



**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

# **Education Standards – Entering the Education System**

**DRAFT**

## **Scrutiny Inquiry Report**

# Introduction and Scope



## Introduction

1. At the start of the 2008/09 municipal year, we agreed to carry out an inquiry into Education Standards, with a focus on Entering the Education System.
2. This followed on from previous work which we had undertaken in 2007/08 into the support available for young people at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). One of the conclusions which we drew was that in fact many of these young people can be identified at a very early stage. We therefore decided to explore the support on offer to those vulnerable to underachievement when they first enter the education system.
3. We commissioned a small working group to define the scope for the inquiry, and identify areas where the board could add value to work already underway to improve education standards in Leeds.
4. The group identified two main areas of focus for the inquiry – namely the methods used to assess education standards during early years and reception, and the way in which the information gathered is used by childcare and education providers and shared between the many different organisations involved.
5. In particular, we decided to examine the following areas:
  - How information on attainment is collected by childcare providers, and in particular what impact the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will have on this
  - How this information is shared with primary schools
  - How attainment is measured within primary schools, both on entry to foundation stage and at KS1
  - More broadly, how the transition between pre-school provision and primary provision is managed
  - How children at risk of underachievement are identified at an early stage, and how information relating to them is shared between the different services involved
  - How information about the needs of all children aged 0-7 and their families is collected and used by other services.
6. This was done by means of inquiry sessions in full board meetings, and also via visits to a range of provision across the city.
7. The inquiry ties in with priorities around early intervention and family support in the Leeds Strategic Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, along with Local Area Agreement targets.

# Conclusions and Recommendations



## Background

8. Supporting all children to achieve their full potential at the earliest possible stage is important for a number of reasons.
9. Firstly, there is significant evidence to suggest that good quality childcare can improve outcomes later in a child's educational career. Some of this evidence was provided to us as part of our inquiry. A recent national report from the 'Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Project', which has followed more than 3000 children since 1996, concluded that those children who had attended a good quality pre-school had better outcomes in English and Maths at age 11 than those who had not.
10. Early evaluations of the Sure Start project and the introduction of Children's Centres are also beginning to show that children attending these settings, and therefore receiving additional support and good quality childcare, are achieving better outcomes than their peers in similarly disadvantaged areas who have not had the benefit of this provision.
11. In addition, there is a growing consensus that identifying those children at risk of underachievement at an early stage can have a positive impact on wider social problems such as social dysfunction, violence, drugs, alcohol and family breakdown. This view was the main finding of the 'Early intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens' report, published by the Centre for Social Justice and the Smith Institute in September 2008. The report argued that early intervention was not only cheaper, but also more effective in terms of tackling these problems. This approach is currently being targeted in Nottingham, which was launched as a City of Early Intervention in April 2008.
12. Finally, identifying children at risk of underachievement can also have a positive impact on safeguarding, as underachievement is often (although by no means always) linked to wider problems within the child's home environment, and support for the family at this early stage can help to prevent difficulties developing later on.
13. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), introduced in September 2008, is designed to be a more refined means of assessing the progress of all children as they complete this first stage of their educational career. It replaced the existing Foundation Stage Profile. In theory the EYFS can be used to identify children in need of additional support in relation to specific areas of learning, and one of our objectives for this inquiry was to consider how well this system is operating.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



14. Because all Early Years providers are required to deliver the EYFS framework, (unless they have an exemption from the Secretary of State), they are also open to inspection by Ofsted from September 2008 onwards. This should enable local authorities to identify and address those areas where childcare is currently not of a satisfactory standard. This is particularly significant when bearing in mind that, broadly speaking, children in deprived areas do not have access to the same quality of childcare as children in more affluent areas. Clearly it is important that all children have access to high quality Early Years provision, particularly in light of the very positive impact which this can have on those at risk of underachievement.

15. In addition to the EYFS, and the use made of the information gathered as part of this process within childcare settings, we also felt that the transition between Early Years settings and Primary school was extremely important in terms of enabling all children to achieve their full potential.

16. Not only can transition itself be an alarming and even traumatic process for the child if handled inappropriately (which could have the knock on effect of temporarily halting or even reversing development), but the transition

period is also a time when potentially the body of knowledge built up by the child's Early Years provider about his or her development and family background can be lost, or at least not fully transmitted to the new setting. If children at risk of underachievement are to be effectively identified and supported then it is essential that transition is a smooth process, and that there are clear links between providers for the sharing of information.

### Current position

17. As we discovered during our initial investigations, many of the above themes have already been recognised and are being acted upon by the Early Years Service and Education Leeds.

18. In particular, a great deal of work has already been undertaken in terms of embedding the Early Years Foundation Stage, and forging stronger links between Early Years and Education providers. This has been achieved through various means, including a comprehensive training programme, offered prior to the introduction of the EYFS to providers across all types of setting, and by the appointment of a joint post to facilitate progress and improvement in Early Years and Education.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



19. However, in spite of this good work, the sector still faces some significant challenges. This is most notable when the progress against the two targets agreed with DCSF for this area is considered. These two targets are as follows:

1. To increase the percentage of pupils with a good level of overall achievement (GLA) at the end of the Foundation Stage.<sup>1</sup>
2. To reduce the gap between outcomes for the lowest achievers and the average for all pupils.<sup>2</sup>

20. While Leeds has made some progress in these two areas in recent years, the specific targets for 2008 were not met in either area. Only 47.2% of children (3580 out of a cohort of 7586) achieved a good level of overall achievement at the end of the Foundation Stage, against a target of 50%, and the gap between the lowest achievers and the average was 39.8% compared with a target of 33% and a national average of 36%.

<sup>1</sup> A good level of achievement is defined as achieving 78+ points including 6+ in all PSED (Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and CLL (Communication, Language and Literacy) strands.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated as the difference between the median score of the full cohort and the mean score of the lowest achieving 20%, expressed as a percentage of the median score of the full cohort.

21. To stand a chance of achieving both of these targets it was clear to us that those children at greatest risk of underachievement needed to be identified and supported in order to raise standards overall.

22. During our consideration of performance management data and also the biannual report on standards in primary education in Leeds, we strongly welcomed the emphasis on narrowing the gap and achievement for all pupils. We feel that this is a healthier approach than previous targets which have tended to encourage 'hothousing' of border line pupils to achieve the next level in Key Stage assessments.

23. In addition to working to achieve the DCSF targets, the local authority also has a statutory duty to improve the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, and reduce inequalities, for all 0-5 year olds. This is known as the Early Years Outcomes Duty (EYOD).

24. Five key objectives have been identified in Leeds, which form part of the EYOD. In summary, these are:

1. To develop a strategic partnership
2. To develop the analysis and reporting of data
3. To develop continuous quality improvement systems
4. To develop integrated working

## Conclusions and Recommendations



5. To develop and promote partnership working with parents.

25. We were keen to identify areas where we could build upon the good work already being done by Education Leeds and the Early Years service in order to increase the chances of the DCSF targets and the EYOD objectives being met, and of children in Leeds being helped to achieve the best possible outcomes, in the next municipal year and beyond. In particular, many of our recommendations are strongly linked to the EYOD objectives.

### **Links between Early Years and Education settings**

26. First of all, it is important to recognise that traditionally children in this age group have been supported by two clear and separate sectors with historically quite different cultures and emphasis – Early Years, and Primary Education. In order for all children to be effectively supported it is essential that these two sectors work together effectively, and that the dividing line between the two is softened, if not erased altogether.

27. As mentioned above, efforts are already being made by Leeds City Council and Education Leeds to achieve this, and we were made aware of many examples of

effective collaboration during the course of our inquiry.

28. However, we also discovered that this positive experience is by no means universal across all providers in the city. For example, on our visit to the Kids Academy private nursery in Holt Park, we discussed with staff the arrangements for transferring information about children attending the nursery to their primary school during the transition process. We were concerned to hear that while a comprehensive report was produced for every child on leaving the nursery, covering their progress against each area of the early years curriculum, staff did not feel that this was necessarily always used to full effect by the primary schools. In particular, there did not appear to be any arrangements for ensuring that children did not cover topics at primary school which they had previously completed at nursery.

29. There were also no clear processes for supporting any Gifted and Talented children, who may have achieved all of the EYFS outcomes by the time they left nursery, and staff expressed concerns that potentially some of these children could end up 'coasting' during their first year at primary school while the rest of their class caught up.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



30. The specific problem in this case, and one which we feel may well be mirrored across the city, is not so much that the primary schools in the area were not doing enough to support the children who had joined them from the Kids Academy nursery, but that the nursery staff themselves had no way of knowing whether the information that they had provided was being made use of or not.

31. We feel that central to solving this problem is the development of 'parity of esteem' between the two types of provider. In particular, the valuable contribution made by all Early Years settings to the achievement of children needs to be recognised by Primary schools across the city.

32. The reason why this is perhaps not the case in all areas at present may be due to a lingering perception that Early Years providers simply offer 'care', while schools are only focused on education and achievement. Clearly in the modern learning environment, both groups of providers are responsible for fostering good achievement, and developing the overall wellbeing of each child, and this must be recognised by staff working in both sectors.

33. In addition, it was pointed out to us during the course of our inquiry that the historic division between Early Years and Education has meant

that staff working in each sector do not necessarily share the same skill base in terms of assessing child development.

34. The Early Years service and Education Leeds have produced a guide to assessment in Early Years called 'The Seven Stage Process', and this has been a useful tool in ensuring that similar techniques are used across the board. However, we are of the opinion that this work needs to be continued and built upon in order to ensure that all staff work together to ensure the best outcomes for children.

### Recommendation 1

**That the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds continue to develop and implement ways of promoting parity of esteem between different settings, in particular by developing more effective means of communication, not just from Early Years providers to schools, but vice versa. Also, that joint training for staff from both areas is extended to ensure that everyone working in the sector has a good shared understanding of child development. That progress in these areas is reported back to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board within three months.**

# Conclusions and Recommendations



## Children's Centres

35. In some parts of the city, the introduction of Children's Centres is also helping to promote stronger working relationships between schools and Early Years providers.
36. Many Children's Centres share a site, and sometimes even a building, with a primary school and consequently there are clear links and lines of communication between the two.
37. During our inquiry we visited an excellent example of this system in practice, at Hunslet St Mary's Primary school, where one of the two Hunslet Children's Centre sites is also located.
38. From the time when the Children's Centre was first established, a decision was taken by management to involve staff from all the primary schools in the area in the planning process, and to foster strong ties between teaching and Early Years staff.
39. This has clearly worked extremely well at Hunslet St Mary's. Children going through the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught together in one class, so that there is no distinction between the children in the final year of Early Years provision at the Children's Centre and those in reception at the Primary school. The class is taught by a foundation stage teacher, who has experience in both types of setting.
40. A concerted effort is also made to ensure that there is a very smooth transition for the children moving from the foundation stage unit into Year 1. This is seen as a year long process, and children gradually become accustomed to the life of the rest of the school during their year in reception.
41. Not only does this mean that the children experience a virtually seamless move from Early Years to education, but also any information about the children's achievement can be effectively transmitted between staff members. In addition, staff also reported that the arrangement made safeguarding much easier, as there was far more 'joined up working' between the school and the range of different agencies involved in the work of the Children's Centre.
42. While we were extremely impressed with the provision on offer at Hunslet St Mary's and Hunslet Children's Centre, we did also have some concerns about what we perceived as weaknesses in the current system, which may well be replicated in Children's Centres elsewhere.
43. While there is no denying that children who attend the Children's Centre at a young age, and go on to become pupils at Hunslet St



## Conclusions and Recommendations



Mary's, will benefit from an extremely high standard of care and education, we did have some concerns about links with other schools in the area.

remedy the situation, particularly in terms of stronger governance arrangements, with representatives from all local primary schools involved.

44. Theoretically, every Children's Centre should serve a whole community, and not just a small section of that community. We were disappointed to discover that while Hunslet Children's Centre was attempting to foster strong links with other primary schools in the area, these links did not appear to be nearly as strong as those with Hunslet St Mary's.

47. We also felt that Children's Centres could improve their ties with surrounding schools, and further expand the support which they offer to vulnerable children, by becoming a more integral part of the 'Extended Services' cluster in their area. Clearly there are strong parallels between the type of support offered to younger children via Children's Centres, and that offered to older pupils via Extended Services. There is also a great deal of potential for sharing information about any young people or families experiencing difficulties.

45. This was borne out by the fact that the vast majority of parents whose children attended the Children's Centre at Hunslet St Mary's wanted their children to move on to the primary school. While this is testament to the great relationship which exists between the school and the Children's Centre, we would have been more reassured to see a Children's Centre with strong links to all of the local primary schools, and a feeling among parents that the transition to any local school would be seamless.

46. Clearly it is always going to be easier for a Children's Centre to have stronger links with a school situated in the same building rather than one further afield. However, we did feel that there were some steps which could be taken to

### Recommendation 2

**That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within 3 months on the steps being taken to ensure that:**

- a) all Children's Centres in the city are committed to serving the whole community in which they are located**
- b) the children experience as seamless a transition as possible, regardless of which school they move on to.**
- c) assistance is offered to those Centres, or schools, which are having difficulty in establishing these ties, and**
- d) all Children's Centres are encouraged to form stronger ties with their Extended Services cluster where this is not already happening.**

# Conclusions and Recommendations



## Additional support for providers

48. As previously outlined, the central reason for improving links between schools, Children's Centres and other Early Years providers is to promote the identification and support of those children who are at risk of underachievement.
49. The Early Years Foundation Stage has the potential to be an excellent tool for staff working with children in any setting to help with this identification process, as children are assessed against a range of areas covering intellectual, emotional and physical development.
50. Many settings are already making full use of this to pinpoint the areas in which certain children need additional support. For example, we were told about a project at Whingate primary school whereby a group of boys in the nursery were identified as having a very low stage of development for 'Disposition and Attitudes', and were helped to overcome this via a pirate topic which included a strong emphasis on speech, language and teamwork. The end result of this, and other similar projects at the school, was that the overall Foundation Stage Profile results were the best ever in 2008, with the school far exceeding the Leeds target for a good level of overall achievement.
51. However, we were concerned about the fact that Leeds is home to a huge range of different types of Early Years provision, and that not all of these providers may be fully equipped to make best use of the EYFS. To give an idea of the situation, in addition to local authority provision in the city, there are around 96 private child care providers, 110 voluntary sector organisations and 1000 childminders.
52. In particular, we were concerned that some childminders may not be able to cope with the increased demands of implementing the EYFS due to the other pressures on their time. Although a comprehensive programme of training has been provided, and continues to be provided, by the Early Years service, due to the fact that the majority of childminders work alone, many may find it difficult to access this training.
53. We also felt that there was a danger that financial pressures on some private nurseries could have a negative impact on implementation of the EYFS. In particular, as there was no longer a requirement for teacher support, and most private nurseries could not afford to employ a qualified teacher, the balance between care and education in a nursery setting was not necessarily as equal as it could be.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



54. The forthcoming review of the nursery education grant should help to ease the financial pressure on some private nurseries. However, we felt that more targeted support should be offered to these settings.

### Recommendation 3

**That the Director of Children's Services takes steps to ensure that greater targeted support is offered to both childminders and private nurseries, in implementing, and making best use of, the Early Years Foundation Stage. Also, that a system is established to enable close monitoring of provision across all settings in order to identify those which may be in need of assistance. That progress in both these areas is reported back to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board within three months.**

### Common Transition document

55. The example quoted above, of the work carried out at Whingate primary school, is also a demonstration of how the principles of the EYFS can be used to identify children at risk of underachievement while they are still in the early stages of the Foundation Stage.

56. Many Early Years providers carry out similar work, and it is vital that the information gathered by these providers is not just used to inform work within the setting, but also shared with the primary school which the child moves on to.

57. As mentioned above, some possible methods of facilitating better transfer of information between providers are to promote parity of esteem between the different sectors, and ensure that Children's Centres have stronger links with all of the schools in their area. However, it also became apparent to us during the course of our investigations that the form in which the information is presented is also of great importance.

58. Schools which receive children from a wide range of settings struggle particularly with this, as while they may receive accurate and useful information from every provider, this is likely to be in a wide range of different formats which can make coordination of evidence quite challenging.

59. In order to address this problem, a 'Common Transition Document' has been produced by the Early Years service. This has been piloted, and is due to be rolled out across the city, along with the accompanying guidance, this spring.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



60. Having been struck by the need for such a document, we were pleased to see that one had been developed, although perhaps a little disappointed to see that it was not already more widely used. However, we hope to see the Transition Record used positively by providers across the city in the coming years.

61. In addition, we feel that there may be a case for encouraging the use of this document wherever a young child moves from one setting to another. For example, not only during the transition from pre-school provision to primary school, but also when a child moves from the care of a childminder to nursery.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds report back to us within three months on the steps being taken to promote the EYFS Transition Record as widely as possible, and to encourage as many settings as possible to make use of it.**

### **Working with parents**

62. One of our main concerns when considering the assessment of children, particularly at such a young age, was to ensure that there was no danger of children

being 'labelled' or stigmatised in any way. Indeed, the main criticism levelled at the EYFS, in the media and elsewhere, when it was introduced was that it was a 'pre-school curriculum', which would set unrealistic standards for children and lead to the very young being cast as failures before they had even set foot in primary school.

63. Our exploration of the issue has convinced us that this is certainly not the case. There is a consistent message running throughout all of the EYFS guidance that all children develop at different rates and that they must be allowed to learn at their own speed. In fact, one of the central priorities of the EYFS is "*Children developing at their own pace with the support of an allocated staff member*".

64. However, it is clear that even taking into account the different rates at which children develop, there will always be some who are obviously in need of additional support. In these cases, it is essential that this support is delivered as sensitively as possible, in order to maximise the benefits for the child and minimise any negative impact. In particular, it is important that parents are fully involved in the process, and understand that their child (or their parenting style) is not being criticised in any way.

65. One extremely effective means of offering additional support in a

## Conclusions and Recommendations



'parent friendly' manner is via Children's Centres. Due to the fact that a wide variety of different agencies are involved in the running of Children's Centres, it is relatively easy for a child attending nursery provision at the centre to be referred on to a specialist service such as speech therapy. Children who attend other provision in the area can also access support via Children's Centres and benefit from the co-location of many different services.

66. The fact that Children's Centres are not seen as a solely educational environment also makes it easier for staff working there to engage with those parents of children having difficulties who may not have had a positive experience of education themselves, and therefore may be wary of school based intervention. This theory was confirmed by staff working at Hunslet Children's Centre, who reported that parenting workshops and other activities run at the centre had proved very popular with parents who may otherwise have been difficult to reach, and that in turn this had led to them feeling more comfortable in the school environment.

67. Children's Centres are not the only means of offering this type of additional support, and many other providers in the city are also developing innovative ways to support children and their families.

We learnt about another piece of work at Whingate primary school where targeted support was offered to several children whose level of 'Personal and Emotional Development' were found to be below average due to family circumstances. The parents of these children were also targeted to attend 'stay and play' sessions, and workshops. This helped to improve the achievement of the children, and also fostered stronger relationships between the parents and the school staff.

68. Involving parents is crucial due to the fact that any support offered by providers can be further built upon and developed at home, where the vast majority of early learning takes place. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that greater parental involvement in children's learning can help to improve wider social inclusion and cohesion, which is particularly significant bearing in mind that underachievement is often part of a wider network of social problems in more deprived areas.

69. Education Leeds and the Early Years service are already fully aware of the need for strong parental involvement and the benefits that it can bring. In addition to the examples above, the city ran a successful 'Parents and Partners in Early Learning' project in 2007-2008. However, we would like to see the benefits of this work

# Conclusions and Recommendations



further built upon, and examples of good practice used to drive improvements in all types of provision.

## Recommendation 5

**That the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds ensure that every effort is made to avoid stigmatising those children who are identified as being in need of additional support during the EYFS, and that any support offered takes account of the need to involve parents as much as possible in order to maximise the benefits for the child's development. That progress in these areas is reported back to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board within three months.**

## Links with Health and Social Care

70. As already discussed, the Early Years Foundation Stage is an excellent tool for providers to use in identifying those children who are not only at risk of educational underachievement, but may also need support in other areas, particularly in terms of safeguarding.

71. As we are all only too well aware, strong links between the range of different agencies which work with and support young children are essential to effective safeguarding

arrangements, and in particular links between education, early years, health and social care services, and the voluntary sector, are crucial.

72. Much work is already being done to develop and improve these links, and as we explained above, Children's Centres are particularly effective in terms of delivering this 'joined-up working' due to the way in which they are set up.

73. In addition, we discovered during the course of our inquiry that strong links already exist at a senior and strategic level between the different agencies. For example, senior managers from Social Care are represented on all school wedge partnerships, and a service level agreement has been developed between the Early Years service and health visitors.

74. However, despite all of this work, we did not see a huge amount of evidence of partnership working with Health and Social Care on the ground during the course of our visits. We feel very strongly that the commitment at a strategic level needs to be rolled out to all individual providers across the city.

# Conclusions and Recommendations



## Recommendation 6

**That the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds report back to us within three months on the steps being taken to ensure that 'joined-up' working becomes a fact of life for all providers working within the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the voluntary sector, and that the existing strategic commitment to partnership working between education, Early Years, Health and Social Care, along with current examples of good practice, are used as a basis from which to roll out these improvements across the city.**

Educational Needs (SEN) and those from the Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage groups.

77. We were particularly struck by the extreme disadvantages often faced by children born into Gypsy/Roma or Irish Traveller communities, and the consequent poor levels of achievement among children from these backgrounds. For example, in 2008, 50% of White British children (2873 from a cohort of 5746) reached a 'good level of achievement' in the Foundation Stage Profile compared with just 14% of Irish Traveller children (1 from a cohort of 7) and 0% of children of Gypsy/Roma origin (from a cohort of 22) (although this needs to be seen in the context of small cohorts of children in the latter categories).

## Support for vulnerable groups

75. As well as looking at the tailored support on offer to those children who may be experiencing difficulties in specific areas, we also examined the more general support on offer to 'at risk' groups during the course of our inquiry.

76. A number of specialist staff within the Early Years service and Education Leeds work with different groups which are particularly vulnerable to underachievement, including children from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, children with Special

78. We discovered that a significant amount of work is being done to support children and their families within these communities, although it is perhaps too early for the positive benefits of this work to be seen as yet. However, the principle of engaging parents and making the most of their support is central to much of the activity being carried out.

79. Similarly, there are programmes in place to support children from BME communities and those with Special Educational Needs.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



80. However, we did have some concerns about the fact that in both cases there appeared to be separate teams in Early Years and Education Leeds to work with each of these groups. While there are evidently good working relationships between the different teams and groups of staff, we felt that support could be offered in a more seamless manner if it was handled by one single group of staff, covering both age ranges. The way that things currently stand, there could potentially be similar problems in the transition between different support teams as can occur when children move from one setting to another.

81. We also had some concerns about the current levels of funding for children with SEN, and the consequent capacity of some providers, particularly those in the private sector, to adequately support these children. During the course of our visits we heard of several examples of Early Years providers who could only find funding for a limited amount of support for children with these additional needs.

82. We discovered that a revised inclusion strategy is currently being developed by a sub group of the Sure Start partnership. However, we were keen to see further work being done to improve the support already on offer to these children.

### Recommendation 7

**That the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds report back to us within three months on how the support on offer to those groups of children identified as being at high risk of underachievement, such as Black and Minority Ethnic children and those with Special Educational Needs, is being made as seamless as possible, particularly during the transition period.**

### Recommendation 8

**Also, that the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds carry out a review of the funding for children with Special Educational Needs within Early Years, within the next three months, with a particular focus on ensuring that children are offered the same level of high quality support, regardless of the type of setting which they attend.**

### Coordination of services

83. Finally, we recognise that a number of our recommendations so far have related to ensuring that similar levels of service are on offer in different parts of the city, and that examples of good practice are shared.



## Conclusions and Recommendations



84. We would like to see a stronger system in place to monitor the different services on offer and to moderate governance and partnership working arrangements.

85. This could help in resolving a number of the issues which we have raised, such as the variation in support offered in different geographical areas and by different types of provider, and the need for stronger links between different services, particularly at a local level.

86. One possible means of achieving this may be through the Area Management Boards, which already play an important role in coordinating services in different parts of the city. By focusing on provision for children in this age group, the Area Management Boards could help to ensure that the same high standards are maintained across the wide range of different providers in the sector.

### Recommendation 9

**That the Directors of Children's Services and Education Leeds develop a means of coordinating and moderating different services and their associated governance arrangements to ensure that there is a consistently high standard of service across all providers. That the option of making use of the Area Management Boards to achieve this be considered. That a report on progress is brought to the Children's Services Scrutiny board within the next 3 months.**

# Evidence



## Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

## Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Early Years Service and Education Leeds – Inquiry into educational standards – Entering the Education System – November 2008
- Parents as Partners in Early Learning project report
- Feedback letter from the National Assessment Agency on the annual Foundation Stage Profile moderation process
- Early Years Foundation Stage training programme outcomes
- Pilot Transition Document – Draft Guidance
- Pilot Transition Document (draft)
- Outcomes at the Foundation Stage in Leeds 2008. Report Version No: 1a (Results for all Leeds settings including PVI's)
- KS1 data report
- Report of the Early Years Service and Education Leeds – Inquiry into educational standards – Entering the Education System – March 2009
- Sure Start for Travellers – Evaluation Report
- Report on Education Leeds Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS), Early Years.

# Evidence



## Witnesses Heard

Andrea Richardson - Quality and Standards Manager, Early Years Service

Christine Halsall - Head of Primary School Improvement, Education Leeds

Liz Bradley - Early Years Foundation Stage Improvement Manager, Early Years Service

Sharon Hogan - School Improvement Adviser (Early Years), Education Leeds / Early Years Service

## Dates of Scrutiny

25 September 2008 – Working Group to scope Terms of Reference (Councillor Lancaster, Councillor Hyde, Councillor Morgan, Tony Britten, Professor Gosden)

13 November 2008 – Scrutiny Board meeting

9 February 2009 – Visit to Hunslet St Mary's Primary School and Hunslet Children's Centre (Councillor Geoff Driver)

10 February 2009 – Visit to Childminder (Sandra Hutchinson)

20 February 2009 – Visit to Kids Academy Nursery (Sandra Hutchinson, Ian Falkingham, Councillor Karen Renshaw)

23 February 2009 – Visit to Kids Unlimited Nursery (Councillor Brenda Lancaster, Celia Foote)

5 March 2009 – Scrutiny Board meeting