



Department  
for Education

# **Early Years Foundation Stage Reforms**

**Government consultation**

**Launch date 24 October 2019**

**Respond by 31 January 2020**

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## Introduction

This consultation seeks views on changes to the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS). This includes proposed reforms to the learning and development and early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) assessment requirements, as set out in the EYFS framework. In addition, it seeks views on an amendment to the safeguarding and welfare section of the framework.

This consultation follows the commitment from Government to improve the EYFSP, with the key objectives of improving outcomes for all children, particularly language and literacy outcomes for disadvantaged children, and reducing teacher workload. The scope of this consultation includes seeking views on proposed changes to the educational programme summaries under the seven areas of learning set out in the EYFS framework, the seventeen early learning goals (ELGs) which make up the end-point measure of children's attainment at the end of reception year, and changes to the EYFSP assessment process, moderation approaches and the criteria used to score each child (emerging, expected, exceeding).

In drawing up these proposals we have engaged extensively with the sector and early years experts and have drawn on the evidence from the EYFSP pilot evaluation, published on 24 October 2019<sup>1</sup>. We will continue to engage with the sector and other interested parties during the consultation period.

## Who this is for

This consultation is for anybody with an interest in early years education and assessment. This includes:

- reception teachers, nursery teachers and EYFS coordinators;
- school leaders, including academy trust chief executives;
- teaching assistants and other practitioners in schools and nursery schools;
- early years practitioners, individuals and organisations providing nursery provision in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector;
- childminders and childminder agencies;
- organisation representing those listed above;
- parents, carers, and organisations representing them;
- independent schools;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-pilot/>

- organisations representing those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- local authorities (LAs);
- training providers;
- other government bodies and departments.

## Issue date

The consultation was issued on 24 October 2019.

## Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- 01325 340589 for assessment policy and ask for Cath Gilligan; or

or email:

[EYFS.consultation@education.gov.uk](mailto:EYFS.consultation@education.gov.uk)

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: [Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk](mailto:Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

## Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

## The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in spring 2020.

## Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [www.education.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations) to submit your response.

## About this consultation

The aim of this consultation is to seek views from interested parties on proposed changes to the [statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#).

This consultation seeks views on:

- proposed revisions to the educational programmes;
- proposed revisions to the ELGs;
- proposed changes to the assessment and moderation process for the EYFSP; and
- a proposed change to the safeguarding and welfare requirements to promote good oral health.

## Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

### By email

- [EYFS.consultation@education.gov.uk](mailto:EYFS.consultation@education.gov.uk)

### By post

**EYFS Consultation**  
Early Years and Schools Group  
Department for Education  
2nd Floor, Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT

## Deadline

The consultation closes on 31 January 2020.

## Setting the context

The early years are crucial for children's development and for establishing the foundations for future success. This government is committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or any additional needs they may have, has access to high quality education in their earliest years, which enables them to progress confidently to the next stage of their education and onwards through life. We plan to spend around £3.5 billion on early education entitlements this year alone.

The quality of early years provision has improved markedly in recent years, with 95% of providers on Ofsted's early years register judged as good or outstanding<sup>2</sup>, a substantial increase from 74% in 2012. In 2019, 71.8% of children achieved a good level of development at age five<sup>3</sup> - up from 51.7% in 2013 - and, since 2013, the gap between children in receipt of free school meals and their peers achieving a good level of development at age five has narrowed by 1.7 percentage points<sup>4</sup>. This success is testament to the commitment and dedication of early years professionals in schools, nurseries and childminder settings across England.

However, too many children still finish the reception year without the language and early literacy skills they need to thrive<sup>5</sup>, which the evidence shows are critical areas for building a foundation for later success. In 2018 Government set a ten year ambition to reduce by half the percentage of children who finish reception year without these skills – from 28% to 14%. This is why the Government is investing around £100m to improve outcomes in the early years, particularly focusing on early communication, language and literacy development for disadvantaged children. This includes £24m allocated to develop more high quality school-based nursery provision for disadvantaged children and £20m to provide professional development for early years practitioners.

A key aim of the changes proposed in this consultation is to improve outcomes at age 5, particularly in early language and literacy, and reduce workload so that teachers can spend more time interacting with children in their care. However, we know that the drivers of children's outcomes at age 5 are broader than what happens within early years settings. Parents play a crucial role in their children's early language

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<sup>2</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/808897/Childcare\\_providers\\_and\\_inspections\\_charts\\_and\\_tables\\_as\\_at\\_31\\_March\\_2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/808897/Childcare_providers_and_inspections_charts_and_tables_as_at_31_March_2019.xlsx) (Table 5)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2018-to-2019> (Main tables: Table 1)

<sup>4</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/759345/EYFSP2018\\_additional\\_tables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759345/EYFSP2018_additional_tables.xlsx). (Table 6) 2019 data for children in receipt of free school meals will be published on 28 November 2019.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2018-to-2019> (Main tables: Table 5a)

development. So we have launched [\*Hungry Little Minds\*](#) – a three-year campaign to encourage parents and carers to engage in activities that support their child’s early learning and help set them up for school and beyond. We are supporting children and families through effective and coherent local early years services, including working with the Institute of Health Visiting to train 1,000 health visitors in speech, language and communication needs, so that they can identify children and families in need of further support.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework

The EYFS statutory framework is mandatory in all early years settings, including maintained schools, non-maintained schools, independent schools, all nurseries and childminders on the Early Years Register, and all childminders registered with an early years childminder agency. It sets the standards that schools and early years providers must meet to ensure that children are taught and develop well and are kept healthy and safe in all early years settings from birth to age 5.

The EYFS was first introduced in 2008. In 2012, following an independent review of evidence and practice (the Tickell Report, 2011<sup>6</sup>), the learning and development requirements were revised to create three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning, rather than the previous six areas of learning. It also introduced three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

Sections 1 and 2 of the EYFS framework set out the learning and development and assessment requirements and include the educational programmes early years providers are required to follow across the seven areas of learning<sup>7</sup>. All early years practitioners and teachers are required to pursue rich daily activities in supporting each child's educational development under these areas.

The EYFS framework does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. It recognises that effective teaching in the early years requires skilled use of a teaching practice repertoire which responds appropriately to the age and needs of the children being taught. In recognition of this, the revised EYFS framework will include the definition of teaching currently included in Ofsted's Early Years Inspection Handbook<sup>8</sup>:

*‘Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundations-for-life-health-and-learning-an-independent-report-on-the-early-years-foundation-stage-to-her-majestys-government>

<sup>7</sup> The seven areas of learning are: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif>



*teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective teaching and learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.'*

The EYFSP is a teacher-observed assessment completed at the end of the reception year which provides teachers and parents with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities against expected levels and their readiness for year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 ELGs.

This summative assessment informs the dialogue between reception and year 1 teachers to support each child's transition to year 1, including identifying where further support is needed. The EYFSP also provides a national and local population-level assessment of child development at age 5, including attainment for particular groups, e.g. children eligible for free school meals and those with SEND. It is not used as an accountability measure for school performance.

Section 3 of the EYFS framework sets out the safeguarding and welfare requirements that must be followed to ensure children are kept safe and are well cared for. This consultation is seeking views on one change to section 3 of the framework.

## Background to the proposed changes

Following the Government response<sup>9</sup> to the primary assessment consultation (published September 2017), the Government consulted early years experts, practitioners and academics to develop proposals intended to:

- make all 17 ELGs clearer, more specific and easier for teachers to make accurate judgements;
- focus on strengthening language and vocabulary development to particularly support disadvantaged children;
- strengthen literacy and numeracy outcomes to ensure all children have a good grasp of these areas of learning in preparation for year 1;
- ensure the ELGs are based on the latest evidence in childhood development; and
- ensure they reflect the strongest predictors of future attainment.

To reduce teacher workload we considered different approaches to assessment moderation, streamlined assessment guidance and strengthened the important message that teachers should use their professional judgement and not rely on unnecessary evidence to justify their assessments.

In July 2018 we published a draft revised EYFS framework with revised educational programme summaries and ELGs and a draft revised handbook<sup>10</sup>, which we piloted during the last academic year (2018/19) in 24 randomly selected schools across England. The pilot evaluation was carried out by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in partnership with NatCen Social Research and Action for Children. An independent report by the EEF was published on 24 October 2019<sup>11</sup>. The objective of the evaluation was to:

- understand how the EYFSP reforms affect staff workload;
- understand the delivery (understanding and interpretation) of the new materials;
- explore the perceived clarity and precision of new ELGs and their descriptors and whether these facilitate or hinder assessment and moderation; and
- gather views on whether children are better prepared for key stage 1.

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<sup>9</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/644871/Primary\\_assessment\\_consultation\\_response.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644871/Primary_assessment_consultation_response.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EYFSP-Pilot-Framework-2018.pdf>  
<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EYFSP-Pilot-Handbook-2018.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-pilot/>

The key findings from the evaluation include:

- Participants viewed the revised ELGs positively overall, describing them as clearer than previous ELGs. They also made practical suggestions about improving the revised ELGs.
- Schools reported that their workload had reduced due to the reduced expectations for assessment and evidence-gathering (or would do once the changes were embedded). Staff reported using this extra time to spend with children.
- The revised ELGs by themselves were not felt to be sufficient: teachers wanted supporting materials, such as exemplification and curriculum guidance.
- There were mixed views about whether children would be better prepared for key stage 1 as a result of the changes, and about whether the new ELGs were more or less challenging than before. Follow-up research would be required to investigate this further.
- Teachers welcomed using their own judgement and felt empowered to do so. However, some felt that external moderation would still be important for ensuring consistency between schools, and for gaining alternative perspectives.

We welcome these findings and that teachers felt the new ELGs offered a useful opportunity to update their curriculum, and that changes to the communication, language and literacy ELGs offered a greater focus in the classroom on stories and discussion.

The detailed findings from this evaluation and additional feedback from early years experts and sector stakeholders have informed the proposals within this consultation. In addition to the changes we are proposing through this consultation, we recognise the need to provide high quality exemplification materials to schools to aid understanding of the new ELGs and ensure consistency of approach to the EYFSP assessment.

Following this consultation our intention is to introduce the revised EYFS framework on a statutory basis from September 2021, with schools being able to opt in to using the new framework on a voluntary basis from September 2020.

## **Not in scope**

No changes to the characteristics of effective teaching and learning are being proposed through this consultation. The characteristics are central for practitioners and teachers to use to support effective practice. Each of the principles should continue to underpin children's cognitive and non-cognitive development under each of the seven areas of learning.

The terms 'prime' and 'specific' for the areas of learning will remain, as will the names of the seven areas of learning. Communication and language, personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and physical development should continue as the core basis for all children's development in the EYFS and continue to work hand in hand with the specific areas of learning of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. All the areas of learning are inter-connected and complement one another.

We are not proposing to change the 'good level of development (GLD)' measure. Children will continue to be judged to have reached a 'good level of development' if they achieve 'expected' against the ELGs under the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics.

The progress check at age two and the reception baseline assessment are not in scope of this consultation.

## About You

1. What is your name?

2. What is your email address?

3. What is the name of your organisation?

4. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation? Please select one option from the list below. .

- Childminder
- Early years sector representative body
- Local Authority
- Maintained Nursery School – head teacher
- Maintained Nursery School – teacher/practitioner
- Parent/carer
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – manager
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – practitioner
- School – head teacher/senior leader
- School – reception teacher
- School – other
- Teaching union
- Training provider
- Other

5. If you answered "Other" please specify in what capacity you are responding to this consultation.

## **Educational Programmes**

The EYFS framework sets out brief, high level summaries of the sorts of activities that practitioners and teachers should undertake with children from birth to reception, under each of the seven areas of learning. These summaries help to inform educational programmes for early years settings and reception classes. These were revised as part of the pilot EYFS framework to give greater clarity and specificity in supporting effective daily practice across the 0-5 age range covered by the EYFS. We have been working with experts to further finesse the new proposed educational programme summaries, on which we seek your views and feedback. More detailed curriculum guidance on early years education from birth to reception is being developed separately alongside these reforms through an update of the 'Development Matters' guidance. The new curriculum guidance will remain non-statutory and does not form part of this consultation.

## **Proposed educational programmes**

### **Communication and Language**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These

attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

### **Physical Development**

Physical activity is important in children's all-round development and to enable them to pursue healthy and active lives. Through opportunities to be active, children develop coordination, control and precision of movement. Children need to develop strength and the habit of exercise, as well as precision when using small tools correctly.

### **Literacy**

Reading consists of two dimensions: word reading and comprehension (both listening and reading). It is important to develop both aspects. Good language comprehension, necessary for both reading and writing, draws from linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. By listening and talking about stories, rhymes and poems, and non-fiction books, children develop knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). It is also crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading; by reading books in class and demonstrating their own enjoyment, teachers will pass on the joy of reading.

### **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep conceptual understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns therein. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives – children will develop a secure base of knowledge from which mathematical mastery is built. In addition, children's curiosity about number, shape, space and measure should be encouraged and furthered through opportunities to apply their growing understanding of the mathematical world to the world around them.

### **Understanding the World**

The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. And enriching and widening their vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

**Q6. Please give us your views on whether the activities described in each of the proposed educational programme summaries support children’s learning and development throughout the EYFS.**

**Please provide your view below, being specific about which educational programme this applies to where appropriate.**



## The Early Learning Goals

The ELGs define the level of progress children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS. Seventeen ELGs make up the EYFSP. The ELGs are an end-point assessment and should not be used as a curriculum. At the end of reception year, each child is currently assessed as either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' against each goal. Assessments are carried out through a 'best fit' approach. 'Best fit' does not mean that the child has equal mastery of all aspects of the ELG. Practitioners should look at the whole of each ELG description when making this summative judgement. A child will be judged to have reached a 'good level of development' if they achieve 'expected' against the ELGs under the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics<sup>12</sup>. All 17 draft revised ELGs and descriptors have been reviewed following the independent pilot evaluation. We recognise that the descriptors will need high quality exemplifications to support teachers in making confident and consistent judgements as part of the assessment. This consultation seeks your feedback on changes to the ELGs.

### Communication and Language: rationale for change

Communication and language is a critical area of learning within the EYFS, and it underpins and influences all other areas. We know from the growing body of research that vocabulary at age 5 is one of the strongest predictors of outcomes for children and these benefits continue into adult life. However, too many children leave reception year without the necessary language and vocabulary and it becomes increasingly difficult for these children to catch up with peers as they progress through key stages 1 and 2. The revisions under this area of learning focus on the key aspects which, when supported by teachers, make a difference in narrowing language development gaps and increase overall attainment for all children. This includes a stronger focus on teachers reading to children and developing and enriching their vocabularies.

### Proposed ELGs

#### Listening, Attention and Understanding ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond appropriately when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;

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<sup>12</sup> The 12 ELGs which make up the current good level of development are: listening and attention, understanding and speaking (communication and language); moving and handling and health and self-care (physical development); self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships (personal, social and emotional development); reading and writing (literacy) and numbers and shape, space and measures (mathematics).

- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

### Speaking ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including accurate use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development: rationale for change**

PSED is one of the prime areas of learning within the EYFS. Following feedback from the primary assessment consultation (2017) and after discussion with experts, we proposed the introduction of a new ELG on self-regulation. A child's ability to self-regulate their emotions and behaviour, control their attention span, and remain task orientated helps to develop non-cognitive and cognitive skills needed to succeed. Strong evidence is emerging about self-regulation as a predictor of pre-reading skills and later outcomes in maths and literacy. Building relationships, particularly with peers, reflects other important emotional and social skills. This area of learning complements the key principles of the characteristics of effective learning. In addition, we have moved health and self care (formerly under physical development) into this area of learning.

## **Proposed ELGs**

### Self-Regulation ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

### Managing Self ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

### Building Relationships ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

### **Physical Development: rationale for change**

Physical development, as one of the three prime areas, is central to ensuring that children develop their core strength and larger muscle groups in a co-ordinated way so that they have the confidence to be active and healthy. Building strength in these muscles provides a solid basis for children to develop their fine motor muscle strength, which will be critical for being able to hold a pencil effectively for writing and drawing with accuracy and working with other small tools. These ELGs have been designed to ensure sufficient focus is given to both gross and fine motor skills. Self-care has been moved to sit under PSED.

### **Proposed ELGs**

#### Gross Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

#### Fine Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

### **Literacy: rationale for change**

It is essential that all children are given the opportunity to develop a love of books, as well as the underpinning skills needed to develop into fluent readers and writers. In line with the simple view of reading, the revised ELGs reflect both the importance of

ensuring children are taught to decode using systematic phonics as well as developing their language comprehension. By developing both crucial aspects, all pupils will be best prepared to become confident readers.

## **Proposed ELGs**

### Comprehension ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

### Word Reading ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

### Writing ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

## **Mathematics: rationale for change**

The maths ELGs have been refocused on children being able to achieve greater depth, in relation to recognising and understanding numbers, quantity and patterns. This will be important to ensure children have the confidence and strong grasp of basic numbers in preparation for key stage 1. Shapes, space and measure is included in the proposed mathematics educational programme. The proposed ELGs will focus on number and numerical patterns.

## **Proposed ELGs**

### Number ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;

- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aides) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

### Numerical Patterns ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Count confidently beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare sets of objects up to 10 in different contexts, considering size and difference;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

### **Understanding the World: rationale for change**

Feedback from the primary assessment consultation (2017) suggested that the ELGs under this area of learning are the most vague. These have been revised to reflect specific categorisation into historical and current figures, geography and natural science. The revisions aim to support greater depth of understanding of these areas through the new ELGs and, importantly, help support language and wider vocabulary development through broader experiences and being read to from non-fiction books. Information Technology (IT) has been removed as an ELG, as the consensus from our experts, primary assessment consultation responses and the pilot evaluation suggests that this has little value as an end-point measure in itself.

### **Proposed ELGs**

#### Past and Present ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Recall some important narratives, characters and figures from the past encountered in books read in class.

#### People Culture and Communities ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

### The Natural World ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

### **Expressive Arts and Design: rationale for change**

The ELGs under this area of learning have been revised to be clearer and more specific and to underpin the importance of children being able to demonstrate imagination and creativity through a wide range of experiences and working with different materials.

These ELGs can particularly support children's language and vocabulary development outcomes through role play, making up their own stories and singing.

### **Proposed ELGs**

#### Creating with Materials ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Draw and paint using a range of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

#### Being Imaginative and Expressive ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

**Q7. Please give us your views on whether the proposed ELGs are clear, specific and easy to understand.**

**Please provide your views below, being specific about which ELGs they apply to where appropriate.**

**Q8. Please give us your views on whether the proposed ELGs contribute to a well-rounded assessment of a child’s development at the end of reception year.**

**Please provide your views below, being specific about which ELGs they apply to where appropriate.**

## The EYFSP assessment process

The primary purpose of the EYFSP assessment is to support individual children's successful transition from the EYFS to year 1, providing teachers with the information they need to assess which children will need further support to be able to catch up and keep up with their peers. The EYFSP also provides a national and local population-level assessment of child development at age 5, including attainment for particular groups, e.g. children eligible for free school meals and those with SEND. It is not used as an accountability measure for schools.

We heard through the primary assessment consultation and teacher feedback that the current EYFSP assessment process drives excessive workload, through unnecessary collection and recording of evidence for use in making judgements and for moderation purposes. A key objective of our reforms to the EYFSP is to look at ways in which these burdens can be reduced significantly.

We tested this in the EYFSP pilot through: streamlining the assessment guidance and making it succinct and clear; reinforcing the message that teachers are not required to collect unnecessary evidence in order to assess children, rather they should use their knowledge to make a professional judgement on how each child should be assessed; and asking the pilot schools to undertake their own moderation in the absence of LA external moderation, as we have heard that external moderation processes can put pressure on schools, and increase workload, as they prepare for a LA visit.

## Moderation

Moderation allows practitioners to benchmark EYFSP judgements and to ensure consistent standards and reliable outcomes. It should be a collaborative process with colleagues, based on professional dialogue.

Moderation should begin with each individual setting and schools moderating EYFSP data internally each year. Schools should also work together to arrange inter-school moderation so that practitioners can share experiences and develop their assessment skills. We do not moderate the EYFSP assessment data at a national level, however, LAs have a statutory duty to externally moderate EYFSP data in 25% of local schools each year.

While moderation is an important part of ensuring that the EYFSP produces trusted assessment outcomes, practitioners have told us that the external moderation process can be burdensome. Some have said that external moderation is contributing to the perception of the EYFSP as a high stakes accountability measure for practitioners and for schools and is leading to unnecessary gathering of physical evidence to support professional judgements. We also believe that a clearer and more specific set of ELGs,



combined with high quality exemplification materials, should improve the accuracy and consistency of teacher judgements, hence reducing the reliance on LA moderation.

We would like to seek feedback on the proposal to remove the statutory requirement for LAs to externally moderate EYFSP judgements, as a means of supporting and empowering teachers to make rounded judgements about a child's development without being over-burdened by the collection of physical evidence. Schools would be expected to continue to moderate internally and with other settings to ensure consistency of judgements and that the EYFSP produces trusted assessment outcomes. We would also like to seek your views on alternatives to statutory LA moderation to ensure the EYFSP remains a trusted and valid assessment.

**Q9. What are your views on removing the LA statutory element of EYFSP moderation?**

**Please provide your views below.**

**Q10. What are your views on whether removing the LA statutory element of the EYFSP moderation will help to reduce teacher workload?**

**Please provide your views below.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a response to the question above.

**Q11. What alternatives to LA statutory moderation do you think could help to ensure consistency of EYFSP judgements across the ELGs?**

**Please provide your views below.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a response to the question above.

## EYFSP judgement criteria

Currently when teachers make a judgement on children's attainment against the EYFSP, they will assess whether a child is 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' across each of the 17 ELGs. Children who can broadly demonstrate the ELG descriptor will have met the expected level of attainment for the ELG. This does not mean that the child has equal mastery of all aspects of the ELG and practitioners should look at the whole of each ELG description when making this summative judgement. The 'expected' level across 12 of the ELGs<sup>13</sup> forms the GLD composite metric which helps teachers, school leaders and government gauge how many children are meeting the expected standards for key educational and developmental outcomes by age 5.

The 'exceeded' level also has descriptors against the 17 ELGs, but as part of our reforms we heard from experts, practitioners and teachers that this set of descriptors is unhelpful in making consistent and accurate judgements, as there are inherent challenges in what level to pitch exceeded descriptors. We also heard that judging children as exceeded against descriptors generates additional unnecessary collection of evidence and creates workload pressure for internal and external moderation events.

There has also been consensus amongst key stakeholders that, in terms of the early years, our focus as practitioners and government should be on efforts to increase the number of children who achieve expected levels of development by the end of reception and closing the GLD gaps, particularly between disadvantaged children and their peers.

The ELGs have been revised to provide more specificity about the expected levels of development at the end of the reception year. Revised curriculum guidance will ensure that all children, from those emerging to those far surpassing the expected level of development, are challenged and stretched during the reception year.

With this in mind, we would like to hear your views on our proposal to remove the exceeded criteria from the EYFSP so that teachers can prioritise their support to children who are emerging and consolidate learning and development for children who are on track for expected levels of development. Teachers will still be required to stretch more able children and support them to excel and provide a narrative for parents and the year 1 teacher, but they will not be required to record the exceeded level to complete the EYFSP for national data purposes.

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<sup>13</sup> GLD comprises ELGs under communication and language, PSED, physical development, mathematics and literacy areas of learning.

**Q12. What are your views on the proposal to remove the 'exceeded' judgement from the EYFSP?**

**Please provide your views below.**

## Safeguarding and Welfare

The safeguarding and welfare section in the EYFS framework sets out requirements that all early years providers must meet regardless of type or size of setting. The requirements are designed to support providers in creating settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can thrive. Any changes to this section should not undermine those principles.

We are proposing to make a minor amendment to the safeguarding and welfare section and we would like to hear your views.

## Promotion of oral health

The EYFS framework requires providers to promote the good health of children attending the setting<sup>14</sup>. Evidence published by Public Health England suggests that more than 1 in 5 children age 5 have experienced tooth decay with one or more teeth being extracted or filled<sup>15</sup>. The promotion of good oral health in the early years can help reduce the incidences of tooth decay and hospital admissions. We propose including the promotion of good oral health as part of the overall promotion of good health, as set out in the EYFS framework. This does not mean 'supervised toothbrushing'.

**Q13. Should the requirement in the EYFS framework to 'promote the good health of children' also include oral health?**

**Please provide your views below.**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> (Para 3.44)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oral-health-survey-of-5-year-old-children-2017>

## Equalities Assessment

This section asks for your help in identifying any potential impacts of our proposals on people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

### Question on Equalities Assessment

**Q14. Please provide any representations and/or evidence on the potential impact of our proposals on people with protected characteristics for the purposes of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).**



Department  
for Education

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