

Early Years Update - Autumn 2008

I hope that the start of the new term has gone well for you and that you are enjoying getting to know the new characters in your class. I have no doubt that you will have taken the introduction of the new EYFS into your stride and that you are becoming increasingly familiar with the similarities and differences. I trust that you will all access further training in line with the needs of your team. Below is the link to the EYFS resources on teachernet www.teachernet.gov.uk. From the home page, select "Teaching & Learning" from the left hand column; then select "The EYFS". The second bulleted list on the page provides links to:-

- EYFS Statutory Framework
- EYFS Practice Guidance
- Letter from Sheila Scales
- EYFS table of changes
- Frequently asked questions

The team have cross referenced the changes that were made before final publication and this is on the EY site on the Wigan schools on line website.

If there is any confusion at all regarding staff ratios, non contact time etc, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team.

Early Years Foundation Stage Forum

In partnership with the CYPS Workforce development team the Early Years Team are providing free access for all early years staff to a new online forum for Early Years Foundation Stage Practitioners.

For more than five years the Foundation Stage Forum has been the platform for a vibrant online community of professionals involved with the Foundation Stage. With the advent of the EYFS this community has become more active than ever.

You are invited to join this network of reception and nursery teachers and all Early Years Practitioners to discuss issues, seek and give advice, find and download articles and resources. As Wigan practitioners you will also find your own local forum area.

Under the terms of the local authority membership scheme to which Wigan now belongs, everyone working for Wigan can join using the password listed below free of charge.

Follow these instructions as to how to register to the forum.

Simply visit www.foundation-stage.info, and click on 'Register' at the top of the page.

After approving the terms and conditions you'll be presented with a short form to complete:

- Select a username and password of your own choice (you'll need to remember this whenever you log in).
- Type in a valid email address (this is used to send newsletters and notification of topics you are interested in).
- When you find the 'LEA Registration Password' field, enter the Wigan password which is **Formby8** (please note this is case sensitive).
- Ignore the subscriptions field. All other fields are optional. Fill out any you wish and then click 'submit'.

- That's it! You're subscribed for a year. Log in if asked to do so, then start exploring...

EYFS - Welfare Requirements Training

Please note there will be a training event to update practitioners in the maintained sector with regard to the Welfare Requirements. You will be aware that these became statutory in September 2008. The training will take place on the morning of 15 January 2009. Please book on in the usual way.

Foundation Stage Profile Outcomes 2008

You will know that the LA has a duty to improve Foundation Stage results and has to set targets for the end of the Foundation Stage. The targets are:

- To increase the percentage of children achieving 6+ in PSED.
- To increase the percentage of children achieving 6+ in CLLD.
- To increase the percentage of children achieving 6+ in both CLLD and PSED.
- To increase the number of children scoring 78 FSP.
- To increase the scores of the lowest attaining children 3 times as quickly as the highest, i.e. narrowing the gap.

Although schools are not required to set numerical targets like these, we have raised awareness about the need for schools to assess children at regular intervals to identify strengths and areas for development – which become their 'target areas'.

In the last academic year, some focused project work, along with the increased focus across every school; the LA **did** achieve most of the targets. LA results indicate that standards in all areas of learning (and strands) increased in 2008 and are above national averages in every case. Whereas in 2007 we did little to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest, in 2008 we made a significant impact in this area.

We must not become complacent though. The fact is that in 3 out of 4 strands in CLLD and in calculating only a third of children assessed on the FSP had achieved the expected level. These children are now in Year 1. Expressed another way, 2/3rds of the children in Year 1 had not achieved the expectation for the end of the Foundation Stage 4 months ago. I therefore strongly encourage all schools to review the progress of these children and ensure that the provision in your school is meeting their needs.

Targeted Intervention

In order to focus attention on practice in the EYFS a range of targeted interventions is in place. In 2006-7 the team focused on working with teachers in LA maintained nurseries. Practise in all nurseries was audited and based on the outcomes, a training programme has been designed including sessions to develop teachers' understanding and use of data, tracking progress and targeting.

Last year, the team focus was on provision in reception classes. In Phase 1 (07-08) a group of 35 schools was identified for a reception class visit. Based on the outcomes of these visits, a range of training has been planned.

In 08-09 Phase 2 of this work will involve a further group of schools, all of which will receive a visit to their reception class by an advisory teacher and enhanced moderation of FSP.

Schools who are not already using 'Forward Together' have been given the opportunity to implement this targeted intervention straight away. Forward Together is a project aimed at the parents of children who achieved low scores (around 4/5) on the FSP. These children are now in Year 1 and without some targeted intervention they are likely to underachieve at the end of subsequent key stages. Schools will also be prioritised to train on Flying Start next summer (in a nutshell, Flying Start is a project that promotes target setting appropriate for reception age children.)

Other targeted work specifically aimed at schools includes:-

- Letters & Sounds – intensive CLLD programme from National Strategies with funding for a CLLD Consultant (starting January 2009)
- SEAD – Social and Emotional Aspects of Development – a new programme from PNS funded for one year only (Awaiting information from National Strategies)
- Support for schools with growing numbers of children with EAL through joint training with EY Consultants and EAL team
- Boys' achievement

Tracking Progress

By now you should have received the updated guidance on a CD and there will be opportunities to familiarise yourselves with this at training sessions throughout the year. If you have not received this please contact Hazel Donohue on 01942 828845.

Collection of FSP on Entry Data

In order to monitor children's progress through the reception year, so that we can identify the children at risk of not achieving expectations, we have liaised with the SIMs team in order to collect this information electronically. Schools will be receiving information on how to do this shortly. A few schools have sent their information in hard copy. We appreciate that you have done this but would ask that you follow the instructions from the SIMs team when it arrives in order that we have the data for all schools in the same format.

Foundation Stage Profile Moderation Tasks

The focus for the moderation activity for the 2008-09 academic year are intended to help you share your understanding of the scale points within Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication Language and Literacy Development.

In most cases practitioners will be able to make judgements in relation to the various scale points from their knowledge of each child as s/he develops through on-going learning and teaching. Other contributors will also be involved in the assessment process i.e. the child's parents or carers, the child, practitioners from previous settings, support staff. Views from all these stakeholders may provide an invaluable source of evidence when 'next steps' are discussed.

The National Assessment Agency's position on the process of assessment is that evidence is collected as an on-going process through:

- The practitioner's knowledge of the child
- Information from a range of contributors
- Observation of self-initiated activities
- Collection of anecdotal *significant moments*
- Focussed Assessments

When making a judgement for the FSP, practitioners should draw on at least 80% of evidence from knowledge of the child, observation and anecdotal assessments, and no more than 20% of evidence from adult directed or focused assessments.

In line with NAA guidance, there are further changes this year to the way in which moderation will be undertaken.

This year the moderation tasks will be similar to Task B for 07- 08 and will provide practitioners with opportunities to agree judgements of scale points from identified scales in two areas of learning. For each of the scales listed below, practitioners are asked to bring along evidence, gathered over time of two children's achievement within the identified scale i.e. evidence relating to the scale points achieved by each child.

1. Area of learning - Communication Language and Literacy Development
Scale – Linking Sounds and Letters
2. Area of learning – Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Scale – Dispositions and Attitudes

This task will enable practitioners to consolidate the good practice of using on-going observations and assessments. The evidence provided will include:

- The practitioner's knowledge of the child
- Information from other contributors where appropriate
- Observation of child-initiated activities
- Collection of anecdotal information about *significant moments (e.g. incidental observation of a child demonstrating a new skill)*
- Focussed Observations

It is not necessary for practitioners to bring large amounts of evidence to the moderators meetings.

Moderation Plans for 08-09

For the next academic year we have arranged for moderation meetings for **Reception** teachers to take place in smaller groups in Children's Centre Clusters as detailed below.

Please note the specific attendees for the meetings on 24.4.09 and 5.5.09 –

- **“Mop Up”**- this meeting is for practitioners who were unable to attend their designated cluster due to unforeseen circumstances.
- **“Directed by moderator”** – practitioners who Moderators feel need to attend an additional event due to their particular circumstances.
- **“New to Reception”** – practitioners new to reception should attend one of these sessions as there will be the opportunity for more support.

3.2.09 1.15pm - Cluster A1 and A2 - Meadowbank Children's Centre
4.2.09 1.15pm - Cluster B1 and B2 - Meadowbank Children's Centre

10.2.09	1.15pm - Cluster B3 and B4 - Brooklands Training Suite, Hindley
11.3.09	1.15pm - Cluster A3 and A4 - Platt Bridge Children's Centre
17.3.09	1.15pm - Cluster A5, A6 and A7 - Hope Children's Centre
19.3.09	1.15pm - Cluster B5, B6 and B7 - Hope Children's Centre
28.4.09	1.15pm - Mop Up / Directed by moderator / New to Reception Westfield Children's Centre
5.5.09	1.15pm - Mop Up / Directed by moderator/ New to Reception Westleigh Children's Centre

As a result of the positive feedback received from Nursery Practitioners, moderation of nursery judgements will now take place annually to support Nursery practitioners to ensure accuracy of assessment data as children move into Reception.

Nursery Moderation

18.6.09 1.15pm - Room 4, Golborne

Foundation Stage SEF Update

The LA guidance document to support schools in completing the SEF sections relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage has been updated and can be found on the Wigan schools on line site.

Newly Qualified Teachers/Teachers new to the EYFS

The first of our meetings will take place at 4.00pm on 18 November at Ince CE Primary School. The focus of the meeting will be the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Observation and Moderation. There will be an opportunity to look round the schools' Early Years Foundation Stage – Nursery and Reception.

These meetings are of value to Practitioners working in Nursery or Reception and provide an ideal forum to network with other practitioners. They are open to NQTs/Teachers new to Reception/Graduate Trainees or indeed anyone who feels they would like to attend. We aim to keep abreast of NQTs joining the EYFS but if you are new and therefore not on our database and would like to attend please contact Janet Johnson 01942 828922 or Janet.Johnson@wigan.gov.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage, Planning, Observation and Assessment

The EYFS places great emphasis on “starting with the child.” This means that the starting point in the planning process is observation to gain an overview of children’s learning needs. The “next steps” that come from observations, inform assessments and planning. There is also a requirement to engage parents and other settings/agencies in the assessment process. This can be done via informal discussions and Parents' Evenings etc. The implementation of EYFS has not added requirements for additional paperwork for settings to complete as far as observation, assessment and planning are concerned. The following is a quick guide to effective early years practice.

Incidental Observations

- These are observations of a child engaged in an activity that he/she have chosen for themselves. Children directed to an area of continuous provision or taking part in a focus activity are not involved in child initiated activities.
- These should form the majority of observation based information about a child. An incidental observation is a short note that records that a child has demonstrated new learning or has shown a learning need. For example, a child counts a group of objects using 1 – 1 correspondence for the first time is new learning. A child shows they are unable to count in sequence beyond 5 is a learning need.

Focussed Observations

- These are planned in advance and may focus on a group or individual children. The majority of focussed/planned observations will take place whilst children are involved in child initiated activities. There may be occasions, however, when a practitioner will set a task for a group of children and sit back and make observations as the children work through the task.
- The majority of observations should come via incidental observations. By looking regularly through the observations that are being kept, a practitioner will be able to see which children/subject areas have not been observed and plan to observe for these areas.
- Although the advice is that there should be a planned observation per child per term, it is appropriate to first look at the amount of observations that have already been recorded for each child. A focussed/planned observation is to provide the practitioner with information that is not already known about the child. If a child has a large amount of incidental observations, then it is not always necessary to spend time carrying out a planned observation on this child. It is for practitioners to use their professional judgement for this.

Focus/Adult Led Activities

- The NAA advice is that 80% of observations are incidental and should come from children engaged in child initiated activities. This gives an indication of the balance of child initiated/adult led activities that is to be expected during nursery and the early stages of reception.
- Focus activities should be planned to meet the learning needs of groups of children. This information comes from the "next steps" identified on observations. It is not necessary for every child to do every focus activity, rather target which group of children would benefit from different activities, always remembering that the skills/concepts that are to be learnt are more important than the actual activity. This is especially important for children who are attending nursery that offers a flexible delivery.
- In order to achieve a balance of child initiated/adult led in a nursery and early reception, it would be necessary to only have one focus activity being delivered at a time. So again, rather than focusing on the number of focus activities being delivered, think about having quality time where one at least one adult is interacting with the children and another delivering focus activities.
- In reception, many practitioners, (at least in the Autumn Term) have a time each day when children are accessing continuous provision and the practitioners are interacting with the children and making observations. The recommendations are that there should be:
 - a daily phonics session, which is systematic and conducive with the findings of the Rose Review.
 - each week each child should have further literacy activities through direct teaching and independent activities with the opportunity to consolidate these skills within the continuous provision. This will be the same for numeracy.

It is important not to become too fixed on the number of observations being collected or focus activities being delivered. It is better to focus on providing quality learning and teaching experiences for the children, where observation based assessment has informed the planning and where practitioners have a good knowledge of each child's learning needs. Further information on this area can be found on the Observation, Assessment and Planning in the EYFS course that takes place on 22/10/08.

Inclusion – Transition Meetings

The Early Years team will be contacting schools this term to follow up the transition meetings for children with additional needs that took place during the Summer Term. If you have identified children with additional needs that have not had Early Years Team involvement please contact Suzanne Payne on 01942 828851 or by email s.payne@wigan.gov.uk.

In cases where the Early Years team have not been involved we would then work with the settings concerned to ensure they understand the importance of highlighting children's needs as early as possible and that they do so in the future.

The Early Years team have also arranged training for maintained Nurseries on the Early Years Inclusion Processes, including Targeted Individual Support (TIS2). Nursery practitioners, Foundation Stage Managers and School SENCO's will find this training useful in order to support children with additional needs in accessing their Nursery entitlement and in planning transition for these children.

This training will be lead by the Early Years Consultants and will take place on **20th November, 9.00am to 12.30pm.** To book places please contact Hazel Donohue on 01942 828845.

Flexible Delivery Pilot / Increase in the Free Entitlement

I informed you last term that a group of 12 schools with maintained nursery classes are working on a pilot project at the moment, exploring the implications of delivering the free early years provision in flexible ways. This requires them to move away from the traditional, sessional delivery pattern and to offer continuous delivery throughout the school day. Some of these schools are also being given the opportunity to market their spare capacity so that parents can buy additional provision in order to meet their needs.

From September 2009, for some of our most disadvantaged children, the free early years provision will increase to 15 hours per week. It will be essential that any schools with maintained nurseries that are identified to receive the extended entitlement join the pilot in the Spring term in preparation for September.

From September 2010 all eligible 3 & 4 year olds will receive 15 hours free early years provision. By this time I hope that all maintained nurseries will have been involved in the pilot phase in order that they are fully prepared.

I will be contacting all schools with nursery classes that are not already in the pilot, soon after half term to join another pilot that will be starting in the Spring.

Early Education

The Autumn term conference on October 9th was as thought provoking and enjoyable as expected, with numbers exceeding all expectations due to the quality and national repute of the speaker – Ian Gilbert. We anticipate a similar interest in our Spring term event.

Due to popular demand we have managed to secure a booking for one of our favourite speakers, Gervase Phinn!!! Gervase will be speaking on Wednesday 25 February 2009 and the title of his conference will be: 'Opening the Magic Door – Literature in the Early Years.' Tickets for this conference will be available early in the Spring term 2009.

Early Education members have discounted entry to all our conferences and your local branch (Wigan) continues to offer discounted membership. If you would like more details of how to join please contact Janet Johnson 01942 828922 Janet.Johnson@wigan.gov.uk

Team Contacts

Just a reminder that the 206205 number is being discontinued and that the updated contacts and numbers are as follows –

Quality & Inclusion Team Manager	Suzanne Payne	01942 828852
Senior Early Years Consultant	Jayne Challiner	01942 828916

	Early Years Consultant Quality	Early Years Consultant Inclusion
West	Janet Johnson (828922)	Carole Morris (828851)
Central	Andrea Smethurst (828859)	Gill Thomas (828936)
East	Sue Hurst (200899)	Suzanne Christy (200899)

Finally.....

It would be extremely helpful if you could take a few minutes to identify the settings that tend to “feed” your school in order to enable us to plan some future joint moderation work. Please complete the slip at the end of the newsletter and return via the black bag, marked for the attention of Sue Turnbull.

I hope you enjoy a well earned half term break when it arrives. If, in the meantime you need support with any Foundation Stage issues, please use the electronic referral form distributed to schools last term. (Please contact Karen Keen for another copy if necessary).

Please let Sue Turnbull know if the FS contact details for your school need updating.