



Children & Education Select Committee
14 May 2014

Overview of Early Years and Childcare Service

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services

This report is to provide the Select Committee with an overview of the work of the Early Years and Childcare Service

Introduction:

1. This report gives information on the following aspects of the work of the Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS):
 - The number of children that the service caters for, and through which specific services
 - The Ofsted Framework for early years and childcare
 - The support that the EYCS provides to ensure “school readiness”
 - Children’s Centres
 - An appendix of data that provides a measure of performance for the early education and childcare sector.

Early Years and Childcare specific services:

2. EYCS has contact with children and families as a result of fulfilling the statutory duty for Surrey County Council to:
 - secure sufficient early education places
 - secure sufficient childcare places for working parents
 - provide information to parents and carers on all aspects of parenting and services for parents including information on early education and childcare.
 - improve outcomes for all children up to age five and to reduce inequalities

- reduce inequalities by integrating early childhood services

3. **Securing sufficient early education places:**

All children aged three and four are eligible for early education for up to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks. In addition, two year olds, whose parental income is equivalent to the eligibility for free school meals are also eligible for 15 hours a week over 38 weeks.

In the spring term of 2014, 28,763 three and four year olds accessed an early education place in Surrey. Take-up of places in Surrey is above the national average where the data indicates for both three and four year olds over 100% of the population for this age group are taking up a place. This is primarily due to a proportion of children from other local authority areas taking up a place in a Surrey setting. For England, the equivalent levels of take up are 94% for three year olds and 98% for four year olds.

In 2011, EYCS undertook some research into children in Reception classes in Surrey's maintained schools that had not taken up an early education place in a Surrey setting. The research indicated that 86% of the respondents had taken up a place in a setting outside Surrey. Consequently, it is the service view that only a very small minority of children do not access early education.

EYCS has a small team of staff to administer payment to the settings for all these children. EYCS also has a small team of staff to advise settings on how they can organise their business to ensure that they have long-term financial sustainability.

4. **Securing sufficient childcare places for working parents:**

EYCS fulfils the statutory duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, which would include:

- a) Full day care for children age nil to five.
- b) Out-of-school childcare – before and after school and during school holidays for children up to age 15 or 16 if they have special educational needs (SEN).

Consequently, EYCS has indirect contact with children through the work that is undertaken in ensuring that there are sufficient places and that the provision is offering the highest quality service to children.

There are a variety of childcare settings within Surrey that offer childcare places for children, and to provide information on the potential number of children that could be supported the following table details the number of settings and the places available:

Top figure: Number of settings (including unregistered settings)
 Bottom figure: Number of places

	October 2013 totals
Day Nursery	178
	10,435
Extended Day Pre-school Playgroup	122
	3,958
Pre-school Playgroup	217
	5,973
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools (NUIS)	69
	3,162
Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes	71
	3,721
Total pre-school settings:	657
	27,249
Before School Care	54
	1,193
After School Care	112
	3,623
Before and After School Care	104
	3,717
Holiday Playschemes	159
	8,226
Total Out of School settings:	429
	16,759
Total Group settings:	1,086
	44,008
Childminders	1,885
	9,073
Home child carers	817
	-
Grand Total:	2,971
	53,081

Source: EMS One Provisional figures as at 04 October 2013

EYCS has the following teams that support these settings:

- a) Early Years Sector Improvement Advisors – who support settings on the EYFS and for children with SEN.
- b) Quality Improvement Advisors – who support settings in raising the quality of the service they offer through a Quality Improvement Scheme.
- c) Early Language Advisors – who support settings in conjunction with other agencies, to improve children’s language and communication.
- d) Home-based Childcare Advisors – who support childminders and other home-based childcarers on the EYFS and on

raising the quality of their service.

- e) Playwork Advisors – who support out-of-school childcare settings.
- f) Workforce Development Team – who support settings on the recruitment and retention of staff, as well as on how practitioners can further their career through training and qualifications.

Surrey has a very vibrant early education and childcare market with new settings opening, or existing settings expanding on a regular basis, not always with the involvement from EYCS. All provision in Surrey is run by a private, voluntary or independent (PVI) organisation, except where the setting is managed by one of Surrey's maintained schools or within a children's centre managed by a school.

Every three years, EYCS undertakes a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) with an annual review. The CSA identifies areas where there is a gap in provision and EYCS endeavours to bridge that gap. In general terms, there are sufficient places for children under five and the most significant gap is for out-of-school childcare. EYCS works with schools, Borough and District Councils and childcare providers to expand the provision of out-of-school childcare. There is now a requirement under the Children and Families Bill to provide an annual report to Cabinet on the assessment of sufficient early education and childcare places.

The Early Years Sector Improvement Advisors provide advice and support to settings on how to develop inclusive practice to meet those children who have special educational needs (SEN). In the spring term of 2014, 1,043 children, age three and four, with SEN were accessing the free early years entitlement in the private, voluntary and independent sector.

EYCS also supports families with disabled children and manages the Early Support Service. This team coordinates the "Team around the Family" arrangements where a disabled child has needs that require the support of more than one agency. In December 2013, 221 children were being supported by this team.

Surrey's children's centres are also in contact with many children and families in the county. They offer a universal service for all children under five with more targeted support for the most vulnerable. As at the end of March 2014, 43,257 children living in Surrey were registered at a children's centre, 62% of the population for that age group, and 17,512, or 26% of the population, were accessing services. Children's centres are targeting their services to support children and families in areas of disadvantage and at the end of March 2014, 3,922 children under five living in an area of disadvantage are registered, 71% of the

population in these areas and 3,145 were seen, 57% of the population.

Children and families are also supported by the Family Information Service (FIS) within EYCS. In the 12 month period up December 2013, 4,579 enquiries were dealt with by FIS, 46% of which required further action beyond the initial contact. FIS also manages the Family Information Directory, a web based information service that had 415,593 visits in the same 12 month period.

The Ofsted Framework for early years and childcare:

5. When early years registered settings are inspected by Ofsted they are judged on the overall quality and standards of the provision, taking into count a number of key judgements:

The inspection considers how well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend, looking at children's progress taking into account their starting points and capabilities and how well they are prepared for school or the next steps in their learning. The inspection will consider the needs of all groups: disabled children, boys, girls, children who are significantly below their development stage, those that exceed expectations, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Early years provision contributes to children's "well-being" through effective care practices in helping children feel emotionally secure and ensure children are physically and emotionally healthy. Inspectors look at children who need additional support, behaviour, independence, exercise, managing own needs and preparing children for transitions. All settings in Surrey have a Welfare Audit Review through an annual conversation to help them identify any areas for development and actions are followed up by an Improvement Advisor. New settings are encouraged to complete an audit when they register for Early Years Free Entitlement. Any setting in Surrey that is given an "inadequate" or "requires improvement" outcome at their Ofsted inspection always has action in the report for the setting to address shortcomings in welfare and safeguarding.

The leadership and management of early years provision have to understand and implement the EYFS and meet the learning and development requirements. Managers must meet safeguarding and welfare requirements, have effective systems to inform setting priorities, supervision and performance management and work with parents and external agencies. Evidence includes training qualifications - for Surrey the workforce has increased at level three plus from 45% in 2010 to 54% in 2013, and the qualification levels of leaders at level four and above has increased from 31% in 2010 to 37% in 2013.

Surrey early years provision has a good level of achievement on the outcomes of Ofsted inspections when compared to the national picture. Data at 31 March 2014, records that for all registered early years providers in Surrey, 84% have a “good or outstanding” outcome for overall effectiveness, compared to 77% in England. Ofsted introduced a new inspection framework in September 2012 and this has led to a more challenging regime of inspection and the data EYCS has collected on inspections since September 2012 records only 67% achieving “good or outstanding”, however the numbers of inspections are too small to make statistically verifiable comparisons.

The support that the Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) provides to ensure “school readiness”

6. EYCS work in partnership with Babcock 4S on this to ensure that there is a shared approach in supporting schools and settings in the PVI sector. The EYFS Profile (EYFSP) results are analysed to consider the outcomes for a number of groups of vulnerable children as follows and details on the outcomes for these children can be found in table 6 of the appendix:
- a) Children eligible for free school meals (FSM)
 - b) Black and ethnic minority children (BME)
 - d) English as an additional language children (EAL)
 - e) Disadvantaged areas
 - f) Gender and age – as summer born boys have low scores.

In previous years, EYCS and Babcock have identified schools with the highest proportion of low attaining children and the PVI feeder settings and offer additional support to raise the quality of teaching and learning in both sets of educational settings. Other strategies have involved targeting teaching and learning for boys. This has resulted in improved outcomes for these children and settings. As will have been seen in the recent report the overall results have resulted in a drop in Surrey’s relative position with regard to the national average and comparative local authorities. This has been due to the implementation of a revised EYFS and practitioners being cautious in how they assess children within the revised framework. Consequently over the spring and summer terms EYCS and Babcock 4S will be providing advice and support on how to best assess children and will check the EYFSP’s at the end of the summer term so that any further cautious assessments can be addressed before the final EYFSP results are reported to the Department for Education.

Readiness for school requires much more than how they have performed as they reach the chronological age required for school entry, which is at the end of the Reception Year. A child's growth, physical development and emotional well being all play a part in how well a child is ready for school and EYCS supports a range of activities in early years and childcare settings so that these aspects of child development are understood by practitioners and parents. The following are aspects of child development and parental support that are supported by EYFS:

- a) Understanding attachment – children form secure attachments with a small number of key care givers including early years practitioners. Therefore, early years practitioners need to have a good understanding of attachment and they should be able to build warm, responsive and sustained relationships with young children. A high quality setting will establish a key worker system so that every child has one practitioner who oversees their development plan and liaises with parents, other staff in the setting and in outside agencies. EYCS provides advice support and training in this area as well as on having good recruitment and retention strategies to minimise staff turnover.
- b) Support effective parenting – EYCS provides advice, support and training for settings and practitioners on how they can liaise effectively with parents. EYCS also produces a termly Parents Pages newsletter which provides a range of advice and information for parents and practitioners on children's learning and development. It also sends out weekly e-bulletins on a range of linked topics.
- c) Understanding the importance of speech and language development – EYCS has developed a Reading Strategy in partnership with the Library Service to increase children's access to books and to encourage parents and practitioners to read to children. There is clear evidence that children's ability to learn is increased where they spend more time reading or being read books by parents and practitioners. EYCS also has developed a programme of work with health visitors and speech and language therapists to raise practitioners understanding of how children's language develops, approaches they can take to improve language acquisition and development and to refer children to more specialist support earlier to address any significant delay.

High quality early years settings will address these issues and an EYCS priority is to improve the proportion of settings offering the highest quality services. EYCS fulfils this through:

- our Training Programme,
- Workforce Development support including bursaries for practitioners accessing NVQ level 2 and 3 courses in childcare and for graduate programmes,
- our Quality Improvement Programme,

- business advice and support,
- targeted programmes on early language and communication
- the support for children with additional needs.

Children's Centres:

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7. Children's centres have their own part to play in supporting child development and parental aspirations and understanding of their role in children's learning and development. Indeed this is one aspect of the three elements of their core purpose as set out in DfE guidance:

- a) Child development and school readiness
- b) Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- c) Child and family health and life chances

The most significant aspect of their interventions is the partnership work with health visiting and midwifery services in running the Healthy Child Programme (HCP). Every children's centre will have arrangements with their local health teams on how this programme is run in their reach area with many ante-natal, post natal, well baby clinics, breastfeeding support groups being run in the children's centre itself. Children's centres also run weekly Stay and Play sessions for parent and their young children to attend.

These sessions are run using the relevant aspects of the EYFS to provide a high quality environment for children to play and learn and for parents to understand the role they play in their child's learning and development. Each centre will also have identified the most vulnerable groups of parents in their reach area and these parents are supported to access these sessions and places are protected so that they have priority over other parents in the community. Examples of vulnerable groups are:

- a) Young parents
- b) Children known to Children's Social Care services
- c) Children in workless households, including lone parents
- d) Children in families experiencing Domestic Abuse
- e) Gypsy, Romany Traveller communities
- f) Black and ethnic minority communities
- g) Armed Services families

Children's centres are also provided with details of the outcome of the EYFSP results in their area so that they can target their interventions in line with the areas of development where there is a need to improve.

Children's centres also support parental attachment through breastfeeding support groups and in running baby massage sessions. Both these interventions are proven to improve a parent's secure attachment to their child. Healthy eating and living is encouraged through cookery classes, general advice on healthy living and physical activity sessions. Children's centres also have a focus on enabling parents to enter or re-enter employment and will run a range of sessions to offer basic skills training and qualifications and liaise with Job Centre Plus on access to employment and to target vulnerable families.

Conclusions:

This report provides an overview of the Early Years and Childcare Service and contains information on how the service is supporting children and families to access early education and childcare services in order to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. The report indicates that there is a high level of take up for services and that for most children the outcomes are good but there is a need to provide focussed support for disadvantaged children.

Recommendations:

The Select Committee is asked to note this report and make recommendations as appropriate.

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APPENDIX

This appendix sets out a set of data that provides a measure of the performance for the early education and childcare sector.

1. **The population of children aged under five years in Surrey is estimated at 69,512.**
2. **Access to early education and childcare places across a variety of settings**

Table 1 Childcare settings and places in Surrey
Top figure: Number of settings (including Ofsted unregistered settings)
Bottom figure: Number of places

Day nursery	178 10,435
Extended day pre-school playgroup	122 3,958
Pre-school playgroup	217 5,973
NUIS	69 3,162
Maintained nursery schools and classes	71 3,721
Total pre-school settings	657 27,249
Before school care	54 1,319
After school care	112 3,695
Before and after school care	104 3,771
Holiday playschemes	159 8,562
Total out of school settings	429 16,759
Total group settings	1,086 44,008
Childminders	1,885 9,073
Home child carers	817 -
Grand total	2,971 53,081

Figures are as at 4 October 2013

3. Early education places for three and four year olds

Table 2 Number of early education places available to three and four year olds in Surrey

	Number of places*	Population of three and four year olds	**Density rate for early education places
Surrey	24,092	27,207	89%

At 4 October 2013

*Places include those available in day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, extended day pre-school playgroups, nursery units of independent schools, maintained nursery schools and classes, and 30% of reception class places.

**Density rate represents the number of early education places for every 100 children aged three and four years. Many three year olds do not take up a full time equivalent place.

4. Take up of Free Early Education in the private, voluntary and independent (non-maintained) and maintained sectors

Table 3 Take up of Free Early Education for three and four year olds in Surrey for the last three terms

	3 year old children			4 year old children		
	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014
Population	13,788	13,788	13,788	13,419	13,419	13,419
Number of children non-maintained	11,559	11,458	11,921	7,407	1,549	4,848
Number of children maintained	1,889	2,940	2,444	7,032	12,964	9,550
% children non-maintained	83.8%	83.1%	86.5%	55.2%	11.5%	36.1%
% children maintained	13.7%	21.3%	17.7%	52.4%	96.6%	71.2%
% children all sectors	97.5%	104.4%	104.2%	107.6%	108.2%	107.3%
% children all sectors England (Spring 2013)	94%			98%		

From a survey of parents of reception year children, it is estimated that less than 1% of children do not access free early education before entering school. For the 2013-14 cohort, this is equivalent to 174 children. Half of parents that have not accessed free early education prior to reception year wanted to but couldn't because the setting they used was not registered for free early education or because the 'free' hours were not flexible enough.

5. Number of settings offering places for two year olds eligible for Free Early Education

Table 4 Number of settings offering places for two year olds

Private, voluntary and independent (PVI)	406
Childminders	258
Maintained	4
Total	664

April 2014

In Surrey, 1,244 two year olds accessed free early education in the 2014 spring term.

6. Outcomes at the end of Reception Year within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Table 5 Foundation Stage Profile Assessments 2013 for Surrey and England

Percentage of children achieving at least 'expected' across all the Prime Learning Goals in addition to Literacy and Mathematics	Surrey	53%
	England	52%
Percentage gap between mean score of pupils in lowest 20% of results and median score of whole of Surrey cohort	Surrey	30%
	England	37%

7. Outcomes at the end of EYFS 2013 for the borough including outcomes for vulnerable groups

Table 6 Percentage of children achieving a 'Good Level of Development'

Groups	No. of children in FSP cohort	Surrey
All children	14,774	53.5%
Boys	7,638	47.1%
Girls	7,136	60.3%
FSM	1,149	27.9%
Summer born	6,257	43.0%
BME	2,749	46.4%
EAL	1,445	40.5%
Disadvantaged areas	1,056	38.1%

Figures are based on dataset which includes autumn and spring born pupils in nursery units of independent schools.

8. Ofsted inspection outcomes for childcare and early education settings

Table 7 Ofsted inspection outcomes for all active early years registered providers at their most recent inspection

Outcome	Area	% Outstanding	% Good	% Satisfactory	% Inadequate	Total number
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the provision	Surrey	14	70	15	1	2,017
	England	12	65	21	1	67,349

Table 8 Ofsted inspection outcomes for all active childcare on non-domestic premises at their most recent inspection

Outcome	Area	% Outstanding	% Good	% Satisfactory	% Inadequate	Total number
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the provision	Surrey	20	67	12	2	584
	England	15	67	16	2	23,367

Table 9 Ofsted inspection outcomes for active childminders at their most recent inspection

Outcome	Area	% Outstanding	% Good	% Satisfactory	% Inadequate	Total number
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the provision	Surrey	12	71	16	1	1,426
	England	10	65	24	1	43,846

Tables 7 to 9: Surrey figures are as at 31 March 2014, from EMS ONE, England figures are as at October 2013. For providers inspected under the previous EYFS framework between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2012, overall effectiveness refers to the outcome 'How well does the setting meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?'. For providers inspected between 1 September and 31 August 2013, overall effectiveness refers to the outcome 'Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the provision'.

9. Level of qualifications of staff in the sector

There are approximately 9,318 practitioners working in group childcare settings, and 1,898 childminders (Spring 2013).

Table 10 Qualification levels of childcare and early education practitioners in Surrey

	% Unqualified	% Qualified to level 2	% Qualified to level 3	% Qualified to level 4+
Leaders in group settings	4%	1%	58%	37%
Paid staff in group settings	35%	11%	42%	12%
Childminders	58%	3%	32%	7%

10. Children's Centres

Table 11 Children's centre registration and activity rates

Children's centre	Number	Percentage
Population of children 0 – 4 years	69,512	
Children 0 – 4 years registered as at 31 March 2014	43,257	62%
Children 0 – 4 years seen at a children's centre in the last year (1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014)	17,512	26%
Children 0 – 4 years living in a disadvantaged area registered at a children's centre	3,922	71% (of 5,521)
Children 0 – 4 years living in a disadvantaged area seen at a centre in the last year (1 April 2013 – March 2014)	3,145	57%

Table 12 Children from disadvantaged areas attending or benefitting from children's centre activity in the last year (Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014)

Core Purpose	Activity / Event	Number of children
Child development and school readiness	Stay and Play	1109
	Early education and integrated childcare	203
	Childminder Support	31
	Special needs support	31
Parenting aspirations and parenting skills	Family support and outreach	579
	Parents support group	120
	Adult Learning	171
	Structured parenting programme	36
	Community involvement	40
	Employment support	5
Child and family health and life chances	Child and family health services	586
	Healthy lifestyles	149
	Breastfeeding	54
	Baby development classes	28
General information and advice	Information and advice	144

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