

Leeds Education Challenge – Foundation Stage: Children’s Services and Cluster approach to the three prime development areas,

- **personal, social and emotional development,**
- **communication and language and**
- **physical development.**

As clusters grow and develop in different ways embedding a cluster approach to early years (0-5) and the three prime areas is also growing. There are a number of excellent examples of the effective 0-5 involvement in clusters within Leeds. For example, within the Horsforth cluster, a range of early years providers meet on a regular basis to develop partnerships and action key issues identified through cluster priorities. A representative from the 0-5 improvement team sits and contributes to the cluster meetings. Providers within the cluster have embedded children’s ‘learning through movement’ through a cluster training programme. This has resulted in enhanced PSED and PD learning opportunities across both schools and early years settings. Leeds’ EYFS Profile 2012 data indicates that these two aspects have the highest percentage of children working securely within the early learning goals at 89%.

In the Morley cluster a local private provider manager chairs the early years network, reporting on progress to the cluster against the cluster’s early years action plan. This has raised the profile of private providers in the area and due to effective partnerships between schools and non maintained providers, children have effective transitions into schools.

The continued delivery of the ‘Every Child a Talker’ programme, in partnership with Children’s Services and Leeds Speech and Language Therapy service through a cluster approach, is demonstrating improved outcomes for children in their early language skills. Leeds’ EYFS Profile 2012 data indicates 84% children are working securely at the end of the EYFS. These and other approaches are useful case studies which could be shared with other clusters across the city to facilitate shared learning. Local Authority Partners and cluster chairs have a key role to play in this.

Progress since the Education Standards – Entering the Education System inquiry 2009.

Despite a year on year increase in the number of 5 year olds entering education, the percentage of children reaching a good level of development has increased by 13% over the last three years to 63% compared to 50.5% in 2009. The 5% increase in 2012 is the same rate of increase as seen nationally but above the increase for Leeds’ statistical neighbours. This means around 5560 five year olds reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation with some minority ethnic groups having improved by over 20 per cent in the past year. This means that children have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make a good start to their learning when they enter primary school.

In January 2012 8900 children were in reception classes across Leeds which was the largest cohort ever and 23 per cent of those are entitled to free school meals, compared to 18 per cent of the current year 11 (15 to 16 year old) of which the cohort is over 800 less at 8072. An effective EYFS profile moderation programme

(externally validated by the Standards and Testing Agency), better transition arrangements into school with a focus on children's learning and higher quality early years provision (amongst others) have all contributed to this improvement. This will be the last set of data results which will be published against the present profile's 9 points and the existing good level of development indicator. These have been replaced by a new assessment measure as required by the revised Early Years Foundation Stage published earlier this September.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Sept 2012) Legislation changes

The revised EYFS has brought a number of significant changes (and a revised Ofsted inspection framework) for those settings (including schools) required to deliver the EYFS. In preparation for the changes the 0-5 improvement team from spring 2012 onwards delivered 34 universal 2.5 hour briefings (*Getting to know the revised EYFS framework*) for early years providers. Spread across the city, the week and day to meet the needs of the diverse sector these ensured providers had an opportunity to hear key messages outlining the key legislative changes and implications for practice. Over 1,100 providers attended. Since September this support remains with a revised universal EYFS training programme, refreshed quality improvement programme and regular communications through commissioned sector representatives, a 6 weekly EYFS ebulletin and improving web resources such as an EYFS hub on the Leeds Family Information Service and early years collaboration site for schools.

A key message is that the document retains its universal and statutory nature but has been 'simplified' and reduced in size and that it is a revised document, building upon the existing EYFS framework and its research based early years practice. The most significant changes are in assessment requirements and practices with some guidance e.g. EYFS Profile moderation still awaiting publication from the Department for Education. Other notable changes include:

Notable Changes to the learning and development requirements

1. *Areas of Learning and Development* now consist of three prime areas and four specific areas instead of the current six. These shape the 'educational programmes' in all early years settings.
2. *Early learning goals*: instead of the 69 there will be 17 from September. The content of these has also changed in some cases – these summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year.
3. *Assessment at 2* is a new progress check, which is a requirement for all providers providing for 2 year olds. To be completed when the child is aged between two and three, a short written summary must be provided to parents/carers, highlighting achievements and areas in which extra support might be needed, and describing how the provider will address any issues.
4. *Assessment at 5 remains but* will require a different process to be undertaken by providers (mostly schools) when the child is in their final year of the EYFS. This will involve teachers making judgements against the 17 goals. For each goal teachers determine whether children are meeting expected levels, are exceeding them, or are below the expected level (emerging). Providers will be required to share the report, along with a comment on the characteristics of learning, with both the Year 1 teacher and parent/carer.

5. EYFS Profile scores are still required to be sent to the local authority, however, the DfE have ceased to fund the national use of the Suffolk eyeProfile from September. Further announcements on the requirements for collecting and sharing data are expected from the STA in the next few months after they have completed their trials. All matters relating to the LAs duty to discharge the statutory moderation programme remain.
6. *English as an additional language*: requirements give a clearer focus on the reasonable steps providers must take, including the assessment of children's skills in English, to ensure children reach a good standard of English at the end of EYFS.
7. *Wrap around and holiday care*: the framework now makes it clear that the EYFS requirements do not need to be delivered in full when children spend limited amounts of time in such settings.

Notable Changes to the safeguarding and welfare requirements

To emphasise the importance of safeguarding, the welfare requirements are now the *safeguarding and welfare requirements*.

1. *Child protection*: the revised EYFS includes examples of adults' behaviour, which might be signs of abuse and neglect. If they become aware of any such signs, staff should respond appropriately in order to safeguard children.
2. The EYFS now requires that safeguarding policies and procedures must cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.
3. *Suitable people*: the requirements for providers to check the suitability of managers have been simplified. From September 2012, providers will be responsible for obtaining criminal record disclosures on managers. Currently, Ofsted obtain these disclosures.
4. *Staff qualifications, training, support and skills*: a requirement has been introduced in relation to staff supervision. Providers must give staff opportunities for coaching and training, mutual support, teamwork, continuous improvement; and confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
5. The requirement for childminders to complete training in the EYFS has been strengthened. Childminders will be required to complete the training before they register with Ofsted.
6. *Staff:child ratios*: there is a clarification of the circumstances in which there may be exceptions to the staff:child ratios for childminders caring for children of mixed ages.
7. *Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment*: the requirements in relation to risk assessment have been adjusted to clarify that it is for providers to judge whether a risk assessment needs to be recorded in writing.

These changes will all impact on the Ofsted inspection framework with the publication of a revised inspection framework where providers are expected to strive for a good or better outcome at inspection. Further information is available to the public at www.foundationyears.org.uk and additional briefing notes and information can be provided upon request.