



Early Years and Childcare Bulletin

November/December 2015
Issue 10

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Welcome

From Alex Gamby, Head of Early Years and Childcare

Ofsted Outcomes

We have been concerned recently that the percentage of Kent Early Years and Childcare providers being judged as Good or better in inspections has been declining slightly, from 91% earlier in the year to just over 88% currently.

An analysis of the most recent Early Years provider reports for providers not achieving or maintaining a Good or better judgement has identified the following issues:

- Self-evaluation and monitoring systems including identifying strengths and areas for development, such as the environment, need to be improved
- Observations, planning, assessment, tracking of children and cohort tracking to identify gaps are not robust
- There is a need to inform Ofsted of changes to manager and/or committee, including providing information on suitability

Additionally, for settings judged to be Requires Improvement or Inadequate we have also identified that on average:

- Only 2% were attending Briefing and Networking sessions
- Only 14% had accessed the Improvement Service to support their quality improvement agenda
- Only 50% had an Early Years graduate within the provision, therefore not taking advantage of bursary awards available to support graduate development
- Only 50% were in a collaboration

We would therefore strongly encourage all providers reduce the risk of Requires Improvement or Inadequate judgment by attending Briefing and Networking Sessions (please see page 12), accessing the Improvement Service and making sure you are taking advantage of bursary opportunities (page 2 and onwards) and joining a collaboration if you are not already in one (page 10).

Thank you

1 Safeguarding

For information on safeguarding issues including Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation please click on the latest [Safeguarding Newsletter](#)

Kent Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria

It is important that all staff understand the revised threshold criteria and levels and communicate these to partners as appropriate. This is the [key document](#) that informs decision making about levels of service and the application of thresholds across Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) and Specialist Children's Services (SCS). The levels haven't changed but the descriptors are clearer about the interface between SCS and EHPS.

E-Safety

The new EYFS framework identifies that it would be good practice for settings to be able to demonstrate how they inform parents about e-safety. You may find this [link](#) to a parents' magazine produced by Vodafone useful as it contains many articles about e-safety.

2 Early Years and Childcare Service Improvement and Standards Team

*******Limited Offer*******

****Don't miss out****

Strategic Support Visit offer

We can offer a 2 day strategic support package to individual Early Years settings at a cost of £300.00, which can be paid monthly via direct debit

A range of purchase options are available e.g.:

2 days (or 4 half days) Advisor visits or 3 half days with the additional half day consisting of a workshop/training based on a need identified at previous visits

Please note all days must be used by 31st July 2016 and you must purchase a Service Level Agreement to be eligible for this

Interest is very high for this offer. Please contact us soon to secure your chosen dates

Email EYCSImprovementServices@kent.gov.uk
or call 03000 410452 for further details



Ofsted Update

How is your Early Years provision meeting the key requirements of Self-Evaluation and Monitoring and the Observation, Planning, Assessment and Tracking of Children? The Improvement Service has a range of support packages that can assist you in addressing these, including:

- **Leadership and Management** – Supporting leaders and managers in their processes to develop rigorous monitoring, reviewing and evaluating systems that drive continuous improvement
- **Observation, Assessment and Planning** – Provides Early Years practitioners with the opportunity to explore the cycle of observation, assessment and planning, to ensure they fully understand how to make accurate and effective observations and assessment, to inform planning that meets the needs of individual children and addresses gaps in learning
- **Are you ready for your inspection?** – This course supports Early Years managers in understanding the current Ofsted inspection framework. Using the Ofsted documentation it explores the main elements of the inspection process and provides practitioners with the opportunity to reflect on their current practice and provision in preparation for inspection
- **Strategic Improvement visits** – Advisers will act as a critical friend through regular structured visits to support you in identifying key areas for improvement.

Please contact our team to discuss your training and support requirements:

EYCIImprovementServices@kent.gov.uk

Common Inspection Framework Briefings

During September we held six briefing sessions across the County which aimed to support providers to be able to identify and understand the implications of changes to the new framework to enable them to effectively prepare for inspection.

Attendance was good with over 230 people attending the sessions. Feedback following each briefing was very positive with a large number of people commenting on how informative the sessions were.

The briefings covered a range of key points from the new Framework and included some brief clarification on British Values.

Each delegate received a printed copy of the PowerPoint slides as hand-outs. All the documents referenced are available from either the Ofsted website or the KELS I website and we would encourage everyone to regularly access these sites for updates.



Evaluation scores following these two hour briefing sessions gave an average of 1.7 (1 being outstanding and 4 being inadequate). Therefore we will continue to use this format in order to communicate significant updates. In order to keep costs low at these events we will signpost and reference documents to relevant websites.

The documents shared can be accessed from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and [KELSI](https://www.kelsi.org.uk).

Common Inspection Framework – A manager’s perspective following inspection

Oxford Nursery School and Oasis After School Club has been one of the first Early Years provisions in Kent to be inspected under the new Common Inspection Framework. They have kindly agreed to share their experience.

The inspector initially sampled a number of pieces of documentation, as listed on page 10 of the Early Years Inspection Handbook, to ensure that all requirements were in place.

The new framework states that the inspector must track the experiences and development levels of a representative sample of children and this was indeed the case, including a child eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium. The impact of this funding was questioned and the setting manager explained how the funding had been used and the positive impact of this on the child’s progress.

The inspector invited the manager to complete a joint observation, which the manager accepted. This focused strongly on teaching and learning, leading to discussions on how well the teaching of children was demonstrated and how a particular activity was extended and differentiated to ensure it met the needs of all the children present.

Tracking of all children’s progress was analysed in depth, with the manager explaining what they had put in place to support children who were making slower progress. This was included in the setting’s report, which states: “The manager effectively monitors and tracks children’s progress. This helps her to identify if all children are making good progress and any areas where they are not developing as well”

The inspector’s discussions were not solely had with the manager. All staff felt that they were included in the inspection, with the inspector taking time to talk to staff about their key children’s learning and development.



The inspection also had a strong emphasis on the setting’s relationship with their parents, talking to parents to understand how welcome they feel in the setting and how the setting involves them in their children’s learning. This was identified as a particular strength for the setting, reporting that “Staff form good partnerships with parents and fully engage them in their children’s learning as they share information effectively with them”.

The manager and staff commented that the inspection process was a positive experience and that the inspector made them feel at ease.

Workforce Development

White Oak Pre-School successfully achieved the **Enhancing** level of the 'Threads of Success' Improvement and Achievement Award in July 2015. At the celebration event in September 2015 staff from the setting presented their action research project and shared their journey on the award.

Following the initial award training the manager led the team into the planning of an action research project and through discussion and support from their designated mentor decided to focus on creating an outdoor environment. The team wanted to ensure that the characteristics of effective learning are incorporated by aiming to create an outside area where children are motivated by their curiosity to problem solve, thus developing a wide range of skills in this enabling environment. Progress tracking data showed that maths was an area that was low across the setting which gave another element to consider when planning changes.



The staff team used observations of children's play to help them change and develop areas of the outdoors; this included the mud kitchen, moving areas and providing more resources in the outdoor area to support children in exploration, problem solving and developing new skills.

During the year of the award staff attended maths training accessed through the '**Threads of Success' Improvement Service** and implemented changes as a result. The impact of this was observed through leadership observations and children's development, the increased use of mathematical language by both staff and children was noted as having a particular impact.

In the evaluation of the project it was concluded that particularly when children are outdoors they are observed as being active learners, creating and thinking critically.

The staff have also changed their attitudes on maths and are creating far higher thinking levels by posing questions, such as "What do you think will happen if?" and "How will you do that?"

While the weather and other factors sometimes slowed down progress of the project, the staff team agrees that it has been a success with measurable progress for the children.

For more information on the 'Threads of Success' Improvement Service please visit [KELSI](#).



National Men in Early Years Conference 2016

A conference has been arranged at City College in Southampton on **Saturday 13th February 2016**.

This is the first national conference focusing on men in childcare and will be introducing a charter for Early Years settings that welcome male practitioners. Tickets cost **£25.00** and can be purchased through the link below. We encourage you to take the opportunity to be part of this ground breaking conference that hopes to be instrumental in moving towards more gender balance in the Early Years workforce.

Booking and conference details can be found [here](#).

To support the conference and raise the profile of men in Early Years, we are offering to fund a place for a male practitioner at the conference with a contribution to travel expenses included.

If you would be interested in this opportunity please submit an expression of interest to earlyyearsworkforce.ask@kent.gov.uk by Friday 18th December

Please include the following details:

- **Your name**
- **Setting details**
- **Role within your setting**
- **A short statement as to why attendance at the conference would be beneficial to you**



We will be asking for a brief evaluation of the conference and a short piece as to how you got into childcare for publication in the next bulletin.

3 Out of School

Four **Out of School Briefing and Networking sessions** took place in November. Settings attending heard key messages from Improvement and Standards, Equality and Inclusion, Sufficiency and Sustainability and Partnership and Integration. They also had the opportunity to shape future sessions as well as to discuss collaborations in the form of networking activities.

It is expected that some Out of School collaborations will begin in the New Year. If you are interested in learning more please email eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk.

Funding may be available in the form of KCC training or support through our Threads of Success offer to support stand-alone Out of School settings in driving improvement.

4 Early Years and Childcare Service Sufficiency and Sustainability Team

Free For 2 (FF2) Delivery

At the end of Term One, 4015 eligible two year olds had accessed a free place with a registered Free For 2 provider. This equates to a take-up rate of 64.5% across the County, which is good news but still well short of where we need to be.

At the beginning of October, the FF2 team had received claim forms and paid for 3393 eligible two year olds or 55% of all those identified as being potentially eligible on the August DWP list. In addition to this, eligibility had been confirmed on a further 1099 families. If all these families access their free place during the autumn term we would be looking at 72% take-up rate – so, *building on the good news of 64.5% take up, there is an ongoing challenge for us to encourage as many of these families as possible to place their children with a FF2 registered childcare provider.*

Finally, the FF2 team would like to remind you that an online application form is now available. We would encourage you to use this with parents rather than a paper copy. It is a quick and easy way to submit an application to the FF2 team which ensures that the details are clearly legible. This enables the team to process the application as quickly as possible. The form can be accessed by following this link: www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2.

Pre-school Committee News

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is setting out its plans for the annual return 2016 which all registered charities must complete. The information provided in the annual return is used by the commission in its regulatory work, and helps populate a charity's details on the online charity search – an important tool for accountability to the public. The content of the annual return for 2016 will remain broadly the same as the content of the annual return for 2015. The only changes will be to the financial information required of charities with an income of £500,000 and over, reflecting the changes needed as a result of the new Statements of Recommended Practice (SORP). Follow this [link](#) for more information.

You can find other information and guidance about the responsibilities of your charity [here](#).

Committee Support

If you would like committee support please contact your Childcare Sufficiency Officer or alternatively email your request to sufficiencyandsustainability@kent.gov.uk

A Message from the Childcare Sufficiency Officers

A big thank you to all providers for helping us complete our recent vacancy audits. Your responses to these questions help us get a clear picture across the county of areas where we have a shortage of places or anywhere we have a surplus. More importantly, by telling us about your vacancies we can ensure this information is passed to CFIS so they can help parents find suitable childcare for their children. Obviously the audit is just a snapshot in time so we would

urge you to keep your details up to date at all times via the CFIS portal. By doing so CFIS can market your business for free and help you fill your vacancies more quickly.

It appears that some settings may be unsure on using the new online system to update their details therefore CFIS have put together some useful information to help you. This information can be found on [KELSI](#).

5 Early Years and Childcare Service Equality and Inclusion Team

Best Practice Guidance

You can now purchase additional copies of Best Practice Guidance.

To do this you will need to contact **Treasure Chest on 01304 849043**.

You will be required to make the payment over the phone, so have your card details handy and let them know how many copies you require.

Copies are £10 each plus postage and packing at £1.50 (reduced postage and packing charges for multiple copies).

You will need to provide delivery information so please ensure you give the full address and postcode where you wish your copies to be sent.

They will then be mailed out to you.

It is as simple as that.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) has now been available for over six months and we have heard of some very innovative ideas of how the additional funding is being used. We are looking forward to seeing the impact of this in Ofsted reports, in the attainment data at the end of the EYFS and on visits to your settings.

NurseryWorld

An article in Nursery World (5th-18th October) was based on the information Kent settings shared at our original briefings, available on KELSI. We were contacted to provide further information about what settings are actually doing. It is so good to celebrate the strength of the Early Years sector in Kent.

We would like to put together further case studies of how the funding is being used so this can be shared across the county and beyond. Please remember that you are able to show progress for the EYPP cohort of children using the Kent Progress Tracker.

If you would like to share what you are doing or request the most up to date Kent Progress Tracker please use the Equality and Inclusion email EYinclusion@kent.gov.uk



Colleagues in the Specialist Teaching Language Service (STLS) have arranged **SCARF training** in each District across the County which will be jointly delivered by Specialist teachers, Equality and Inclusion advisers and SEN and R colleagues. The invitation will be sent directly to you and will be offered free of charge.

Gov.Uk

Inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will assess how effectively local areas are fulfilling their obligations towards children and young people with special educational needs, under new proposals announced on Monday 12 October. A new form of inspection will begin in May 2016. For the first time inspectors will evaluate how local authorities, nurseries, schools, further education establishments, and health services identify and support children and young people with special educational needs. They will also evaluate how well they provide services to meet these needs, both in nursery, school or further education college, and through specialist services, such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and mental health services.

[Press release: Views sought on inspecting special educational needs provision](#)

6 Early Years and Childcare Service Partnership and Integration Team

Collaborations

The start of a new collaboration in the Dover district takes the number across the County to 52, incorporating 409 settings.

Joining a collaboration can help you to share good practice with other settings, keep yourself up to date through the sharing of information and help to make purchasing training more cost effective.

Over the past six months, several Ofsted inspection reports have highlighted membership of a collaboration as an example of good practice. We would also like to draw your attention to point 36 in the new Early Years Inspection Handbook which explains the purpose of the inspection notification telephone call. The handbook states that during this call the inspector should “establish whether the setting is either providing support for other settings or receiving it. Inspectors should include this information, giving the names of the setting(s), in the ‘setting details’ section of the report. This should include any such activity over the previous 12 months. Where a setting has received support from the leader of another setting, it will be important to

establish the extent and the impact of this, to determine whether that leader should be nominated for recognition by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector as an exceptional leader.”

If you feel you may be interested in leading or joining a collaboration please contact us at eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk. Leading a collaboration does not have to be onerous and you could consider sharing the role with another setting leader or a strong deputy.

Funding may be available in the form of KCC training or support through our Threads of Success offer to support those collaborations who did not access collaboration funding previously and who can demonstrate a plan as to how they intend to further drive improvement and narrow achievement gaps.

EFICL Pathways (Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning)

The launch of EFICL (Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning) – Pathways to Excellence took place over the past few weeks. The launch sessions were exceptionally well received by those attending.

Delegates received a free resource pack (EFICL Toolkit) containing a range of resources to help evaluate their practice and put in place helpful strategies to increase and enhance involvement of families in their children's learning.

The EFICL toolkit comprises:

- EFICL audit and reflection tools (for Early Years settings as well as a separate tool for Children's Centres)
- An A1 EFICL wall planner for settings, A3 EFICL wall planner for childminders - sharing 14 strategies to engage families together with an accompanying booklet
- An eight minute DVD introducing The Power of Schemas DVD, which can be shared with staff and parents to support their understanding of how children learn
- The Power of Schemas booklet aimed at families – exploring the most frequently observed schemas and offering ideas to carry out at home
- Details of KCC's SmarterPlay app – a new innovative way for parents to receive regular pop-ups every week sharing ideas on how they can be more involved with their children's learning at home, useful geolocation features such as local settings, schools, parks, zoos, Children's Centres, a 'special moments' section allowing parents to record key learning and special times with their child using text, video and photos, in depth information and useful links on key issues around child development to include areas such as the importance of attachment, physical play, sensory play for example, and an interactive quiz
- An EFICL guide to support practitioner visits to family homes
- Details of a 10 week EFICL programme for parents and carers called Learning Links, which supports families in the understanding of their child's development through schemas, wellbeing and involvement and language acquisition for example

Further events are planned for next term and will be available for booking through CPD Online. Further copies of the toolkit and the DVD with Schema Booklet can also be purchased and expressions of interest in purchasing can be made by emailing

EYImprovementservices@kent.gov.uk

Treasure Chest

Treasure Chest is an educational resources loan service that provides quality play and learning resources to support high quality, stimulating learning environments in Early Years and Out of School provision. We deliver and collect in Kent at no additional cost. Find out more about [Treasure Chest](#).

7 Kent Children and Families Information Service

We are here to help

Our Facebook page has changed

Please be aware that our Facebook page address has changed www.facebook.com/kcccfis. Please take a look and if you wish to advertise any of your events please do not hesitate to contact us.

Free Advertising

We are aware that the guidance currently on the system does not apply to childcare providers and have put together guidance that is suitable. A copy of the guidance can be found on [KELSI](#). Please email kentcfis@kent.gov.uk if you have any queries about registering and updating your information.

Have you updated your information but still cannot find your details on the website? Have you amended your permissions?

Your permission settings

The information you give us will be made available, with your consent, over the telephone, in writing and via the internet. You have the option to restrict the ways in which your information is published. It is important that you complete the permissions form correctly using the following link [our permissions form](#).



If you cease to provide childcare services, please ensure you inform Ofsted as soon as possible. We may retain your information for a period of time, for statistical purposes.

Please remember if you are looking for information about headcount week, estimates, PVI calendar or EYPP, this information and more can be found on the KELSI website.

If you are unsure on how to complete an application form for the Free for Two funding please contact the Free for Two Team directly eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk or call them on 03000 413 700.

Please remember we can also help you with:

- advertising any childcare job vacancies that you may have through the Kent County Council website
- supporting all childcare providers no matter what the enquiry and we are happy to offer advice, information and assistance whenever needed kentcfis@kent.gov.uk

8 Briefing and Networking Sessions

February Briefing and Networking Sessions are currently available for booking via CPD Online. It is expected that the agenda will include a surgery session between 3.30 and 4 p.m., pop-up updates from each of the Early Years and Childcare Teams, an information share from the Children's Centre Free for Two Champions and a networking activity around Vulnerable Learners.

Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Ashford, Shepway)	EYC 16/001	01/02/2016	Mercure - Hythe Imperial Hotel & Spa	Shepway
Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Maidstone/Tonbridge & Malling)	EYC 16/002	03/02/2016	The Orchards East Malling Events Venue	Tonbridge & Malling
Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Dartford/Gravesham)	EYC 16/003	09/02/2016	Inn on the Lake	Gravesham
Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Tunbridge Wells/Sevenoaks)	EYC 16/004	11/02/2016	Swanley Banqueting - Alexandra Suite (Head Office)	Sevenoaks/Tunbridge Wells
Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Dover/Thanet)	EYC 16/005	22/02/2016	The Ark Christian Centre	Dover
Early Years Briefing and Networking Session (Canterbury/Swale)	EYC 16/006	24/02/2016	Best Western Plus - The Coniston Hotel & Restaurant	Canterbury

9 Newsflash

Local Children's Partnerships

New Local Children's Partnership Groups are being established in each of the 12 Districts. Their purpose is to drive improvement in specific outcomes for local children and young people. The activity of the group will include the sharing of information to provide understanding of local services. It will also provide a vehicle for identifying and addressing local needs and gaps in provision and facilitating and pooling resources to meet the needs of local children and families. More information is available on [KELSI](#).

If you are interested in representing the Early Years as a setting manager please contact eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk.

Early Years Census and Provider Survey 2016

Please be aware that the statutory annual data collection will need to be completed in January 2016. Further information will be sent to all providers of Free Early Education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds at the beginning of January 2016.

Health Visiting and School Public Health Service Consultation

KCC is seeking views on the delivery of Health Visiting and the School Public Health Service to improve services and ensure that they are designed around the needs of Kent residents. As well as responding yourselves you may wish to highlight this consultation to your parents. Visit [KCC's website](#) to read the consultation document and complete the online questionnaire.

Government Consultation on Paediatric First Aid – EYFS Statutory Framework Amendments

The government is consulting on proposed amendments to the paediatric first aid requirements in the EYFS framework. Visit the [GOV.UK](#) website to find the proposed amendments and to respond online.

10 A Note from the Editor

Following a query from a provider about music licences, you are advised to click on the following links for current information regarding requirements to hold a licence for the use of music, tariffs and possible exclusions:

<http://www.ppluk.com/I-Play-Music/PRS-for-Music-and-PPL>

<http://www.prsformusic.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PPS%20Tariffs/n-tariff.pdf>

11 Provider 'Good News'

Dear Ms Gamby

I feel I must write and praise Briary Pre-School and all the staff that work there regarding the attendance of my two grandsons, Hayden Sperring age 5 and Joseph Sperring age 4.

They attended this setting from the ages of 3 and 2 respectively. The Manager, Lorraine Barker, showed me around and as soon as I stepped into the school, I knew it was the right one for them and us. I was made to feel very welcome from the start.

They started in March/April 2013, settled almost immediately and in those two years have never had a tear or a tantrum from either of them. In fact it has been hard to get them to leave the school at the end of the day!!!

Both the boys were in separate key groups which gave them the chance to form other friendships yet still mingle with each other during time when they were in the garden. The staff helped to encourage Hayden to read which is something he is excelling at, at his infant school. Joe has

become very confident while thinking through certain tasks given to him and I don't think they would have enjoyed their new schools so much had it not been through the time, patience, dedication and love for the children that the staff show.

The staff are fantastic from the Manager to the lunch time helpers. They make you feel you want to get involved in helping out, and regularly we saved all out clear plastic bottles and egg boxes to be used in play and shredded paper taken in for the rabbits etc. They put so much effort into arranging day trips out in the summer, the school discos and of course the Christmas school play and pantomime, this which takes some time to get organised on top of their other duties.

I cannot praise them all enough and was so pleased the boys had this opportunity to attend so that as they get older they can look back through the photos and discs of their time at Briary Pre-school with such fond memories.

I would appreciate if you could give the staff some praise for all their hard work, as all too often we find fault with what staff fail to do, yet when the majority of the time they do not get the praise they so rightly deserve for what they do, so hopefully Ofsted will take this into account when they next pay a visit.

So, we would all like to thank:

Lorraine Barker, Carol, Nicola, Karen, Maria, Mel, Diane, Sharon, Hannah and Amanda

Without the above mentioned I don't think the two boys would be going onto their new schools with such confidence and looking forward to the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Sperring

12 Contact Us

Sufficiency and Sustainability

Free For 2 (FF2) Team

Improvement and Standards

Equality and Inclusion

Collaborations

Treasure Chest

Workforce Development

Kent Children and Families Information Service

KELSI:

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/curriculum_and_pupil_learning/early_years_and_childcare/including_all_children.aspx

Schools e-bulletin

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/working_in_education/news.aspx

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