

## Early Years Update Spring 2007

I trust this update finds you refreshed after the half term break. As usual the update will be e-mailed to Headteachers 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](mailto:s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

I made you aware last term of the Childcare Act 2006 which is the first ever piece of legislation devoted exclusively to Early Years and Childcare. The Act included a power for the Secretary of State to set targets for Local Authorities based on the Foundation Stage Profile results and I am pleased to be able to give you more information about the progress that has been made in respect of this and how we intend to work with our schools and settings in order to achieve the LA targets.

There are 2 targets:-

1. **An improvement target.** Increase the percentage of children who achieve a total FSP score of at least 78 points AND achieve at least 6 points in each PSED and CLL scale. It is believed that 78 is the minimum score at which children have the basic skills to access the KS1 curriculum. This is very generalised however because you will be aware that just looking at a points minimum could mask some very low scores in some very significant scales. This is why practitioners need to look closely at progress in each scale.
2. **An equalities target.** Improve the average FSP score of the lowest achieving 20% of children to narrow the gap between this group and the rest. We have to try to improve the scores for this group at a faster rate.

A small team has looked in detail at the results for Wigan in 2006. Our results fell in 2006 but this fall was mirrored nationally and it is believed that this was a result of the moderation bedding in.

Analysis of the 2006 data identified the following features of the 20% of children with the lowest scores.

- Children were spread across most primary schools but half of the children were in about 20 schools; in most cases in the most disadvantaged areas of the borough;
- 13 of these 20 schools have a maintained nursery, 8 of them have a Children's Centre
- There were more boys than girls;
- There were more children with Summer birthdays;
- There was a significant proportion of looked after children, a greater proportion of children with additional needs and children from ethnic groups.

There is clearly a need for each and every setting to contribute to improved outcomes for children as they move through the Foundation Stage and if everyone focuses in on their pupil tracking and amends their curriculum focus and time appropriately to meet the needs of children at different stages of development, we believe that the percentage of children achieving more than 78 points will increase.

However some targeted work alongside this is necessary and the following areas comprise a summary of the priorities in the Local Authority FS Duty Outcomes Plan.

- To raise awareness of the FS outcomes duty and to keep appropriate groups updated;
- To audit the quality of provision in all maintained nursery classes and nursery schools\* and provide training appropriate to need, including training on working with boys;
- To target the Firm Foundations and Playing with Sounds projects based on the most disadvantaged areas;
- To raise awareness of the data on boys' attainment from FSP;
- To gain baseline data about attendance in nursery classes and monitor;
- To review the information disseminated via Health Visitors/ Local Programmes /CC project providers, update and review regularly;
- To raise awareness about the increasing proportion of children with EAL in the lowest 20% amongst appropriate managers and teams and respond.

\* Schools with nursery classes and the two nursery schools have been circulated to request that a teacher attends a introductory course on the morning of Wednesday March 7<sup>th</sup>. If you have not yet booked a place on this course please contact Sue Turnbull on 01942 486014 or by email on [s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

At this stage there is no requirement for individual schools or settings to set numerical targets for the end of the Foundation Stage. However, it is our view that schools and settings should be targeting children in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of their children. Using a common sense approach this is about:-

- assessing what children already know, can do and understand
- identifying what they need to learn next
- adjusting planning to reflect the areas identified for focus.

Although it has not been circulated directly to schools, a guidance document has been brought to my attention and I have ordered sufficient copies for one to be sent into each school along with this update. Sue Child has used this document and an earlier publication to give a brief overview of target setting appropriate for the Foundation Stage.

### **How do we set effective and appropriate targets for children in the Foundation Stage?**

In order for children to make good progress, it is essential to know their learning needs. This knowledge comes from observation based assessment and evaluations of plans that identify the "next step." The first stage for short term planning, especially for continuous provision, is to collate the "next steps" and use this to decide which activities are going to be provided. Often children's learning needs can be grouped to create target groups, e.g. children who are developing fine manipulative control. This group can then have a particular focus over a few weeks by planning continuous provision and focus activities that promote fine manipulative control and ensuring that the targeted children take part.

The targets can be shared with children verbally at the start of an activity. This is the basis of effective short term target setting in the Foundation Stage, however, how does this fit in with longer term, whole school targets? The DfES has produced a booklet entitled

"Developing the Foundations for Curricular Target Setting in ISP schools Birth to Five." The document discusses curricular targets and the process of layering. This involves taking a whole school target, breaking it down for each year group and looking at how this can be approached in a developmentally appropriate way within the Foundation Stage. It states that the whole school target setting process should incorporate an understanding of how young children learn, with sufficient opportunities for child initiated activities. In order to develop the whole child, Foundation Stage targets will relate to all areas of learning, so for example, a whole school target on improving handwriting may involve Foundation Stage targets around Physical Development.

A supplementary document - "Developing the Foundations for Curricular Target Setting in ISP schools: Pullouts," gives examples of layered targets and puts an emphasis on what Foundation Stage practitioners need to do and provide in order enable the children to achieve. This shows how a whole school Literacy/Numeracy target can be met via all areas of learning. Both documents can be found on [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk) and entering the titles into the search.

A copy of "Improving outcomes for children in the Foundation Stage in maintained schools." referred to above is included with your paper version of this update. This looks at the process of forming early learning and development targets and builds on the work outlined in the ISP document. It breaks down the features of good targets and looks at making use of the FSP data. It also states that target setting in the Foundation Stage is underpinned by an understanding of how young children develop and learn, again stating the importance of identifying and planning for the "next step" in children's learning.

If you would like any more information on target setting within the Foundation Stage, then you are welcome to contact Sue Child on 01942 200899.

### **Important Information about the Expectations for the end of the Reception Year**

Some of you will be aware that I have been concerned for some time that despite the national expectation for the end of reception being clearly documented at 8 scale points in the Foundation Stage Profile, the National Assessment Agency has advised that a score of 6 across all scales was "good". It has now been confirmed that this terminology was not precise enough and the message should have been "a score of 6 across all scales was good for the 2005 cohort". In other words, in 2005, not many children achieved 8 points. This message resulted in changes to our local guidance on quantifying attainment on entry and subsequently progress for cohorts. As a result of the confirmation in the new EYFS that a scale score of 8 is the expectation, our locally produced guidance has been amended and will be re-distributed shortly.

### **New Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

You will probably be eagerly awaiting news of the revised curriculum that brings together the Birth to Three Matters Framework with the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Members of the team have had sight of some of the materials but have not yet seen the totality.

We have just been informed that the first batch of materials will be despatched during March. These will be for central staff use to support their plans for the roll out of training to all schools and settings. Our intention is to begin the roll out with a borough wide launch of

the new Early Years Foundation Stage around October 2007 followed by a training programme during late Autumn and Spring ensuring that schools and settings are well prepared for its introduction in September 2008.

It is expected that there will be a legal requirement to improve the ratio in maintained nursery classes to 2 adults (1 teacher and 1 qualified TA) to 26 children. Once this is confirmed CYPs will begin the appropriate processes.

## **Early Years Practitioner Qualification**

Some of you may be aware of this new qualification which is open to staff who are qualified to degree level, including teachers. At present it is only teachers and practitioners who influence the quality of provision in the private and voluntary sector that are eligible to apply for this status. For example, the qualified teachers in the Children's Centre, or teachers who support the work of the Quality & Inclusion Team as Community Advisory Teachers.

In the proposed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), this qualification will enable providers in the private and voluntary sectors to run early education and child care at a ratio of 1:13. It will be a requirement for Children's Centres to have an EYP. The government has set local authority targets which state that by 2010, there must be an EYPS within every Children's Centre and by 2015 an EYPS in every Full Day Care setting within the Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector. To date we have had no guidance about targets for the maintained sector.

For further information please contact Samantha Rourke, Workforce Development Team by email at [s.rourke@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:s.rourke@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

## **eProfile**

Many schools are now successfully using the eProfile to keep an electronic record of pupil's progress in relation to the Foundation Stage Profile. Over the years there have been many changes to the eProfile and the graphs and charts it can produce have been improved dramatically. If you feel you are using an older version of the eProfile you can check this by accessing the website <http://schoolsportal.suffolkcc.gov.uk/schools/FSP> where you will be able to download the latest version by clicking on the link. If you have recently accessed training then the version you have will be 2.4.3. There has been an update since this and the website allows you to download 2.4.4. If you have any problems with this then please call Nicola Goulding on 01942 206205 or contact her by email on [n.goulding@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:n.goulding@wiganmbc.gov.uk).

## **Foundation Stage Profile Update**

Foundation Stage Profile Moderators have contacted Cluster A (and some cluster B) schools and arranged their visit for either the Spring or the Summer term.

If your school is in Cluster B and you have not been contacted but would like a visit from a moderator for support with any aspect of the Foundation Stage Profile please contact Jayne Challiner on 01942 200899.

**The LA has a statutory duty to moderate all teachers' judgements. Consequently all schools, (including those in Clusters A1 – A7) 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:** 16.5.06

**Time:** 1.15pm

**Venue:** Quality Hotel River Way Wigan MBC

**Clusters:** A3B3 A5B5 A6B6 A7B7

**Date:** 23.5.06

**Time:** 1.15pm

**Venue:** P.D.C. Hindley

**Clusters:** A1B1 A2B2 A4B4

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

Should you have any further queries at this stage do not hesitate to contact, Jayne Challiner on 01942 200899.

**Reminder.....**

The latest guidance from the National Assessment Agency (NAA) 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.

**Continuing the Learning Journey**

You will be aware that each school received a training file to support continuity between Foundation and KS1 and that we delivered training for 2 staff members from each school. The training package was designed to help schools to give children a positive experience of transition as they move into key stage 1 and to show how to make most effective use of information which comes from the foundation stage. It addresses issues of understanding practice and provision in the foundation stage, how assessments are made and used and the effective use of FSP data to support school improvement and self-evaluation. It was specifically designed to be delivered as a WHOLE SCHOOL INSET to ensure that all aspects of the foundation stage and the FSP were fully understood by ALL Infant, First and Primary School colleagues.

A small number of schools did not attend the training we ran and I know that the team is hoping that they will access the course organised for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Please book onto this in the usual way through PDC.

The training materials are still available to download from <http://www.qca.org.uk/15005.html>. A limited reprint of the DVD that accompanies the pack has been produced to meet demand and each LA has received a number of copies that can be loaned to schools. If you would like to loan a copy of the DVD please contact Sue Turnbull at [s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:s.turnbull@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

## Inclusion

Inclusion Workers will be supporting practitioners and parents as children known to the Inclusion Team move from Nursery to Reception Class. This support will be in the form of Transitional Review Meetings held during the Summer term.

Receiving schools and Nursery settings will receive a letter informing them about this process, once school placements are known. We would ask that a representative from each school involved attends the Transitional Review Meeting/s when invited.

## Wigan Quality Standard

The following settings have been accredited or reaccredited under the Wigan Quality Standard since the last update and they will be attending the next achievement awards ceremony.

Area East	Area West	Area Central
Newton Westpark Primary School	Marus Bridge Primary School	Bickershaw CE Primary School
Leigh CE Infants	Ince CE Primary School	St Thomas CE Primary School

The following settings have been recommended for accreditation or 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
Leigh Sacred Heart	Haigh St David's	Hindley J&I
St Joseph's RC Primary	Douglas Valley Children's Centre	Hindley Green J&I
	Winstanley Primary	

## Further Development of the Wigan Quality Standard

I advised you last term that work is underway to develop the WQS into Key Stage 1, allowing schools to access training and then apply for a "Seal of Approval" for their continuity between FS and KS1 and their KS1 provision.

Supported by the Q&I Team, the cross borough network group has worked hard to move this work on and a group of schools will be invited to become involved in a pilot from September 2007.

## **Early Education**

Our guest speaker for the next Early Education conference is Rona Barbour, International Storyteller and Public Speaker. Rona, an expert and mesmerising storyteller, is passionate about her work and strongly believes in the power and need for Storytelling with children of all ages.

The conference will take place at 7 o'clock on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March at the Quality Hotel. Fliers advertising the event have been sent into school, alternatively please telephone Sam Barton 01942 206205 for tickets.

## **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.

## **Finally.....**

I know that many of you are familiar with our local Early Years Projects. Last term we asked if you could complete a simple proforma to enable us to update our information. Only a relatively small number responded and therefore I am attaching this again. We have a number of Early Learning Centre Vouchers and will ensure that the first 25 respondents receive one.