

# **Early Years Statutory Framework Building on what works or changing the foundations?**

An event for Early Years Coordinators and Teachers

5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

ORT House, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE



## Aims for the day

By the end of the day we hope that:

- You will be familiar with the main recommendations in the proposed framework
- You will have had the opportunity to discuss the changes with school colleagues.
- You will feel more confident about what to plan for the next academic year in the current climate of uncertainty.



## Outline of the day

- 10.00 The revised EYFS
- 10.30 Planning for the revised EYFS
- 11.30 Coffee
- 11.45 Approaches to assessment
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Curriculum development
- 15.15 Plenary: sharing good ideas and ways forward
- 15.30 End of the day

# 1. The revised EYFS

What's going to change?

- Seven areas of learning instead of six
- The rationale behind them
- The 24-36 month summary
- The new EYFS profile



## An encouraging quote

The earliest years in a child's life are absolutely critical. A child's future choices, attainment, well-being, happiness and resilience are profoundly affected by the quality of the guidance, love and care they receive during these first years.

Dame Clare Tickell



# The Foundation Years

The DFE has published its vision for early years.

“Foundation Years” will be used to indicate early years.

Key documents:

- *Families in the Foundation Years*
- *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*
- *Foundation Years Evidence Pack*

All of the above can be found at

[www.education.gov.uk/familiesinthefoundationyears](http://www.education.gov.uk/familiesinthefoundationyears)

There is a parent friendly version on 4Children’s website ([www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)).



# Recommended changes- learning and development impacting CCs

- ❑ Seven areas of learning
- ❑ 17 early learning goals - learning and development
- ❑ Learning and development requirements should not apply in full to settings where children spend limited time, outside school hours - for example, holiday and wraparound care.
- ❑ Where children attend more than one setting that providers should work together, with parents, to determine how they can most appropriately support that child.
- ❑ Focus on ensuring children's English language skills are sufficiently developed.
  - ❑ Assessment requirements appropriately measure children's progress in English, taking account of the needs of children who have not had the appropriate time or support to develop their English language skills.



# Recommended changes- assessment and safeguarding and welfare impacting CCs

- ❑ Two assessments- 24-36 month and at reception
- ❑ EYFSP slimmed down to reflect proposed 17 ELGs
- ❑ 'Emerging' and 'exceeding' bands are included in the assessment measures, to help identify clearly where children are working towards or have gone beyond the goal.
- ❑ The wording of the goals is amended to fit more clearly with the goals of the National Curriculum
- ❑ For longer term, Government is exploring feasibility of single integrated review at around age 2 in which health and early years providers jointly assess children's progress, and work together, and with parents, to plan tailored support as appropriate.
- ❑ Childminders should be trained to understand fully the requirements of the EYFS before they can register and look after children

## Important dates

- November 2011 - The final statutory framework was supposed to be published
- January 2012 - The new Ofsted framework
- March 2012 - School budget planning
- May 2012 - Refresh of the school development plan
- September 2012 – Implementation of the revised EYFS

## Other important initiatives

- Bew Review of KS2;
- SEN Green Paper;
- New primary curriculum.

## 2. Planning for the revised EYFS

### Planning for learning in your classroom

- Principled
- Holistic
- Enjoyment, achievement and challenge
- Progress
- Diversity, personalisation and choice
- Coherence

### Strategic planning for and with your SLT

- Importance of EYFS in your school – ways to increase this
- Progress from an attainment on entry into Year 1 and beyond
- FY governor
- Provide a road map



## Whole school planning

How the changes affect the school

Take account of other initiatives

Ofsted outcomes  
Continuity of learning and development from 3 to 11

## EY teams plans

How my work with children may change

Take account of other initiatives

Partnerships within and beyond the school  
Transitions into, within and out of EYFS



# Action planning for the school or for your team

- What are we going to do?
- Why are we going to do it?
- When are we going to do it?
  
- How are we going to do it?
- Where are we going to do it?
- Who is going to do it?

Be ready to share your ideas in the final session.

### 3. Approaches to assessment

- How would you define summative assessment?
- And formative assessment?
- What do you use for locating attainment on entry?
- How do you measure progress?
- How do you manage transition into Reception?
- Into Year 1?

## 4. Curriculum development

- The seven areas of learning – what will planning look like?
- Does my school have an attainment on entry document?  
Can we use the 24-36 month summary?
- How does the replacement profile (and the new 17 ELGs) work?
- Can we use the three characteristics for learning this year?

## Paperwork

- At the minimum to promote children's successful learning and development

## Parents

- Become partners in children's learning

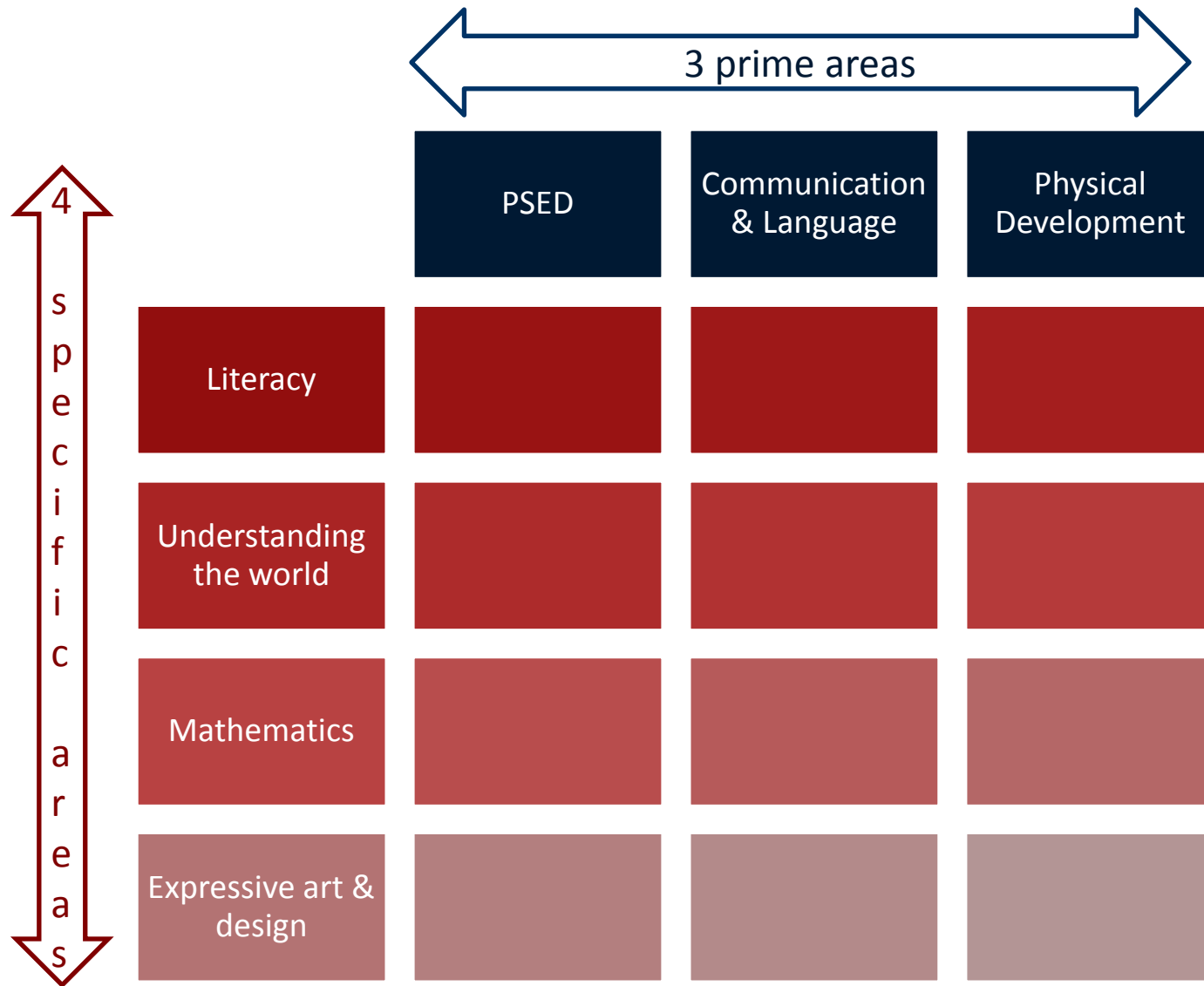
## Redraft EYFS

- Slim down *Development Matters*

## ELGs

- Reduced from 69 to 17

# The areas of learning: A matrix approach



# Learning characteristics

Playing  
and  
exploring

Active  
learning

Creating  
and  
thinking  
critically

## Observation

Illustrate  
embedded  
learning

80/20  
abolished

## 2 point summatives

24-36 months

Replacement  
Profile



# Action Planning

## Scenario planning

- A way of approaching the revised EYFS

Which area interests you the most:

- Framework for 24-36 month report on PSED, PD and CL
- Revised ELGs
- Replacement Profile
- Including the characteristics for learning in my planning



## 5. Sharing good ideas and ways forward

You may have helpful ideas to share as a result of today.  
Let's share them.....

- Attainment on entry
- Observations – how we track them
- Mapping progress across Nursery and Reception
- Transition into Year 1
- 7 areas of learning
- And anything else you think may be useful to colleagues

## A reminder of the fixed points

- 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 - The consultation closed
- November 2011 - The final statutory framework was to be published
- January 2012 - The new Ofsted framework
- March 2012 - School budget planning
- May 2012 - Refresh of the school development plan
- September 2012 – Implementation of the revised EYFS



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## Delegates to the December 2011 events

# Agenda

December 2011



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## Agenda

- 9.30 Networking and registration
- 10.00 The revised Early Years Framework: aims, purpose and changes that affect settings
- 10.30 Planning for the Early Years Framework: what works for planning the implementation of the EY Framework. Plus discussion to share learning and experiences
- 11.30 Coffee
- 11.45 Assessment in the EY Framework: top tips for approaching the assessments in the Early Years Framework and discussion
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Curriculum development and the EY Framework: top tips for approaching curriculum development and discussion to share learning and experiences
- 15.15 Plenary: sharing good ideas and ways forward
- 15.30 End of the day

# List of recommendations and proposals

December 2011

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The Tickell Review put forward a number of recommendations:

- The six areas of learning to be replaced with seven areas;
- Three prime areas: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development;
- Four aspects: literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, understanding the world;
- The 69 Early Learning Goals covering the areas of learning should be reduced to 17;
- Early years practitioners to carry out a child development check with children between 24 and 36 months of age;
- A summary report of the check should be included in the 'red book', which all parents are given and kept alongside their child's health records;
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to be 'slimmed down' to take account of changes to the number of Early Learning Goals;
- The EYFS Profile should include a simple scale to measure whether children's learning and development at the age of five is emerging, expected or exceeding the Early Learning Goals;
- Ministers should consider the findings of the Advisory Panel for Food and Nutrition and provide guidelines for healthy eating and nutritional requirements for under-fives to early years practitioners;
- A graduate-led early years workforce should continue to be an aspiration for the Government;
- Entry qualifications to early years should be of a high standard consistent with the NNEB qualification.

Some of these have subtly altered in the DFE response expressed through the Revised Framework for the EYFS. The consultation document and a revised version of the EYFS framework, reflecting Dame Clare's recommendations, can be viewed [here](#)

The government proposals included:

- A new focus on three prime areas of learning in the EYFS so children are ready and able to learn at school. These areas are: personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language.
- A slimmed down EYFS, cutting the number of learning goals from 69-17. The learning goals will be more closely aligned with Key Stage 1 to smooth the transition from reception class to Year 1.
- Assessment at age five will remain but instead of the current complicated scale point assessment children will be judged against 17 learning goals.
- A new check for every two-year-old in pre-school settings to pick up early any problems in a child's development or special educational needs. Going further than Tickell's recommendation, the Government will require all early years settings to provide this information to parents.
- New plans, to be consulted on in the autumn, to enable parents to access their free entitlement hours from 7am-7pm, and take the full 15 hours over two days rather than a minimum of three days.
- A new core purpose for children's centres, with a stronger focus on school readiness and supporting families. It clearly sets out the outcomes which children's centres should be supporting.
- Exploring how we can find new ways of running children's centres, such as mutuals and co-operative approaches, so parents and communities can be more involved in local decision making and services.
- New requirement on all local authorities to publish data on how much they are spending on children's centres in their area to improve local accountability.

# Summary of the main proposed changes

November 2011



## 1 Update on the Consultation on the revised EYFS

The government has responded to the Tickell Review of the EYFS. A consultation on the revised statutory framework for EYFS began on 6.07.11. This consultation ended on 30.09.11. We were all expecting a government response in November.

The revised framework, a description of the consultation and the consultation document are available here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1747&external=no&menu=1>

The proposed changes include:

- Seven areas of learning instead of six;
- A revised and slimmed down *Development Matters*;
- 17 early learning goals instead of 69;
- 24-36 month summary;
- A replacement Profile;
- Three characteristics of learning.

## 2 24-36 month summary

The government will be introducing a summary of development for children aged 24-36 months. This is not mentioned in the consultation because it is not part of the existing EYFS statutory framework, and so does not need to be included in the consultation.

Details of the 24-36 month summary are on pages 12 – 13 of the revised statutory framework. This summary “would usually be completed by the provider who has spent most time with the child. Other relevant providers should also be asked to contribute.” If your school has a maintained nursery class, this is likely to mean that the teacher in charge should complete this.

The actual document is on pages 36 – 38 of the revised statutory framework. During the events 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July, many of the schools attending thought they might use the 24-36 month summary in their nursery classes from this September to develop their familiarity with the document. They felt it would make sense for the Nursery teacher to complete it and pass it to the Reception class teacher in 2012. Others decided to do nothing until September 2012, when all the requirements will become statutory. Either approach is

acceptable, so long as one adheres to the current requirements – recording a baseline, or creating an attainment on entry record is not at present statutory, although Ofsted is likely to ask for one.

## 3 Update on the EYFSP

The government has issued clarification on the EYFSP. Providers should continue to assess children against the current EYFS profile in the 2011/2012 academic year.

The arrangements for statutory data collection remain unchanged. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) will be established to deliver national curriculum tests and assessments following Ministerial decisions to close the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). Responsibility for the overseeing of EYFS profile moderation in 2011/2012 will continue under the STA, a new executive agency within the Department for Education.

Moderation of the EYFS profile for 2011/12 will be continuing as normal. Settings and schools should continue to liaise with QCDA until the STA is established and takes on responsibility for this work.

The Department for Education (DfE) will aim to publish the new EYFS and EYFS profile in Spring 2012, giving schools and LAs a full term before September 2012 when the new EYFS and EYFS profile are expected to come into effect. This doesn't give you much time to digest and understand the new requirements. You may think it is a good idea to experiment with some of the new requirements before they are introduced in September 2012.

The DfE expects to work closely with schools and local authorities in developing guidance to support the new Profile. Further information will be provided following the EYFS consultation. If you want to make comments in addition to your response to the Consultation, you can email [revisedeyfs.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:revisedeyfs.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## 4 The three characteristics of learning

### 4.1 Learning characteristics

Three learning characteristics are mentioned: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. There is more detail in the Tickell Review (Annex 9 pages 87-90). In Annex 9, the key researchers in this field are name-checked with references.

### 4.2 By playing and exploring

- Finding out and exploring
- Using what they now I their play
- Being willing to have a go

### 4.3 Through active learning

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping on trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

#### 4.4 By creating and thinking critically

- Having their own ideas
- Using what they already know to learn new things
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

#### 4.5 Summary

The learning characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. This has implications for assessment. How a child exhibits these characteristics could be observed within formative assessment, in order to better understand the child and support their development as learners; it is not considered appropriate to specify particular ages or stages for the development of learning characteristics, which apply alike to children and adults, nor to assess the extent to which these have been achieved in a summative form. Early learning goals, therefore, have not been developed for the characteristics of learning in the proposed model. The learning characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. This has implications for assessment. How a child exhibits these characteristics could be observed within formative assessment, in order to better understand the child and support their development as learners; it is not considered appropriate to specify particular ages or stages for the development of learning characteristics, which apply alike to children and adults, nor to assess the extent to which these have been achieved in a summative form. Early learning goals, therefore, have not been developed for the characteristics of learning in the proposed model.

# Some ideas for planning and reporting

December 2011



## 1 Some thoughts on planning

### 1.1 Planning grid for the seven areas of learning

Think about a theme you may want to plan for, for example, a story or a type of small world equipment. Let's say *The Tiger who came to tea* and Lego.

How many activities can you think of for the boxes below?

Complete one grid for the story, another for a box of Lego. If you are using these two provocations next week, what other activities might you need to plan?

	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development	Communication and language
Expressive art and design			
Understanding of the world			
Mathematics			
Literacy			

## 1.2 Summary of the differences between the prime and specific areas

On page 96, Annex 9, there is a helpful summary of the relationship between the prime and specific areas:

Key differences between the prime and the specific areas

Prime areas of learning	Specific areas of learning
Are time-sensitive. If not securely in place by the age of 5, they will be more difficult to acquire and their absence may hold the child back in other areas of learning.	Are less time-sensitive. Specific areas of learning reflect cultural knowledge and accumulated understanding. It is possible to acquire these bodies of knowledge at various stages through life.
Are characterised by their universality. They occur in all socio-cultural contexts.	Are skills and knowledge which are specific to priorities within socio-cultural contexts.
Are not dependent on the specific areas of learning, although the specific areas of learning provide the context for their development.	Are dependent on learning in the prime areas – the specific learning areas cannot easily take place without the prime areas.

The Review then says: “It is important to note, however, that the prime and specific areas are not conceptualised as ‘first one, then the other’. The relationship between the prime and specific areas of learning is not chronological but symbiotic; the prime areas are necessary but not sufficient.” So we are still looking at areas of learning that are equally important...though their different applications and approaches are explained more clearly.

## 2 Being creative with the replacement EYFSP

Colleagues felt they would want to personalise their EYFSP for parents and came up with the following ideas.

### School Logo EYFS PROFILE

Name.....

Age in Months.....

Area of Learning	Aspect	Emerging	Expected	Exceeding
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	<b>Self-confidence and self-awareness</b>			
	<b>Managing feelings and behaviour</b>			
	<b>Making relationships</b>			
Physical Development	<b>Moving and handling</b>			
	<b>Health and self-care</b>			
Communication and Language	<b>Listening and attention</b>			
	<b>Understanding</b>			
	<b>Speaking</b>			
Expressive Arts and Design	<b>Exploring and using media and materials</b>			
	<b>Being imaginative</b>			
Understanding the World	<b>People and communities</b>			
	<b>The world</b>			
	<b>Technology</b>			
Literacy	<b>Reading</b>			
	<b>Writing</b>			
Mathematics	<b>Numbers</b>			
	<b>Shape, space and measures</b>			

### 3 Reporting through the three characteristics for learning

Some colleagues want to use the three characteristics of learning as an ongoing termly report – not just in Nursery, but also in Reception and beyond.

Colleagues thought they might use this format as the context for their initial discussion with parents, making notes of the examples shared with them.

Then each term, one would add an example for each area, or possibly a photo. This would be used as a Termly report, and would also contain much of the evidence for assessment judgements.

One would need to check that one had sufficient information for the EYFSP – whether in terms of professional knowledge, a note, photo or other recorded material.

Characteristics of learning	[Child's name]
<b>Playing and Exploring</b>	
Finding out and exploring	
Using what they know in their play	
Being willing to have a go	
<b>Active learning</b>	
Being involved and concentrating	
Keeping on trying	
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do	
<b>Creating and Thinking Critically</b>	
Having their own ideas	
Using what they already know to learn new things	
Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways	

#### 3.1 Summary

The learning characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. This has implications for assessment. How a child exhibits these characteristics could be observed within formative assessment in order to better understand the child and support their development as learners. It is not considered appropriate to specify particular ages or stages for the development of learning characteristics, which apply alike to children and adults, nor to assess the extent to which these have been achieved in a summative form.

Early learning goals, therefore, have not been developed for the characteristics of learning in the proposed model. The learning characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. This has implications for assessment. How a child exhibits these characteristics could be observed within formative assessment, in order to better understand the child and support their development as learners; it is not considered appropriate to specify particular ages or stages for the development of learning characteristics, which apply alike to children and adults, nor to assess the extent to which these have been achieved in a summative form. Early learning goals, therefore, have not been developed for the characteristics of learning in the proposed model.

## 3.2 What are other schools thinking of doing?

### 3.2.1 Working with staff

Use the characteristics of learning with early years colleagues and unpick the meaning together.

- What does this mean for children's learning?
- Do we need to alter our environments to enable children to show these characteristics?
- Does the way we plan support the characteristics in our children?

### 3.2.2 Working with parents

Think about using the learning characteristics with parents.

- Tell me about your child.....
- What kinds of things does your child enjoy doing?
- How does your child learn at home....

This conversation can become a two-way street, with the parent telling you about what the child does at home, and you sharing achievements in the setting. Aim for moments of significant learning, use a "Wow! Book" or Special Book to keep the other items that you, the child and the parent may want to save.

By the time the term ends or by the next termly meeting with parents, aim for one or two small examples of what the child can do – under as many headings as possible. Share this with the parents at the end of term, keeping a copy for the school. At the end of the year, these co-produced examples of how a child learns can form the annual report.

### 3.2.3 Working across the whole school

While many practitioners said they wanted to do this in early years, some school leaders want to use this approach from Nursery to Year 6. Their planning for the next academic year revolves around how they intend to use INSET and staff meetings to develop whole school understanding of the three characteristics of learning. The research applies to an age range wider than early years.

# Timeline for preparing for new statutory requirements for EYFS

December 2011

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## 1 Timeline for preparing for new statutory requirements for EYFS

Here is a timeline for next year, suggesting the preparations you might want to consider for the new EYFS.

### 1.1 Before the end of the Summer term (July 2011)

You should have completed the following actions:

- Told your head teacher that there will be significant changes to EYFS data from September 2102, arranged to update the SMT early in September 2011
- Read the Tickell Review of EYFS, paying particular attention to the Annexes. These contain important information about the rationale behind the new areas of learning, the aspects of the areas of learning and the characteristics of learning.
- Reflected on whether you want to use the 24-36 month check experimentally from September 2012.
- Thought about an attainment on entry measure. Schools at previous events were thinking of using the age bands in *Development Matters* for a baseline. They thought they would use PSED, PD and CL and then see how that related to the proposed statements in the 24-36 month summary.
- Considered using the characteristics for learning as the basis for your reporting. You could use it with parents from the first home visit, and continue right through to the end of Reception.

If you haven't completed the above actions, you still have enough time to think about them during the Spring term and arrange the suggested meetings.

### 1.2 Before the end of the Autumn term 2011

You should have completed the following actions:

- Updated the SMT and arranged a staff meeting slot to inform the rest of the staff.
- Asked for additional management time to enable you to plan effectively for all the changes you will face next academic year.

- Discussed with colleagues whether you want to continue with your current attainment on entry in Nursery or Reception, or want to try out the 24-36 month summary.
- Discussed the characteristic for learning, looked at the headlines and asked yourselves what those headings mean to you.
- Made sure you keep up with changes in other areas that will affect early years: the final report of the Bew Review, the changes for early years in the SEN white paper, the new primary curriculum, the new Ofsted framework.....

As above, if you haven't completed these actions, you still have enough time to think about them during the Spring term and arrange the suggested meetings.

### **1.3 November 2011**

- This is when we were told the DFE would publish the new statutory framework for EYFS. No sign of it yet. The level of response from the early years has caused a delay.

### **1.4 January 2012**

- The new Ofsted framework will be published.
- Ofsted is no longer looking at EYFS separately. This has implications not only for early years but for the whole school. How do you establish attainment on entry? How do you evidence progress?

### **1.5 March 2012**

- School budget planning: make the case for early years. You may need management time, and/or resourcing, and even changes to the environments to be secure about the new framework. This funding will need to be secured now.

### **1.6 May 2012**

- The school development plan is usually refreshed in May. Make sure that your EYFS plans are part of the school vision.
- The revised EYFS materials should be with us in May. Staff will have a term to familiarise themselves with the slimmed down *Development Matters* document.

### **1.7 September 2012**

- Implement the new requirements.

### **1.8 December 2012**

- Review your progress to date.
- Continue with a plan – do – review cycle.

## **The characteristics for learning [Annex 8 pp87-91]**

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### ***Overview of the characteristics of effective learning – how children learn***

In addition to the prime and specific areas of learning, this report proposes that a number of characteristics are highlighted, describing factors arising within the child which play a central role in learning, and in becoming an effective learner. These learning characteristics run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development. As enduring characteristics, pertaining to lifelong learning, they need to be continuously observed and fostered but cannot be described in a developmental sequence. The strands of the characteristics of effective learning are related to key themes in early childhood development, and are grouped within the EYFS commitments. The proposed characteristics of learning are:

#### **Playing and Exploring**

- Finding out and exploring
- Using what they know in their play
- Being willing to have a go

#### **Active learning**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping on trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

#### **Creating and Thinking Critically**

- Having their own ideas
- Using what they already know to learn new things
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

The learning characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. This has implications for assessment. How a child exhibits these characteristics could be observed within formative assessment, in order to better understand the child and support their development as learners; it is not considered appropriate to specify particular ages or stages for the development of learning characteristics, which apply alike to children and adults, nor to assess the extent to which these have been achieved in a summative form. Early learning goals, therefore, have not been developed for the characteristics of learning in the proposed model.

The characteristics underline the ‘will’, or motivational factors, which enable the learner to employ the effortful control necessary for effective learning (Evangelou, 2009: p5). The will arises naturally within the child, according to theories of intrinsic motivation which describe a natural, inherent drive to seek out challenges and new possibilities. In neuroscience this is related to animal behaviour as ‘a spontaneous tendency (of the being) to explore and learn about its environment’ in anticipation of rewards. Examples of these anticipatory and satisfaction-seeking behaviours which arouse this system in human beings are ‘intense interest’, ‘engaged curiosity’ and ‘eager anticipation’ (Panksepp, 2005). Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) describes universal, innate human needs for competence and control, as well as for being related to others (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim and Kaplan, 2003). Dweck’s work points to the greater success of individuals whose motivation arises from a desire for mastery (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). This is supported by the theories of

Bandura (1977) whose notion of self-efficacy describes those who view challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate, form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities, and recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments. According to Bandura, beliefs and attitudes supporting self-efficacy form in early childhood, while the growth of self-efficacy continues to evolve throughout life as people acquire new skills, experiences, and understanding (Bandura, 1992).

Children are seen as inherently proactive in developing their potential and acquiring self-regulation; development of positive motivation, however, can be helped or hindered by the social environment (Deci and Vansteenkiste, 2004), which underlines the importance of recognising and fostering these characteristics. The motivational factors are brought to bear in all areas of learning; for example, 'A crucial aspect of early literacy development is personal autonomy – the clear establishment of a sense of control over one's learning experiences. According to Whitehead (2004), progress in writing is bound with autonomy and children need to be involved from the start in forming opinions and having views about their own writing successes and difficulties' (Evangelou, 2009: p35).

## **Detailed rationale for the characteristics of learning**

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### **Playing and exploring – engagement**

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"Play is the prime context for development." (Evangelou, 2009: p4). Alongside development in all areas of learning which is enhanced in play, this strand particularly highlights the agency of the child in actively constructing knowledge and understanding through playful qualities of engaging with their environment and with others.

*Finding out and exploring* is concerned with children's open-ended, hands-on experiences which result from innate curiosity and provide the raw sensory material from which children build concepts, test ideas, and find out;

*Using what they know in their play* describes the importance of play as a context for children to bring together their current understandings, flexibly combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking (Evangelou, 2009: p78); and

*Being willing to have a go* refers to the role of play in children finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a 'can do' orientation, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as learning opportunities.

### **Active learning – motivation**

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This strand highlights key characteristics which arise from intrinsic motivation to achieve mastery – to experience competence, understanding, and autonomy.

*Being involved and concentrating* describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities. This supports the deep level learning (Ferre Laevers) which should be a goal of early education:

'In enhancing children's thinking, it is more important to aim at depth and not breadth. Deep understanding is more important than superficial coverage.' (Evangelou, 2009: p8);

*Keeping on trying* refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties, an element of purposeful control which supports resilience; and

*Enjoying achieving what they set out to do* refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

### Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Babies and children are thinkers who make sense of their experiences through perceiving patterns and developing concepts. As they engage in activities they actively think about the meaning of what they encounter, and over time begin to develop more awareness of their own thinking (metacognition). Awareness of oneself as a thinker and learner is a key aspect of success in learning (Whitebread and Pasternak, 2010).

*Having their own ideas* covers the critical area of creativity – of generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these;

*Using what they already know to learn new things* begins in infancy as babies organise their sensory information to assess patterns and make predictions, with brains generating rules based on small datasets (Evangelou, 2009: p5). Thinking becomes more conscious as concepts are developed and linked together, finding meaning in sequence, in cause and effect, and in intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought; and

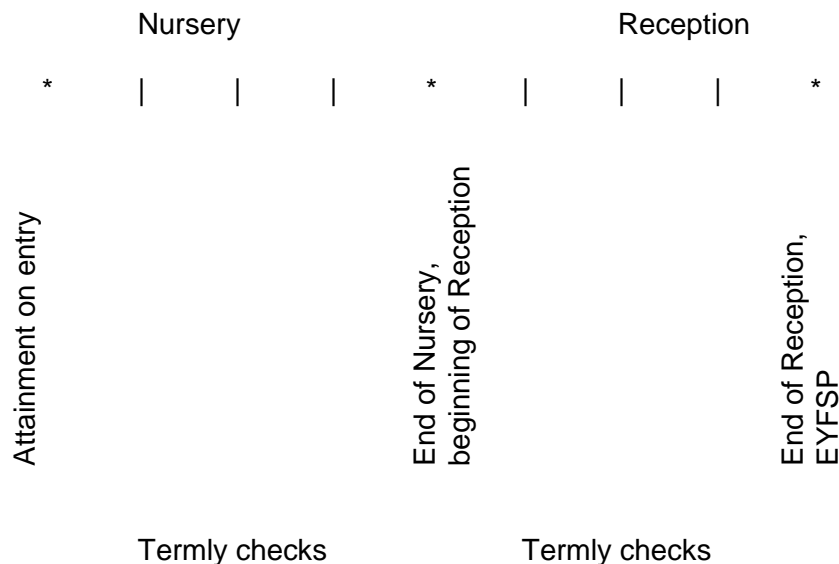
*Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways* involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do, and being able to change strategies. Siegler and colleagues (2005) describe toddlers and young children learning in 'overlapping waves' as they choose from older or newer strategies to suit the demands of the task. Recent research identifies that children giving explanations about how they solve a problem learn more than when simply given positive feedback and explaining errors leads to greater learning than explaining why something is correct – suggesting that understanding the processes of how problems are solved is more important than the right answer (Evangelou, 2009: pp51, 79).

## Assessment – what children know and can do

The following notes were developed with EYFS Co-ordinators in a London borough. The “We” refers to the work done in and with schools and with the LA.

### 1 Summative assessment

We discussed the need for an attainment on entry evaluation, based on the notes from the home visit or the parent interview. We also talked about the need to know whether children are making progress. Poor progress may mean problems at home, or could signal emerging special educational needs.



The timeline above represents the summative assessments discussed at the meeting. The “\*” indicates the beginning of the next stage: entry to Nursery, to Reception and to KS1. The “|” indicates termly progress checks. None of these requires any information in addition to the formative assessments described below, with the exception of the entry to KS1 point, which is at present covered by the EYFSP.

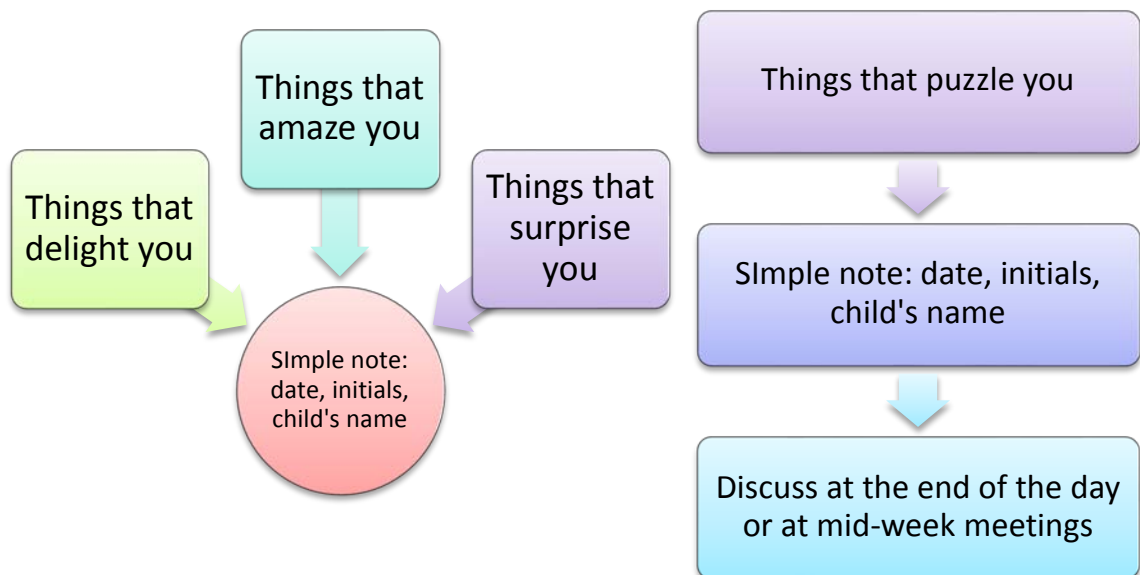
## 1.1 Evidence

Every assessment must have a purpose. Any record keeping should be meaningful and have a purpose. Recording systems must be meaningful and sustainable.

Look up “Creating the Picture”

## 2 Formative assessment

Note down things that surprise, amaze and delight you. Use something simple: a post-it or a sticky label (but don't generate millions of the things). Add your initials, the date and the child's name. Use a system to organise these simple notes (and the ones that puzzle you): this should be a system that is manageable and sustainable, it may help to use the [local system]. Review the notes at the end of the day or at the mid-week meeting. Save them in a file. You might have a class file that covers most children, and separate files for children who you need to observe more frequently – probably at either end of the spectrum of attainment. You might have 6 files: 2 for children with special educational needs, one for a child about whom you are worried, 2 for children with marked attainment in language, and one for the rest of the class. Making a note presupposes an immediate action on the part of the writer – not wishful thinking. How do you make things better at this moment? Extend the learning? Change the environment?



The notes you make should help you identify “invisible children” and gaps in teaching and learning. You should get a general idea about who is making progress and who is not. The daily few minutes spent catching up on which child is doing what, and the weekly mid-week meeting when you discuss whether you need to amend the planning in the light of what you have seen, are invaluable and the way to improve progress.

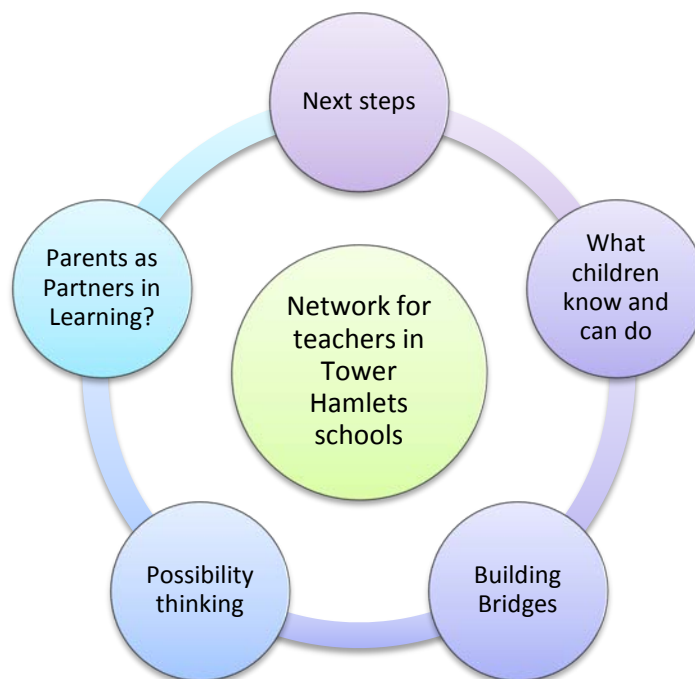
When you make an observation that puzzles you, you may want to carry out a long observation. There are various types:

Target child – Sociogram - Spider’s web - Time sampling - Event sampling

Each of these will have a specific purpose. None of them will provide a full picture. You may need to make a range of long observations to build up a picture of a child’s achievements and areas where s/he needs support.

### 3 Networks

I am working with other groups of schools to create networks based on areas of interest. Let me know if you are interested.



## Action planning

December 2011



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### 1 Action planning

You may find it helpful to list the actions you may wish to take between November 2011 and September 2012. This process will help you prepare for the implementation of the revised EYFS and the replacement EYFSP in September 2012.

### 2 Questions for action planning

- 2.1 What are we going to do?
- 2.2 Why are we going to do it?
- 2.3 When are we going to do it?
- 2.4 How are we going to do it?
- 2.5 Where are we going to do it?
- 2.6 Who is going to do it?

### 3 Some answers

- 3.1 What are we going to do?
  - Are we going to change our curriculum or assessment systems to help us prepare for September 2012?
  - Maybe we need to think about some of the language we use and begin to change that...

- Do we need to think about any of the other major changes that are likely to affect us?....the SEN review, the Bew Review, the review of the primary curriculum – they all mention early years. Maybe we need dedicated time to catch up with the implications.

### **3.2 Why are we going to do it?**

- Are we going to base what we do on principles?
- Or are we just going to sit tight and wait for somebody else to tell us what to do? IS anybody else going to tell us what to do?

### **3.3 When are we going to do it?**

- There are a number of fixed points that we know about: implementation, the cycle of school planning; school budget timing – we need to tap in to these to effectively implement the new requirements.
- Are all the staff ready to take on big changes – or do I need to drip feed the changes across the forthcoming year?

### **3.4 How are we going to do it?**

- Who do we need to brief?
- To influence?
- Do we start with the head? Perhaps flag up we need an in-depth discussion of EY at the start of next term to secure his/her buy-in.
- When do we enlist the aid of governors?
- And parents?

### **3.5 Where are we going to do it?**

- Just Nursery – maybe we want the 24-36 month check in place for the next cohort of nursery children. Maybe we need to work with our feeder settings.
- Just EY?
- In KS1 too, linking to the review of their curriculum?
- In KS2?

### **3.6 Who is going to do it?**

- Whoever is doing all of the things we've talked about in our group will need time and resources

- Perhaps we think the whole team should be involved.

## 4 What are other schools thinking of doing?

### 4.1 Working with staff

Use the characteristics of learning with early years colleagues and unpick the meaning together.

- What does this mean for children's learning?
- Do we need to alter our environments to enable children to show these characteristics?
- Does the way we plan support the characteristics in our children?

### 4.2 Working with parents

Think about using the learning characteristics with parents.

- Tell me about your child.....
- What kinds of things does your child enjoy doing?
- How does your child learn at home....

This conversation can become a two-way street, with the parent telling you about what the child does at home, and you sharing achievements in the setting. Aim for moments of significant learning, use a Wow! Book to keep the other items that you, the child and the parent may want to save.

By the time the term ends aim for one or two small examples of what the child can do. Share this with the parents at the end of term, keeping a copy for the school. At the end of the year, these co-produced examples of how a child learns can form the annual report.

- Some schools said they wanted to do this in early years;
- Other schools want to use this approach from Nursery to Year 6.

### 4.3 Re-shaping their whole school action plan

Some schools are considering re-shaping their whole school action plan using the three characteristics of learning.