

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 17 December 2009 | | ITEM 6 |
| Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| Update on Early Learning and the Role of Early Education Providers and Children's Centres | | |
| Portfolio Holder: Cllr. S. MacPherson, Portfolio Holder for children's Services | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Non-Key | |
| Accountable Head of Service: Christine Tinkler Head of Schools and Learning & Jay Mercer - Head of Children, Youth and Families | | |
| Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Corporate Director of Children, Education and Families | | |
| This report is Public | | |
| Purpose of Report: To provide further information for comment on the role early education providers and children's centres play in preparing young children for future learning, as requested at a previous meeting. | | |

Comment [sj]: PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX ONCE and enter the date of the meeting (in font 16, not capitals)

Comment [sj]: Please leave this for completion by Democratic Services

Comment [sj]: PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX ONCE and enter the name of the Committee you are reporting to (in font 16, not capitals)

Comment [sj]: Please state the name of the Cabinet Member and the Portfolio to which the report refers

Comment [sj]: Please enter details of any Wards and Communities affected by the report. If this section is not applicable, you should enter "none".

Comment [sj]: Yes/No/Not Applicable – a 'Key Decision' is generally one affecting more than 2 wards or above £50,000 expenditure – see Guideline 2.7

Comment [sj]: Please state the Head of Service's name and job title

Comment [sj]: Please state Director's name and job title

Comment [sj]: State whether your report is Public or Exempt. If Exempt (i.e. not to be given to the public or discussed in

Comment [sj]: Briefly set out the purpose of your report

Comment [sj]: Please provide a summary of the key points in your report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key points within this report are:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the framework for all early education providers to support early learning and to lay secure foundations for a child's future learning. All children, regardless of the type of setting they attend, work within the same curriculum.
- In some areas of the Borough children are unable to access their full entitlement to 12.5 hours per week of funded early education and steps are being taken to address this.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a requirement by law set out in the Childcare Act 2006.
- All providers regardless of type or size have to work within the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan to ensure that the individual needs of children in their care are met.

- Support is provided by the Local Authority team to provide information, support and training to all early education providers and this is based on an analysis of need.
- Children’s Centres and early education providers work in partnership with parents to ensure that early learning in early education settings builds on the home learning environment and provides a secure foundation for future learning through the National Curriculum.

Comment [s]: The recommendations should be set out in bold in the form of the decision that the decision-maker is being asked to make - See para. 5.2 of the report writing guidelines

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 That members note the information as requested, provide comments and consider any further reports that are required.

Comment [s]: You should briefly explain why the report is on the agenda - See para. 5.3 and 5.4 of the report writing guidelines.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 All children are entitled to 12.5 hours per week of funded early education, the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage through the Childcare Act 2006 ensured that all young children have access to the same range of early learning experiences regardless of which type of early education provider they attend. In Thurrock early education is provided across a range of preschools, full day care nurseries, childminders and schools.
- 2.2 The earlier report presented by Christine Tinkler on attainment set out details of the results at the end of the Foundation Stage (at age five years), this report seeks to provide additional detail on how many children attend early education provision and how early education delivered across a range of providers prepares children for future learning. It also gives information on how support is offered to early education providers and the links with the work of Children’s Centres.
- 2.3 All providers are required by law to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage in a way that meets the needs of the individual children in their care. We know that from birth, children develop and learn in a wide variety of ways and early education providers use six areas of learning to plan the early learning goals that all children should reach by the end of the foundation stage.
- 2.4 There are six areas covered by the early learning goals are:
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
 - Communication, Language and Literacy;
 - Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy;
 - Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
 - Physical Development;
 - Creative Development.

All learning is delivered through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

3. [ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:]

- 3.1 Currently 3,979 children access early education this equates to approximately 90% of three year olds and 97% of four year olds. In some areas a shortage of places means that children cannot access their full entitlement, in particular this is an issue in Chafford Hundred, South Stifford and Stifford Clays. In most other areas where a child does not access their full entitlement this is due to parental choice, as statutory schooling does not start until the term after a child's fifth birthday.
- 3.2 In the areas where a lack of places has been identified as a problem we work with both the private and voluntary sector and schools to increase the places available. In South Stifford the development of the Children's Centre will increase places available and in Stifford Clays a new nursery class is currently being built, both facilities will offer increased early education places from September 2010.
- 3.3 The Local Authority team support all early education providers by providing training advice and support tailored to the needs identified. These needs come from analysis of the Foundation Stage Profile data, analysis of Ofsted inspection reports and support identified during visits to settings. All early education providers receive support from a qualified teacher that is linked to their setting as well as support from other members of the team such as a Birth to Three Development Officer to advise on best practice for children aged 0-3 years.
- 3.4 Through their planning against the early years foundation stage all early education providers lay secure foundations from birth for future learning. Many children have the opportunity to visit the school they move into either through 1.1 visits or group visits from their early education provider and there are clear links between the foundation stage curriculum and the national curriculum that begins in year one.
- 3.5 Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process, providers must ensure that staff are observing children and responding appropriately to help them make progress from birth towards the early learning goals. Where practitioners require additional training in order to assess capably and objectively, this is provided by the Local Authority through an annual training programme.
- 3.6 At foundation stage level, assessments should be based on practitioners' observation of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities. As judgments are based on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts, it is expected that all adults who interact with the child should contribute to the process, and that account will be taken of information provided by parents. An essential feature of parental involvement is an ongoing dialogue, building on the partnership begun by any previous practitioner(s). Settings should report progress and achievements to parents throughout the foundation stage.

Comment [s]: Other headings may be appropriate. The report should outline the reasoning that leads to its recommendations and **must** include:

1. a brief summary of options considered;
2. consultation outcomes
3. a risk assessment.
4. Whether the responsible cabinet members have been consulted/contributed to the report (NB professional and political advice must be clearly distinguished)

- See para.5.5 of the report writing guidelines.

- 3.7 All Children’s Centres provide access to early education and childcare either by direct delivery, partnership with onsite childcare providers or links with neighbouring early education providers. Children’s Centres provide information, advice and guidance to parents across a range of issues including early education.
- 3.8 The Effective Provision of Preschool Education project, a national longitudinal research project published in 2004 showed that parental involvement in their child’s early learning at home has ongoing and significant positive benefits on attainment and social behaviour at ages 7, 10 and 11. Children’s Centres can help young children achieve their potential by supporting with attachment, helping to stimulate the home learning environment and supporting parents to access early education for their child.
- 3.9 Part of the support from the Local Authority is through the Early Years Consultant / teacher each of which is aligned to a Children’s Centre and supports the early education settings and schools in a geographical area. Thurrock has also established the Thurrock Training and Assessment Centre to enhance the skills of all practitioners in our settings and Children’s Centres. This has successfully enabled a significant proportion of staff working in early education and childcare settings to enhance their qualification levels and their ability to develop the learning of young children.

4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 4.1 This work supports the objectives of the Children and Young People’s plan, it has provided and will continue to provide links with the voluntary sector and local communities.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Yannick Stupples-Whyley**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652532**
ystupples-whyley@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no implications for the local authority on the delivery of this support as it is funded by external DCSF grants and parental fees.

5.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Colville**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652042**
kcolville@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comment [a]: Please refer to Section 5.7 of the Report Writing Guidelines

Comment [sj]: This section should always be completed – if they are dealt with fully in another part of the report, they also need a brief cross reference here. The names and job titles of the officers providing the implications should be provided in full – see Guideline 6.1 and please note Democratic Services Deadlines and ensure that officers providing implications are given 5 clear working days to work on the report. Authors can write implications but they must be signed off by the appropriate officers

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.2

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.3

5.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this update on Early Learning and the Role of Early Education Providers and Children's Centres as it is for information purposes only.

5.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

6. **CONCLUSION**

- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the framework for all early education providers to support early learning and to lay secure foundations for a child's future learning. All children, regardless of the type of setting they attend, work within the same curriculum.
- In some areas of the Borough children are unable to access their full entitlement to 12.5 hours per week of funded early education and steps are being taken to address this.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a requirement by law set out in the Childcare Act 2006.
- All providers regardless of type or size have to work within the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan to ensure that the individual needs of children in their care are met.
- Support is provided by the Local Authority team to provide information, support and training to all early education providers and this is based on an analysis of need.
- Children's Centres and early education providers work in partnership with parents to ensure that early learning in early education settings builds on the home learning environment and provides a secure foundation for future learning through the National Curriculum.

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.4

Comment [sj]: This should inform the recommendations in the report

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

None

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 8. If any Papers are to be placed in the Members room that relate to this report, you should also list them here

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

None

Comment [sj]: List the Appendices referred to in the Report

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Christine Tinkler / Sue Green

Telephone: 01375 652804

E-mail: ctinkler@thurrock.gov.uk sggreen@thurrock.gov.uk

Comment [sj]: Insert the full contact details of the author of the report