

Local Authority Early Years Team – function and impact

Report to the School Forum 1 October 2020

*'The quality of a child's early experience is vital for their future success. It is shaped by many interrelated factors, notably the effects of socio-economic status, **the impact of high-quality early education and care**, and the influence of 'good parenting'.*

'Are you ready? - Good practice in school readiness.' HMI report

In the Local Authority there are 201 Early Years and Childcare providers, which includes 61 PVI settings and 111 childminders and 2 Local Authority Nursery Schools and 27 school based nurseries. Settings cater for approximately 3,000 children from when they are babies until they enter school in Reception.

Quality of provision

The team offers individual support to providers in terms of compliance, quality of education, SEND support and safeguarding and a range of CPD courses.

At the current time 98.5% of Early Years providers are rated as good or better, and this is a direct impact of the team in ensuring good quality education for early years children is supporting the objective for as many pupils as possible to be 'school ready' by the time they enter Reception. Providers who are rated less than 'good' by OFSTED are given intensive support and guidance from the team to help them to improve their provision and ensure they are graded at least 'good' at their next OFSTED visit.

Local Early Years Hubs

*'We found various views on the definition of school readiness and whether the term refers to readiness to start school on entry to Year 1 or at the start of entry into Reception. **Where providers had developed close partnerships they were more likely to have developed a localised mutual understanding of what was expected in terms of children's readiness at the time of transfer.** Defining what school readiness means is an essential factor in ensuring that children can be well prepared for starting school.'*

'Are you ready? - Good practice in school readiness.' HMI report

The team has established, and now supports 8 local Early Years hubs across the borough. Hubs comprise both schools and Early Years providers whose aim is to work together to establish a shared understanding of what school readiness means to them, offer a blended child care offer to parents as appropriate, and to share and develop good practice together based on their local needs. Where these hubs are well established this has included sharing end of R data to establish both strengths and areas for development, develop consistent approaches to teaching and share relevant CPD and good practice.

National programmes and initiatives

The team manages and bids for national funding programmes for Early Years providers. The most recent one is the Early Years Professional Development Programme (EYPDP), designed to support pre-Reception Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) to improve their practice in working with very young children between the ages of 2 and 4, to improve outcomes in language, literacy and mathematics for the most disadvantaged children, with an emphasis on improving school readiness. The programme is based on practitioners supporting each other and is funded by the DFE.

Its aim is to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and close the 'word gap' in the early years between more affluent children and their less advantaged peers at age 5, and based on recent evidence which shows that investing in focussed professional development activity in the early years, to improve skills and practice in the existing workforce, can lead to rapid improvements in children's cognitive outcomes and socio-emotional development.

An overarching purpose of the programme is that a network of effective local partnerships is developed, bringing together practitioners from schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings to focus on improving children's outcomes in the locality. In Telford and Wrekin this programme will be cascaded through our local hubs enabling Early Years practitioners from both schools and setting to work together and benefit from the programme.

Sufficiency

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient Early Years and Childcare places for all disadvantaged two year olds across the borough and to provide the funded places for 3 and 4 year olds. This is reflected in an annual Child Care Sufficiency Assessment, which is completed in house by the EY team. The team monitors and offers support, advice and guidance to all early years and childcare settings including those planning on setting up a new provision or extending existing offers e.g. Out of School provision/Offering 2 year old provision thus ensuring the right provisions are available in the appropriate locations and that settings remain sustainable. The team also manages the portal for parents' registration, administration of the Early Years Pupil Premium and administration for the accurate payments to providers for this provision. The Team works proactively with a range of agencies from inside and outside of the local authority to promote the funded offers including the Strengthening Families teams, Children's Social Care, Health, Job Centre plus and most recently Home Start.

% of entitled 2 year olds benefitting from funded EY education

	2018	2019	2020
Telford and Wrekin	70	72	74
West Midlands	68	66	67
National	72	68	69

% of 3 & 4 year olds benefitting from some free EY education

	2018	2019	2020
Telford and Wrekin	97	96	95
West Midlands	96	95	94
National	94	94	93

Safeguarding

Children’s safety is the first priority for all, and is particularly important for these very young children who are less able to speak up for themselves. The Early Years team leads and manages on safeguarding for all our Early Years settings and requires an annual return of the Safeguarding audit tool for Early Years settings, supports with policy and compliance for providers and helps embed a culture of safeguarding for all staff and children.

Currently 98.5% of our Early Years and Childcare providers meet safeguarding requirements on inspection. The team works intensively with providers who do not meet safeguarding requirements on inspection to support them to address the issues raised swiftly.

Outcomes for children

Education providers in Telford and Wrekin share the same overall aim to promote learning, achievement and safety for all our children. End of Reception outcomes are steadily increasing, are above regional averages and closer to national than in 2015 and has surpassed the national average for FSM children.

% children achieving GLD by the end of R

	2017	2018	2019
Telford and Wrekin	69.7	70.9	71.3
West Midlands	68.6	69.8	70.1
National	70.7	71.5	71.8

% FSM children achieving GLD by the end of R

	2017	2018	2019
Telford and Wrekin	53	60	61
West Midlands	56	57	57
National	56	57	57

There is a raft of research and evidence to demonstrate that investment in education before the age of 5 will have had long-lasting and positive effects on children’s outcomes in both maths and reading at age 7; and even though these effects diminish in size they remain significant throughout the child’s school career up to age 16.

The 'Are you ready?' HMI report includes a quote from a primary school headteacher defining their school view of school readiness.

'By four we would expect children to be ready to be separated from their parent or carer, to be able to demonstrate listening skills in being able to show interest and pay attention to a subject or stimulus. To have enough language to be able to express themselves if they need something and be able to communicate something about what makes them who they are, such as name, age and something about family or relevant factors in their life. To be able to interact with an adult and/or a peer. For example, during play to be able to take turns and take some responsibility for their actions. We think that children should be able to focus on, and show interest in, their work and the world around them. To make observations, notice things and ask questions. To be able to hold a book, understand some aspects of narrative and respond to some boundary setting.'

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