

1. INTRODUCTION

Following a period of consultation and preparation starting in 2006, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in September 2008. It replaced the Foundation Stage in place since 2002, and provided a statutory framework under the *Childcare Act 2006* for all primary schools and early years providers that have to be registered with Ofsted [*see DSS Summary DSS 06/07 28 (March 2007)*]. From the start, the EYFS Profile, particularly, attracted criticism for requiring assessments of very young children to be made on 13 nine-point scales

In July 2010 the Children's Minister asked Dame Clare Tickell, Chief Executive of Action for Children, to conduct an independent review of the EYFS to consider how it could be less bureaucratic and more focused on children's early learning. The Tickell Report was published on 29 March 2011. It contains 46 recommendations, including: proposals for a new formulation of early learning goals; a replacement EYFS Profile; and revised areas of learning divided into prime and specific areas.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

An inclusive, accessible and flexible EYFS

- Any revised **welfare requirements** are checked against the Independent School Standards to ensure there is no conflict between the two.
- There should continue to be **a framework that applies to all providers** working with children in the early years.
- Government [should] consider whether the learning and development **exemptions** process could be widened to allow professional organisations representing groups of independent schools to seek exemptions on behalf of the schools they represent who do not wish to deliver the EYFS learning and development requirements. This would apply in circumstances where the professional organisations can show both support from parents whose children attend the schools seeking the exemption, and demonstrate how the professional organisations would continue to ensure delivery of high quality early years provision.
- The Government [should] **extend the exemptions** from these early learning goals to all settings within the Steiner-Waldorf Foundation.
- **Simplifying the procedure for exemption** applications for providers meeting the existing stringent criteria – by replacing the requirement to consult local authorities with a requirement to inform them.
- Guidance for **wraparound and holiday provision** is embedded in the EYFS and that Ofsted continues to ensure that it is embedded throughout the inspection process.
- The Skillsactive playwork level 2 award is included as a relevant **early years qualification** for holiday providers.
- Recognising that there will be less support in the future to help early years providers improve, the **EYFS must be redrafted** in such a way that the framework is easy to **access, understand** and **navigate**, incorporating what is known about how young children learn and develop and highlighting the importance of protecting their welfare. Any revised EYFS and guidance for inspectors are both subject to a plain English review, and should seek to be awarded the plain English crystal mark.
- The development of a high-quality and **interactive online version** of the revised EYFS, with clear navigation to help people find what they are looking for.
- **Parents** should be provided with a brief, simple, explanation of what the EYFS is and what they can expect when a child starts in an early years setting.
- The Government increases the emphasis within the EYFS on **the role of parents and carers as partners** in their children's learning, and in addition ensures that all practitioners continue to have access to the necessary resources needed to support the incorporation of effective parental engagement into their practice.

Equipped for life, ready for school

- **Personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development** are identified as **prime areas of learning** in the EYFS.
- The EYFS should include a requirement for practitioners, including childminders, to provide on request to parents and carers, at some point between the ages of 24 – 36 months, a **short written early years summary** of their child's development in the prime areas.
- An insert is added to the early childhood health record, known as the Red Book, to encourage parents and carers, or their nominee, to enter information arising from this early years summary and from children's **interaction with other professionals**, for example speech and language therapists.
- The Government works with experts and services to test the feasibility of a **single integrated review at age 2 to 2½**.
- The Government investigate **urgently** how the development of children's **English language skills** can be effectively supported and assessed.
- Alongside the three prime areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development, **four specific areas of learning** are proposed in which the prime skills are applied: **literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, and understanding the world**.
- **Playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically** are highlighted in the EYFS as **three characteristics of effective teaching and learning**.
- Practitioners have said how helpful they find the non-statutory guidance on ongoing, formative assessment, **Development Matters**, in tracking children's learning and development from birth through to reception. It is therefore recommended that this is **retained but is reviewed and slimmed-down**, and is aligned with the proposed new areas of learning.
- **No changes** to the EYFS requirements on **formative assessment**...[but] that the EYFS explicitly states that **paperwork should be kept to the absolute minimum** required to promote children's successful learning and development.
- The **Government adopts the reduced set of early learning goals to provide a framework which defines the expected level of children's development by the end of reception year**.
- For each early learning goal a **simple scale** is established. This should define what **emerging, expecting** and **exceeding** means for each early learning goal. The level of exceeding the early learning goals [should be] set to be consistent with expectations in the current National Curriculum, and evolves in a way that is consistent with expectations to be set out in the new National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1 in the relevant subjects.
- As part of the review of the *Development Matters* guidance, the Government develops an additional column setting out clearly the **key milestones of development** for children aged under 24 months.
- The EYFS is made more explicit about the **different approaches to assessment** that practitioners may wish to consider for those **children with special educational needs**.
- Assessment at the end of the EYFS, the **EYFS Profile**, should be **significantly slimmed down** and made much more manageable, based on the **17 proposed new early learning goals**, and have clearer links into the National Curriculum.
- Guidance sets out that assessment should be based primarily on the observation of **daily activities that illustrate children's embedded learning**.
- The EYFS requirement relating to delivery through **play** [should be] clarified, including emphasising that this does not preclude more adult direction or teaching, and by setting out what playful adult-directed learning looks like.

Keeping children safe

- The welfare section of the EYFS is renamed the 'safeguarding and welfare requirements' and that the **welfare requirements are redrafted to improve their clarity**.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are made more explicit about **warning signs in the behaviour of adults** working in a setting. Also ... that the EYFS sets out clearly the high level content of the **child protection training** that lead safeguarding practitioners are required to attend. This should align with the *Working together to safeguard children* guidance, and include content on safeguarding within early years settings.
- The banning **mobile phones** in early years settings is explicitly *not* recommended.
- The Government act on the report of the Advisory Panel for **Food and Nutrition in Early Years** and consider providing further advice and good practice for practitioners.
- The Government research as a matter of importance the **ratios currently used in reception classes**. This should include the use of **support staff** and identifying and sustaining current good practice if needed.

- The Government should take the opportunity when redrafting the EYFS to reflect the **parity** between the ratio requirements for independent and maintained schools which has been in place since 2009.
- It should be made clear in the EYFS that, when ratios are met and maintained across the whole provision within an early years setting, it is left to the professional expertise of staff, and the leaders and managers of settings, to work with parents and carers **to agree exactly how staff are deployed within the setting throughout the day**. However, it should also be made clear that the majority of practitioners' time should be spent working directly with the children.
- Clear guidance is included in the EYFS about the amount of paperwork that should be kept in relation to **risk assessments**. Also ... that practitioners should not have to undertake written risk assessments in relation to outings, but instead be able to demonstrate, if asked – for example, by parents or during inspection – the way they are managing outings to minimise any risk.

A professional, well-supported workforce

- The Government retain a focus on the need to **upskill the workforce**, to commit to promoting a minimum level 3 qualification and to maintain the ambitions for a graduate led sector.
- The Government discusses with the Careers Profession Alliance how to ensure that careers professionals are well informed about **careers in the early years**.
- The Government review the content of early years training courses to test the strength and quality of these **qualifications**.
- The Government consider how the best-performing settings could help to support **introduction of the known model of Teaching Schools** to the early years.
- The Government build on existing work to draw together a **progression structure for qualifications**, linking these to leadership qualifications and identifying clear career pathways for practitioners.
- Work continues to develop **qualifications to meet the needs of all learners**, including young people undertaking full-time college courses and those who have worked in the early years for a long time who wish to evidence their expertise and progress along the structure of qualifications discussed above.
- The Government ensures that new **entry qualifications** are of a high standard and, once introduced, reviews whether they succeed in conferring the equivalent status of the NNEB qualification.
- The EYFS is clear what **supervision** means in practice, including some good practice examples, and that settings should agree their own procedures for supervision. **Childminders** should also have access to the challenge and professional support that supervision can provide. the Government should consider how peer networks, such as childminder networks, and national organisations can provide this kind of support.
- **Ofsted** and **local authorities** work together to produce clear, **consistent information** for early years providers and communicate this effectively to all practitioners.
- **Ofsted** reviews the **training, capacity and capability of the current early years inspectorate** and existing guidance to inspectors.
- As with Ofsted, **local authorities avoid creating burdens** for practitioners arising from requests to collect unnecessary data and information, and to keep paperwork that is not required by the EYFS. Instead, they should find other ways of testing the strength of practitioners' ability to support children's development.

3. PROPOSED EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Prime areas of learning

- **Personal, social and emotional development**
 - self-confidence and self-awareness *[formerly self-confidence and self-esteem]*
 - managing feelings and behaviour *[formerly behaviour and self-control]*
 - making relationships and understanding others *[formerly making relationships]*
- **Physical development**
 - moving and handling *[formerly movement and space]*
 - health and self-care *[formerly health and bodily awareness]*
- **Communication and language**
 - listening and attention *[formerly language for communication]*
 - understanding *[formerly language for thinking]*
 - speaking *[formerly language for thinking]*

Specific areas of learning

- **Literacy**
 - reading *[including the former linking sounds and letters]*
 - writing *[including the former linking sounds and letters]*
- **Mathematics**
 - numbers *[formerly two aspects – numbers as labels and for counting, and calculating]*
 - shape, space and measures
- **Understanding the World**
 - people and communities *[formerly time and communities]*
 - the world *[formerly place]*
 - technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
 - exploring and using media and materials *[formerly being creative – responding to experiences, expressing and communicating ideas]*
 - being imaginative *[formerly creating music and dance, and developing imagination and imaginative play]*

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

In addition to the prime and specific areas of learning, the 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.

- **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 full report can be viewed/downloaded at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/tickellreview>