Guidance for Heads, Senior Managers, and Assessment Coordinators.

EYFS Provision- A Learning Walk

What to look for in good/outstanding EYFS provision.

Herefordshire Early Years Team
1. Leadership and Management:

It is essential that the Early Years Foundation Stage Coordinator (or Key Stage Coordinator or Headteacher, depending on the size and management structure within the school) has a thorough understanding of what constitutes good and outstanding provision and practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school’s Senior Leadership Team will need to ensure that they:

- Set a clear direction for developments within the Early Years Foundation Stage with a strong focus on knowledge and understanding of child development and the characteristics of effective learning.
- Have a clear vision about how the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage is integral to overall improvement in the school.
- Motivate staff and children and provide a model of good practice.
- Are committed to Continuous Professional Development and workforce reform to ensure that all staff are valued and encouraged to improve their practice and to gain qualifications.
- Promote equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination, and identify vulnerable groups so that all children make good progress and the attainment gap is closed.
- Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities in developing children’s learning and are given regular opportunities to meet together to discuss observation, assessment and planning.
- Encourage the involvement of all relevant people in children’s assessments—parents/carers, support staff and other professionals where applicable.
- Monitor the progress children are making against the age/stage bands in Development Matters, in all areas of learning; analyse and evaluate the data to identify gaps in provision and/or learning.
- Have high expectations of the staff, children and their families.
- Have supported and overseen clear improvements since the previous inspection, and continue to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement.
- Contribute to the promotion of community cohesion.
- Ensure that the Governing Body is actively involved in the Early Years Foundation Stage and contributes to improvement through its role as a critical friend.
2. What to look for on an EYFS Learning Walk:


In the Early Years Foundation Stage you should expect to see children demonstrating the Characteristics of Effective Learning through:

- Developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across all the areas of learning, with a focus on the three prime areas as the foundation for all other learning.

- Initiating activities, showing initiative and making decisions.

- Having time to explore ideas and interests in depth.

- Behaving appropriately, feeling secure and becoming confident learners.

- Developing their concentration and ability to see activities through.

- Learning in different ways and at different rates, according to their ages/stages.

- Making links in, and discussing, their learning; seeing their learning made visible e.g. through photographic displays at their level/in their Learning Journeys.

- Recognising that they have learned something new and ‘improved’.

- Working/playing co-operatively (for example, taking turns, sharing and discussing).

- Working/playing independently without close supervision.
- Showing that they know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

- Taking responsibility (for example, tidying up, pouring the juice).

- Following instructions and responding well to questions.

- Learning through movement and all their senses, being active learners.

- Learning to accept each other’s differences; effective “conflict resolution”.

### 3. Quality of Provision for Children’s Learning and Welfare—what to look for:

- Effective assignment of key persons who know each child and their families well.

- A welcoming atmosphere that helps children settle into their new environment.

- Close adherence to policies and procedures so that children’s safety and well-being is secure.

- Partnerships with external agencies to ensure that any specific needs can be met.

- Inclusive practice with effective promotion of equality and diversity.

- Staff fostering and modelling the Characteristics of Effective Learning.
4. The Role of the Adult in Supporting and Challenging Learning - what to look for:

- An inclusive approach that meets the diverse needs of all children.

- Well-planned and purposeful activities which engage and interest the children, and which meet their developmental needs.

- ‘Continuous’ provision where progress is promoted through positive relationships and effective deployment of staff, and thoughtful planning of the indoor and outdoor environments to extend all areas of learning.

- A good balance between children making purposeful choices about their learning activities (child-initiated) and adults directing/leading/teaching specific skills (adult-led).

- Adults using and modelling language at the appropriate level, to extend children’s understanding, listening and speaking skills.

- Adults actively modelling and teaching desired social skills/behaviour and self-care skills (rather than policing).

- Adults encouraging independence and perseverance, and not stepping in too quickly to do things for the child (e.g. dressing/undressing; meal/snack times).

- Clear roles for and expectations of other adults working in the setting to ensure they add to the children’s learning experience.

- Good relationships with and involvement of parents/carers in their children’s learning and in the assessment process.

- An environment, both indoors and outdoors, that promotes the Characteristics of Effective Learning.
5. Observation, Assessment and Planning:

Children develop rapidly in the early years: assessment should be based on observation which in turn informs the planning and provision. The EYFS Development Matters document provides essential guidance on how to recognise and assess the progress children are making. Methods of gathering evidence to make the assessments are not prescribed but the evidence itself should reflect the unique characteristics and learning of each individual child.

Please note:

- **Baseline assessments are not statutory.** However, staff should be able to demonstrate that they evaluate children's starting points (attainment on entry) in order to identify their stages of development (= age/stage bands in Development Matters) and to plan the next steps in provision and learning.

- Ongoing observations of child centred/initiated activities on post-it notes and/or notebooks are common but not the only method. Practitioners may keep “Learning Journeys” or portfolios, including annotated work samples, photographs, spontaneous and focused observations. All these strategies have a place providing there is a purpose to them and they impact on a child’s learning and development.

- Effective practitioners are likely to use the information they have to identify the next steps in children’s learning and to plan appropriate experiences that will build on what children already know, understand and can do. They will also use the information to analyse their own provision (a gap in learning may not be due to the ability of the child, but due to a lack of opportunity). The systems in place should be manageable, operated consistently, be used effectively and demonstrate an impact on a child’s learning and development.

- Staff should be able to explain their assessments and how the system they use tracks children’s progress; they should also be able to explain how they meet the needs of all ages/stages.

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The Herefordshire Early Years Consultants can support Heads, KS/EYFS Coordinators and Governors to learn more about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Members of the team can carry out visits, undertake shared observations, attend staff meetings and are available to talk to your staff and Governors.

For more information please contact your Early Years Consultant in the Learning and Achievement Service.