

Early Years Update Autumn 2006

It seems hard to believe that it is Autumn already! I trust that you had a good summer break and that your new children are all settled in. As usual this update will be e-mailed to Head teachers with a hard copy via the "black bag" to the named Foundation Stage contact for your school. Please let Sue Turnbull know if the FS contact for your school has changed, via email on s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk

The summer saw the introduction of the Childcare Act 2006. This is the first ever piece of legislation devoted exclusively to Early Years and childcare. It sets out three main duties for local authorities:-

- To improve the outcomes for all children under five and reduce inequalities between them
- To secure sufficient childcare for working parents and those seeking to take up work
- To provide comprehensive information about childcare and other services for parents of children and young people

The Act includes a power for the Secretary of State to set targets for Local Authorities based on the Foundation Stage Profile results. At this stage there is no requirement for individual schools or settings to set targets for the end of the Foundation Stage but of course it will be essential for the Local Authority to work with schools in order to achieve the LA targets.

There are two main areas for focus, both of which you will probably have considered in respect of your FSP results.

1. An improvement target. The aim is to increase the average points levels across all scales in each Area of Learning with a particular focus on PSE and CLL, both recognised as being fundamental to future development.
2. An equalities target. This aims to reduce the inequalities between children living in different areas – in other words to close the gap in achievement between children living in advantaged and disadvantaged areas

A batch of reports relating to FSP has been placed on the S drive. If you have not already done so, I urge you to identify time to look at your FSP results for 2006 and use the information to ensure that your SEF is up to date.

New Early Years Foundation Stage

Although further information had been promised for the Autumn Term it seems that this has been delayed. Our intention is to wait for further guidance before preparing schools and settings for the introduction in 2008.

Inclusion

The transition from nursery to reception for children with identified additional needs has gone smoothly and the team is appreciative of the part that practitioners in schools played.

A member of the Sure Start Inclusion Team will monitor reception children known to the team during the Autumn Term. At the end of the term schools will then include these children in their plans with Wigan Educational Support Service (WESS).

Please note that the SureStart Inclusion Team does not pick up requests for service involvement for reception children. Requests for advice and guidance on the inclusion of these children must be directed to WESS via the school's Link Teacher.

Introduction to the eProfile

As a result of requests from practitioners who missed this course in September we will be running "**Introduction to the eProfile**" again on Tuesday 14th November at Room 4 in Golborne. If you wish to book onto this course please contact Tracy Croston on 01942 200899 or email t.croston@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Foundation Stage Profile Update

This year cluster groups have been amended in order to strengthen the links that exist between schools grouped around the Children's Centres. This means that a few schools will receive a further visit during the 2006/07 academic year even though they were visited last year whilst some will not receive a visit for the second consecutive year. **The visit is not designed to focus on the moderation of judgements.** Primarily it will be used to discuss the practice and processes related to the observation of children and the quality of day to day learning and teaching. The validation of a school's results depends on the outcome of the moderator's visit **and** the statutory moderation meeting. *Schools who are not due a visit this year may request one at any time.*

This year's support for YR teachers has now been planned. Foundation Stage Profile Moderators will offer a half-day support visit this year to all Cluster A schools in either the Spring or the Summer term. The timing and focus of this support is negotiable with your moderator who will make an initial contact this term. A copy of the cluster groups is available on the Early Years Website.

The LEA has a statutory duty to moderate all teachers' judgements. Consequently all schools, (including those in Clusters B1 – B7) are required to attend a moderation meeting to share their understanding of the various scale points within the Profile. To help meet this requirement schools have received a booklet containing two observational assessment tasks last June. (Further copies can also be downloaded from the above website.) **Recorded observations from these activities will form the basis for the discussions and the ultimate verification of judgements.**

Colleagues must bring at least three examples of observational assessments to the moderation meeting in order that your school's judgements can be verified. If you wish you may bring two examples from one of the tasks and another from the second.

The dates for these meetings are

Date: 16.5.07

Time: 1.15pm

Venue: Quality Hotel River Way Wigan MBC

Clusters: A3 B3 A5 B5 A6 B6 A7 B7

Date: 23.5.07
Time: 1.15pm
Venue: P.D.C. Hindley
Clusters: A1B1 A2 B2 A4 B4

NB: Please bring a photocopy of one piece of evidence as this will be retained to verify that statutory moderation has taken place

There will again be an opportunity for all practitioners to meet with their moderator and other colleagues during the Spring Term. Two half day Cluster Support Meetings have been arranged at the following times

Date: 23.1.06 **Time:** 1.15 pm **Venue:** P.D.C. Hindley

Date: 31.1.06 **Time:** 9.15 am **Venue:** P.D.C. Hindley

Please book on for both the moderation meeting and the cluster meetings in the usual way by contacting PDC.

Latest Guidance from the National Assessment Agency (NAA)

The latest guidance on assessment in the Foundation Stage stresses the need for practitioners to assess children working in a variety of contexts. The recommendation is that assessments made based on the observation of children accessing continuous provision should account for 80% of the assessment evidence and judgements made during a planned teacher focused assessment for the other 20% of the evidence. Moderators will be looking for evidence of this balance in their visits and conversations about FSP this year. It is also worth reiterating that from September 2008 when the new Early Years Foundation Stage becomes statutory, the FSP will be the only assessment tool that should be used in the Foundation Stage.

Headteachers will receive an electronic copy of the letter from NAA that makes this explicit and further exemplification on a separate attachment. The text of the letter is attached at the end of the document. If you want to see the exemplification, please ask your Headteacher.

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The team are keen to extend the team of Foundation Stage Profile Moderators, initially by recruiting two practitioners who would attend meetings and shadow an existing moderator with a view to undertaking the role independently as the need arises in the team.

If you would be interested in this opportunity or should you have any further queries about FSP moderation in general, please do not hesitate to contact, Jayne Challiner on 01942 200899.

Foundation Stage Assessment Guidance and Transfer Document

The team are very pleased to have received positive feedback from schools about the Transfer Documents which were introduced to maintained, private and voluntary nurseries last year. These have been widely used and Reception teachers have valued receiving this information to help with on entry assessment.

Copies of the end of year transfer document will be sent to all maintained nurseries.

Copies of the Foundation Stage Assessment Guidance/Record can be requested by Foundation Stage practitioners by emailing Tracy Croston on t.croston@wiganmbc.gov.uk

A copy of the extensions to these Assessment Guidance Records which will cover all of the Early Learning Goals and point 9 of the profile will be forwarded to schools in the next few weeks.

Coloured Stepping Stones Records

If you use these records in your school you will know what I mean! Rather than sending these into school, please email Tracy Croston t.croston@wiganmbc.gov.uk if you need more hard copies.

Wigan Quality Standard

The following settings have been accredited under the Wigan Quality Standard since the last update and they will be attending an achievement awards ceremony during October.

Area East	Area West	Area Central
Hindsford CE Primary School		RL Hughes Primary School
		St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

The following settings have been recommended for re-accreditation under the Wigan Quality Standard since the last update. Once confirmed by the Ratification Group, their hard work and commitment will also be recognised at an awards ceremony.

Area East	Area West	Area Central
Newton Westpark Primary		Bickershaw CE Primary

Launch 6 of Wigan Quality Standard is about to begin. If you missed the launch event but want more information, please contact Jayne Challiner on 01942 206205 or by email on j.challiner@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Wigan Quality Standard for Out of School Clubs (WQSOOSC)

The Wigan Quality Standard for Out of School clubs was launched at Douglas Valley Training suite on the 9th June. The scheme has been developed from Wigan Quality Standard, (our local Quality Assurance scheme that most of you are familiar with) and extended to meet the needs of Out of School Clubs. WQSOOSC and has been endorsed by the Children and Young People's Services Department within Wigan Council. Accreditation is awarded to clubs who, through the process of self evaluation, work to continually improve the service they provide.

For further information please contact Emily Wood on 01942 200899.

Further Development of the Wigan Quality Standard

Discussions are underway to consider the development of WQS into Year 1. A cross borough network group has been developing the WQS audits to bring them in line with good practice in Year 1 and proposals are in hand for schools to apply for a “Seal of Approval” for their continuity between FS and KS1 and their KS1 provision.

Whilst this is only a proposal at this stage it would be most useful if we could gauge the level of interest. Please email Sue Turnbull on s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk if you think your school would be interested.

Early Education

Fliers should have been received in schools for our next local event:-

Date	Thursday November 9 th
Time	7:00 pm
Venue	Quality Hotel, Wigan
Theme	Early Writing in the Foundation Stage
Speaker	Alistair Bryce-Clegg (Headteacher of a 3 form entry Infant school)

If you have not received a flier please telephone 01942 206205.

Membership of Early Education

The Wigan Branch of Early Education is extending the offer of discounted membership. From now on all practitioners working in early years settings in the Wigan area will be able to take advantage of this offer all year round!

Please note subscription rates went up in January 2006.

Annual subscription rates to Early Education are now as follows:

Individual - £37.50

Group A - £95 for settings of up to 5 people

Group B - £150 for settings of up to 10 people

10% discount will entitle you to membership at the following rates:

Individual - £33.75

Group A - £85.50

Group B - £135

Please remember this will only entitle you to membership/membership renewal for one year. Please telephone Janet Johnson 01942 206205 if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

Playing with Sounds (PWS)

During 2004, the DfES issued "Playing with Sounds; A supplement to Progression in Phonics." These materials were developed to support the learning and teaching of phonics within the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage One. Over the last academic year, settings were invited to take part in a project, which looked at the implementation and use of Playing with Sounds within the private and voluntary sector. Settings selected to take part were those with good OFSTED outcomes and were judged to have practitioners who were able to meet the challenge of taking part in using and evaluating PWS.

Initial training took the form of discussing good practice with regard to Literacy development within a Reception class so pre-school practitioners could develop an awareness of the value of their practice and how this is further developed. This included elements of successful phonic teaching. The feedback from the initial training was very positive and settings implemented PWS in January. Practitioners found the resource cards easy to use and were finding that the children were eager to join in the action rhymes and listening games. They were also asked to assess children at the start and end of the project so progress could be measured.

It was found that settings were already carrying out similar activities to those identified in the resource file, however, these were not classed as "phonics." It helped to clarify exactly what constitutes early phonic development. All settings were very positive about their experiences of using PWS and stated that children have made faster progress than previously. One setting felt that using PWS had resulted in a "massive impact" on phonic and writing development. Two settings were able to produce examples of children's writing that showed use of initial sounds and blends. Two settings had already liaised with reception classes and all were interested to know if the children would be continuing with PWS when they started school.

This project will be re-run this academic year, with the progress of the children taking part being tracked. Training was provided for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 teachers during 2005.

Given the focus on developing CLL settings will be targeted to be involved in similar projects on an on-going basis.

The PWS Resource file is available from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60, ref DfES 0280-2004. If you would like any more details about the use of PWS, please contact Sue Child on 200899.

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers or Teachers new to Reception

If you are a newly qualified teacher or a teacher new to reception, please let the team know as we will be able to offer you some support in your first year in Reception. Please let the appropriate advisory teacher know by email or telephone.

West Janet Johnson on 01942 206205 email janet.johnson@wiganmbc.gov.uk
East Sue Child on 01942 206205 email s.child@wiganmbc.gov.uk
Central Nicola Goulding on 01942 206205 email n.goulding@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Support for Teachers with mixed Reception and Year 1 classes

It would be helpful if you could let the appropriate Advisory Teacher know if you have a mixed age reception /Year 1 class in your school this year. (Please use contacts above.) A drop in session has been arranged on Wednesday November 29th 2006. The session will run from 1.00pm to 4pm in the Training Suite at Douglas Valley Early Years Centre in Wigan. Practitioners with immediate issues can drop in at a time to suit themselves and ask for advice from the team – there is no need to book in advance.

A new course has been developed this year to support teachers with mixed Reception /Year 1 classes - "Effective Provision and Practice for a Mixed R/Y1 Class" is due to run on 03/05/07. Please book places via the PDC system.

Early Years Practitioner Qualification

Some of you may be aware of this new qualification which is open to staff already qualified to level 3 and above, including teachers. In the proposed Early Years Foundation Stage, this qualification will enable providers in the private and voluntary sectors to run early education and child care at a ratio of 1:13 (Which will be the required ratio for maintained nursery classes from September 2008) It will be a requirement for Children's Centres to have an EYP.

Where practitioners with EYP are working alongside teachers, the EYP status will be higher than qualified teacher status. It is likely that many teachers, especially those working in Children's Centres, will be interested in pursuing this qualification.

Qualified teachers will be able to pursue the EYP via one of three routes. For further information please contact Samantha Rourke, Workforce Development Team by email at s.rourke@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Finally.....

I know that many of you are familiar with our local Early Years Projects. In order to update our information I would be most appreciative if you could complete the simple proforma provided with this update.