number of partner organisations and involved practitioners, parents and children from a variety of settings and services.

The project has focussed on the distinct themes of adding value to existing programmes and creating innovative pilots to promote the importance of parental involvement in early learning in schools and the voluntary sector.

The sustainability of project activities has shaped their delivery to ensure that there is a long term strategy in place to involve parents in their children's early learning.

1.2 Background and context

Leeds is the regional capital of Yorkshire and Humberside. It is the second largest metropolitan authority in the country. Leeds differs from most other large metropolitan areas by having an urban centre with surrounding small towns, villages and countryside.

Unlike many other cities, the population of Leeds has grown in recent years to 715,000 people (2001 census). Over 8% of the population are from black and ethnic-minority groups, particularly concentrated in communities such as Beeston, Harehills and Chapeltown. 150,000 people in Leeds live in areas that are amongst the most deprived in the country (Community strategy 2004-2010). The Unemployment rate in the City was 2.3% (NOMIS 2003) and in that year 21.74% of children were living in households some income was from benefits.

The city has seen strong economic growth and investment in recent years.

However, although there is rising prosperity, areas of significant and multiple disadvantage remain. There are sharp and significant differences between some areas, including some of the wealthiest and some of the most deprived areas in England. Leeds can be characterised as a 'two speed city'.

Phase 1 of the Children Centre programme is complete with 29 centres being designated during this phase. A further 18 have been designated in phase 2 serving families in the 30% most deprived wards.

Children Centres services in the form of "7 day response teams" have been re-commissioned from 8 existing local Sure Start programme areas to provide family and parenting support in conjunction with children centres and schools.

Family outreach services provide families with support and information to access the facilities of the Children Centres.

There are around 43074 children under 5 living in Leeds and 75% of 5 year olds are White British.

Foundation Stage Profile results for 2007 show that 47% of pupils in Leeds achieved "a good level of overall achievement" which is defined as having at least

78 points across all strands but at least 6 points in CLLD and PSED strands. This is a four percentage point improvement on 2006 (43%) and is above the national average for 2007(46%).

21.9% of 5 year olds are eligible for free school meals (National average 17.2%) and 15.6% (National average 14.8%) have English as an additional language. There are sufficient free education places for all resident 3 and 4 year olds and 62% of the places are provided by the PVI sector (NEG sufficiency survey, November 2007).

An annual Early Years User survey is conducted with families accessing Children Centres.

In 2007 94% reported satisfaction with the services provided by the centre their child attends.

1.3 Target Communities and groups

The project activities were primarily delivered within the 30% super output areas of Leeds. These areas are spread across the city with the most deprived wards being in the East and South of the city.

Foundation stage profile data from 2007 demonstrates the difference in achievement in children living in the 30% most deprived areas and those living outside of these areas. 35.5% of children in the 30% SOAs achieved 78 points and 6+ points in CLLD and PSED whereas 58.2% of children living outside the 30% SOAs achieved the same indicator.

Where there was no focus on delivery within a specific area activities were directed at supporting children at risk of children of significant underachievement at the end of foundation stage. This included a variety of families who had access to the project activities although absolute targeting of groups was found to be inappropriate due to the nature of the activities.

1.4 Barriers to Parental Involvement

The Leeds PPEL baseline consultation report (Feb. 2007) analysed barriers to parental involvement in terms of communication, engagement and involvement:

1.5 Communication

- Provision of written information does not meet every parent's needs
- Information about the curriculum difficult for some parents to understand
- Unclear arrangements for sharing information at transition to school from nursery
- Parents' using Children Centres reported good communication both at the centre and in their own homes by outreach workers
- Parents' felt that the curriculum was there to help settings achieve targets and if they were given information they would be clearer about the importance of continuing learning at home.

1.5 Engagement

- Investing time and resources in working with parents can be an issue for settings and parental involvement becomes “devalued”
- Parents’ previous negative experience of school can prevent them becoming engaged
- Inconsistent information about setting policies and not enough notice when activities are offered prevents parents attending
- Opportunities for face-to-face contact at school was limited due to small staff teams whereas Children Centres had the benefit of a multi disciplinary staff team and parents could relate to staff from varying disciplines and backgrounds.
- The physical layout of settings as reported as a barrier to engagement. For example one parent reported that they could not wait for their child in the school reception due to health and safety concerns.
- Sharing profiles was one way regular information could be exchanged however parents’ felt that activities and interests outside of school were not as important.

Involvement

- The need and cost of an enhanced CRB check for parents/volunteers
- Male carers find it difficult to become involved in their children’s learning as there is a lack of male Early Years practitioners.
- The opening times of some settings can prevent working parents being involved
- Lack of involvement of parents who do not see their role as important as their child starts nursery or school

From this consultation these barriers to parental involvement were highlighted as a focus for the PPEL project:

- Staff attitudes and use of jargon when communicating with parents
- Judgmental and inflexible services
- Lack of parental self esteem and confidence in own ability

1.6 Outline of project or projects and anticipated outcomes

Outcomes for children

- Improved levels of involvement and well being for children.
- Services and support will be targeted towards children at risk of underachievement at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) e.g. children who have English as an additional language, children with additional needs, looked after children, gypsy roma and traveller children.

Outcomes for parent/ carers

- Improved levels of involvement parents and carers in Children Centres, schools, private and voluntary providers.

- Services have a strong customer focus measured through regular and sustained evaluation of parental satisfaction.
- Increased parental understanding about their children's learning and education
- Increased access to other Children Centre and Extended Services.

Outcomes for practitioners

- Increased staff awareness of barriers to parental involvement such as poor housing, domestic violence, mental health issues etc.
- Improved knowledge of the role of parents in early learning.
- Increased access to resources to support parental involvement in early learning.
- Improved support for staff across all sectors of provision to further develop parental involvement through identified frameworks and strategies.

Outcomes in terms of local authority practice

- A range of support available for children and families from the maintained, voluntary and health sector services to enhance the progress of those likely to underachieve.
- Enhanced progress of children in areas of greatest disadvantage (identified by PSA1 targets) to support the authority's Early Years Outcomes Duty.
- Local dissemination events to celebrate good practice from across the Early Years sector.

1.6.1 Project Activities

The project activities were designed to reduce these barriers to parental involvement particularly through a programme of practitioner and parent training, support for the implementation of the PICL approach in children centres and to add value to a number of successful projects:

Parents, Early Years and Learning (PEAL) training

Parents, Early Years and Learning (PEAL) training was designed to be delivered in children centres and settings in disadvantaged areas to promote the importance of parental involvement in their children's learning. PEAL provides practitioners with a sound evidence base in relation to how to involve parents and why parents are important in improving early attainment. Practitioners are given the opportunity to reflect on current policy and practice within their setting and plan development strategies. As part of the PPEL project the training was targeted at foundation stage practitioners in 40 primary schools. 44 schools sent a total of 87 practitioners to the training between December 2007 and March 2008.

The Hanen Programme training

The Parents as Partners in Early Learning Project has funded the roll-out of Hanen certified speech and language therapist training that will support both early years practitioners and parents of children with a range of early language needs. Fourteen Early Years speech and language therapists were awarded their Hanen certification during the PPEL project and are now able to use the strategies learned during appointments and interventions to support adult-child interaction. Following certification all therapists have been offered advanced options in programmes to train Early Years practitioners, parents and provide tailored support for parents of children on the autistic spectrum.

Developmental Movement Play

Developmental Movement Play (DMP) supports young children's learning and development through their natural desire to move.

The programme is based on neuroscientific theories that link movement to brain and nervous system development as well as an understanding of the value of child-led play. The Parents as Partners in Early Learning (PPEL) has enhanced the delivery and sustainability of Developmental Movement Play by providing additional resources and evaluation of family groups.

Over the last 10 years DMP has been embedded across children centres. Training is given to centres to promote DMP concepts in everyday practice and each centre identifies a lead practitioner(s) to champion the approach and establish family groups.

There are currently 62 lead practitioners who have been accredited through NOCN working in 18 children centres.

Regular network days and visits from the DMP team is offered to lead practitioners to continue their professional development and inform them of different aspects of DMP theory, research and practice.

Lead practitioners are supported to establish family groups where parents can achieve accreditation over a 6 week course. On average 6 families attend the courses.

Parents and practitioners share information about the children's movements and engage in activities to support and enhance these movements.

The courses are unique to each centre in terms of the marketing the group, set up and ages of children attending but the principles, delivery and structure ensure practitioners are offering quality experiences for their families.

Between September 2007 and March 2008 approximately 150 adults (including parents, carers and childminders) and 178 children attended the 6 week courses held by 26 practitioners in 13 children centres.

The Amazing House Project

The Leeds branch of the Pre-school learning alliance has piloted 'The Amazing Rainbow House' quality assurance toolkit and family learning package.

11 baby and toddler/play and stay groups were involved in the project. Each received the support of a pre-school learning alliance development worker who planned family learning sessions with group leaders on story sacks, rhythm and rhyme and 'what's in your cupboard'.

302 adults and 322 children attended the sessions between October 2007 to March 2008 supported by 33 practitioners. The sessions were delivered in a variety of

existing groups such as children centre play and stay, travellers play development group, the grandparent and toddler group and a toddler group held in a city centre church.

Parents Involved in their Children's Learning

27 Children's Centres (and the Travellers Play development team) were given additional funding of £1,000 to support the implementation of the Parents Involved in Children's Learning (PICL) framework following training delivered by the Pen Green Centre. The PICL programme is based on sharing four key child development concepts with parents: involvement, well-being, adult pedagogic strategies and schemas. These concepts are shared primarily through using video technology during study groups, home visits and workshops. In total 55 children centre practitioners have completed the training. The additional funding has supported centres to implement the learning they have acquired through the training. This two pronged approach should enable the trained practitioners to sustain and embed the principles of the Pen Green framework by dedicating resources to the strategies and programmes they put in place.

Sure Start Parenting Academy

In order for parents to play an active role in their children's development they must feel supported to value the importance of learning.

The Surestart Parenting Academy (SPA) offers a menu of family support courses for professionals and parents and coordinates KIDSCOPE sessions which provide a drop-in facility for parents needing support and advice.

The PPEL project has worked in collaboration with SPA to enhance the accreditation of their courses, produce a citywide publicity strategy and recognise the achievements of the parents attending courses.

12 practitioners attended the internal moderation training between January 2008 and March 2008. These practitioners came from a number of services such as speech and language services and the family outreach team.

1.7 Working Partnerships

Reporting on the progress and outcomes of the project involved a number of agencies and partners at strategic and operational level.

Mechanisms such as multi-agency task group meetings provided a forum for professionals delivering or managing parental involvement initiatives.

Presenting to the sure start partnership, the Leeds Voice forum (VCS agencies), The Early Years Outcomes Duty group and Early Years senior management built the profile of the project but more specifically the issue of parental involvement as a key factor to improving child outcomes.

Involving parents in early learning and education is a key priority of the city's Children and Young People's Plan through the PPEL project and associated services such as early years family outreach workers. The family supporting and parenting strategy recognises the need for universal support for parents to engage them in their children's learning.

The delivery of the project recognised the variety of services and agencies already established and offering parents opportunities to support their child's learning in the early years. In creating an authority wide dissemination event at the end of the project year the strengthening of links between the Early Years Service, Education Leeds, health visitors, private, voluntary and independent childcare providers, further education colleges, voluntary services and others was celebrated. In practice the project has developed the involvement of parents in their children's learning through children centres, schools and volunteer led play and stay groups. The children centres involved in the PICL training have carried out family studies that in some cases have extended beyond their training showing a commitment to working in partnership with parents in this way. This has given parents the knowledge, understanding and support to discuss their child's development with staff.

One practitioner shared the way in which PICL has helped to build more effective relationships with parents in the setting "The parent we worked with has been enthused by our discussions and the video (of her son) and now comes into nursery and tell us what he's been doing at home. They have more confidence now and this was a parent who worked in a nursery themselves"

The Amazing Rainbow House project enhanced the relationships that play and stay groups have with parents by demonstrating to group leaders the ways in which parents can become more involved in the activities and running of groups. Parents were encouraged to work alongside their children and group leaders during activities and given resources to use at home. As a result parents felt empowered to work together with group leaders on evaluating the group using the Amazing Rainbow House framework.

The Amazing Rainbow House project was delivered by the pre-school learning alliance in addition to the services commissioned by the Leeds Sure Start Partnership. This existing partnership ensured that expectations for delivery, monitoring and evaluation were clearly defined and realistic.

The partnership between the Early Years Service and the Speech and Language service have also been strengthened through the PPEL project.

The delivery of the Hanen programmes to speech and language therapists will ensure a rolling programme of courses to support parents and practitioners can continue.

More importantly the Hanen programmes will be embedded in local speech and language and post-natal practice in partnership with health visitors to further expand the scope of the innovative and supportive strategies offered by the workshops and interventions.

1.8 Impact

Emerging Impact of the Parents as Partners in Early Learning Project

- Where parents are attending sessions/groups and their knowledge of early learning is increasing children are being supported as learners in the home.
- Parents are requesting more training and support as a result of attending sessions.
- The role of parents as first educators is being highlighted in centres and settings attending practitioner training.

- Changes to practice and attitude in the centres and settings involved in the project impact on the delivery of support and strategies to improve parental involvement.
- Practitioners involved in the movement play and amazing rainbow house projects are able to provide more opportunities for parents to be involved in all aspects of child development.
- Strengthened partnership between voluntary and maintained sector through the amazing rainbow house project.
- As the project coincides with the development of the city's parenting unit (underpinned by the Family and Parenting Support Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan) parental involvement in learning is a priority for the authority.
- 'Parents as Partners in the foundation stage' is recognised as a key feature to improving FSP results and will become the responsibility of the EYOD strategic group and the foundation stage improvement manager.

Successes for children

Where parents and children have accessed activities together (Developmental Movement play, Amazing Rainbow House and PICL child studies) practitioners have reported increased parental awareness of the signs of wellbeing and involvement in their children. Observations from the Amazing Rainbow House and Developmental Movement play activities support the idea that children attending become more sociable, willing to take risks and respond to encouragement and feedback from their parents/carers and practitioners over a period of time. Where PICL child studies are being used children wellbeing and involvement is being heightened and practitioners are seeing benefits to sharing what happens outside of the children centre with parents. They feel that they have a clearer understanding of how to support the child's learning, taking a lead from the child's interests and schemas.

Limitations

The Amazing Rainbow House project has been designed to provide informal and fun opportunities for parents and children to learn together. This has made the collection of data relating to child outcomes difficult as parents and children 'drop-in' to sessions and as some of the groups are volunteer led sessions have been spread over a number of weeks or months. However, there is no doubt that children are benefiting from the sessions as the quality of the groups improve through the support of the development officer.

PICL child studies have been focussed on children accessing a nursery place with the agreement of their parents. As most practitioners were using the framework for the first time they chose parents who they had a working relationship with already and agreed that as the framework becomes embedded in the centre they will identify children at risk of underachievement and work with their parents.

Successes for parents/carers

Practitioners and parents have reported increased parental awareness of the signs of wellbeing and involvement through PICL child studies.

Where children centres are implementing PICL based activities such as groups, literature for parents, profile building and camera lending parents are increasing their understanding of child development, how children learn and how they can support them. These activities have been evidenced through written and visual case studies.

Parents who were attending sessions for the first time were enthused and keen to do more. This was particularly evident at the Movement Play first sessions as the groups were well planned and organised and parents were informed about the course and other services that the centre could offer.

The parents involved in Amazing Rainbow House project evaluated that they had learnt something that could support their child through singing, stories and messy play.

Parents involved in SPA courses (especially 0-6 parenting course) also report an increased knowledge and understanding of their children. A parent case study describes this as “tuning into” their child and having time to play with him as being more important than before the course.

Of the schools who submitted evidence for the settings audit a range of activities to involve parents were demonstrated. 83% of schools offered parents the opportunity to contribute to their child’s planning, observation and assessment examples included shared planning meetings with keyworkers; sharing learning stories and play and learning sessions for parents.

The Early Years user survey had increased levels of parental awareness of activities that parents can attend from 2006-2007 (from 54% to 37% not knowing about activities in the centre). Participation in activities also rose (76% of respondents did not attend any activities in 2006 which fell to 50% in 2007) thus showing that with increased awareness of what is available parents are more likely to participate in centre based activities.

A parental involvement survey was carried out with a generic sample children centre users and then repeated with families identified as vulnerable (e.g. families accessing income support and children and families from black and minority ethnic groups). 96% of respondents to the overall survey felt able to contribute to their child’s learning compared to 86% of more vulnerable families. With regards to having information about early learning 83% of respondents to the overall survey said they had enough information and suggested amongst other things more written information on the foundation stage (56%). Only 55% of more vulnerable families said they had enough information about early learning.

Limitations

Where parents have accessed the activities the support offered by practitioners has furthered their involvement with services however this is difficult to assess.

The surveys conducted need to be treated with caution due to the size of the sample and sampling techniques. The general messages from the survey indicate that tailored support from practitioners, an understanding of the role of parents in learning and consistent information about early learning and activities parents can attend to support this are all necessary to encourage parental involvement in learning.

Marketing groups and courses to parents has been difficult to determine as some practitioners supported the attendance of vulnerable parents whereas others relied on parents turning up to activities. Where children were already attending the

children centres conversations with parents who were able to access groups at the times held seemed to encourage attendance. In the Amazing Rainbow House project children attending were mainly awaiting a place a nursery or being cared for at home.

Successes for practitioners

The majority of the PPEL project has focussed on the outcomes for practitioners to ensure greater impact on families and children post project.

Where practitioners have attended training there has been increased awareness of the role of parent's in early learning, improved knowledge of parental involvement strategies and support made available through networking and practice sharing events.

The training evaluations from the PICL training delivered by Pen Green shows that almost all practitioners have increased understanding of child development concepts, awareness of how to share this information with parents and the role parents must play in achieving positive outcomes for children.

Furthermore, all 28 settings who have received training have delivered (or planned in detail) staff briefings to the wider staff team (approx. 20-30 staff per children centre team). The model of delivery has ranged from single staff meetings to a series of staff sessions with supporting resources.

Children centres involved in the PICL training have received funding and most centres have purchased I.T. equipment, learning materials and dedicated resources to implement their learning. Practitioners as they feel more supported by to share their learning and embed the approach across the centre. Family outreach workers who have been PICL trained are able to support parents in the home and at groups to develop their understanding of early learning.

The most significant emerging outcome for school based practitioners who attended PEAL training is their enhanced confidence for involving parents in the foundation stage. Less than half (45%) of practitioners felt confident in offering opportunities at the beginning of the training and by the end 92% felt confident or very confident in being able to offer such activities. This motivation for change is evident as the action planned reflect both short and long term goals and where needed the support of senior management and outside agencies.

Speech and language therapists are now able to deliver a wider range of parent/practitioner support programmes through the Hanen project. Following the training 100% practitioners felt they could offer parent courses using the information and strategies provided by the course (only 27% felt able to do this before their training).

All practitioners involved in the project have accessed resources to support ongoing development and improvement. This has been supplemented by the dissemination event.

Limitations

The training delivered to schools has proven to be very successful for both practitioners and to strength the links between Education Leeds and the Early Years Service. The barrier to continuing this and making the pilot more permanent is identifying co-ordination post project.

The PICL pilot has been successful in 28 settings and the roll-out of training will now rely on settings or the local authority funding places on the course. Children centres have had to purchase their own resources as this would ensure they bought items to suit their implementation plan. This has been a barrier to engagement in the project with some settings as they have not been able to identify staff to co-ordinate the purchasing. Ongoing opportunities for practitioners working in the Early Years sector to share information about parental involvement in early learning has been identified as a need to continually develop practice.

Successes for the local authority

The links between Education Leeds and Early Years service continue to be strengthened by the EYOD strategic group. The practitioner training and PICL implementation will be taken forward as part of the EYOD action plan. Advisory teachers working with foundation stage settings are able to support the development and improvement of parental involvement practice through the use of the identified frameworks and strategies. The PEAL project has been linked to SEF and quality improvement to support settings in reflecting on their practice and planning continual improvement.

Limitations

There is an appreciation that a variety of programmes already existing to support parental involvement in early learning and the project has been designed to support and enhance current practice. Difficulties in co-ordinating the activities that are being part funded or where monitoring and evaluation activities are duplicated by other mechanisms.

1.9 Overcoming barriers to parental involvement

The nature of the projects aimed specifically at providing opportunities for parents and children i.e. Developmental Movement Play and the Amazing Rainbow House has used a number of strategies to engage parents in them. Where groups were held at children centres by staff there were a number of strategies employed to support parents attendance. This included conversations with nursery parents to recruit them to family movement groups and wider advertising of the groups to open them to any parent accessing the centre. To overcome barriers to involvement such as lack of confidence family outreach workers played a valuable role in supporting parents to come to groups for the first time. Some parents who had attended a number of groups and courses felt that the persistent visits, leafleting and encouragement of the family outreach team had given them the confidence to attend the children centre and 'try out' the facilities. The family movement courses have been designed to educate parents and carers about the importance of movement in child development through focussed discussions, literature and individual advice. This provides parents with the necessary information to support their children in and out of the groups. The Amazing Rainbow House sessions that were held in existing play and stay or babies and toddlers groups drew on existing parents and invited them to the family

learning sessions. To inform parents about the project the development worker advertised her attendance prior to the sessions through a newsletter stating the dates, type of session being delivered and parental involvement in the quality assurance assessments. The group leaders and volunteers were visited and informed about the themes over the 5 weeks and the quality assurance model being introduced.

During the Amazing Rainbow House sessions the development worker encourage both practitioners and parents to get involved and modelled the activities. Parents were given information about how the activities supported different aspects of development and how this could be replicated at home.

Practitioner and setting based project activities aimed to overcome barriers to parental involvement through the development and awareness of existing barriers and solutions to them.

The PEAL training has been based on reflective practice and giving practitioners the time and space to discuss attitudes towards parental involvement and their settings policies and practice. Staff attitude was suggested as a major barrier to parental involvement and PEAL training has been evaluated by practitioners as improving their confidence to encourage parental involvement and identify parents who need more support.

The implementation of PICL in children centres will continue to build practitioner knowledge of how parental involvement has a positive impact on child outcomes. The majority of centres are working with one family who is already engaging in their children's learning to build their confidence of the framework. It is hoped that this work will continue to embed across the centres and be introduced to family outreach teams to overcome barriers to parental involvement such as lack of parental confidence.

1.10 Evaluation

The positive effects of project activities have been demonstrated by the external evaluation carried out by NCB.

The successes identified within project monitoring and evaluation have been focussed on developing the support available to practitioners and the provision of more opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning.

The PEAL pilot has encouraged the involvement of schools in parental involvement training and has allowed effective strategies to be shared into the foundation stage and beyond. Practitioners attending the training reported an overall improved confidence in working with parents to engage them in activities in school to support their children's learning.

The Amazing Rainbow House pilot has given both group leaders and parents access to sessions that provided both activities and practical information to support learning at home.

The project coordination has proved difficult due to the levels of involvement required with each project activity. Defining the monitoring and evaluation needed for project activities has also caused confusion as some activities have been monitored by other performance management systems. Those delivering activities have also found data collection difficult as some of the sessions are informal and do not require parents to register and formal data collection has not been insisted upon. The delivery of parent groups have been termly or in 6-8 session blocks and

in some cases this has been delayed due to holidays, staff illness or other issues. The knock on effect on this has been the delay in data collection and analyse and as such some activities cannot be included in the project findings. Delivery of the project activities could have been improved if further support was available to children centres to purchase resources to support PICL implementation. Improved communication regarding the PEAL training options available from NCB would have also ensured strategic development of the programme across schools and settings.

1.11 Sustaining Parents as Partners in Early Learning Activities

The procurement of resources to implement PICL across children centres and the establishment of practitioner networks will ensure that the approach continues to be embedded. This is will be supported by the EYFS manager and the advisory teacher team.

The role of the family outreach worker is being realigned in Leeds and a key feature of their work will be to encourage parental involvement and the use of children centre services. Training will be delivered to family outreach workers by the EYFS training team to provide them with an understanding of the new framework and how parents will be supported by it.

Resources have been bought to support parent groups and practitioner training in developmental movement play. The approach has been developed in children centres over around 10 years and the project has further enhanced the offer to practitioners and parents.

Training for trainers in the PEAL programme will support the roll-out of the training across the sector and provide advisors with an understanding of the model and how to support settings. PEAL has been linked to quality improvement strategies and school improvement policy using SEF and this will continue to ensure settings and schools assess and improve their practice with regards to parental involvement in learning.

A city wide marketing strategy for the parenting academy and KIDSCOPE and the provision of internal moderators to improve the quality of groups and courses being delivered will become part of the new parenting unit's remit. The parenting unit will be responsible for commissioning and delivering parenting and family support across Leeds and this will impact on the involvement parent's have in their children's learning.

The implementation of the Hanen programmes will become a core feature of the Early Years Speech and Language Service for both parents and practitioners and courses can now be offered on a wider scale across the sector.

The success of Amazing Rainbow House project has resulted in around 30 groups being put on waiting list for the programme. These groups will be offered the programme by the development team post project as part of their ongoing support.

2.1 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage¹

This document contains the statutory framework for the EYFS. It sets out the legal requirements relating to learning and development (the early learning goals; the educational programmes; and the assessment arrangements) in Section 2 and the legal requirements relating to welfare (safeguarding and promoting children's welfare; suitable people; suitable premises, environment and equipment; organisation; and documentation) in Section 3.

The learning and development requirements are given legal force by the Early Years Foundation Stage (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007 made under Section 39 (1) (a) of the Childcare Act 2006. The welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations made under Section 39 (1) (b) of the Childcare Act 2006. Together, the Order, the Regulations and the Statutory Framework document make up the legal basis of the EYFS. The requirements in this document have statutory force by virtue of Section 44 (1) of the Childcare Act 2006.

Providers have a duty to ensure that their early years provision complies with the learning and development requirements, and the welfare requirements. In addition, this document contains statutory guidance. All providers must have regard to this guidance, which means they must take it into account and, if they decide to depart from it, they must have clear reasons for doing so and be able to demonstrate that their alternative approach achieves the ends described in this guidance. Ofsted will take account of any failure to have regard to this guidance when exercising its functions, including any proceedings which are brought under the Act.

2.2 Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage²

This booklet provides guidance for practitioners on meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. It provides useful, practical advice and detailed information on supporting children's learning and development and welfare.

It contains key guidance on the areas of Learning and Development, non-statutory guidance, additional advice and information.

2.3 EYFS resources

Supporting materials for providers and practitioners include a CD-ROM, poster and Principles into Practice cards.

¹ Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
EN

DCSF 2008 00267-2008BKT-

² Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage
EN

DCSF 2008 00266-2008BKT-

Further information, regularly updated, is available at www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears

2.4 A principled approach

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on four guiding themes. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. The themes are each broken down into four commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice.

Unique Child recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being.

Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.

Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

This approach ensures that the EYFS meets the overarching aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.

Feedback letter from National Assessment Agency on the annual Foundation Stage Profile moderation process

Dear Liz

(Early Years) Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile – response to your completed evaluation and planning form

Thank you for submitting your completed evaluation and planning form for the implementation and moderation of the (Early Years) Foundation Stage Profile. This provides us with valuable data with which to establish a national picture of the development of the EYFS profile and the security of the resulting data. It enables NAA to identify generic issues, challenges and obstacles to its implementation. This form also provides information that will contribute to NAA assigning a data confidence rating to each local authority (LA) for the potential security, reliability and accuracy of EYFS profile data.

Where it is appropriate, we will be allocating a Support and Development Officer who will work closely with LA personnel to develop its approach to the implementation and moderation of the EYFS profile.

Plan development

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The moderation plan is reviewed and developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and is responsive to the review of the previous year's moderation.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9

- To seek headteacher representation when completing annual EYFS profile moderation plan.

Specific EYFS profile training

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- A clear system is in place for training and supporting all practitioners.
- The LA provides specific EYFS profile training for all representatives.
- The LA provides specific EYFS profile training for NQTs and practitioners new to reception.
- The LA uses additional exemplification materials provided by QCA/ NAA.
- The LA follows up non-attendance.
- Training, briefings and updates are regularly provided for all levels of school and LA management.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- The LA recognises the need to gain knowledge and data about current reception practitioners.

NAA has identified the following issues as areas to consider for development:

- The LA needs to develop a database of to identify and monitor current foundation stage practitioners to enable them to effectively target support.
- To ensure subject leaders receive EYFS profile training.

The moderators

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The LA recruits a moderation team which reflects a balance of serving practitioners and LA personnel. All members of the team have appropriate early years experience.

- Moderators receive appropriate training and opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding of the EYFS profile.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- To recruit additional moderators depending on funding.

Inter-LA moderation

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The moderation manager/team engages in inter-LA moderation of EYFS profile judgements.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9

- To widen attendance to assessment adviser.
- To continue to share updated documents to practitioners through EYs/assessment collaboration site.

Moderation cycle

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The LA externally moderated 28% of settings.
- The LA identifies and moderates schools and settings through a range of triggers. These may be cyclical, NQTs and staff new to the EYFS profile, where concerns have been identified by the SIP or headteacher, anomalies in data, previous concerns during moderation visits and / or non-attendance at training and / or moderation meetings.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- In addition to present triggers the LA plan to moderate settings with fluctuating staff, patterns in data, for example, no children achieving a score of 78 with 6 in PSED and CLL.

The moderation model

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The moderation visit focuses on a professional dialogue with the practitioner to explore their understanding of FSP scale points in relation to the attainment of the children in the moderation sample.
- Moderation visits include a reference to NAA exemplification.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- For the moderator and practitioner to observe jointly where appropriate to further examine quality of the practitioner's observations and judgements.

NAA has identified the following issues as areas to consider for development:

- The NAA advises that when the moderator observes alongside the practitioner for a short length of time that the purpose of paired observation is for the moderator to gain a clearer understanding of the practitioner's observational skills and the accuracy of pitching judgements.

The moderation sample

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The moderator focuses on evidence of three children's attainment within three bands, 1-3, 4-8 and 9 with the practitioner.
- Moderators explore the ratio between child initiated and adult directed evidence used to secure a judgement. Practitioners are increasingly providing evidence from child initiated activity, especially where there is a strong in-house moderation culture.

Practitioner judgements

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The LA found that practitioners' judgements were in line with national exemplification.
- Practitioners drew their evidence predominantly from observations of child initiated activity. Practitioners were challenged on their judgements when if the majority of evidence was based on adult directed activities.

The LA has not stated the % of settings regarding data confidence

Appeals arrangements

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- Settings receive verbal and written feedback.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- As a priority an appeals procedure will be drafted, consulted and circulated to all settings.

NAA has identified the following issues as areas to consider for development:

- At present there appears to be no formal appeals arrangement in place.

Additional assessments

NAA has identified the following issues as areas to consider for development:

- The form states that some schools and settings are using commercially produced assessment materials and recording systems. It is unnecessary for practitioners to use additional materials as they may contradict or undermine the process of observation based assessments for the EYFS profile.

EYFS profile data collection and analysis

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The LA has appropriate arrangements to support the collection of results.
- All settings receive analysis of LA EYFS profile assessment results.

The LA has proposed the following changes/developments for 2008/9:

- For the LA to support schools in analysing their own data through training and challenge. Headteachers will be informed in September.
- For school improvement partners to receive data with a greater level of detail to use for autumn visit.

Quality assurance of EYFS profile data

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- FSP data is scrutinised. Apparent anomalies and inconsistencies are identified and referred to schools and settings for review.
- Headteachers are requested to sign off the data.

Understanding of EYFS profile data in year 1

Scrutiny of the form has identified the following effective features:

- The 'Continuing the Learning Journey' materials are used effectively during the FSP year 1 course.

NAA has identified the following issues as areas to consider for development:

- Very few schools have implemented the materials as INSET training. The LA don't have the systems or information to make a secure judgement regarding the percentage of year 1 practitioners using data effectively to support planning.

Data confidence rating

NAA assigns a data confidence rating for each LA that describes the potential security, accuracy and reliability of EYFS profile data. It is based on the results of external moderation by NAA (where applicable), scrutiny of the completed evaluation and planning form and analysis of LA EYFS profile data.

The confidence rating is expressed as follows:

- Serious concern for potential security of data
- Some concern for potential security of data
- Stable data
- Secure data
- Secure data and exemplary model of implementation and moderation in place

The current rating assigned to Leeds is

Secure data

As a result of the confidence data rating assigned to your LA, NAA has concluded that additional support is not currently required.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Jan Dubiel

Programme Leader (Early Years) Foundation Stage Profile

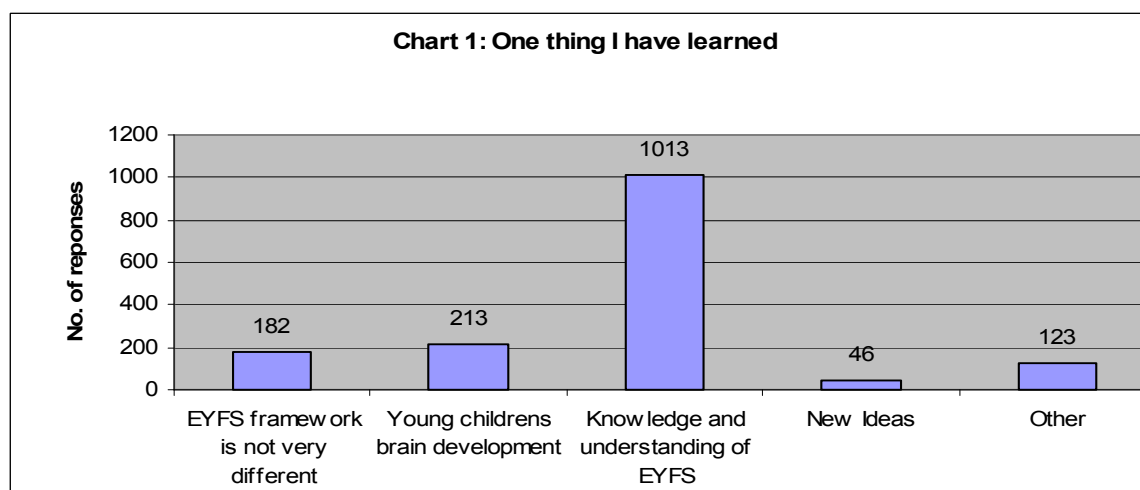
Direct Line: 020 7509 6282

Email: jan.dubiel@naa.org.uk

LA EYFS Training Outcomes

Outcomes for children

As Chart 1 shows, more than two hundred practitioners reported increased knowledge about young children's development...



The following quotes are taken from end of course evaluations and exemplify practitioners' increased knowledge about children's learning and development...

"I've realised again how important my attitude is to a child's learning."

"There needs to be more space for physical activities more child initiated activities." (Children's Centre)

"As a Year 1 teacher I have found the day very useful and have a much better insight into Early Years Foundation Stage."

"I've learned about children learning through movement and how important observing is." (Childminder)

I've learned "Children need to lead the learning more." (Private sector)

I've learned "The children's need for fat in their diet is linked with brain development." (Voluntary sector)

I've learned "About assessment in the early years – particularly in observations." (Independent sector)

Although many practitioners reported increased knowledge and understanding about young children's development following EYFS training, the challenge remains that many initial training courses do not include child development as a substantial element and practitioners are starting from a low knowledge base in this vital area.

Outcomes for parents/carers and the wider community

A number of practitioners stated that the training would impact on their work with parents/carers and the wider community...

I've learned "How important the wider context is and ways in which to include/share with other child carers." (Private sector)

I've learned "That my Key Worker role is as much about getting along better with the parents as it is filling out a profile." (Independent sector)

I'm "More confident on profiles and ideas on involving parents in building them up." (Private sector)

However, following discussion on working in the Wider Context, which was included in the EYFS training, many trainers reported that participants found this aspect of their work challenging.

Outcomes for practitioners

Following training, 94% of practitioners reported a rise in their confidence with the EYFS and, as Chart 1 demonstrates, more than one thousand practitioners reported increased knowledge and understanding of the EYFS framework. In the end of course evaluations, when asked about what they had learned, practitioners said...

"To be more positive about myself and the high standards of service I provide." (Childminder)

"A clear understanding of the principles and welfare requirements. I feel we can go back to the school and highlight the things we need to put in place." (Teacher)

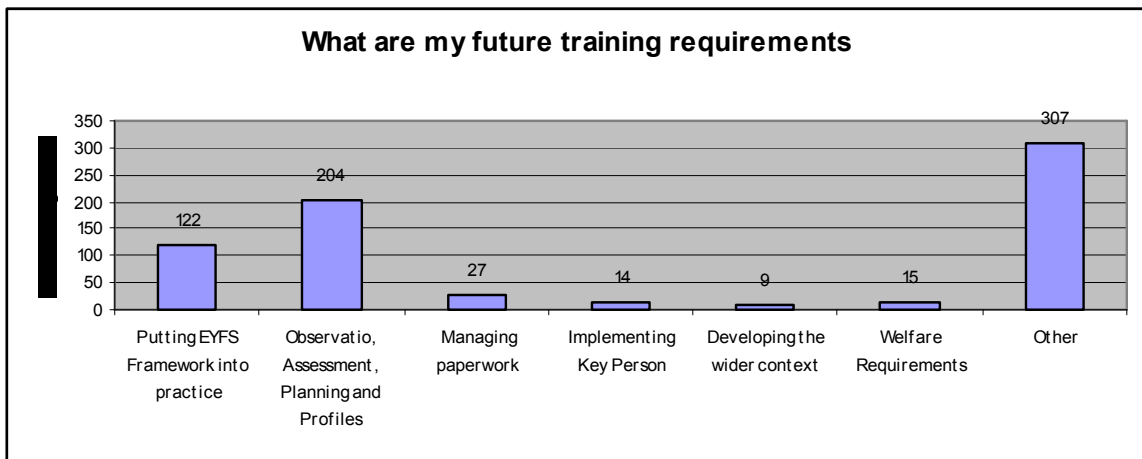
"I feel more confident about the whole framework." (Private sector)

"New EYFS is not as daunting as I thought it would be." (Voluntary sector)

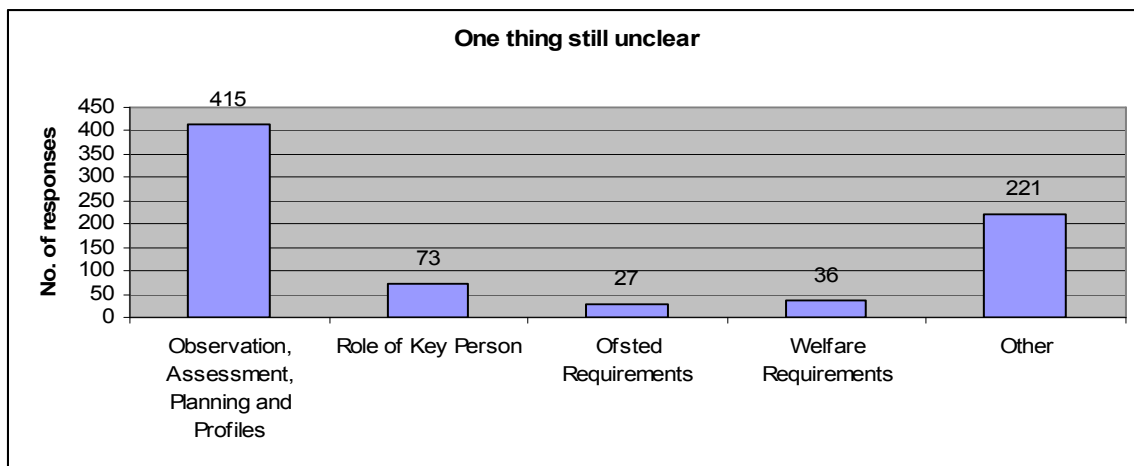
"Not to be afraid of change and learning." (Children's Centre)

"How it differs from before - but its not really more complicated." (Independent Sector)

Practitioners were also able to identify their future training needs and, as Charts 2 and 3 show, a majority of those completing that part of the evaluation form identified Observation, Assessment, Planning and Profiling as an area that they were still unclear about and would like more training on.



Outcomes in terms of local authority practice



In response to practitioners' evaluations, the EYDT has produced materials to support practitioners' observation, assessment, planning and profiling and delivered a number of half-day workshops to Foundation Stage Co-ordinators in schools.

Training on these topics is planned for the Private, Voluntary and Independent sectors in Autumn Term 2008 and for Childminders in 2009.

Another thing remaining unclear to practitioners following the initial training was the role of the Key Person (Chart 2). Participants' and trainers' evaluations show that this was particularly true of schools' staff. This training need, along with the implementation of the EYFS, also identified as a future training requirement (Chart 3), will be addressed in future training programmes.

Pilot Transition Document – Draft Guidance to support Leeds EYFS Transition Record

Guidance to support Leeds EYFS Transition Record

“Children’s social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition...Effective communication between settings is key to ensuring that children’s needs are met and there is continuity in their learning.” EYFS PiP card 3.4

Aims of guidance:

- To ensure that every child has a positive experience when moving between settings and when starting a new setting
- To ensure continuity of experience for children
- To enable all settings to build on & value a child’s previous experience
- To support inclusive practice in all settings
- To promote effective communication between all EYFS settings
- To encourage & enable all EYFS practitioners to work together



Transition works best when:

- It is a process rather than a ‘one-off’ experience
- The child & his/her needs are at the centre of the process
- Time & care are taken to plan the process of transition
- All parties involved value & acknowledge the role of parents as the child’s first & most important educator and parents are consulted about the information that is included in the child’s record
- All parties involved have respect for each other & there is effective communication between home & settings & between settings
- Transition records are valued and used effectively
- Confidentiality is respected



Good practice tips for transition:

- Practitioners listen to children’s hopes & fears regarding transition & children are given opportunities to express their feelings
- Practitioners prepare booklets containing photos of people & provision that children will meet in their new settings
- Home visits are made to meet children & parents & share information
- In addition to visits with their parents, children have the opportunity to visit the new setting with a practitioner from their current setting

- Practitioners visit each other's settings, meet children there & gain understanding of children's experiences
- Practitioners meet to discuss transition and hand over children's records. If this is not possible, they communicate directly by phone, e-mail or letter
- Parents are trusted to take the transition record to the child's new setting and know the name of the Leader, Manager or Reception Teacher involved
- The child's record is received before the child makes the transition, so that there is time to prepare for him/her. If this is not possible, it is received within two weeks of transition
- When children are making the transition into school, their record is passed on by the end of the Summer Term.



Notes to support completion of the Transition Record:

The record is confidential to children, parents and the settings involved and should be stored securely.

Attendance pattern

- Identify number of hours and days attended per week
- Identify details of how sessions are made up, for example - sessional, stay for lunch, full day (e.g. 8am-6pm)
- Outline any significant periods of absence

Health/Allergies*

Discuss with parent and state briefly any important information

SEN Stage/Early Support*

Refer to family-held records for children with LDD and indicate any additional info.

Involvement of other agencies*

Discuss with parent before completion and indicate any additional info. provided
(*Completion of these sections should respect confidentiality)

Home Language

Complete only if other than English and discuss with parent before completion

Previous settings

List all settings (and dates where known) previously attended.

Child's drawing/mark-making and comments

- The child need not draw /make marks directly onto the Transition Record. Their drawing/mark-making (or photocopy) can be folded and attached
- No adult prompts should be made or support given
- If appropriate (according to child's st/age) ask the child to draw a picture of a person e.g. self or parent.
- If appropriate (according to child's st/age) ask child to write their name independently i.e. without adult prompting or support, or recourse to name card. (This could be completed separately and included at end of the Transition Record)
- Language they use in respect of their drawing/mark-making should be written verbatim (word for word) either on the drawing or within the Communication Skills section of the record.

Summary of EYFS stages of learning and development

- These boxes represent the 13 strands of the Foundation Stage Profile and should be completed using the Leeds 'Stepping into the ELG's' document
- Not all boxes need to be completed, but PSED (Personal, Social and Emotional Development) CLL (Communication, Language and Literacy) and PD (Physical Development) are the most important ones
- Any coding system can be used – colours, letters, stages of development - as long as a key is provided
- Judgements must be honest i.e. made when child is working securely within that stage and has achieved the majority of Development Matters (EYFS Practice Guidance) indicators for that stage.
- Key to initials (see EYFS Practice Guidance for further information):
PSED (Personal, Social and Emotional Development) **D&A** (Dispositions & Attitudes) **SD** (Social Development) **ED** (Emotional Development) **CLL** (Communication, Language and Literacy) **LCT** (Language for Communication & Thinking) **LSL** (Linking Sounds & Letters) **R** (Reading) **W** (Writing)
PSRN (Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy) **NLC** (Numbers as Labels & for Counting) **Cal** (Calculating) **SSM** (Space, Shape & Measures) **KUW** (Knowledge and Understanding of the World) **PD** (Physical Development) **CD** (Creative Development)

Communication skills...

Needs to include:

- If child has EAL - how much understanding/use of languages.
- A verbatim (word for word) quote about how the child feels about the transition or one from a recent observation or the language used in respect of the drawing/mark-making included on the Transition Record.
- Speaking and listening skills with familiar and less familiar adults and peers
 - One to one
 - In a small group
 - In a larger group

All about ...

- Is a mainly PSED statement, to be completed honestly by the child's key person
- The indicators from EYFS Practice Guidance could be used to support positive but informative comments re child e.g. "with adult support" etc
- PSED - need to know about:
 - Making friends and social development
 - Sharing and turn taking
 - How child reacts to new situations, experiences and people
 - Confidence
 - Needs help to...
 - How child expresses feelings
- Also need to know about:

- Interests and preoccupations
- Learning styles
- Preferred Areas of Provision – indoor and outdoor
- Favourite book, rhyme, song, etc.
- Areas of support - any worries or concerns.
- Any additional needs, SEN support and/or other agency involvement.

About your child...

To be completed by parent / carer with appropriate support from key person.

Prompts might include:

- What does your child enjoy doing?
- Is there anything your child doesn't like doing?
- Who lives at child's house? e.g. siblings, pets
- Who are the special people in your child's life?
- Who are your child's friends?
- Who will they know in school?
- How does your child react to new experiences?
- What sort of eater is your child?
- Are they a good sleeper?
- My child is confident when...
- My child needs help to...
- Have there been any recent changes in routine for your child?
- Has your child any particular fears or worries?
- How do **you** feel about your child's transition?
- Is there anything else we need to know to help us take good care of your child?

Comments, signatures & date...

These can include personal comments, wishing the child well, and the record should be offered to parents when all other sections have been completed.

Annexe 5

Pilot Transition Document – EYFS Transition Record *draft – not to scale*

EYFS TRANSITION RECORD (CONFIDENTIAL) (Please attach photo)

Name	
Likes to be known as (if different)	
Date of birth	
Current setting	
Date of admission	
Attendance pattern	
Health / Allergies	
SEN Stage/Early Support	
Involvement of other agencies	
Home Language	
Previous settings	
Additional information attached	