

How good is our early learning and childcare?

February 2016

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Please note that the following terminology is used throughout this framework:

- **Setting** - is a single term which encompasses all establishments, including a childminding service which delivers early learning and childcare for children aged 0 - until they start primary school.
- **Parents and carers** - includes all adult individuals who have a legal responsibility for a child aged 0-5 years.
- **Practitioners** - is a single term which includes all staff and adults who work with children under 5 years old until they start school and includes childminders, teachers, managers, supervisors, support and out of school care workers.

How good is our early learning and childcare?

Context

Self-evaluation for self-improvement has been a feature of improving the early years sector of Scottish education for our youngest children in Scotland for many years. As members of the early learning and childcare sector, we have used our previous self-evaluation frameworks as a tool to help in the process of self-evaluation for settings to improve their quality and aim for excellence. We have become very familiar with the use of quality indicators, which has been a key feature to influence our practice for the benefit of children's outcomes.

This new framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare' (HGIOELC), seeks to build on this positive response but at the same time take a fresh look at the developing needs and reflect the changes and increased provision of the ELC sector today. For the first time, this framework will only be published as a digital resource on the new National Improvement Hub. This gives Education Scotland the opportunity to offer truly interactive digital resources for our future improvement frameworks and tools that can be developed and updated flexibly.

In April 2014, *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act* was introduced with a renewed focus on children from birth to starting school. This focus highlighted the importance of ELC for the future of individual children, their families and practitioners in the varying types of settings throughout Scotland. Recent changes in approach and policy direction have been the conduit for change to our existing self-evaluation materials. HGIOELC takes account of the continuous aspiration to make Scotland the best place to grow up, and embraces the diversity and type of provision across the country.

HGIOELC takes account of childminders, all private, voluntary and local authority settings. It is therefore for all practitioners working with children from birth to starting school. It complements the newly published *How good is our school? (4th edition)*, for primary and secondary schools, and underpins the approach to self-evaluation to drive forward improvement work across Scotland. It takes full account of recent policy initiatives such as, *National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare: Building the Ambition, Pre-birth to Three, Getting it right for every child* and *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Why we need a new framework

'Evidence on the current performance of Scotland's education system suggests that we have a good education system, which is performing strongly in a number of respects. However, we are not yet at the level of achieving consistently excellent levels of performance which would match the world-leading ambition of our vision' Education Scotland Corporate Plan 2013-2016

Partnership working between key organisations supporting early learning and childcare (ELC) in Scotland is a clear and defining strength and we are in a unique time where the emphasis on working with our youngest children has never been given such prominence. The *Programme for Scottish Government* has identified some significant priorities for the next stage of our improvement journey, including increasing the provision of early learning and childcare to improve outcomes for children, developing the ELC workforce, *Developing Scotland's Young Workforce* and the *Scottish Attainment Challenge*. Closing the gap in children's attainment, achievement and wellbeing between children living in our most and least deprived areas is a key challenge for the wider Scottish agenda. We know that physical, social, emotional and economic wellbeing have a significant impact on our youngest children's successes and achievements throughout their life. This new framework *How good is our early learning and childcare?* provides an important contribution to support those working in the ELC sector and system-wide improvement alongside this significant and exciting agenda.

Partnership, collaboration and self-improvement

Meeting the wide-ranging needs of all children and their families is the heart of what makes excellent provision. Settings cannot achieve this by themselves. *How good is our early learning and childcare?* highlights the importance of partnership and collaboration as significant features of a highly effective setting. For example, parents and carers have unique experience of their children and have important knowledge of their progress as learners over time within the ELC setting, at home and in other aspects of a child's life. It is important that their views on the setting are taken into account, from what they see on an informal daily basis, what help and support and response they may receive at times of difficulty or concern, and by generally gathering their views on the impact of improvement.

A note about the term self-evaluation

The term 'self-evaluation' is used to cover the way in which individuals and settings explore their progress, development and practice to identify what has improved and what still needs to improve. It is a way of using evidence to assess achievements and success and areas that still need action. The significant relationship between effective self-evaluation and improvement might also be understood to help settings answer the familiar three questions, which remain at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

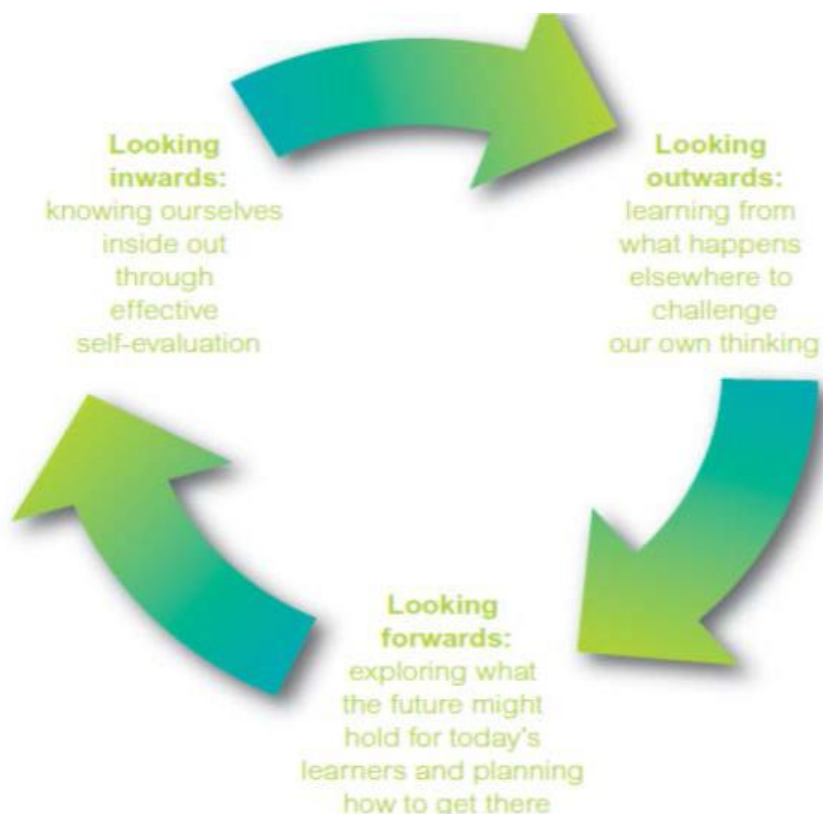
Settings well on their way to excellence focus these questions on the core business of the setting to promote learning and development for children.

It is important to have reasons for evaluating the areas you have chosen and the evidence on which you base your evaluations kept manageable. Key sources of evidence will come from, for example, what you actually observe, from data of various kinds and collating the views of people who actually are involved with the setting, such, parents and carers, partner agencies, practitioners and the children themselves. It is important not to underestimate the contribution of children, as they provide a thoughtful and valuable perspective of their experiences. You may want to gather their views by talking individually or in a small group, watching and listening to how they play, making observations of their progress and seeing how they respond to adult interaction. Through this approach, settings look inwards to analyse their own work, reflect on what they are actually providing, then make adjustments to make the provision better for children's learning. At the same time, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others locally and nationally, and look forwards to gauge what continuous improvement might look like.

How to use the framework

As you look through the framework, you will see a number of quality indicators which focus on specific areas for improvement. They will help you identify strengths in the ways you are currently working in your own situation and also areas where you could do more to improve outcomes for children and their families. They are designed to help you understand the difference you are making and what you need to do next, and help you plan to make positive changes.

The quality indicator framework in *How good is our early learning and childcare?* supports settings and their partners in **looking inwards**: to evaluate performance at every level and use the information gathered to decide on what needs to be done to improve. It is never an end in itself, but a means to inform action, which will lead to increasingly positive impact on the service you provide.



How good is our early learning and childcare? provides national guidance against which practitioners and others can work together to reflect and evaluate their collective impact on improving outcomes for children in their local community. When this inward-looking process begins in the setting and then moves outwards, it can provide a unique and valuable picture of what is having most and least impact at individual, local - with other settings in the community - or local authority level. Once the levels of impact are identified, then plans for improvement can be drawn up and looking outwards and forwards can support these.

The Quality Indicators

The quality indicator framework consists of a set of fifteen quality indicators designed to help settings answer three key questions linked to three important aspects of their work. They are therefore divided into three categories.

- **Leadership and Management:** *How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?*
- **Learning Provision:** *How good is the quality of care and learning we offer?*
- **Successes and Achievements:** *How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?*

When the evidence from quality indicators related to each of these questions is combined, it can create a unique and powerful story to answer the central key question: *What is our capacity for continuous improvement?* Or, in other words, *how good can we be?*



This diagram illustrates the strong relationship between each of the categories and the central question about the setting's capacity for improvement. A range of appropriate evidence from all three categories is required to evaluate the overall capacity for improvement. There is no hierarchy. Each of the three categories is equally important.

Practitioners and school leaders are invited to use the quality indicators with partners to look inwards and evaluate their work against a national benchmark of **very good** practice. (See Appendix 1.)

The quality indicators contained within *How good is our early learning and childcare* follow a similar pattern and fully complement those written in *How good is our school?* Having two frameworks, very similar but with important contextual differences, will help continuous improvement as young children start their learning journey. The structure has been simplified to make the framework more accessible to practitioners, school leaders and partners who will collaborate with each other to support effective self-evaluation.

As you look through the framework you will see a number of quality indicators which focus on specific areas for improvement. They will help you identify strengths in the work of your setting and areas where you need to improve. They will help you understand the difference you are making and what you need to do next.

Overview of the quality indicators

What is our capacity for improvement?		
Leadership and management	Learning provision	Successes and achievements
How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	How good is the quality of the care and learning we offer?	How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children?
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement 1.2 Leadership of learning 1.3 Leadership of change 1.4 Leadership and management of practitioners 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity	2.1 Safeguarding and child protection 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 2.4 Personalised support 2.5 Family learning 2.6 Transitions 2.7 Partnerships	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion 3.2 Securing children's progress 3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

Each quality indicator:

- Belongs to one of the three categories Leadership and Management, Learning Provision or Successes and Achievements.
- Has a general descriptor and themes to tell you what it covers.
- Has illustrations of what a “very good” level could look like. These are intended to provide examples of evidence and practice, not to be fully comprehensive, nor used as a checklist. They are intended to support professional dialogue and reflection and can be applied in any setting.
- Describes features of highly effective practice. These are to help you identify the kind of evidence which helps support self-evaluation. Amongst the examples you will find some which relate more to a particular setting rather than your own context. You should aim to gather positive examples from your own setting to show the strengths of your work.
- Sets out challenge questions to reflect and discuss and support professional dialogue or support a shared understanding of your setting's strengths and next steps.

Quality indicators and themes

Leadership and Management	
How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	
Quality Indicator	Theme
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation • Evidence- based improvement • Ensuring impact of success for children and families
1.2 Leadership of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional engagement and collegiate working • Impact of career-long professional learning • Children leading learning
1.3 Leadership of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the ELC setting and its community • Strategic planning for continuous improvement • Implementing improvement and change
1.4 Leadership of management and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance framework • Building and sustaining a professional team • Practitioner wellbeing and pastoral support
1.5 Management of resources to promote equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of finance for learning • Management of resources and environment for learning

Learning provision	
How good is the quality of care and learning we offer?	
Quality Indicators	Themes
2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for safeguarding , including child protection • Arrangements to ensure wellbeing • National guidance and legislation
2.2 Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale and design • Learning and developmental pathways • Pedagogy and play • Skills for life and learning
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and engagement • Quality of interactions • Effective use of assessment • Planning, tracking and monitoring
2.4 Personalised support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal support • Role of practitioners and leaders • Identification of learning needs and targeted support. • Removal of barriers to learning
2.5 Family learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging families in learning • Early intervention and prevention • Quality of family learning programmes
2.6 Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of support for children and their families • Collaborative planning and delivery • Continuity and progression in learning
2.7 Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting • The promotion of partnerships • Impact on children and families

Successes and Achievements

How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children?

Quality Indicator	Themes
3.1 Ensuring well-being, equality and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellbeing• Fulfillment of statutory duties• Inclusion and equality
3.2 Securing children's progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, health and wellbeing• Children's progress over time• Overall quality of children's achievement• Ensuring equity for all children
3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing creativity• Developing skills for life and learning• Developing digital skills

Getting started

You can start with any quality indicator and look at them in any order. You do not need to use every quality indicator, but they do relate to each other so looking at more than one or two will give a broader understanding of the impact of your setting's work. For example, you may be wanting to know how well children are progressing in their learning. You may find it helpful to start with 'Securing children's progress' (QI 3.2) but you equally may want to know so what is the impact of the curriculum we offer and look at 'Curriculum' (QI 2.2) and working with both quality indicators, reflecting on the good practice statements and discussing the challenge questions will help you decide on what you need to do to further improve.

Leadership and Management

How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?

- 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
- 1.2 Leadership of learning
- 1.3 Leadership of change
- 1.4 Leadership of management and practitioners
- 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity

QI 1.1: Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Themes

Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
Evidence-based improvement
Ensuring impact of success for children and families

Descriptor

This indicator underlines that rigorous self-evaluation is the responsibility of all practitioners and stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and a shared understanding of strengths and areas for development. A key factor is how to demonstrate the impact of self-evaluation and how evidence is used to improve outcomes for children.

Level 5 illustration:

Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation

- All practitioners understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous improvement. Our team reflect well together and use these reflections to bring about positive change for our children and families. We work very well with our stakeholders and partners over a sustained period of time. We have an agreed rationale outlining the purpose and focus of our relationship with partners, and continually review this to ensure that there are positive outcomes for our children and families. We actively seek to develop and extend our range of partners to further enhance our provision for children and families. We consistently use a wide range of approaches to engage with and listen to the views of children, stakeholders and partners to build a shared understanding of our strengths and areas for development. We can show how their views inform change and improvement. This has led to the identification of agreed steps to secure improvement.

Evidence-based improvement

- Our self-evaluation focuses on improving outcomes for children. Our identified priorities reflect this focus. To help us improve, we take account of relevant local, national and international advice and research. This enables us to make thoughtful changes and innovations. We follow a clear process when putting new initiatives into practice, which includes regular opportunities for reflection and evaluation of progress. We make very good use of evidence to draw conclusions about the quality of our provision and identify effective approaches to improvement. We involve all practitioners in gathering a wide range of information and evidence to document, assess and record children's progress which is manageable and appropriate. This includes focused observations of what children can do and relevant examples of children's work. We involve children and their families in regularly reviewing learning and progress. We use all of this evidence to make sound judgements about the quality of children's learning.

Within our setting and learning community, we engage regularly in effective quality assurance and moderation activities and have agreed standards and expectations. We share good practice within and beyond the setting and can confidently show the improvement this has made to the setting and outcomes for children.

Ensuring impact of success for children and families

- Continuous improvement, successes and achievements for children and families are vital to our setting's strategic direction. We ensure that high-quality learning through play is the central focus of our improvement planning. All of our plans and actions are directed at improving experiences and outcomes for children. We can evidence clearly the link between self-evaluation and improved approaches to how young children learn within our setting. As a result, children are making very good progress with their development and learning. We share these successes with stakeholders and partners and use them as a starting point for future improvements.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation is at the heart of everything that we do in our setting. • All of our practitioners are actively engaged in continuously evaluating and improving our setting. • The views of children, parents/carers and families are effectively used to improve the life and work of the setting. • Everyone involved with the setting's community has a shared understanding of its strengths and improvement needs. • Parents/carers have regular opportunities to support improvement by participating in a range of formal and informal activities. • All practitioners have a clear focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of children's learning and on tracking their progress and achievements. They work effectively as a team. • There is a strong ethos of improvement through sharing practice, and through peer support and challenge. • Professional learning activities for all practitioners are clearly linked to the results of self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement. • Our practitioners are inward, outward and forward looking in their evaluation and improvement activities. • We make very effective use of information from our learning community, up-to-date research from Scotland and beyond to inform our learning and developments. • Our practitioners have high aspirations and expectations for all children and families. We use a well-informed range of approaches to assess children's progress across their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do all practitioners understand their responsibility in improvement through self-evaluation? • How has using <i>Building the Ambition</i> to support reflection, led to improvements in children's experiences? • What do we know about the community in which children live and learn; and, in what ways are we using this knowledge to improve outcomes for children? • How effectively do we identify our strengths as professionals and as a setting, to improve children's experiences and progress? • What progress are we making in addressing our identified areas for improvement? • To what extent are all stakeholders (children, practitioners, parents/ carers and partners) involved in self-evaluation and planning for improvement? • What approaches do we use to support our children to reflect on and evaluate our practice and provision? • How do we demonstrate that all practitioners are involved in and lead aspects of improvement in our setting? • In what ways are our practitioners encouraged to reflect on and share their own practice in taking forward agreed areas for improvement? • To what extent do we look inward, outward and forward in our evaluation and improvement activities? • What evidence do we have that changes we have made are as a result of our self-evaluation and have improved outcomes for children?

QI 1.2: Leadership of learning

Themes

Professional engagement and collegiate working
Impact of career-long professional learning (CLPL)
Children leading learning

Descriptor

This indicator relates to leadership of improvements in learning and teaching. It highlights the importance of professional commitment to improving pedagogy through a range of approaches to professional learning including collegiate working. It focuses on leadership which improves outcomes for children and families. It highlights improving outcomes for children through enabling them to lead their own learning.

Level 5 illustration:

Professional engagement and collegiate working

- Across our setting, an ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working is prominent. This commitment is leading to our practice being continuously refreshed and improved for the benefit of our children and families. There is evidence of strong leadership of learning in a range of contexts. We prioritise the building and maintaining of effective relationships, within our setting and beyond. All practitioners in our setting undertake lead roles to motivate, support and inspire others. There is a strong collegiate learning culture in our setting demonstrated through for example peer learning, constructive feedback and high-quality professional dialogue. We work collaboratively with colleagues, children, parents/carers and partners to improve our setting and secure improved outcomes for our children and families.

Impact of career-long professional learning

- All practitioners take responsibility for their own CLPL and routinely engage in a broad range of professional learning activities to build on and sustain our practice. As individuals and as a team we reflect critically on our work. We are proactive in extending and deepening our knowledge and understanding of early learning pedagogy through research, current literature and policy sources to exemplify this very effectively in our practice. We are improving our approaches to digital and our own professional learning. We maintain effective records of the impact of professional learning and development and create a clear professional learning action plan. Our professional learning complements and enhances our setting's improvement priorities. It is having a positive impact on high quality experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in our setting.

Children leading learning

- We make very good use of children's ideas and interests to help shape the learning environment and experiences. Practitioners are highly skilled at encouraging children's curiosity and in using higher-order questions and making comments to extend children's thinking and understanding. Children are consistently encouraged to choose and lead interactions in their own learning in play and in real-life contexts. They are becoming increasingly confident in interacting with others, discussing possibilities and reasoning out answers to a self-satisfying conclusion within an exciting range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences. Taking very good account of children's age and stage of development, practitioners are flexible and responsive in their approach as they encourage children to discuss and plan their learning, enjoy their successes and share their achievements.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders empower practitioners and actively develop leadership at all levels to improve the overall capacity of the setting. • All practitioners participate in high quality individual and collective professional learning which improves outcomes for children and families. For example, shared understanding of early years pedagogy and assessment. • Careful planning ensures that practitioners have regular opportunities to learn with and from each other, both in and beyond the setting. • Professional learning opportunities are well planned and matched to identified needs and draw on local, national and international evidence and research. Practitioners are confident in discussing how they have improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. • There is clear evidence of a wide range of strategies in use to support children to take responsibility for their own learning and progress. • Planning strongly reflects children's ideas and interests and shows how practitioners very effectively respond to and promote their creativity, inquiry and curiosity. • Practitioners have a clear understanding of how children learn. Their actions encourage high quality adult/child interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do we have that our professional learning is increasing our knowledge and understanding and as a result improving outcomes for children and families? • How well do senior managers enable practitioners to learn with and from each other and, where appropriate, learning with colleagues across sectors and with partner agencies? • To what extent does our own professional learning reflect the needs of individuals and the improvement priorities of our setting? How confident are we at building on individual skills and interests which lead to improvements for children? • How well do practitioners support children to take responsibility for their own learning and progress? How do we know? • How well do practitioners recognise and support children who are less confident in expressing their views' and preferences? How effectively do they support children in making choices about their own learning?

QI 1.3: Leadership of change

Themes

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the ELC setting and its community
Strategic planning for continuous improvement
Implementing improvement and change

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

Level 5 illustration:

Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the ELC setting and its community

- We are committed to an agreed shared vision for our setting and community that reflects the aspirations of children, parents/carers, practitioners and partners. Senior leaders demonstrate that they are highly committed to providing strong leadership to develop and sustain our vision and values. Current thinking and research about quality in early learning and childcare underpins continuous improvements in our setting. Through effective leadership at all levels we consistently achieve high standards in our work and strive to be sector leading. All practitioners show a strong personal and collective commitment to our vision and to their professional values as outlined in professional codes of conduct and standards for registration. By working closely with parents/carers and partners we ensure the highest possible standards for all of our children.

Strategic planning for continuous improvement

- Leaders at all levels in our setting promote and support innovation, creativity and practitioner enquiry. Practitioners continually reflect on and develop their practice as part of the setting's commitment to improvement. Leaders at all levels are highly visible and effective as lead practitioners. They motivate and inspire others to achieve a shared vision. Senior leaders guide and manage the direction and pace of change very effectively. We know what is important for our setting, its community and our children and therefore, our innovations are very well judged and meet the needs of children and families. Our setting continually explores ways to build our capacity for improvement through developing the talents and skills of its practitioners and through working in collaboration with children, families, partners and each other. We develop leadership at all levels. Opportunities for practitioners to take forward improvements, and nurture and develop their own expertise, are provided. Creativity is valued and encouraged in our setting and our work. We welcome the opportunity to adopt different approaches to the delivery of early learning and childcare. Regular opportunities for professional dialogue, independent and collegiate learning have high levels of participation by all practitioners. This shared learning leads to well informed improvements.

Implementing improvement and change

- Continuous improvement, success and achievement for all children are central to our planned implementation of strategies for improvement. Senior leaders create conditions where all practitioners feel confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process of change. We effectively communicate a clear view of our setting's vision and aims so that the wider practitioner team, children and families are included in achieving them. When events or change challenge us, we respond positively and manage demanding targets effectively. We ensure any proposed changes are understood by all.

Leaders support and enable our team to make confident, well-timed changes for continuous improvement. We guide and manage the process of self-evaluation for improvement ensuring we have specific, clear, measurable targets and an appropriate pace of change in order to make a difference for children and families. Highly effective strategies are used to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for children and families and shape our future actions.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, families, practitioners and partners are all involved in the creation and regular review of the vision, aims and values of the setting. These are revisited and updated in line with setting improvements. • The vision of the setting is ambitious and focuses on improvements in outcomes for all. It is shaped by the needs of our community and is informed by current thinking in early learning pedagogy. • Leaders are effective role models as they carefully guide the strategic direction and pace of change to ensure sustainable positive outcomes for children and families. • Effective, inclusive communication about the vision, aims and values of the setting informs and involves parents and partners in improvements. • Children and families are supported to understand the vision, aims and values of the centre in the most appropriate way. • Practitioner enquiry and professional dialogue informs and supports continuous improvement, creativity and innovation. This motivates and inspires everyone to sustain high standards of delivery of early learning and childcare. • Practitioners are proactive in the change process and in evaluating the impact of improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively do we engage others in developing a shared vision and purpose for our setting and work? • To what extent is our vision ambitious and challenging? How do we know? • How well do our vision, values and aims inform our daily practice? What impact do they have on improving the quality of the early learning and childcare we provide? • How effectively do we communicate our vision with children, families and partners? How successful are the approaches used to ensure that everyone has a say in shaping our future direction? • What examples do we have of successfully nurturing creativity and promoting innovation? • What examples do we have of practitioners successfully collaborating with one another through critical enquiry? • In what ways are we maximising opportunities for practitioners to work and learn together? • How do we know that our professional learning is making a difference for children and families? How effective are our approaches to planning for continuous improvement? • What positive impact has our planning for continuous improvement had on outcomes for children and families?

QI 1.4: Leadership of management and practitioners

Themes

Governance framework
Building and sustaining a professional team
Practitioner wellbeing and pastoral support

Descriptor

This indicator highlights the importance of sound governance within the early learning and childcare setting. It promotes the importance of fair and proper recruitment and selection of practitioners. It focuses on accountability, responsibility and shared values as important features of building and sustaining a highly professional team. Positive, caring and inclusive relationships underpin a highly supportive and welcoming ethos.

Level 5 illustration:

Governance framework

- We have a coherent vision of what is important for our setting and its community. This provides a clear basis from which to help our babies, toddlers and young children flourish and grow. Leadership of our setting is clearly founded on the key governance principles of high quality early learning and childcare, engagement with children and their families and a quality culture. The roles and responsibilities of groups and individuals are defined through our clear framework of governance as reflected in the National Care Standards taking full account of the features of our setting. The governing body monitors our setting's actions rigorously and ensures a prompt response to parents' concerns and suggestions. The governing body works closely with our setting and is clear about the role of partnership with the local authority and other relevant bodies. There are clear lines of accountability for the setting's performance and quality, including children's progress and achievements. Strategic leadership leads to high quality outcomes for children and their families.

Building and sustaining a professional team

- Our setting uses effective and transparent recruitment, selection and performance management procedures consistent with current legislation, local and national agreements. Safeguarding procedures are clearly understood and implemented by those with responsibilities for the recruitment of practitioners. Our appointment procedures focus on the skills, aptitudes and experience required for working with babies, toddlers and young children. We have effective and supportive induction policies and procedures for all practitioners. Through an effective professional review process, based on coaching and mentoring, practitioners reflect on their professional skills and knowledge and identify areas for improvement. In our setting, all practitioners willingly engage in a wide range of professional learning activities to improve their practice. Our high quality professional development and learning has a clear and positive impact on outcomes for our children and families.

Practitioner wellbeing and pastoral support

- Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure pastoral support and wellbeing of practitioners. These are shared with practitioners and are well understood. The culture and ethos within our setting is positive and caring. It focuses on the needs of children, families and practitioners. We are proactive at tackling any prejudice-based discrimination so everyone working and learning within our setting feels included and valued. Our practitioners are empowered and motivated to make decisions and lead on aspects of improvement. We use national policy and local agreements very well to ensure our high professional standards of conduct are understood and maintained. Opportunities to consult, share information and raise concerns are well established and understood by all practitioners. Lines of accountability are clear. All practitioners share information effectively, listen to others and respond positively to ideas and issues raised with them.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of all practitioners and governing bodies are clearly outlined. It promotes and supports a culture of accountability and high quality early learning and childcare. • The welcoming and inclusive culture and ethos is evident within the setting and promoted by all practitioners. There is an 'open door' policy to support and encourage positive communication. • The setting robustly monitors the range of complaints received, responses are made promptly, and when necessary passed to the governing body. • Recruitment arrangements are clearly outlined in policy and procedure documents. • Arrangements to manage practitioners discipline, attendance/absence and grievance are understood and implemented fairly. • All practitioners undertake reviews, at least annually, and on-going professional dialogue helps improve and develop practice. • Equalities legislation is adhered to and explicit in recruitment of all practitioners. • All practitioners have current membership of Protection of Vulnerable groups (PVG) scheme and are registered with relevant bodies, for example SSSC and GTCS. • All practitioners, including those on varied working arrangements, have equal access to professional learning and development opportunities. • A dignity at work policy is in place and shared with all practitioners. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are implemented systematically and in line with local and national policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively do we work with our governing bodies, including Care Inspectorate, to ensure a culture of continuous improvement in our setting? • How well can we demonstrate that we learn from complaints? • What arrangements are in place for new or temporary practitioners to feel they are welcome and well supported in our setting? • How well do practitioners understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to SSSC and GTCS as appropriate? • What evidence do we have that our professional learning and improvement priorities are having a positive impact on the babies, toddlers and young children in our care? • How do we ensure that practitioners who work different shift patterns are well informed and are fully engaged in planning and leading improvements? <p>How do we know how rigorous and robust our health and safety and risk benefit procedures are?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do we ensure staff are fully aware of our policies and procedures?

QI 1.5: Management of resources to promote equity

Themes

Management of finance for learning
Management of resources and environment for learning

Descriptor

This indicator relates to the impact of the provision and management of the setting's finances and resources for learning. It focuses on the importance of sound management of the setting's finances and the extent to which the use of resources leads to improved outcomes for children. The management of resources should result in building a sustainable and equitable future for all.

Level 5 illustration:

Management of finance for learning

- We make effective use of available finances, including funding bids as appropriate, to allocate resources and take forward our improvement priorities and planned developments. Our available budget is targeted towards improving outcomes for children and families, ensuring that we meet the learning needs of all. We are transparent and equitable in the use of our financial resources. We employ effective and efficient financial management processes to manage and monitor our expenditure ensuring best value. We take account of local and national advice in our financial management seeking support from those with financial expertise when appropriate. We systematically monitor the extent to which our use of financial resources leads to improved outcomes for children and families. There is strong evidence that any devolved budgets have been used effectively to support our planned improvements and has led to improved outcomes for our children.

Management of resources and environment for learning

- We make the best use of available resources to create, sustain and enhance a motivating environment for effective learning. Our accommodation provides a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment that is of a very high standard of cleanliness. We effectively implement relevant health and safety legislation and use risk benefit procedures to remove or minimise any potential hazards. All practitioners are vigilant and take prompt action to ensure the safety and security of our children, visitors and each other. We effectively use the community and indoor and outdoor spaces to maximise high-quality learning. There are well-appointed areas for children to engage in energetic activities inside and out, and for them to safely rest and sleep. We have identified areas for practitioners and parents/carers, and sufficient space for storage and display.

We have effective systems in place to ensure our resources are well maintained, organised and accessible. Our resources are used effectively and managed in a sustainable way that offers children choice and promotes independent learning. Where appropriate, we support children to be actively involved in assessing relevant risks they may encounter during their learning and play. We offer a wide range of resources to support and challenge children and to engage them in their learning across all aspects of their development. We make effective use of resources within our local environment and beyond our setting. Displays contribute to a stimulating environment that supports effective learning and celebrates achievement. Children's experiences are enriched through planned and spontaneous use of technologies. Information and communications technology and digital learning is used effectively to promote the development of skills for life and learning.

Effective systems are used to monitor, evaluate and review the use and impact of resources to maximise high quality learning. This information contributes to improvements to the learning environment and to inform future resourcing decisions.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our use of financial resources is transparent and ensures equity for all. Financial decisions are made in line with the setting's vision and aims to achieve planned priorities. There is clear and measurable impact of financial expenditure on improving outcomes for learners. • Effective and efficient financial management procedures enable senior managers to focus on improving outcomes for all learners. Systems and procedures enable budgets to be easily monitored and prioritised. • Stakeholders are consulted on significant spending and are informed of spending priorities. • All available resources (including digital learning resources) are used effectively to create and sustain effective indoor and outdoor learning environments. • Resources are fit for purpose and are developmentally appropriate to children's stage of development. • Displays include an appropriate balance of children's work, text, photographs and learning stimuli. • Practitioners are clear of their shared responsibility for keeping everyone safe. They are proactive in ensuring the accommodation is secure and any health and safety issues are identified and addressed promptly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective and efficient are our approaches to financial management? Are all practitioners aware of the importance of, and involved in, achieving best value with finite resources? • What procedures do we employ to ensure transparency and equity in the use of our financial resources? • How effectively do we allocate resources to sustain improvement priorities? • To what extent do our approaches to resource acquisition and allocation improve outcomes for all children? • To what extent is financial expenditure focused on improving the quality of learning and development for children? • How well do we monitor the use and impact of available resources on children's progress and development? • How well do we work together with children, parents/carers and partners to discuss and make appropriate resourcing decisions? • How effective are our resources in meeting the learning needs of all children and ensuring equity? • How effective are our health and safety procedures, including appropriate use of risk assessment systems?

Learning Provision

How good is the quality of the care and learning we offer?

- 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection
- 2.2 Curriculum
- 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- 2.4 Personalised support
- 2.5 Family learning
- 2.6 Transitions
- 2.7 Partnerships

QI 2.1: Safeguarding and Child Protection

Themes

Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection
Arrangements to ensure wellbeing
National guidance and legislation

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on the responsibilities required by practitioners and partners to ensure that all children are safe, well cared for and able to flourish. This indicator looks to how the setting takes account of statutory requirements in relation to child protection to ensure the needs of all children are met. Safeguarding all children requires strong partnerships to be established between the setting and its local community. This includes well-planned opportunities to help children become resilient and develop a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Level 5 illustration:

Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection

- There are clear, appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the care and welfare of babies, toddlers and young children including child protection, safeguarding and risk assessments. The needs and concerns of our children and their families are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Arrangements for raising concerns are well publicised and are known by practitioners, parents/carers, partners and children, where appropriate. Senior leaders have been trained in safeguarding matters to a high level and demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding, acting as models of best practice for others. Children, parents/carers, practitioners and partners take an active role in promoting care and welfare. An appropriate, designated person is in place to take lead responsibility for any care and welfare or child protection concerns that may arise and all stakeholders are aware of their role. All practitioners receive regular professional learning and are confident in responding to any child protection or safeguarding issue, including e-safeguarding, child sexual exploitation and extremism. All incidents relating to equalities are recorded and acted upon to provide support and prevent further occurrences. Any accidents/incidents and administration of medication is recorded in line with clear policies and procedures.

Arrangements to ensure wellbeing

- The ethos and vision of the setting strongly promotes equality, challenging all forms of discrimination. Babies, toddlers and young children are able to build up positive relationships with consistent adults whom they trust. Children, at a developmentally appropriate stage, are supported to be involved in decision making. They have access to a named person who will act on their behalf when appropriate. There are well-embedded policies and systems in place to promote care and welfare matters across the life of the setting. We use learning and teaching approaches which promote resilience and healthy lifestyles and are highly sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each baby, toddler and young child.

National guidance and legislation

- Babies, toddlers and young children are safe and are observed to feel safe in the setting. There is a strong, robust and proactive response from adults working with children that reduces the risk of harm or actual harm to them. All adults working with them know and understand the indicators that may suggest a baby, toddler or young child is suffering or at risk of suffering harm and they take the appropriate and necessary action in accordance with local procedures and statutory guidance. Practitioners keep their knowledge up-to-date and are aware of emerging issues within society. Leaders and governing bodies where appropriate, ensure that policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with legislation at all times. Our record keeping for all safeguarding matters, including planning is maintained to the highest standards and stored safely and securely ensuring all sensitive information is only accessible to relevant members of staff.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures reflect most recent legislation and are reviewed on a regular basis. • Safeguarding is an important thread running through a setting's self-evaluation. There are clear policies and procedures in place to promote equalities. • There are robust and reliable approaches in place to follow up non-attendance through a range of strategies. • There are risk assessments in place within settings taking account of individual circumstances. Risk assessments are carried out and recorded appropriately including for all outings. • All staff, including volunteers and partners, have a full understanding of child protection procedures, and the steps to be taken in any given situation, including an appropriate referral, child protection case conferences, and child protection registrations. • Practitioners effectively engage children and take account of their views and experiences; particularly where decisions are to be made that may impact on life choices. • Children's learning in health and wellbeing is enhanced through effective partnership working with parents/carers and partners. • All child protection records are stored safely and securely ensuring all sensitive information is only available to those relevant members of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are approaches to child protection and safeguarding an integral part of our self-evaluation processes? How good is the leadership of the setting in taking forward this area of practice and how do we know? • Is there an appropriate, designated person in place for child protection and do all families and stakeholders know who this is? • How effective are the recording and planning processes in delivering positive outcomes for children where there is child protection or safeguarding concerns? How well are babies, toddlers, young children, and their families supported following a concern? • How do we ensure that all staff, including support and visiting staff are kept up-to-date with effective safeguarding practice? How do we ensure volunteers and students are familiar with our safeguarding policy and practice? • How effectively are children who are on or were previously on the child protection register and/or Looked After being supported? • Are there guidelines and procedures in place for determining if a child requires an individual plan? How do we sensitively and appropriately share this information?

QI 2.2: Curriculum

Themes

Rationale and design
Learning and development pathways
Pedagogy and play
Skills for life and learning

Descriptor

This indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs of children at the centre of curriculum design and development. It focuses on the importance of offering children rich and exciting play and learning opportunities, indoors, outdoors and within their community. The curriculum is designed to reflect local and national circumstances. The curriculum is most effective when it is highly relevant to children and families and has been shaped by their engagement. A clear and shared pedagogy promotes high quality learning and teaching and results in positive outcomes for all children.

Level 5 illustration:

Rationale and design

- We are clear about the purpose of our curriculum framework. It is based on shared values and takes full account of local needs and circumstances. Our very good understanding of pedagogy and play in learning is evident in our delivery of the curriculum for babies, toddlers and the young child. It provides equity of opportunity for all. Innovative and creative approaches are encouraged to ensure that children make very good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Our curriculum framework secures children's wellbeing and rights including the right to play. We reflect a positive image of each child as a capable and competent learner. It is informed by national guidance and pays close attention to achieving challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance. We work consistently well with our stakeholders and partners in reviewing the purpose of our curriculum ensuring it reflects the changing and unique needs of our children, families and community. We take very good account of emerging developments and current research in the care and learning of children when refreshing and reviewing our curriculum approaches. Our creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design support positive outcomes for children and families.

Learning and developmental pathways

- We provide a high-quality curriculum framework for children that is very well matched to the stages of development of our babies, toddlers and young children. We carefully promote strong nurturing attachments for children in our care. We very effectively build on the prior and continuous learning of our children, within and beyond the setting. We actively promote and effectively develop the essential aspects for early learning: wellbeing, communication, mathematics, curiosity, inquiry and creativity to secure the very best outcomes for our children. Our practitioners set high expectations and aspirations for all children. All practitioners take responsibility for developing early literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. We plan carefully to ensure all of our children experience very effective continuity and progression through to the next stage of their learning. Our practitioners introduce well-considered curriculum innovations that successfully enrich children's learning. We plan very effectively to take full account of each child's needs, dispositions, interests and stage of development. Our approaches to planning are flexible and highly responsive ensuring that children are making sustained progress in their learning.

Pedagogy and play

- Our curriculum framework is based firmly on play and active learning. It is stimulating and engaging and offers all children challenge and enjoyment. Our practitioners are confident and knowledgeable. In their practice, they demonstrate their deep understanding of the critical role of play in promoting children's development and learning. There is a shared understanding in our setting of pedagogy and practitioners readily engage in debate and dialogue about ensuring high quality play. Children are provided with rich, relevant experiences to enhance their play and practise skills, explore the world around them and develop knowledge and understanding in their own way and in their own time. We provide innovative and creative opportunities for children to experience high quality play both indoors and outdoors. Our well-timed and skilled interventions effectively promote children's creativity, extend their thinking, widen their skills and consolidate their learning in play.

Skills for life and learning

- We provide very good opportunities to support the development of children's skills for life and learning, and an awareness of the world in which they live and grow. High priority is given to the development of children's health and wellbeing, and to the development of their skills in communication, early language and early mathematics. Through our highly responsive approach, our children are developing a broad range of skills within motivating and relevant contexts. Our children respond positively to challenge and they enjoy solving problems alone and with others. We very skilfully support children to take forward their own ideas and interests. We help them to experience a sense of achievement and to understand the reasons for their success. Our children's curriculum is enriched by the very effective contributions of carefully chosen partnerships. Together we successfully plan and deliver relevant, real-life opportunities for young children to apply their developing skills. We have established a suitable range of highly effective partnerships with parents/carers and the wider community to nurture an enterprising culture.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum is current and relevant to children. It is informed by shared values and beliefs about how young children learn. • All practitioners have a sound understanding of the importance of play and their role in supporting children's play experiences. • Everyone understands what the setting is trying to achieve through the design of the curriculum they offer. • All practitioners and partners are ambitious and expect high levels of progress and achievement for all children. • Professional learning and collegiate working are prioritised within the setting. • Practitioners' up-to-date knowledge of early learning pedagogy is evident in all aspects of practice within the setting. • There is a clear focus on the development of children's skills in early language and mathematics. • Planning for progression in children's learning is in place and continuity and progression in learning is secured for children within and beyond the setting. • We create rich and meaningful opportunities for our children to be active participants in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do we share the purpose of our curriculum framework with children, parents, practitioners and partners? What difference does this make to our practice? • What evidence do we have that our children are developing a positive attitude to learning? • How do practitioners challenge and support for example creativity and problem solving with young children? How do they engage in discussion and what examples are there of this working well in practice? • Are children regularly involved in evaluating their play experiences and can they describe what they are learning? What do we do with this information? What changes could we make to use this more effectively? • In our work with colleagues in other settings and sectors, to what extent do we focus on a shared understanding of continuity and progression in learning? What are the arrangements to share children's learning across, for example, the early level of Curriculum for Excellence? • What do we do to encourage a child's sense of belonging and increase their knowledge within their wider community?

QI 2.3: Learning, teaching and assessment

Themes

Learning and engagement
Quality of interactions
Effective use of assessment
Planning tracking and monitoring

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised.

Level 5 illustration:

Learning and engagement

- The ethos and culture of our setting demonstrates a strong commitment to children's rights. Relationships are positive throughout. All children feel valued, safe and secure. As a result, they are successful, confident and responsible. Children contribute effectively to the setting and its community in purposeful and innovative ways. They enjoy and are actively involved in learning through spontaneous play opportunities, well-planned, purposeful play and through relevant real-life experiences. They are highly motivated and fully engaged by the range of rich, challenging experiences and opportunities that are on offer both indoors and outdoors. Learning experiences extend and sustain children's interest, help them make decisions and develop their creativity, resilience and independence very well. Children make informed choices about their learning and they have a key role in leading their own learning within a supportive nurturing environment.

Quality of interactions

- We have a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy and skilfully put this into practice. We have warm, responsive relationships with babies, toddlers and young children, creating a positive climate for achievement. We use skilled questioning and interact in a sensitive, responsive and stimulating way to promote curiosity, independence and confidence. We listen effectively to children and they know their views are respected and acted upon. Children have time and space to follow their interests and deepen their individual learning. Learning is enriched and supported by our effective use of digital technologies.

Effective use of assessment

- In our setting, practitioners know individual children very well as learners. As a team, practitioners make very good use of high quality observations and interactions to make accurate judgements about the progress being made by babies, toddlers and young children. Observations are used to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning. Our approach to capturing and recording children's progress and achievements at key points in time provides reliable evidence which leads to significant improvement to learning and developmental outcomes for children. Approaches are proportionate and manageable. Through talking together with colleagues within and beyond our setting, we have a shared understanding of children's progress and achievements as they grow and learn. We have high expectations for all our children. Practitioners make very good use of learning profiles to support children to reflect on their learning. Parents/carers receive regular and up-to-date information, including learning profiles, on their children's progress and achievements. Both children and parents/carers make valuable contributions to these profiles. Our overall approach to assessment supports effective transitions into, across and from our setting which enhance the learning process.

Planning tracking and monitoring

- We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of babies, toddlers and young children across all areas of learning. Planned experiences are developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet all children’s individual learning needs. Practitioners use imaginative and appropriate ways to involve children in planning learning. We monitor and evaluate progress across the curriculum to improve children’s learning. This includes those children facing additional challenges, for example looked-after children and those living with financial hardship especially those who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged. We use information from a range of sources to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for all children and their families.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning environment is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. • Children can talk about their learning and achievements with practitioners and peers. • Practitioners, children and parents/carers share and use a range of assessment information to improve learning and development, and to reflect on the quality of practice. • Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching and is used effectively to plan high quality learning experiences for all children. • High quality observations take place naturally during everyday activities and interactions. • We use our knowledge of how children learn, for example schema, when making observations of children and as a basis for future planning. • Tracking and monitoring of children’s progress is well-understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all children. • Practitioners make sound judgements about children’s progress and respond quickly to ensure learning opportunities meet the needs of individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do we motivate and engage all children? How can this be consistent for children every day? • How do we know that all children are making very good progress in their learning? What information do we already have and what do we still need to find out? • How well are we enabling children to become independent learners and develop the four capacities? • To what extent do our learning environments support different types of play? • How do we ensure that processes for planning, assessment and reporting are manageable and effective in improving learning and teaching? • How do we ensure that processes for tracking and monitoring are manageable and effective in improving learning and teaching? • How well do we support practitioners in undertaking their role in evaluating children’s progress? • How well does the information we gather about children’s progress inform our planning and improvement? • How well are children enabled to select and make use of high-quality resources and equipment including digital technologies?

QI 2.4: Personalised support

Themes

Universal support
Role of practitioners and leaders
Identification of learning needs and targeted support
Removal of barriers to learning

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on the provision of high quality support that enables all children to achieve success. It highlights the importance of wellbeing and of involving children and their families in decisions about how their needs should be best met. Strong partnerships with parents/carers and others who support children are essential. Careful monitoring of all children, particularly those who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged, ensures effective and early support leading to positive outcomes.

Level 5 illustration:

Universal support

- In our setting, children receive high quality universal support. Their needs are at the centre of our planning and review processes. We have high expectations for all children. Practitioners work very well with parents/carers to take full account of children's experiences, interests and individual ways of learning. We work closely with parents/carers to match learning activities and resources effectively to the age, needs and abilities of individual children. We ensure our babies, toddlers and young children benefit from exploration and engagement with natural materials including daily encounters with nature and learning outdoors. We have a well-established and effective key worker approach, respond very well to the individual needs of children, promote, and support their wellbeing. Within our setting, each child has regular interactions, and where developmentally appropriate, learning conversations with a supportive adult who knows them well. Tasks, resources and experiences are at the right level to help children make sustained progress. Where appropriate, learning targets are in place specific to individual children. These build on prior learning, are reviewed and evaluated with parents/ carers and appropriate next steps identified based on progress made. Strong links with the 'named person', such as health visitors, promote knowledgeable and consistent contact between the setting and families.

Role of practitioners and leaders

- In our setting, the roles of practitioners are clearly defined and understood. Babies thrive through relationships that are consistent, nurturing and responsive. Toddlers are sensitively cared for and skilfully helped to vocalise their needs. We provide them with a very good balance of experiences to promote and develop their confidence and independence. As children progress we consistently involve and support them in making decisions about their own learning by helping them to plan and evaluate their own experiences. We work effectively with parents/carers, other professionals and partner agencies to ensure factors that may inhibit progress are identified and addressed quickly. We carefully monitor the impact of our plans for individual children. Practitioners increase their ability to meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child through effective use of professional learning, learning support and specialist resources.

Identification of learning needs and targeted support

- In our setting, children's needs are identified early through careful observation and effective analysis of assessment information. Wellbeing indicators are used to provide holistic assessments of children's strengths and support needs. We ensure appropriate, proportionate and timely support including specialist input where required. We fully adhere to legislative requirements and provide all children with additional support needs with high quality targeted support, including highly - able children. Children, parents/carers and partners are fully involved in decisions about learning and support. Targeted interventions are effective and lead to positive outcomes for children.

Removal of barriers to learning

- In our setting, practitioners take positive and proactive steps to ensure that potential barriers to learning and development are minimised. Practitioners are highly responsive to the family circumstances of all our children, particularly those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or looked after, including those living in financial hardship. Our practitioners are skilled at identifying and supporting children with specific challenges. All children living with a disability, health issue or social and emotional needs receive high quality targeted support. We work closely with key partners to remove barriers to learning and provide an inclusive, nurturing learning environment.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal and targeted support is fully embedded. It has a positive impact on children's progression and development. • There are high expectations for all children across our setting. • Children requiring additional support have high quality, individualised plans. Careful monitoring and review ensures that identified support strategies have a positive impact on learning and development. • Children's needs are identified through robust assessment processes. We consistently and effectively involve parents/carers and other partners in gathering information through observations, careful planning and reviewing support for our children. • Each child has an effective Child's Plan. Effective partnership approaches are evident in support plans and interventions. • All practitioners work effectively to minimise the impact of potential barriers to learning. • Practitioners reflect on their own practice and work collaboratively with others to improve their capacity to meet the needs of all children in their care. • The progress of all children is effectively reviewed, including those with additional support needs. Reliable and valid evidence supports this process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do we know our children, and their families? How do we use this knowledge to help children progress in their learning? • How do we know that all practitioners fully understand our approaches to personalised support? Do all practitioners consistently use effective support strategies? How do we know these are having a positive impact? • What arrangements are in place to ensure all children and their parent/carer have regular discussions with their keyworker to review their progress and plan what they will learn next? In doing this, what difference is this making to children's learning and development? • Are practitioners able to access effective levels of training and support to build their own capacity to support the diverse needs of children as they grow, learn and develop? • How well does our curriculum planning meet the needs of different groups of children? • To what extent do we involve parents/carers and partner agencies to ensure all children benefit from the right support at the right times?

QI 2.5: Family learning

Themes

Engaging families in learning
Early intervention and prevention
Quality of family learning programmes

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with families to improve learning and achievement. The emphasis is on all early learning and childcare settings working in partnership with others in the community to support families to secure better outcomes through programmes which enable them to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Level 5 illustration:

Engaging families in learning

- Our setting values the contribution parents/carers and families make to children's learning. We have established positive relationships that are fostered to support confidence and self-esteem within families. Universal support is available to all. Where appropriate, more targeted support is offered to families that enables them to engage in a variety of learning opportunities which meet their individual needs. Practitioners work to support children and families and are responsive to family circumstances such as, at the risk of disadvantage, poverty, families affected by imprisonment, English as an additional language or mental health issues. Families have regular opportunities to discuss their learning needs in an environment where they feel valued and respected. Effective opportunities for our families to experience personal achievement are actively developed and encouraged. Parents/carers are supported to regularly and meaningfully engage in their children's learning at home and within the early learning and childcare setting. Our practitioners work in partnership with parents/carers and families to reduce potential barriers to engagement and overcome disadvantage. They sensitively respond to individual family circumstances.

Early intervention and prevention

- Our practitioners strive to form respectful relationships, an unconditional positive approach and strong positive relationships with families from first contact. These relationships support preventative work and the earliest possible intervention. We consult with parents/carers and work in partnership with other services to share relevant information on individual family's needs and factors affecting our community. We use this information to ensure appropriate timely interventions. Needs are identified and reviewed in consultation with families and partners. Our families are active participants in agreeing intended outcomes for themselves, and we support them to set realistic timescales for achieving their aspirations. Our partnership approaches ensure a robust service for families within their local community. Families benefit from our strong collaboration with colleagues from other sectors to ensure appropriate referrals to and from services. These engagements help to build confidence, trust and respect. Outcomes are tracked over time.

Quality of family learning programmes

- Our family learning programmes contribute to a culture of learning within the family. They provide opportunities for parents/carers and children to learn together as well as parent/carer only learning. Families are fully engaged and participate whenever possible in designing and delivering programmes. Our programmes are stimulating, challenging, relevant and enjoyable. We consult with families to ensure we are meeting their needs in relation to literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and wider family learning outcomes. The design and delivery of our programmes support families through changes and when making choices. We actively promote lifelong learning for the family as a whole and for the individual learners within each family. Our families are consulted in a meaningful way at the end of any course or programme about their next steps. As a result of our family learning programmes, families have high aspirations as individuals and as a family. They have a sense of achievement and successes are recorded and celebrated.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative approaches, which are well matched to the needs of families, are used to engage families throughout their contact with the setting. • Family learning promotes equality and diversity. Approaches seek to include all, especially those who may face barriers to their involvement. • Almost all those engaged in family learning programmes are highly motivated and actively involved in their own learning and development. • Family learning approaches take account of the developmental stages of children in the family. • Family learning opportunities help parents to understand the significant impact of the home learning environment at all stages of their children's education. They recognise and make the most of everyday learning opportunities. • Family learning approaches seek to address parents' own learning needs in areas such as literacy and numeracy, and equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to support their children throughout their education. • We work with others to show that the life chances of families experiencing particular challenges are being improved as a result of their engagement in family learning. • There is evidence that almost all learners have improvement in their health and wellbeing. • Families are involved in evaluating the impact of their involvement in programmes and in planning next steps. • We have effective partnerships with a range of agencies to support family learning within our setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we do to meaningfully engage with families taking account of their individual circumstances? • What approaches do we use and to what extent do we involve families in planning opportunities to meet their learning needs? • To what extent do practitioners understand the wellbeing indicators and how these can have a positive impact on children and families? • What do we do to involve families in evaluating the impact of programmes taking account of the developmental stages of children? • How do we know if outcomes for children are improving as a result of their participation in family learning? • How can we demonstrate that families are feeling included and that they are participating, achieving and progressing? • How is our family learning supporting families' progress in relation to the <i>GIRFEC</i> wellbeing indicators? How do we know? • What evidence do we have that our partnerships with others are strong and support family learning? • What do we do to actively promote equality and diversity? • What do we do to identify and overcome barriers to participation in our family learning programmes? • What do we do to address parents/carers own learning needs in areas such literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing?

QI 2.6: Transitions

Themes

Quality of support for children and their families
Collaborative planning and delivery
Continuity and progression in learning

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on the need for babies, toddlers and young children to be well supported at times of transition. This includes moving into and out of the early learning and childcare setting but also includes transitions as children move through different rooms or stages of learning. Effective communication and partnership working supports successful transition arrangements. Very good processes for tracking and recording progress and effective arrangements for sharing these are essential for curriculum continuity and progression in learning.

Level 5 illustration:

Quality of support for children and their families

- In our setting, practitioners carefully support children and families to make successful transitions when they first start, and as they move to another stage of learning or to a new setting. We understand the importance of building relationships and developing secure attachments. Transitions are handled sensitively and are a positive experience for children and their families. We take very good account of the individual care and support needs of each baby, toddler, young child and their families. We value and build on the learning that takes place before a baby, toddler or young child starts in our setting. We acknowledge the impact of life events and provide effective support to help with these times making adjustments as necessary to ensure equity for each child when attending the setting and when moving to another setting. Effective arrangements are in place to involve families and relevant agencies in carefully planning personalised approaches for those requiring additional time and support. We provide very effective support to our children when they have a split placement with another setting. Our practitioners make effective links and communicate with the other setting to ensure continuity in learning and care.

Collaborative planning and delivery

- There are comprehensive, well-planned transition arrangements in place. These help children and families make very positive and successful transitions. We actively work in partnership with others, including the named person, to ensure transition arrangements are effective for all children, in particular for those requiring additional support. For children needing additional support this is clearly documented in the Child's Plan. We listen to and act upon the views of parents/carers and children when planning and evaluating transitions. Our arrangements for passing over information ensure continuity of learning and we have agreed shared approaches to record keeping. We include our partners, other settings and agencies in our regular review and evaluation of the impact of our transition arrangements.

Continuity and progression in learning

- Transition programmes effectively build on prior learning to support curriculum continuity and progression to meet the needs of all children. We pay very good attention to continuous progression in children's learning and wellbeing during their learning journey across our setting and into primary one. We carefully and concisely record aspects of children's progress in their development and learning and share this information effectively with parents/carers and key partners. We use planned opportunities with others, including other practitioners and parents/carers, to develop a shared understanding of progress and play-based pedagogy across the early level. As a result, children benefit from meaningful continuity in their learning experiences as they move on to school.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers and children, (where appropriate), are actively involved with practitioners to sensitively plan and effectively manage transitions to meet children’s emotional and learning needs. • Clear, shared processes are in place for the exchange of relevant information about children’s care and support needs, skills, learning and achievements across the curriculum. • Information about children’s learning, and achievements, particularly in key areas of early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, is used effectively to ensure continuity in learning across the curriculum for all children. • Planned opportunities enable practitioners to come together to develop a shared understanding of progress and pedagogy at all stages and across the early level. • Objective evaluations that seek and respond to the views of parents/carers, children and partners are used to develop and improve transition arrangements and programmes. • Effective communication and planning enables continuity of care and learning for children accessing more than one ELC setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively do our processes for settling in new children support them and their parents/carers to become familiar with their surroundings? To begin to develop close, positive relationships and to continuity in meeting their care and learning needs? • How effectively do we engage with parents/carers, children and other agencies to build up a clear picture of the child? • How well do we work with parents/carers to ensure transitions are personalised, planned in advance and sensitively handled? How do we support parents/carers to adjust to change at key points of transition? • How do we support children to develop a positive attitude to change, and form new relationships to ensure continuity as they move across the setting? • In what ways does information from profiling and personal learning planning ensure continuity and an appropriate pace of progress in learning for all children? • How effectively do we use transition information to plan progressive learning and developmental pathways for all children? • What examples do we have of transitions being adapted to suit individual needs and circumstances? What difference has this made for children and families? • To what extent do we discuss children’s growing skills in early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, as they move from one setting to another or on entry to primary school? • How well do we work with parents/carers and with partners in other agencies to plan transitions for children who require additional support?

QI 2.7: Partnerships

Themes

Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
The promotion of partnerships
Impact on children and families

Descriptor

This indicator aims to capture the setting's success in developing and maintaining strong partnership approaches which improve outcomes for babies, toddlers and young children. These partnerships also contribute to the continued improvement of the setting and community. All partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect for the particular contribution each partner brings. Strong partnerships are a powerful feature of a highly effective setting.

Level 5 illustration:

Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting

- We have highly effective partnership working with families which results in sustained high quality provision for children. Families feel very welcome and play an active role in the life of the setting. Our strong partnerships with parents/carers increase family engagement in children's development and learning and impacts positively on the progress children make. Parents and carers understand the role they can play and feel empowered to contribute to decisions. Through their active engagement, improvement is clearly evident and positive change happens. High quality feedback to parents/carers ensures they are aware of the difference their involvement is making to their child's progress and the life and work of the setting.

The promotion of partnerships

- We take full account of the benefits of establishing and sustaining a wide range of partnerships; local, national and international. We use these effectively to enhance positive outcomes for children. As a result of our effective partnerships, all our young children are developing positive life skills and dispositions towards learning. Through effective partnership working, we are improving young children's development and learning and are securing positive impacts for children and families in our community. Partnerships have increased family engagement in children's learning and this involvement has a positive impact on children's progress in key areas of learning including health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Impact on children and families

- Young children benefit from an increased motivation to learn from their engagement with a wider range of partners. Parents are fully informed about their children's progress and achievement, and what they can do to support it. They are very engaged in their children's learning, within the setting, at home and in the community. Parents understand the contribution they make to their children's progress and achievement. High quality feedback to parents/carers ensures they are aware of the difference their involvement is making to the life and work of the setting. The setting has an empowering culture which supports all children to develop their ability to be meaningfully involved in decisions which affect their learning. Children feel empowered and contribute effectively. They are confident and feel able to exercise initiative and responsibility. Children's specific interests and disposition towards learning are recognised and nurtured.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose, aims, roles and responsibilities within partnership working are clear and understood by all involved. • Sharing of skills, knowledge and experience between partners improves outcomes for children. • Partnerships learn from effective practice elsewhere. Shared professional learning opportunities enhance capacity. • Feedback from partners indicates strong and effective relationships with the setting. The setting plays an important role in the life of the local community. • Partnership working with other services demonstrates improvements in outcomes for children and families. • Joint planning and evaluations of partnership working show the positive difference collaboration is making and has enriched children's progress and achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we do to support families to participate in, contribute to and understand the value of their engagement in children's learning and life of the setting? • What strategies do we use to communicate, plan, monitor and evaluate our work with partners? • How do we know our support to parents/carers has led to further engagement in children's learning within the setting, at home and in the wider community? • What approach do we take to actively seek out, promote and respond positively to potential partnerships which will lead to better outcomes for children? • What do we do to share skills, knowledge and experience amongst all partners? Do we engage in shared professional learning opportunities with partners? • How well do we understand our local community? What is the impact of our partnership with the community on our setting and the local area? • How well do we ensure all young children contribute to the life of the setting? What strategies are used? • How well do we support parents/carers to understand the value of their engagement in children's learning? • What makes our partnerships successful and how do we learn from what is working well? • What evidence do we have of the added value partnership working brings and what difference it makes to our children?

Successes and Achievements

How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children?

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

3.2 Securing children's progress

3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

QI 3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Themes

Wellbeing
Fulfilment of statutory duties
Inclusion and equality

Descriptor

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements

Level 5 illustration:

Wellbeing

- In our setting, we recognise that relationships lie at the heart of children's development and lay the foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. The promotion of wellbeing for all our children and their families underpins everything we do and is based on mutual respect, honesty and trust. Our approach to getting it right for all children focuses on improving outcomes for children and their families. We model behaviour which promotes wellbeing and encourages it in others. We actively promote the wellbeing of all our children and can demonstrate that they are being supported to feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Everyone shares the responsibility for creating a positive and respectful ethos and we have a shared understanding of wellbeing. There is a strong sense of community, shared values and expectations. We are proactive in promoting positive behaviour through positive relationships. In a developmentally appropriate way, children show consideration for others and have positive relationships with each other and practitioners. Each child is considered as an individual with their own needs and rights. We seek out and encourage the participation of children through a range of developmentally appropriate activities which allows them to engage in decisions which affect them.

Fulfilment of statutory duties

- We comply and actively engage with statutory requirements and codes of practice. Our practitioners, children, parents/carers and partners know what is expected in these areas and are involved in fulfilling statutory duties to improve outcomes for children. In particular, we are knowledgeable about those statutory duties which impact on young children and their families.

Inclusion and equality

- We actively promote inclusion and equity, supporting all children to make very good progress and fulfil their potential. Children and families, practitioners and partners are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. We value diversity and challenge discrimination. In our setting we understand, value and celebrate age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. None of these is a barrier to participation for young children or their families. We have effective strategies in place which are improving progress for all children, with a focus on those facing challenges such as children from our most deprived areas, those who are looked after and those with additional support needs.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within and beyond our setting there is a shared understanding of wellbeing and children’s rights. Full account is taken of children’s rights and is considered in respect of their stage of development including when planning learning across the curriculum. • Practitioners’ sensitivity and responsiveness significantly contributes to the wellbeing of each individual child and their family. • Managers and leaders ensure that all practitioners know, understand and use the wellbeing indicators in a meaningful way. Our young children show a developing understanding of the wellbeing indicators. • Leaders and managers look out for the wellbeing of practitioners. All practitioners feel valued in their work and are confident they can receive support should they need it. <p>All our practitioners engage in professional learning which takes due account of the legislative framework related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum we offer and our approaches to learning and child development promote diversity and equality. . • Children are encouraged to begin exploring the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values and beliefs that influence their lives and relationships in a developmentally appropriate way. • Children show consideration and empathy for others supported by consistent positive relationships. • Health and wellbeing is fully embedded in the daily life of the setting and consistently promoted by all practitioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the <i>GIRFEC</i> principles reflected in the work of our setting? What actions do we need to make to bring about further improvements? How well do we use information about children’s wellbeing to support their care, learning and development? • How explicitly is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child understood and embedded within our practice? • How well do practitioners understand attachment theory and its impact on future development and learning? • What methods do we employ to ensure information is shared effectively about children’s wellbeing between parents/carers and practitioners? • How do we ensure important principles including consistency, dignity and privacy when supporting children with their personal care? What other important principles should we be considering? • How well do practitioners take account of national documents and guidance that impact on early learning and childcare? For example <i>Building the Ambition</i>. • How do we ensure that all practitioners undertake regular professional learning around legislation, statutory requirements, national and local guidance and codes of practice? • Have we successfully established an inclusive learning environment and setting? How welcome and included do all children, parents/carers and partners feel? How do we know? • To what extent has creating an ethos and culture of inclusion and participation been successful in supporting children to make very good progress? How can this be strengthened?

QI 3.2: Securing Children's Progress

Themes

- Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing
- Children's progress over time
- Overall quality of children's achievement
- Ensuring equity for all children

Descriptor

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success.

Level 5 illustration:

Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing

- Across our setting, we have established high quality approaches that enable babies, toddlers and young children to develop their emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills very well. A strong focus on health and wellbeing has a very positive impact on children's learning and development. We effectively promote learning in a skilful way. We understand how young children develop early language skills and mathematical thinking. We apply this knowledge in our approach, which is characterised by a very effective blend of adult supported and child-initiated experiences. The various environments of our setting are very effectively constructed allowing babies, toddlers and young children to be increasingly independent in their ability to express themselves vocally and creatively. They are settled, happy, thriving and learning to communicate in their own way. Our successful use of real-life and imaginary contexts support children effectively to develop their early language and mathematics skills very well. We skilfully apply strategies to support children to build vocabulary that helps them best explain their thinking and understanding. Within our setting, children demonstrate a high level of interest about the world around them. Young children are confident to try new experiences, engage with new learning enthusiastically and are making continuous progress. .

Children's Progress over time

- Within our setting babies, toddlers and young children make very good progress across almost all aspects of their learning and development. They are becoming increasingly confident, resilient and independent learners. From the earliest stages, children are supported to make choices and talk about their learning. As a result, they acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to continue to be motivated, life-long learners. In our setting, practitioners know each child very well as an individual and as a learner. Using this knowledge together with our sound knowledge of child development, we are ensuring that significant learning is identified and very effectively built upon. We work very effectively with families and other professionals to identify and deliver meaningful learning opportunities. We make sound professional judgements about children's progress and how well children are learning and developing.

Overall quality of children's achievement

- We place high value on recognising, capturing and celebrating children's individual achievements. We understand the significance of what happens beyond our setting, at home and within other provisions. We use this information very well to promote achievement and progress. Our young children are successful, confident, and are able to exercise responsibility very well. Increasingly, children are able to self-regulate their emotions, and feel supported to share their concerns and opinions. Our practitioners

use feedback and praise consistently well to promote positive attitudes and to encourage effective cooperation and independence. Our children contribute effectively to the life of the setting, the wider community and increasingly, as global citizens. Parents/carers and families are kept very well informed about their own child's progress and feel empowered to share information about their child's success beyond the setting. They feel valued and significant partners in the life and work of setting.

Ensuring equity for all children

- In our setting, we actively promote equity across all aspects of our work. We have a supportive and inclusive ethos with a strong climate of mutual respect and trust. We are proactive in identifying and reducing potential barriers to effective learning of our children. We take very good account of the differing cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of our children and their families. We work very effectively in partnership with colleagues who have evidenced improvements in children's progress. We make effective use of information and data, for example, agreed developmental milestones and the levels of multiple deprivation in the areas in which our children and families live. We monitor very closely the impact of strategies we use to ensure equity and use our evidence to make decisions about future interventions.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all children make very good progress through experiences that promote holistic learning. They are developing their social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills very well. • Information on every child is showing almost all children are making very good progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as appropriate to their developmental stage • High quality appropriate early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing experiences are used well to promote and enhance learning. • Practitioners make confident judgements about children's progress and this is shared and agreed through appropriate discussions. • High aspirations for achievement are shared by children, practitioners and parents. • Parents are fully involved in understanding their child's progress. They are valued partners in identifying and reviewing progress and achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do we ensure children are making progress across all aspects of their learning and development? • How do we ensure children understand their own progress in a meaningful way? • Reflect on the current balance of adult and child initiated learning experiences. Are both leading to progress? What could be improved? • How effective are our approaches to tracking progress and achievement? What needs to improve? • How effective are we at sharing children's progress with parents/carers? • Do we truly value contributions and children's achievements from beyond the setting? Would parents/carers recognise their role in this? • How well do we use and analyse information to improve outcomes for children and families? For example, data about 27/30 month reviews, developmental milestones and the levels of multiple deprivation in the areas in which our children and families live.

QI 3.3: Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

Themes

Developing creativity
Developing skills for life and learning
Developing digital skills

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on a range of significant skills for life and learning which children should increasingly be able to demonstrate as they grow and learn. A key feature is children's increasing ability to apply skills in a range of contexts, including in unfamiliar settings. Children understand the importance of these skills to their learning and to work and life in their local community and the wider world.

Level 5 illustration:

Developing creativity

- Creativity is at the heart of play and all aspects of learning. We use innovative approaches to encourage children to be inquisitive, imaginative and to take risks in their learning. We ensure that children access open-ended play materials to extend their creativity and thinking. Our indoor and outdoor learning environments and engagement with the natural world offer regular high quality experiences that enable children to explore ideas and materials and to use their imagination freely. Discussion and interaction very effectively support children to explain their thinking and to reflect on their learning. Children have freedom to develop their play and interests and to deepen their learning. They confidently lead aspects of their own learning. High quality play enables children to explore possibilities, plan, design and evaluate solutions as they apply their skills across learning.

Developing skills for life and learning

- Developing children's wellbeing and creativity is at the heart of all we do. We ensure that children's emotional, social and physical needs are met very well. Children can express their ideas and feelings with increasing confidence and they are learning to use the ideas and suggestions of others to extend their thinking and their play. We very effectively support children to help them resolve disagreements when they arise. Children persevere with their play and show high levels of self-esteem and self-belief when learning alone and increasingly with others. Children can ask questions, consider and make connections across learning experiences to make sense of the world around them. Our nurturing approaches ensure that children develop positive attitudes towards change and show determination to succeed in chosen activities. Our children increasingly demonstrate eagerness and capacity to initiate and participate in improvements to our setting and community.

Developing digital skills

- The setting has a clear rationale for developing children's skills in using and exploring digital technologies including staying safe online. Children's use of digital technologies enhances, deepens and personalises play and learning across the curriculum. They recognise a range of everyday technologies and increasingly understand how they work. Children are developing skills very well and are eager to try out and problem solve using new opportunities in digital technologies. They are becoming confident in making choices and decisions about solving problems and use digital technologies to enrich their play and learning in the setting, at home and in the community and how they may use their skills in the future. We make effective use of the skills of children, parents/carers and partners in developing the use of digital technologies across the curriculum.

Features of highly effective practice:	Challenge questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are enabled to take risks, learning in safe, secure and supportive environments where they are expected to make decisions and where their contributions are valued. • Through exploratory play, all children have the opportunity to develop and apply investigative, problem solving and thinking skills. • There is an emphasis on talk and shared thinking. Practitioners support the development of children’s thinking skills through scaffolding, modelling, questioning and making their own thinking explicit. • Approaches to learning and teaching enable children to become immersed in activities that interest them and to play for extended periods. Practitioners take care not to rush children. • Practitioners are highly skilled in posing questions which encourage enquiry and curiosity. • Children are developing a positive attitude to learning through an active learning approach using real-life and imaginary situations. • The learning environment, including the provision of open-ended and natural resources and the adaptability of space, encourage creativity. The structure and flexibility of the day also nurture creativity. • Children’s experiences provide opportunities to play and learn together, share ideas, reconcile differences and develop a sense of fairness. • Children can select and use appropriate technology to learn or solve problems across a range of contexts with increasing confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does our indoor and outdoor space support creativity, curiosity or inquiry? • How well are natural materials and open-ended resources used to support sensory play, exploratory play and creativity? • In what ways and to what extent do children make choices and decisions about their play and learning? • How and to what extent does our setting work with other partners to support and enhance the development of creativity? • Do practitioners value the creative process including individuality, rather than a focus on the end product? • In what ways and to what extent are children able to resolve conflict? • What can we do to ensure we are enhancing learning through the use of digital technologies? • Are children encouraged to recognise a range of technologies and their purpose in the setting, at home and the local environment? Do children know how to operate simple technological equipment?

Appendix 1: The six-point scale

The six-point scale is a tool for evaluating the quality indicators. It is mainly used by Education Scotland, local authorities and other governing bodies for the purpose of national and/or local benchmarking across a number of settings.

It is not necessary for individual settings to measure themselves against the six-point scale although they may choose to do so to help assess and understand your performance.

Level 6	excellent	outstanding or sector leading
Level 5	very good	major strengths
Level 4	good	important strengths with areas for improvement
Level 3	satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	weak	important weaknesses
Level 1	unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Please note that, when an evaluation is applied, it is for the whole quality indicator. Individual themes should not be evaluated. An evaluation can be arrived at in a range of contexts. We need to bear in mind that awarding levels using a quality scale will always be more of a professional skill than a technical process. However, the following general guidelines should be consistently applied.

An evaluation of **excellent** means that this aspect of the setting's work is outstanding and sector leading. The experiences and achievements of all children and are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice, based on achieving equity and inclusion and a deep professional understanding which is worth disseminating beyond the setting to support system-wide improvement. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

An evaluation of **very good** means that there are major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish children's experiences. An evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision for all children and is a standard that should be achievable by all. There is an expectation that the setting will make continued use of self-evaluation to plan further improvements and will work towards improving provision and strive to raise performance to excellent.

An evaluation of **good** means that there are important strengths within the setting's work yet there remains some aspects which require improvement. The strengths have a significantly positive impact on almost all children. The quality of experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the setting should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, and also take action to address the areas for improvement.

An evaluation of **satisfactory** means that the strengths within this aspect of the setting's work just outweigh the weaknesses. It indicates that children have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on children's experiences. While the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of learners' experiences. The setting needs to take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.

An evaluation of **weak** means that there are some strengths but where there are important weaknesses within this aspect of the setting's work. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the setting.

An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** means there are major weaknesses within this aspect of the setting's work which require immediate remedial action. Children's experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, this will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the

necessary actions to effect improvement. This will usually involve working alongside other staff in other settings or agencies.

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Within the context of this framework, the terms we have used mean:

Achievement refers to the totality of skills and attributes embedded within the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and developed across the curriculum, both within the ELC setting and in other contexts.

Attachment is the quality of relationship from the child's perspective. The early parent/child relationship is viewed as one of the most important factors in child development, especially with regard to how the brain develops and the development of emotional and social skills. The early attachment process can form the template for future relationships.

Building the Ambition is national practice guidance on early learning and childcare which provides clear direction on what good practice is in delivering high quality experiences and interactions for babies, toddlers and young children.

Creativity is a process which generates ideas that have value to the individual. It involves looking at familiar things with a fresh eye, examining problems with an open mind, making connections, learning from mistakes and using imagination to explore new possibilities.

Career- long professional learning (CLPL) is a continuous process through which practitioners take responsibility for their own learning and development, exercising increasing professional autonomy enabling them to embrace change and better meet the needs of babies, toddlers and young children.

Child's Plan refers to a single plan of action drawn up for a child where evidence suggests that one or more targeted interventions are required to meet the child's wellbeing and learning needs. This is managed and reviewed through a single meeting structure even if the child is involved in several processes.

Child Protection is protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

Child Protection Plan is a multi-agency plan for children who are believed to be at risk of significant harm. This plan will be incorporated into the Child's Plan.

Child Protection Register is a central register of all children who are the subject of a multi-agency Child Protection Plan.

Closing the gap refers to the gap in progress and achievement (attainment in school aged children) between those living in Scotland's least and most disadvantaged homes. Many children and young people from lower-income households do significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from better-off homes. This is often referred to as the 'attainment gap'.

Coaching and mentoring are development techniques based on the use of discussion, often on a one-to-one basis, to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge or work performance.

Data are facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

Digital learning is learning which is supported and enhanced by a range of digital technology and approaches. It can focus on one or more particular technologies. It may focus on playroom use or anywhere-anytime access. It may include features and approaches that are used to develop independence in learning.

Digital literacy encompasses the capabilities required for living, learning and when older, working, in a digital society. It includes the skills, knowledge, capabilities and attributes around the use of digital technology which enable individuals to develop to their full potential in relation to learning, life and eventually work. It encompasses the skills to use technology to engage in learning through managing

information, communicating and collaborating, problem solving and being creative, and the appropriate and responsible use of technology.

Digital technology is the term used to describe those digital applications, services, and resources which are used to find, analyse, create, communicate and use information in a digital context.

Equity means treating people fairly, but not necessarily treating people the same. Equity in ELC means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving potential and that all our babies, toddlers and young children are well supported to secure the best possible outcomes.

Equality is the removal of barriers and the widening of opportunities for those for whom access is limited. Where equality is embedded in practice, there will be no prejudice-based discrimination.

Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage.

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is an independent professional body which promotes and regulates the teaching profession in Scotland. It is a legal requirement for any teacher teaching in a Scottish school to be registered with GTC Scotland.

Getting it Right for Every Child is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. The approach puts the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making, takes a holistic approach to wellbeing and advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children and their families. It is founded on the belief that professionals must work together in the interests of the child.

Governance framework is what defines levels of accountability in relation to leadership and management of the setting. It supports strategic leadership and ensures all stakeholders know who is responsible for the performance of the setting.

Governing body is the group or groups of individuals who defines accountability for leadership or management of the setting. This could be a management group or board. In local authority settings, it would normally be those responsible for early learning and childcare within the local authority.

Higher order thinking involves the learning of complex judgment skills such as problem solving. Bloom's taxonomy suggests skills involving analysis and evaluation are of a higher order requiring different learning and teaching methods than the learning of facts and concepts.

Image of the Child gives credit to the competences and potential of each individual. It recognises that every child is unique and an active learner who is capable and intelligent. Children have their own rights within early learning and childcare.

Inclusion means taking positive action and intervening in order to enable achievement for all by building and fulfilling the potential of every baby, toddler young child.

Lead professional is identified where a child requires two or more agencies to work together to deliver services to the child and family. The lead professional will be the professional who is best placed to carry out the coordinating role and work with the family to improve outcomes for the child.

Learning community means the cluster of neighbouring settings and schools and other partners delivering early learning and childcare and education.

Learning conversations give opportunities to children to share their thoughts and views on experiences and activities in conversation with an adult or peer.

Looked After Child is defined as those in care of their local authority under the provisions of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This can include being Looked After at home or being Looked After away from home. The vast majority of children become 'looked after' for care and protection reasons.

Named person is a single point of contact who can work with a child and his/her family to sort out any additional help, advice or support if they need it. The Getting it Right approach includes making a named person available for every child, from birth until their 18th birthday (or beyond, if they are still at school).

For children in early learning and childcare the role of the named person is usually taken by the health visitor.

National Care Standards is the framework that Care Inspectorate uses to measure quality in early learning and childcare settings. They regulate and inspect childminders and daycare of children services that require to be registered under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

Outdoor learning is an approach to learning that is integral to the curriculum. It takes place in a range of contexts such as the grounds of the setting, the local area and day trips. Its purposes include health and wellbeing, encouraging investigation and exploration, physical activity and personal and social development.

Partners include all individuals or organisations that deliver learning and contribute to the life and work of the setting. These may include third sector, community organisations, libraries, local businesses, etc.

Pedagogy is about the interactions and experiences that support the curriculum and the process of how children learn.

Personalised support means learning, teaching and assessment are planned to meet the needs of learners as individuals. It includes ensuring that children have regular opportunities to be involved in discussing their learning and can influence what and how they learn.

Practitioner enquiry means developing knowledge, skills, dispositions and understanding required to be the kind of professional who is able to question, challenge, understand and know deeply about learning and teaching. It means continually asking critical questions about your own practice. This can also be done in a collaborative way, i.e. with others, for example in a professional learning community.

Protected characteristics is the term used in The Equality Act 2010 to describe who is protected by law. Protection varies on whether a person is at work or using the service. There are eight protected characteristics of people who use services. These are: disability; sex (gender); gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; and age.

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children, through paid and unpaid work, do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.

Risk is the likelihood or probability of a particular outcome given the presence of factors in a child or young person's life. What is critical with respect to child protection is the risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

Risk assessment/benefit is about identifying issues that may cause harm and deciding what reasonable and sensible measures can be taken to control/limit the risks.

Safeguarding is a much wider concept than child protection and refers to promoting the welfare of children. It encompasses; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all babies, toddlers and young children to have the best outcome. Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Schema is a repeated pattern of behaviour in their play that young children express through their ideas and thoughts as they explore the world and try to make sense of how things work. As children grow these schemas increase in number and become more complex. .

Scottish Social Services Council is the national body responsible for registering people who work in social services. This includes workers in daycare of children services for whom registration is a requirement as legislated for within the Regulation of Care Act (Scotland) (2001). The SSSC has an important role in ensuring the regulation, training and education of the early years workforce and seeks to promote continued education and training.

Setting community refers to all children, practitioners, parents/carers, families and partners who are connected to the setting.

Senior leaders refer to all staff in formal leadership roles, for example managers, heads of settings, deputies, principal teachers, deputy and head teachers, etc. This can also be used to refer to those aspiring to be in senior leadership posts and those working towards the standards for leadership.

Stakeholders are all those who are affected by the work and life of the setting.

Targeted support refers to additional or targeted support, tailored to the individual circumstances of a young child. This could be at any point of their learning journey or, for some, throughout the journey. This 'targeted' support can be, but is not exclusively, delivered by practitioners with additional training and expertise.

Transitions are times of change within children's learning journeys. Transitions can have a major impact on learners since they usually include new people, new learning environments and new circumstances. All children experience points of transition when they move into, through and out of the setting.

Universal support is the responsibility of all practitioners and partners. It includes children's entitlements to conversations about learning, reviewing progress and planning next steps as part of effective personal learning planning.

Wellbeing indicators are at the heart of the Getting it Right for every child. The approach uses eight areas to describe wellbeing in which children need to progress in order to do well now and in the future: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

Helpful contacts and resources

A Stronger Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2015-16

www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484439.pdf

Advice on Gaelic Education

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/a/advicegaeliceducation.asp

Assessment resource

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/assessment/index.asp

Assessing Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care

www.researchgate.net/publication/272349364_Assessing_Quality_in_early_Childhood_Education_and_Care_Sustained_shared_thinking_and_emotional_well-being_SSTEW_for_2-5_year-olds_provision

Better relationships, better learning, better behaviour

www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/03/7388

Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare

www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/08/6262/0

Building the Curriculum series

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/buildingyourcurriculum/curriculumplanning/whatisbuildingyourcurriculum/btc/

Care and Learning Alliance

www.careandlearningalliance.co.uk/

Care Inspectorate

www.careinspectorate.com

Career-long Professional Learning

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/c/genericresource_tcm4735771.asp

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance

www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00457025.pdf

Curriculum for Excellence Briefing 11

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/c/genericresource_tcm4783185.asp

Curriculum for Excellence Briefing 12

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/c/genericresource_tcm4809709.asp

The Early years Framework

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf

Early Years Scotland

<https://earlyyearsscotland.org/>

European Commission, *European Commission Communication: Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, 2011

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0066>

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009

www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/7/contents

Education Working For All! Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report

www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/commissiondevelopingscotlandseyoungworkforce/finalreport

Engaging with Families

engagingwithfamilies.co.uk/

Equality Act 2010

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Growing Up in Scotland: Publications

growingupinScotland.org.uk/publications

General Teaching Council of Scotland

www.gtcs.org.uk/home/home.aspx

Health and wellbeing - Making the links ... making it work

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/m/makingthelinks.asp

How good is our school? (Fourth edition)

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533.pdf

How good is our third sector organisation? (HGIOTSO)

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/support/selfevaluation/hgiotso/index.asp

How good is our community learning and development? (2)

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/h/genericresource_tcm4654473.asp

How good is our culture and sport?

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOC&S%20-%20251012_tcm4-712897.pdf

Learning for Sustainability within the standards

www.GTCS.org.uk/standards/learning-for-sustainability.aspx

National Care Standards Scotland

www.gov.scot/resource/doc/37432/0010250.pdf

National Day Nursery Association (Scotland)

www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/All_About_Us/Scotland.aspx

National Parenting Strategy

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00403769.pdf

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)

www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052/downloads

National Guidance on Professional Review and Development (2014)

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/professionallearning/prd/index.asp

OECD Starting Strong III - A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care

www.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiii-aqualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm

Parents as Partners in their Children's Learning

www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/147410/0038822.pdf

Pedagogy: The Silent Partner in Early Years Learning

academic.research.microsoft.com/Paper/5054704.aspx

Pre-Birth to Three, Positive outcomes for children and families

https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/PreBirthToThreeBooklet_tcm4-633448.pdf

Promoting Diversity and Equality: Developing Responsible Citizens for 21st Century Scotland

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/p/genericresource_tcm4747991.asp

Recognising and Realising Children's Rights

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/r/childrensrightsresource.asp

Scottish Attainment Challenge

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inclusionandequalities/sac/index.asp

The Scottish Child Health Programme: Guidance on the 27-30 month child health review
www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/12/1478

Scottish Childminding Association
www.childminding.org/

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
www.scvo.org.uk/

Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL)
www.scelscotland.org.uk

Scottish Out of School Care network
<https://soscn.org/>

Scottish Social Services Council
www.sssc.uk.com

Setting the Table: Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards
www.healthscotland.com/documents/21130.aspx

Transforming lives through learning: Corporate Plan 2013-2016
www.educationscotland.gov.uk/about/remitandframework/corporateplan.asp

Voluntary Action Scotland: Find your Third Sector Interface
www.vascotland.org/tsis/find-your-tsi

Wellbeing (GIRFEC)
www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/

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