

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE, Interim Director – Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>18 October 2019</b>
Subject:	<b>Improvement Plan – School Readiness</b>

**Summary:**

The Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage sets the standards for learning development and care for children from 0-5 years. This framework is expected to be used by all registered early years providers. This includes childminders, preschools, nurseries and day-care providers, and in all schools regardless of their model of governance for the provision of early years and reception class children. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the curriculum that is used to support children's learning and development throughout their early education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on the on-going teacher observation and assessment of a child's learning throughout this time. This is then recorded, collated and used to measure children's attainment at a school level, a district level, a county level and then ultimately compared nationally on an annual basis. Data is validated through the summer and released in to the public domain in the autumn term.

Historically, Lincolnshire has compared well to national figures, however, in the two most recent years Lincolnshire has seen their data dip below the national average. This report provides further details on this data trend, explores the emerging patterns that have been identified and sets out the improvement plan that will focus on addressing these issues.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to

1. consider the content of this report and provide comment.
2. review the improvement plan that sets out the actions to be taken to address the issues identified.

## 1. Background

The early years in a child's life are the most formative and in order that all children thrive it is important that services provide information, support and advice to parents at the right time in the right way. It is widely acknowledged that the majority of children and families will not require access to targeted or specialist services. Most children will develop and thrive within the family environment accessing universal health services i.e. Health Visitors and GPs, early years and childcare services via childminders, pre preschool/nurseries and then have a smooth transition into school achieving the expected outcomes or above at the end of their reception year. The measure of this journey is the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

### EYFS Profile Outcomes

The EYFSP summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the foundation stage. It is based on on-going observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning and the three learning characteristics.

A completed EYFS profile consists of the attainment of each child assessed in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) descriptors together with a short narrative describing the child's three learning characteristics. For each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the development expected at the end of the Reception year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding) or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

In addition, the EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of children's development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and the readiness for the next phase in their education both nationally and locally. Children with a Good Level of Development (GLD) are those achieving at least the expected level in all the following areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; and mathematics. All areas of learning within the EYFS are important and to reflect this, the GLD measure is supported by a measure of the average of the cohort's total point score across all the ELGs. This ensures that the attainment of all children across all ELGs is captured.

For 2018 academic year:

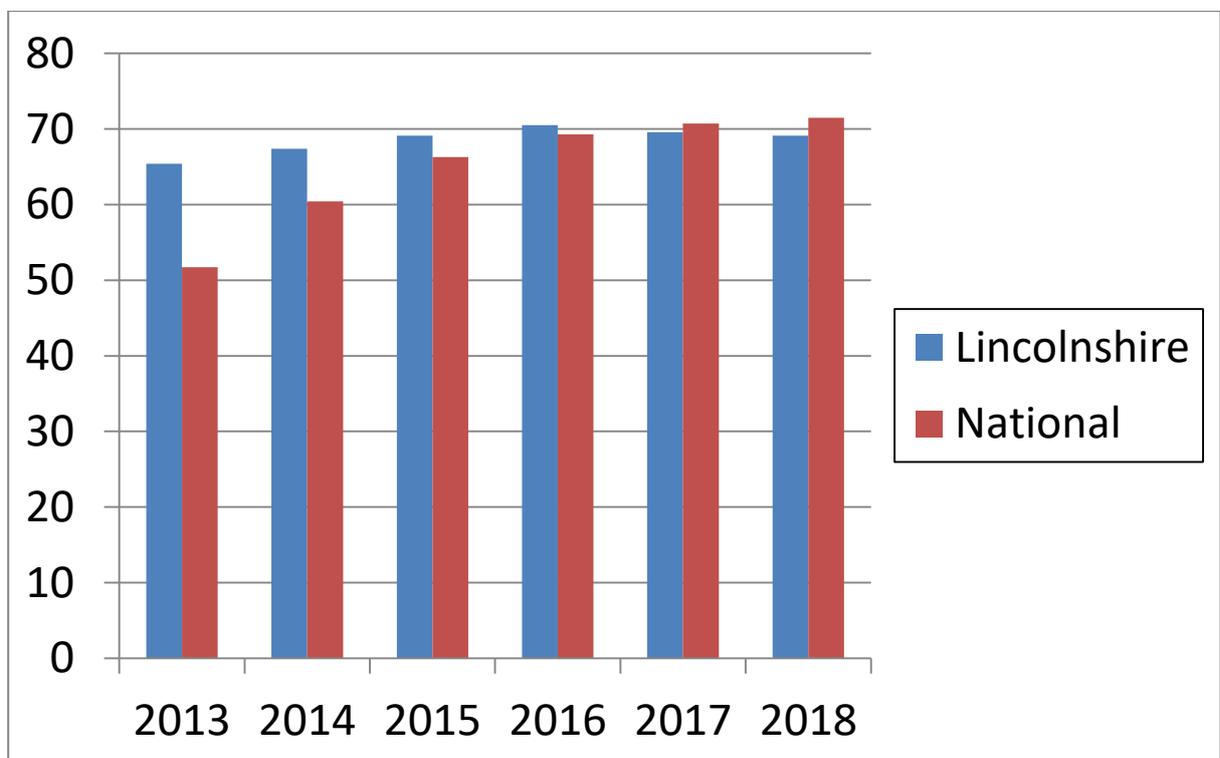
- 69.1% of children in Lincolnshire achieved a Good Level of Development in 2018, 2.4% lower than the national average of 71.5%.
- Girls outperformed boys in Lincolnshire; 76% achieving a GLD compared to 62% which is a 2% increase from 2017 in the gender gap.
- The average point score (supporting measure) in Lincolnshire was 34.4 broadly in line with National.

Data for disadvantaged cohorts was also analysed:

- For the lowest attaining 20% of children, the national gap is 31.8%. At 32.2% the gap in Lincolnshire remains slightly wider than the national figure, but narrower than the East Midlands average of 33.1%.
- For children eligible for pupil premium the gap between them and their non-eligible peers is 20% in Lincolnshire, compared to 18% nationally. The gap remained the same in Lincolnshire for these children in 2018.
- For children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) the gap between them and their English as a first language peers is 14% in Lincolnshire compared to 7% nationally. The gap widened for these children in Lincolnshire in 2018 by 1%.

As you can see from Table A below the data has dipped in 2017 and once again in 2018 in comparison to 2013-2016 figures which were inline and or above national.

**Table A - 5 year data trend (measured in %)**



Further analysis at a district level is set out below in Table B to better understand this picture at a more local level. Two districts of Lincolnshire exceed national averages with 5 areas adrift from national. Reflecting on 2018 data in comparison to 2019 proxy data there has been an improvement in three district areas with the two remaining unchanged. Validated 2019 data will not be available until later in the autumn term.

**Table B**

	% achieving GLD 2017	% achieving GLD 2018	% achieving GLD 2019
Lincolnshire (Calculated locally)	69.9%	69.1%	69.6%
Boston	62.7%	62.2%	65.5 %
East Lindsey	66.7%	65.8%	68.9 %
Lincoln	64.6%	66.1%	66.5 %
North Kesteven	76%	76.3%	76.2 %
South Holland	68.7%	65.5%	65.5%
South Kesteven	73.3%	73.3%	71.7 %
West Lindsey	71.7%	69.5%	69.5 %

- Red – Below national with no improvement demonstrated to date
- Amber – below national with some improvement demonstrated to date or outcomes sustained
- Green Above or in line with national

This data enables resources to be targeted geographically, however, breaking this down in to the early learning goals gives opportunity to develop and plan more effectively directing support to children's areas of learning that may need more input.

From the data above there are early signs that there is progress being made to improve children's outcomes in the early years and that the foundations that have been put in place with an emphasis on the shared responsibility on all services that work with families during their first six years of a child's life.

Writing is the ELG in which Lincolnshire children do least well within the EYFS however other elements need to be in place to underpin their skills prior to this. Children must be confident communicators, be able to enjoy books using them as a way of increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world and writing skills will follow, with parents supported to be primary educators.

In Table C below, the 17 ELGs are set out with the percentage of children who reached expected or exceeding judgments and the areas of learning achieved.

**Table C**

Area of Learning	National 2018	2018	2019
Listening and attention	86.3%	85.4%	84.9%
Understanding	86.0%	85.4%	85%
Speaking	85.5%	85%	85%
Moving and Handling	89.6%	89.1%	89.1%
Health and Self - Care	91.2%	91%	91.3%
Self- confidence and self-awareness	88.9%	88.5%	88.4%
Managing feelings and behaviour	87.9%	87.3%	87%
Making Relationships	89.7%	89.4%	89.4%
Reading	77%	75.2%	75.1%
Writing	73.7%	70.8%	71.5%
Number	79.6%	77.6%	78.4%
Shape, space and measure	81.7%	80.7%	80.3%
People and communities	85.9%	85.8%	85.8%
The world	85.8%	85%	85.5%
Technology	93.1%	93.5%	94.7%
Exploring and using media and materials	89.0%	89.1%	89.7%
Being imaginative	88.7%	88.8%	89.6%

- Red – Below national with no improvement demonstrated to date
- Amber – below national with some improvement demonstrated to date or outcomes sustained
- Green Above or in line with national

Following this data trend further work has been undertaken to set out an improvement plan. Lincolnshire's ambition is that every child has the best start in life and in order to achieve this, the child and family must journey through those early years overcoming issues and seeking support from professionals as and when they feel they need it.

This has been set out in to seven key headings within the plan.

1. Raising a good level of development
2. Ensuring sufficiency of good quality provision
3. Focusing of effective transitions
4. Accessing children centres services
5. More effective early identification of need
6. Raising the aspirations of providers
7. Ambition 1 – Social Mobility

The improvement plan sets out a number of actions that will be undertaken to address areas children do less well across the ELGs. This requires a range of professionals to work together to improve outcomes for children as the journey is not just about the child's time in school.

The improvement plan includes working in partnership with Early Years Providers, and schools both directly and through the work commissioned to Lincolnshire Teaching School's Together (LTT). In addition, it includes working with other service areas including Special Education Needs and Disabilities team (SEND), Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education team (EMTET) Children's health teams, and external agencies commissioned nationally to work with Local Authorities. The improvement plan is attached at Appendix A.

### **Early Years services in Lincolnshire**

There are almost 700 providers registered to deliver early years entitlement places to children across Lincolnshire. This includes 615 PVI (private, voluntary and independent) providers (this includes approximately 300 childminders who are essential to the sufficiency of provision in a rural county), 30 Academies and 54 Local Authority (LA) maintained schools.

The quality of Lincolnshire provision has improved and compares well to national and regional figures. Childminders in Lincolnshire have increased to 96% Good and Outstanding, and Childcare on Non Domestic Premises have increased to 97% Good and Outstanding. This suggests that Lincolnshire's PVI early years providers are continuing to build on their good practice and that the revised targeted model of support from the Early Years and Childcare service (EYCC) has enabled our resources to be utilised effectively to support the sector. However, on comparing the number of outstanding providers in Lincolnshire to national and regional data there is some improvement required as the figures are slightly adrift and therefore this will be a focus going forward. Although it is acknowledged that there could be some challenges with this as the Ofsted Education inspection framework will change from September 2019.

In the last three years a number of changes have been put in place to give a greater emphasis on how services are delivered and commissioned to best meet the needs of children and families in their early years with a focus on integrated delivery.

This includes:

- The reshape of the Early Years Childcare service (EYCC)
- Maintaining our network of 48 children centres
- Commissioning of the Best Start contract
- Insourcing of the children 0-19 health services
- Development of maternity hubs in our Children's Centres in areas of high deprivation.

## **EYCC**

In 2016 the Early Years Support Service and the management structure of Children's Centres was redesigned and restructured. This resulted in 50% fewer qualified teachers working in the Early Years' service. The new model embedded 75% of the remaining Early Years expertise in to Early Help locality teams to undertake targeted work focused on improving the educational outcomes of the most vulnerable children (i.e. SEN, Children on a plan, children not accessing their entitlement) with a view to narrowing the attainment gap. 25% of the workforce was retained centrally with a county wide focus and had an emphasis on supporting Early Years providers that received a less than good Ofsted judgement.

## **Children's Centres**

In 2017 the commissioning arrangement for the delivery of the early years services delivered from Children's Centres transferred to a new provider from the Education Development Trust to the Pre-school Learning Alliance (now known as The Early Years Alliance) after a comprehensive procurement exercise was completed. The new contracting arrangements came into place in the summer of that year. This took time to embed, however, this contract is now providing a good level of services across all Children's Centres focusing on delivery sessions to support the best start in life for families with children 0-3 years.

## **Health Visiting**

In addition, in October 2017 our children's health visiting service transferred in to the Council. It is felt that there is now evidence to suggest that this is already having a positive impact on the number of families accessing children's centres, since a decision in December 2018 was made to deliver as many mandated health checks in children's centres as capacity would allow. Further strengthening of professional partnerships is required to improve earlier identification of need for children who need additional support. This is recognised as an action within the improvement plan.

## **Community based maternity hubs**

In late 2017 and early January 2018 Lincolnshire launched the first phase of our community maternity hubs which was a recommendation from the Betterbirths Report (2016). The aim was to deliver services locally and more effectively to families across the county with a specific focus on parents living in areas of the highest deprivation. The first phase of the roll out is proving to be successful,

seeing increased take up of services by families including accessing a range of other support services i.e. smoking cessation which has added benefits for parents and their children. The success of phase 1 resulted in support for a second phase with a hub now in our Children's Centres in Skegness, Grantham, Boston and Lincoln Birchwood followed by Spalding, Mablethorpe, Lincoln Central and soon to be Stamford.

There have been many changes across the early years and Children's Centre sector in the last three years in Lincolnshire, all of which it is felt will in the longer term have a positive impact on families and children's outcomes both from a health and wellbeing perspective and will also increase opportunities for learning. Lincolnshire embraced these changes and remains fully committed to the principles of early intervention and integrated locality working as a conduit to improving all children's early educational outcomes.

Lincolnshire's overarching approach will be set out within a strategy along with our ambitions later this year. The strategy will include how our integrated workforce across midwifery, health visiting, the PVI and maintained childcare sector, schools, our commissioned services and partners come together to deliver a cohesive package of support to families as they travel through pregnancy and the early stages of parenthood and beyond. To ensure the foundations are in place to enable our children to succeed. This will support a shared vision, encourage collaboration across services and professionals and ensure we make the best use of the resources available to improve children's outcomes.

## **2. Conclusion**

To inform the priorities within the improvement plan the most recent EYFSP data has been used (2018 validated data and 2019 proxy data) to compare with national results in all 17 ELGs and RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated. This has allowed us to focus on outcomes in areas of learning that need to be improved. To enable resources to be geographically targeted the data has been set out at district level. To enable the wider outcomes of children to inform the health and wellbeing of children the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been reviewed and the previous EYFS profile attainment data set has been replaced and refocused on Early Years in its widest sense with a chapter dedicated to support future investment in this area of work.

Using the data available and maintaining a focus on the delivery of good quality universal services with targeted support available to children and families as and when they need it, the improvement plan has been developed to set out how we will work collaboratively to improve the early educational experiences and outcomes.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

No

## b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Improvement Plan

## 5. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Early Years National Funding Formula	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-national-funding-formula-allocations-and-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-national-funding-formula-allocations-and-guidance</a>
Statistics: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2019	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-early-years-foundation-stage-profile">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-early-years-foundation-stage-profile</a>
Early years national funding formula: allocations and guidance	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-national-funding-formula-allocations-and-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-national-funding-formula-allocations-and-guidance</a>
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2</a>
Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2</a>
Lincolnshire's Early Years Entitlements Agreement & Guidance	<a href="https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/childcare-and-family-support/early-years-and-childcare-support/early-years-entitlements/registration-and-delivering-funded-places/129305.article">https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/childcare-and-family-support/early-years-and-childcare-support/early-years-entitlements/registration-and-delivering-funded-places/129305.article</a>
Early Years Inspection Handbook for Ofsted Registered provision 2019	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif</a>
Early Years Outcomes Dashboard	<a href="https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/smapey-dashboard/">https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/smapey-dashboard/</a>

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