



Department  
for Education

Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
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08 March 2022

**Dear local authority early years leads,**

(cc'd to Directors of Children's Services)

As you will be aware, this summer term will be the first time that all reception teachers across England will complete the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), following statutory implementation of government's landmark Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reforms in September 2021. Over the past two years we have engaged with early adopter schools, statutory rollout schools, LAs and early years providers to understand how the new EYFS is being implemented in practice, what is going well and where there is a need for additional messaging or support from central government and LAs.

In light of this feedback, and given the significant changes that the reforms have made to the statutory assessment and moderation process, we wanted to take this opportunity to write to local authorities and clearly set out what is different, as well as signpost to resources and vodcasts that DfE and Ofsted have published to support reception teachers in completing the EYFSP.

### **Changes to the EYFSP**

One of the main aims of the EYFS reforms was to reset the approach to making EYFSP assessments for children in reception year. The [EYFSP Handbook 2022](#) sets out all guidance and requirements regarding the assessment going forward, for teachers, leaders and for local authorities, as well as any other early years providers who must complete the EYFSP in the rare case where a child has not attended a reception class in the last year of the EYFS. The main changes include:

- Statutory LA moderation is no longer in place and LAs are no longer required to externally moderate teachers' EYFSP judgements to ensure consistency, or to offer moderation training, including 'agreement trialling'. The Handbook is clear that it is for schools and trusts to determine their approach to moderation but that this should be a collaborative process, for example discussing observations about a sample of children's development with other EYFS teachers and practitioners or a year 1 teacher.
- All new seventeen Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are now clearer, more specific and easier for teachers to make accurate and consistent judgements against. When completing the EYFSP, teachers should use only the ELG descriptors to assess whether or not a child has met the expected level of development. Teachers must not assess against additional elements that are not set out in the ELG descriptor for the purposes of completing the EYFSP.

- The ‘exceeding’ criteria has been removed, meaning that teachers must now just assess whether or not a child is meeting or not meeting the expected level of development set out in the ELG. Teachers should do this using a ‘best fit’ model, based on their knowledge of the individual child. Best fit does not always mean that a child has equal mastery of all aspects of the ELG descriptor and teachers should use their professional judgement to determine whether each ELG in its totality best fits the child’s learning and development.
- We have strengthened the messaging that teachers should not collect physical evidence or create Profile books to prove or to demonstrate that a child has met the ELG or because they believe that Ofsted or the LA may wish to see it. We have also been clear that the EYFSP should be regarded as a short and low stakes assessment carried out at the end of reception year with the primary purpose of supporting children’s successful transition into year 1, as well as sharing important information with parents and carers. It should not be used to hold individual teachers, schools or trusts to account. We have also heard examples of LA teams being held to account on the GLD in their local area and we are clear that this is not an appropriate use of the data.
- As well as the statutory changes set out above, the EYFS reforms have reset expectations around curriculum, teaching and assessment practice within the EYFS. This includes strengthened messaging to reduce the use of tick lists and trackers throughout the reception year and the rest of the EYFS and to be clear that the ELGs should be used for an assessment at the end of reception year only – not to plan a curriculum or to track children against in-year.

## **LA responsibilities going forward**

LAs’ statutory responsibilities with regard to the EYFSP are set out each year in the EYFSP Handbook, as per article 4(2) in [The Early Years Foundation Stage \(Learning and Development Requirements\) Order 2007](#).

As set out in the 2022 Handbook, LAs must ensure schools have a secure electronic system to submit EYFSP data, collect EYFSP data, quality assure it and submit it to DfE. The EYFSP Handbook is clear that quality assurance of the data relates to ensuring that a full and complete set of data is submitted to the department for the schools in each area (for example following up any missing records either at school or child level or querying any clear errors or inconsistencies). It does not mean ensuring accuracy of teachers’ professional judgement.

As per [section 13 of the Childcare Act 2006](#), LAs are still required to secure information, advice and training on meeting the EYFS requirements for providers in their area who are judged less than ‘good’ by Ofsted, have not yet had an inspection report or those on Part A of the Ofsted General Childcare Register who are assessed by Ofsted as not having met the requirements of registration. This duty is not impacted by the change in approach to EYFSP assessment following the EYFS reforms.

## **Resources to support teachers in completing the new EYFSP**

Today (8 March), DfE published a suite of case study exemplification videos to support teachers in making EYFSP assessments. These can be found [here](#) on gov.uk, alongside a

context note that sets out how to use them and reiterates the messages in this letter to LAs. We have also published a [vodcast](#) that teachers and leaders may find helpful in explaining the new EYFSP assessment, including these videos and their aims. We would recommend that LA early years teams watch the vodcast for teachers and leaders to ensure consistent messaging and advice from both the LA and central government.

As explained in the vodcast, we have deliberately taken a different approach to these exemplification materials to be clear that teachers, schools and settings should move away from excessive tracking and evidence collection. The previous exemplification materials for the EYFSP unintentionally encouraged assessment and moderation practices that became burdensome for teachers and did not focus on what matters most for children.

We have also intentionally refrained from giving schools additional criteria to assess children's development against for each area of learning, beyond what is set out in the ELGs themselves. For the purposes of completing the EYFSP, we want teachers to use the information in the ELGs, rather than reviewing additional documents or guidance and assessing children against these too. The ELGs are clearer and more precise for this purpose and also leave room for teacher judgement through the best fit model. If offering advice or support to schools, we request that LAs do not advise teachers to complete the EYFSP using broader criteria than what is set out in the ELGs.

The seven case study videos show teachers, leaders and support staff having professional discussions about an individual child's holistic development children's development and their EYFSP judgements. The videos were filmed in early adopter schools from across the country who volunteered to share their experiences assessing against the new ELGs last year. The teachers demonstrate behaviour that is in line with government guidance following the EYFS reforms, including using professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to make assessments, as opposed to collecting physical evidence to support moderation discussions.

The exemplification videos aim to empower teachers to approach the new EYFSP feeling trusted in their professional judgements and confident that they will not be externally checked for accuracy or held to account on the EYFSP scores of children in their class. They are not designed to be used for curriculum planning or to provide an exhaustive list of things that will contribute to a teacher's decision that a child has, or has not, reached the expected level of development. [Development Matters](#) supports curriculum planning under the revised EYFS framework. Other information and support is available on [Help for Early Years Providers](#) and [Foundation Years](#).

While not specifically about the EYFSP, we would also recommend that LAs share a recent [interview between NCB and Ofsted](#) that sets out how Ofsted approaches its inspections in line with the EYFS reforms and aims to dispel some of the myths that we know have been circulating in relation to this, including in relation to evidence gathering and what inspectors will want to see.

## **Communications to schools**

We are continuing to work with multi-academy trusts (MATs), school governing bodies, unions and school leadership to ensure the changes to the EYFSP and how the data should and should not be used going forward are well understood across the sector. As part of this we are working closely with Ofsted to ensure joint messaging from central government.

We know that for many schools this new approach will require a significant culture change and we are grateful for the continued support from LA colleagues in reiterating this messaging and supporting teachers in their local areas to complete the new EYFSP in line with the EYFSP Handbook 2022 and the behaviour demonstrated in the recently published exemplification videos.

Thank you for your support to date with the implementation of these important reforms - and for the support you will give going forward. We are happy to respond to any questions from LAs sent to the EYFS reforms team mailbox: [eyfs.qualitypractice@education.gov.uk](mailto:eyfs.qualitypractice@education.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ada Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'S'.

**Ada Simpson**  
**Early Years Quality and Outcomes**