

## Implementing the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice

## Information for Governors



Early years governors will no doubt be aware of the introduction of the revised EYFS framework, which is statutory from September 2021 (DfE, 2020b). There are also two non-statutory documents, the updated Development Matters guidance (DfE, 2020a) or the Birth to Five guidance, which can be used alongside the revised EYFS framework.

Below are points to consider as a governor in school linked to these changes.

### 1: Communication and understanding

Are all members of the school team fully aware of the changes in the revised framework, the new Development Matters and the Birth to Five guidance? Do the staff including the head, know what this means for day to day practice?

As a governor, it is important to ensure all staff involved in early years have clarity on what has changed and discuss with staff what this means for practice. Ensure this does not lead to increased burdens on the team linked to workload. The revised framework focuses on a workload reduction.

### 2: Deeper understanding of child development

A child-centred, play-based approach should still be at the heart of the early years provision in school. There is more flexibility with assessment procedures. There is a shift in emphasis which places greater trust in the professional judgement of staff. This should save time and reduce paperwork.

Questions governors might want to ask:

- How secure and confident are the staff in their knowledge of child development?
- How might these changes affect how the staff collate evidence of learning?
- How will we ensure parental communication and engagement remain a high priority?

### 3: New assessment systems

There is a clear shift away from tracking in the revised EYFS and a greater reliance of professional judgement. As a school you will need to create a system that is suitable for your children. You need to consider and agree terminology for progress of children – many of the early adopter schools are using ‘on track, not on track’ as they monitor progress. If everyone in school agrees and understands the terminology it will help you as governors to monitor progress from starting points and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision.

Each child’s development is understood well by at least one person in the team. Without progress data, they need to be able to describe the progress that a child has made in their different areas of learning. As governors you need to ensure that the head and the rest of the team all understand who they need to speak to about each child.

Governors should be aware of how children with SEND or children who have additional needs are supported in school. These children should be taught within their class and changes made to the curriculum or the environment to allow them to access all the areas of learning. Interventions should be considered within the early years provision. Additional assessment tools made be used for these early years' children e.g. Communication tools or the Early Years Developmental Journal.

The Reception Baseline assessment (RBA) will be statutory in September 2021.

The early years profile will continue, and schools will be expected to submit data to the DfE using terminology 'emerging and expected'.

#### 4: Curriculum and pedagogy

The new guidance does not mean you should be moving away from a play-based approach to the curriculum. It does not mean large curriculum documents.

The curriculum should be planned **to develop children's knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence**. It is really important that the curriculum is not narrowed and it is accessible to all children.

Children need to be taught by adults and guided by adults to help them build the knowledge and skills they need to learn and for life – this is through child led, adult led and direct and guided teaching opportunities. Ofsted are interested in *'to what extent there is a rich, broad curriculum which is helping them to learn all the stuff they need to learn, not only to do well in reception but also as they learn and grow over time'*. Phil Minns HMI and Wendy Ratcliffe HMI

As a governor it is important to check that subject leaders in school are familiar with teaching and learning in the early years and how this is built upon into key stage 1. This can be reflected in curriculum progression maps for different subject areas.

Consider how the environment enables high-quality play. Are there other approaches, beyond play-based learning, that might be important for children's development?

Staff need to feel confident that they understand how a child would typically progress to achieve a particular skill.

Any monitoring or evaluation of provision should be based around the effectiveness of the provision including the environment, quality first teaching, parental engagement, and the use of adults.

During monitoring governors may consider:

- Exploring the way children learn in the early years and seeing this in action in the provision – for example can you see how children learn through their self-chosen play, careful structuring of the environment, quality adult interactions, playful guided learning or direct teaching?
- How does the school curriculum build on strengths of children and families in the local community? How do we work with families to strengthen this and find out more information?

#### 5: CPD

There is a need to ensure everyone in the early years team has a good understanding of typical development in young children. The flexibility around assessment means that this is even more important.

Governor may consider how they will support the offer of professional development and ongoing support for your EYFS lead and team.

#### 6: Implementation

How do the governor's plan to support the head and staff during the autumn term as the systems are implemented? Allowing for regular feedback through staff meetings/SLT is important and that information is shared during governor meetings.

**The Early Years Team have developed a suite of webinars and briefing papers to help support the implementation of the revised EYFS. Please use the link below. The password is available from your school.**

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/earlyyearsfoundationstage.asp>