

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	25 June 2014
SUBJECT:	Early Years in Lincolnshire Analysis of the Local Authority's Current Early Years Priorities and Intentions for 2014 - 15
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IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to share with the Schools Forum the local authority's statutory duties under the current DfE guidance and analysis of Lincolnshire's priorities during 2014/15.

This will enable the Schools Forum to see how Lincolnshire compares to other local authorities and that should help inform future discussions about early year's provision.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

Lincolnshire's Birth to Five Service works to improve outcomes for young children and their families with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness.

The Service provides monitoring, challenge and support for inclusive practice and training to all Early Years Providers within Lincolnshire which cater for children from birth to five years. This includes support for Schools, Pre-Schools, Nurseries, Children's Centres, Day Care Settings and Registered Childminders. The Birth to Five Service ensures that all Early Years Providers have access to efficient and effective support in order to deliver the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and to make a measurable, positive impact upon the lives of young children throughout Lincolnshire. It strives to work closely with targeted teams based in Children's Centres and seeks to progress early intervention through integrated working.

EYFS and Ofsted outcomes in early years continue to rise and to be above the national average. A high percentage of children are accessing the free Early Years Entitlements and there is a strong sufficiency of high quality childcare available to families in Lincolnshire.

EYFS PROFILE OUTCOMES

A new national assessment system for the EYFS was introduced in September 2012 and the first assessments took place in June 2013. Alongside the revised EYFS, the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), places a greater emphasis on three prime areas of learning which the Government believes are crucial for later success: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language. It has also reduced the number of early learning goals for assessment from 117 to just 17 and made changes to the way children were assessed at the end of the EYFS. Practitioners are required to make a best-fit assessment of whether children are 'emerging'; 'expected'; or 'exceeding' against each of the new early learning goals.

Within the new EYFSP, children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in:

- the Early Learning Goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and;
- the Early Learning Goals in the specific areas of learning (mathematics and literacy)

This means that the previous GLD measure cannot continue to be used to compare year on year outcomes.

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 early learning goals. This ensures that the attainment of all children across all early learning goals is captured.

In Lincolnshire, 65% of children achieved a Good Level of Development, 13% higher than the national average of 52%. Girls outperformed boys, 74% achieving a GLD compared to 57%: at national level 60% of girls achieved a GLD compared with 44% of boys. The average point score (supporting measure) in Lincolnshire was 34.8 compared to 32.8 nationally. At a national level, the achievement gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean is 36.6%. At 29.5%, the gap in Lincolnshire is less than the national figure.

Analysis of the 2013 outcomes by the Birth to Five Service indicated reluctance for teachers to award 'exceeding'. It has since rigorously moderated outcomes and quality assured data to ensure that outcomes are accurate. Training events for practitioners completing the EYFSP assessments have been delivered to develop teacher understanding of the criteria for 'exceeding' and to support them to confidently award this where appropriate. This should be evidenced in outcomes for 2014.

An implementation plan was developed by the Birth to Five Service to ensure the new assessment would be completed appropriately by schools and settings across Lincolnshire. This plan was sent to the DfE Standards Testing Agency. The Standards Testing Agency considered this plan to be both rigorous and robust, clearly illustrating how the local authority planned to meet the statutory requirements regarding the implementation, moderation and quality assurance of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

The Birth to Five Service also took part in a peer review of its moderation processes. The review was led by Derbyshire Local Authority who identified strong, strategic leadership of the moderation processes in place. In particular it identified a rigorous process for quality assurance of moderation events and data as a strength as well as the contribution the Service makes to gathering materials for the Standards Testing Agency.

QUALITY OF PROVIDERS JUDGED BY OFSTED

Data taken from the September 2013 statistical release from Ofsted for the period up to July 2013 demonstrates that 85% of Lincolnshire Early Years providers on 'non-domestic premises' were judged good or outstanding. This is 3% above the national average outcome. Over a third of Early Years providers on non-domestic premises have improved their Ofsted outcome under the new more rigorous Ofsted framework (implemented in November 2013) and of those remaining, a strong majority have held their existing grading. This confirms that Lincolnshire's Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Early Years providers are continuing to build on their good practice and are successfully implementing the reformed Early Years Foundation Stage.

The statistical release shows that national outcomes are higher for early years providers registered as 'childcare on non-domestic premises' in comparison to childminder registrations. Lincolnshire statistics reflect this trend. Childminders in Lincolnshire perform slightly below the national average but their outcomes show an improving trend throughout this year.

Evening cluster meetings are being delivered by the Birth to Five Service in June and July 2014 for all childminders to increase the number delivering the free Early Years Entitlement places and to provide additional support regarding workforce, Inclusion and Safeguarding.

In Autumn 2013 the Birth to Five Service launched an intervention programme of support aimed at providers judged satisfactory/requires improvement by Ofsted. Called the 'Getting to Good Programme', it aims to support leadership teams to be judged good at next inspection. Of the original 29 providers, 16 have since been inspected and of these, 13 were judged good.

Lincolnshire's five Nursery Schools have continued to achieve very strong Ofsted outcomes with three of the five schools graded as 'outstanding' and the remaining two schools graded as 'good with outstanding' features.

THE EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENTS (EYE) FOR 2, 3 & 4 YEAR OLDS

The Government introduced the free entitlement for the least advantaged two year olds nationally in September 2013. From September 2014, free early education places will be available nationally for around 260,000 two year olds. This equates to approximately 40% of all two year olds in the country.

The Department published local level data for each local authority along with the funding allocations for 2014/15 in December 2013. A scrutiny report entitled 'Take up of early education for less advantaged 2 year olds in Lincolnshire' was submitted to the committee on the 7th March 2014 detailing the success of this funding in more detail.

DWP data has indicated 3,278 two year olds will be eligible for funded education places from September 2014. The Government has announced that funding for 2015/16 will be based upon participation, it is therefore crucial to ensure as many eligible families access their child's place by January 2015 in order to secure appropriate funding for the future take up for 2 year olds.

Lincolnshire has currently agreed places for 2,264 children which represents 69% of the total potentially eligible in September. This far exceeds the national take-up which is currently 42% (DfE statistics supplied at the A2YO national conference, June 2014).

The number of Early Years providers delivering funded 2 year old places continues to rise and there are currently 260 PVI providers, 103 childminders and 14 school governed providers offering the entitlement for 2 year olds in Lincolnshire. This is 75% of all providers delivering free education places to 3 and 4 year olds. The Service is continuing to build this offer to ensure high quality provision is available for all eligible children in Lincolnshire. The DfE has commended the local authority's progress with the initiative.

All early years providers offering free places to eligible two year olds have participated in a programme of training led by national early year's experts, Nancy Stewart and Helen Moylett during 2013-14. 'Two Year Olds Learning, Playing and Interacting' was commissioned using the 2 year old trajectory funding and this has developed practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the development of two year olds. The Birth to Five Service facilitated the training as part of their continuous professional development so that the Service is even better placed to meet the needs of two year olds in Lincolnshire.

The number of 3 and 4 year olds accessing the free entitlement continues to rise and national figures published in June 2012 indicate that 97% of 3 and 4 year old children accessed their free entitlement in Lincolnshire in 2012. This is above the national figure of 96% and on par with the regional East Midlands figure of 97%. The increase in children accessing the 2 year old entitlement can be seen to be having an impact as children transition into accessing the 3/4 year old offer.

The Service will continue to liaise with targeted teams and early years providers in Lincolnshire to ensure participation and attendance of all 2, 3 and 4 year old children in funded education continues to be supported.

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY

A significant number of new childcare places have been developed around the county to support sufficiency needs since the beginning of September 2012, including places for 2 year olds to support the current 2 year old programme and roll out of funded education places.

In January 2014, the previous team supporting this duty and the large sufficiency budget to support the development of places ceased. Since then, the sufficiency work has been supported by the existing Birth to Five Service team. The current capacity within the Service to continue to support this work is being reviewed and clear delegated responsibilities are due to be confirmed with other teams within the local authority shortly.

Childminders and Out of School Provision were previously supported by commissioned contracts which ended in March 2013. Since the end of these contracts, these cohorts of providers have had little direct support. The Birth to Five Service is reviewing the strategy to provide appropriate levels of information, advice and guidance to these providers as required by statutory duty.

To ensure all eligible 2 year old children are able to access their entitlement, trajectory funding and capital funding was made available to local authorities in 2013-14 to support the development of new places and the improvement of existing places.

A detailed analysis of the market capacity and the expected additional eligible children was undertaken and a breakdown of the needs assessment by district area was created. Many capital projects have been completed and there are still several in development during 2014-15 to support the market need.

WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Birth to Five Service continues to strive to support the Government's aspiration of a 'world class' early years workforce.

The Early Years Training Directory provides a comprehensive programme of statutory courses that assist the sector to meet the EYFS / Ofsted requirements and to provide and maintain high quality provision. The training includes 60+ Paediatric First Aid Courses, 60+ Safeguarding Courses, 30 Food Safety Courses and 40+ Health & Safety Courses (Risk Assessment, Fire Safety, Emergency First Aid at Work and IOSH) and a full range of inclusion based courses.

A wide range of learning and development courses that focus on supporting practitioners to improve outcomes for children are also available, a high percentage of this training being delivered by the Birth to Five Service team. Practitioners across the early years workforce continue to fully engage in the professional development opportunities that are on offer in Lincolnshire. Regular information sharing at Managers Briefings enables the Birth to Five Service Workforce Development Team to keep the sector abreast of imminent changes to legislation and promote tools that have been created to support managers with developing their staff teams in order to meet the requirements placed upon them within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The continuation of Graduate Support Programme Funding (GSP) has enabled practitioners to continue with their studies that otherwise would not have been accessible to them as adult learners in a low paid profession. The Graduate Leader Subsidy supports the settings to pay a salary enhancement to the graduates that they employ in order to retain them within the early years workforce, it is recognised within the Private, Voluntary & Independent sector that there are not the salary scales or terms and conditions from which graduates may benefit are not as attractive as the maintained sector therefore supporting equality for the graduates. The Future Graduate Allowance supports the early years setting to purchase staff cover for the times the growing graduate is attending University, thus ensuring that children's safety, learning and development are not compromised. The Birth to Five Service has excellent links with local FE / HE Training Providers, working in partnership to promote the graduate pathways open to the sector.

The Lincolnshire Early Years Postgraduate (EYP) Network meetings remain strong, with membership now exceeding 130 EYP's. The Service is currently supporting the network to make the transition to becoming sector led, establishing a committee that will direct the work of the network in the future. The EYP's within Lincolnshire remain committed to the role they play in supporting children and their families. During 2013/14 they had training with Helen Moylett (Inclusive Practice), Ben Kingston-Hughes (Physical Play) and Bernadette Duffy OBE who focused on Developing Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills.

The EYP Skills Coach Project went live in September 2013 and now has 14 experienced Early Years Professionals (EYP's) that have completed the training, a 6 month bespoke coaching and mentoring course 'Nurturing Success' and who have now started to support the sector. The Skills Coaches have become involved in coaching those settings that are on the 'Getting to Good' programme as well as working in partnership with Bishop Grosseteste University who are using the Skills Coaches to offer

the mentoring required to those students on the Early Years Teacher Pathway. It is expected that a further 14 Skills Coaches and 40 Childminder Coaches will be trained during 2014/15.

The Service continues to be proud of its ongoing work in supporting and growing graduate level leaders within the early years sector. A vital element of this project is the leadership programmes that have been developed; these have encouraged and inspired leaders to be more effective. During January to March 2013 the workforce team organised a series of targeted training courses for Leaders / Managers, focusing on School Readiness, Raising Boys Achievements, Safer Recruitment, Supervision & Appraisal and Superhero Play. These all ran to capacity and feedback from delegates stated that it has altered thinking, performance and impacted on outcomes of the children in their care.

The Birth to Five Service has historically provided a programme of training events and packages of support for schools through the CfBT Professional Development Agreement (PDA). Since the Service is no longer under CfBT's management, it has ceased to trade through PDA units and is working with the commissioning team to agree consultancy rates to continue to offer this service. Last year the Birth to Five Service generated approximately £65,000 through its services to schools and demand for its services to schools continues.

INCLUSION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Early Years providers continue to be supported through the allocation of the Early Years Inclusion Fund. Early Years Consultants provide support and advice for inclusion to setting staff, parents and children, as required from within their Area SENCo role, and the inclusion funding enables them to enhance support for children with severe and complex needs. The Early Years Inclusion Fund supports government strategy by supporting early intervention and removing barriers to learning faced by children with special educational needs. Inclusion funding is used by early year providers to:

- Enhance staff ratios
- Purchase specialist equipment
- Provide training for additional needs and all aspects of inclusive practice

The Birth to Five Service has supported 290 children with inclusion funding from April 2013 – March 2014. The funding reduces reliance on statementing of our youngest children with additional needs, by providing a mechanism for such children to access Early Years provision with appropriate support.

The Birth to Five Service is working in partnership with the nationally recognised 'Inclusion Quality Mark' to develop a quality assurance process for early years settings focusing on Inclusion. There are ten early years settings currently involved in the Inclusion Quality Mark and it is a future aspiration for the service that all settings will be involved in the programme. There will be a celebration event at the end of the summer for settings who have achieved the inclusion quality mark.

Inclusion Funding has been increased for 2014-15 to include maintained nursery classes in schools. The process for schools accessing this funding is currently being updated and revised for implementation in September 2014. A revised process is being put in place for childminders and this will be implemented for the beginning of September 2014.

Early Bird is now being co-ordinated from within the Birth to Five Service team and twenty-one families have participated in programmes this year. Birth to Five Service are training a further two consultants to deliver programme and there is now team of 9 people across the county able to deliver.

The Birth to Five Service has been heavily involved in the special educational needs and disabilities reforms and has been represented on the Project Board, Delivery and Assurance Group, Stakeholder Group and working groups for Support and Aspiration and Local Offer. Birth to Five has completed

Local Offers for inclusion funding, EarlyBird, 2 year old funding, 3 and 4 year old Early Years Entitlement and identifying and assessing in the Early Years. Information has been delivered and co-produced at Manager's Briefings to early year's providers in the summer term. Timely responses have been given to the two consultations for the SEN Code of Practice and when the final document is produced changes and new processes will be explored with early year's providers.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Service is committed to working in partnership with targeted teams and other agencies across Lincolnshire. There are numerous examples of successful partnership working across Lincolnshire teams.

In several Children's Centres, the Children's Centre Teachers (CCT), working together with Children's Centre teams have delivered a package of transition support through the LEAPP (Linking Education, Partnership and Play) project, to an identified vulnerable group of Reception children and their families accessing the schools across the county. The benefits have been demonstrated in raising the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile score for the allocated vulnerable group focusing on PSED and CLL; coaching and training Teaching Assistants and affirming Reception Teachers existing expertise and strengthening links between the vulnerable families, the Children's Centre and schools.

Working together with Children's Centres, the Children's Centre Teachers (CCTs), are delivering a targeted project for 2 year olds called Prime Time with early years providers delivering the Early Years Entitlement for 2 year olds. Working with funded children, and prioritising children in social care, the project aims to raise achievement of vulnerable children and to support families to raise outcomes for their children. Prime Time was first piloted in a few centres but due to its evident impact on improving children's learning and development, has been identified as a key priority for the work of CCTs. The CCTs work alongside practitioners offering coaching and training and affirming their existing expertise.

The Birth to Five Service is also working alongside Health to look at the Obesity issue within the early years and how we can work together to reduce the 25% of children who enter reception overweight. The Service is analysing the information provided by settings to look at the quality of food and physical activity provided.

The Birth to Five Service is working in partnership with CfBT on a targeted project, Closing the Gap. Lincolnshire County Council has requested an in-depth study on the attainment gap between identified vulnerable groups (pupils eligible for free school meals; Looked After Children; children with a special educational need; white working class children; children whose first language is not English) and their peers. The project is focusing on researching whether there are any particular strategies and interventions that can be used to meet their particular need/s. As part of the Task and Finish Groups that drive the agenda forward, the Birth to Five Service is contributing to a research paper drawing on national and local research and practice that draws on the knowledge, experience and successful strategies of early years providers, Children's Centres and associated agencies within Lincolnshire.

The Service has a commitment to working with Lincolnshire teaching school alliances to develop sector led improvement. As a strategic partner of the KYRA Teaching School Alliance, it has been successful in securing a small grant to develop an Early Years Hub in Lincolnshire. The project will explore and test regional hub models that provide practitioner led networks, peer support and challenge as well as further CPD opportunities.

EARLY YEARS CONFERENCE

The Birth to Five Service is holding its sixth annual Early Years Conference at the end of June 2014, at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln. The two day event, entitled 'Let's Hear it for the Boys!' is the biggest to date and is attracting 425 delegates. The conference aims to address the current gaps seen in boy's attainment across the county and nationally and will accommodate a range of practitioners working in schools and early years provision across Lincolnshire. There will be nationally recognised key note speakers and workshop leaders such as Sue Palmer, Gary Wilson, Shonette Bason and Elizabeth Jarman attending this event.

EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT DEMONSTRATOR (EYDD)

Working in partnership with the Children's Improvement Board, C4EO and the National College, Lincolnshire continues to work collaboratively with eight other East Midlands local authorities to share and demonstrate local developments in the planning and delivery of Foundation Years services to support holistic approaches to narrowing the gap for children in the 0-5 age range. Lincolnshire has been actively involved in a recent peer challenge events, such as the peer review of its moderation processes, to share practice across the region and to collaboratively investigate approaches taken to service improvement. Lincolnshire is working with the local authorities to share exemplification materials it has developed through its work with the Standards Testing Agency.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2014-15

- Continue to increase the number of children accessing the 2 year old free entitlement
- Implement the revised Early Education and Childcare, statutory guidance for local authorities in September 2014
- Deliver the 'Getting to Good' programme – a programme of support for early years providers currently judged as satisfactory/requiring improvement. Whilst the number of satisfactory providers in Lincolnshire remains below the national average, the Service remains committed to ensuring that all children in Lincolnshire experience a high quality education. (Ofsted are aware of this programme and have expressed keenness to trial this as a pilot for future local authority working
- Determine the Service function to reflect the statutory requirements of local authorities and clarify its core offer to schools and early years providers
- Support the delivery of Lincolnshire's Early Help strategy
- Revise the current model of support for providers across Lincolnshire, to include childminders and focus on those providers who have been judged as Inadequate by Ofsted.
- To determine traded services and this delivery
- Continue to work in partnership with teaching school alliances to support sector led improvement

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Birth to Five Service endeavours to maximise outcomes for Lincolnshire's youngest children through the delivery of varied early intervention strategies. The Service continues to ensure sufficient, inclusive, quality provision is being delivered across the county and has strong relationships with Service users.

This is a major strength in ensuring the county has sufficient quality provision to support the increased funding for two year olds from September 2014. The Service has been dynamic in implementing focussed and innovative initiatives in response to the challenge of meeting new national priorities and finding more effective ways of working which is critical as funding for local authorities' decreases. This challenge is particularly significant for rural and sparsely populated authorities. Proactive, strategic planning has been and remains a vital tool in maintaining the effective level of support to the different groups, particularly in a period of significant national policy changes.

The Service is well placed to support the early years sector in order to continue to improve children's outcomes, support inclusive practice, school readiness and improve and maintain safeguarding practices within the county's Early Help strategy.

The Schools Forum is asked to:

- a. Note the contents of the report
- b. Consider and comment upon the contents of the report

BACKGROUND PAPERS			
PAPER TYPE	TITLE	DATE	ACCESSIBILITY
Department for Education	Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities	September 2013	http://education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00209650/code-of-practice-for-las
Department for Education	More Affordable Childcare	September 2013	www.gov.uk/government/publications
Department for Education	Funding Early Learning for 2 Year Olds	December 2013	www.gov.uk/government/publications