

The early years of key stage one



This report focuses on the principles underpinning Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1), and how this influences practice when supporting children in the transition from EYFS to KS1. This report will also include the similarities and the differences between the EYFS and KS1. The main aim of this report is to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theory underpinning the development of key stage 1.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is not a curriculum it is a framework. Sited in (DCSF 2008a, p. 9) The EYFS document sets the standards for children from birth to 5 by meeting the diverse needs of each individual child this principle lies in the heart of the EYFS. All practitioners should deliver personalised learning, care and development to encourage and help children receive the best possible start in life. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes which are:

- Staying safe
- Being healthy
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

(DCSF 2008 a)

However the national curriculum sets out the stages and core subject's children will be able to be taught during their time at school. The national Curriculum also sets out the knowledge and skills that are important for children to become successful and confident learners.

The curriculum also sets out the achievement targets in each subject, teachers can use these to measure each child's progress and plan the next steps in their learning. Schools are free to plan and organise teaching and learning in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. The new curriculum identifies the impact of play-based and activity learning in engaging children and helping them achieve a wide range of outcomes and make the best possible improvement. (National Curriculum online)

However the EYFS framework provides assurance, it also states that every child deserves the best start in life. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth.

The new primary curriculum expands on the principles of the EYFS and encourages play-based learning. In the early stage the content of the curriculum is generic to the area of learning. Rose, J. (2009)

The principles which guide the work for all early year's practitioners are grouped in to four themes.

The first theme is A Unique Child: every child is an experienced learner from birth who can be flexible, confident and self confident about him or herself.

The second theme is Positive Relationship: children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents, families and carers.

The third theme is Enabling Environment: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning,

The fourth theme is Learning and Development: children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

The Four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They put legal requirements in to context and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care for each individual child.

(DCSF 2008a, p. 9)

Transition should be seen as a process not an event, transition is something that is continuous, and should be planned for and discussed with children and their parents. Settings should communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between settings. Schools should use the summative assessment of each child recorded in the EYFS profile to support planning for learning in year 1. However teachers should also be familiar with the EYFS and the EYFS teachers should be familiar with the KS 1 Curriculum.

(DCSF 2008b, p. 10)

‘ Moving into years 1 can be a shock to some children after the play freedom they had in nursery and reception, five year olds can often be turned off education by suddenly being made to sit still and listen to their teachers’.

Sited in Moyles, J (2007 p. 16) Wood and Bennett (2001) stated that the effect on children of the transitions they make in early childhood has become a major focus on the national and international research. (Margetts 2002, <https://assignbuster.com/the-early-years-of-key-stage-one/>

Dockett and Perry 2004a-2005). As many practitioners are aware that the big transition may be the move from a foundation stage setting in to a key stage 1. The recent focus is on continuity and progression that can be offered to children at this point.

Rose, J (2009) stated that:

‘ Transition from EYFS to primary school can be difficult for some children’

This can be difficult for children because the children are more familiar to the play-based learning, and when moving to key stage 1 the children will experience a difference as they will be expected to sit on a chair at a table and be told what to do. However the creative curriculum is also being introduced, the main aims of the creative curriculum are to encourage and develop a more creative curriculum in foundation subjects in Key Stage 1. The creative curriculum is also introduced to create a more personalised, incorporating key life skills that could transfer into lifelong learning skills and increase the use of the local area and increase out of classroom learning experiences.

Feedback from parents, teachers and pupils suggested that the curriculum had become more creative and exciting. Pupils were taking part more and getting involved in their learning and took ownership. This also improved parental involvement in their children’s learning and development. The staff, parents and pupils commented on some changes they noticed occurring from the new topic approach. They reported that the children were more excited about their learning, the children were also talking about their learning more at home with parents and families. The children also started to

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bring resources from home for the new topic to support and expand their learning. (Creative curriculum 2008 online)

The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum includes a survey by Ofsted in 2007 which proclaimed that a very less amount of schools had successfully linked the areas of learning and development in the EYFS with the related subjects of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. Because there was lack of clear links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, this meant that 8 in 10 schools in the survey introduced the subjects of the National Curriculum at the start of the autumn term. However, Two in three of the schools taught a literacy hour or daily numeracy lesson within a few weeks of the start of the school year.

In Rose, J (2009) Ofsted also noticed that over half of Year 1 teachers had used the Early Years Foundation Stage profile but few had found it mostly helpful. The EYFS profile confused many teachers by including assessments beyond the level of the early learning goals, but not linked openly to the level descriptors in the National Curriculum. However given the amount of time spent in completing the EYFS profile and its potential value as a personal record of each child's previous experiences and achievements it is important for schools to make better use of it.

However The Cambridge Primary Review is an independent enquiry into the condition and future of primary education in England. It is based at the University of Cambridge, Alexander, R (2009).

The Review proposes a debate on if the age at which children have to start school should be raised to six in line with many other countries. Logically the <https://assignbuster.com/the-early-years-of-key-stage-one/>

ages and stages of schooling should be brought in to line, so the statutory starting age would become six, the point at which children move from the foundation stage and enter the key stage 1.

The main concern is not when children start school but what they do when they get there. With sufficient resources, there is no reason why good quality play-based learning up to age six cannot be provided in primary schools. However this is maybe a risky change because some fear that children with most to gain from early education will miss out through being kept at home until they are six.

This would confirm that England has finally accepted the need to protect and preserve the distinctive nature of early childhood. Easing the way for the youngest four-year-olds to start school, however the Rose report which has recently been proposed, sends a different view.

Rose, J (2009) says:

“ I hope the review will help our primary schools to build on their success so that all our children benefit from a curriculum which is challenging, fires their enthusiasm, enriches and constantly enlarges their knowledge, skills and understanding and, above all, instils in them a lifelong love of learning.”

The curriculum that primary children are offered must enable them to enjoy this unique stage of childhood, inspire learning and develop the essential knowledge, skills and understanding which are the building blocks for secondary education and later life.

Primary children must not only learn what to study, they must also learn how to study, so the children can become confident, self-disciplined individuals capable of engaging in a lifelong process of learning. High-quality teaching in the primary years, as elsewhere, is vital to children's success. McKinsey 2007 reports said that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. This is echoed by the Cambridge Primary Review, which states that

' A curriculum is only as good as those who teach it'. Rose, J. (2009)

However (BBC news 2008 online) states:

' Do children start school at too young an age in England'?

English pupils are starting very early in the classroom, Compared to other western European countries, as compulsory education begins in England at the age of five with children starting at four years old. However in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, school does not begin until the age of seven.

This general question has been raised by the Cambridge-based Primary Review which is investigating how the primary education is organised. And its conclusion challenges the idea that an early start has long-term advantages for children.

" The assumption that an early starting age is beneficial for children's later attainment is not well supported in the research and therefore remains open to question," says the report.

However the Primary Review, taking an overview of the evidence, suggests that there is no clear link between quantity and quality in education. In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Netherlands, children start school at the age of five years old. However in Austria, Belgium, and Denmark the children start at the age of 6-7, and in, Poland, Spain, and Sweden children start at the age of 6-7.

The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project investigated the effects of preschool education and care on children's development for children aged 3-7 years old.

This study has established the positive effects of high quality pre-school provision on children's intellectual and social behavioural development up to the end of Key Stage 1 in primary school. Pre-school has a positive impact on children's progress over and above important family influences. The quality of the pre-school setting experience as well as the quantity are both important.

The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project explores the impact of preschool provision on young children's cognitive progress and their social/behavioural development. The research seeks to establish whether different types of pre-school settings differ in their impact and effectiveness. It also seeks to identify any differences between individual pre-school centres in their impact upon children's cognitive progress and social, behavioural development. EPPE (2004)

However Brown, J. Said that the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) is the first major study within the UK to focus on specifically the

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effectiveness of early year's education, monitoring the development of children from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures as they progress from the start of preschool up to key stage 2. Brown, J. (2009, p. 26)

In the national curriculum education influences and reflects the values of society. Therefore it is important, to recognise a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum.

Education is also a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development. Education should reflect the permanent values that contribute to these ends. These include valuing ourselves, families and other relationships, and the wider groups, to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment.

At the same time, education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities of the rapidly changing world and work. We also need to be prepared to engage and connect as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid development of communication technologies. National curriculum (online)

The National Curriculum applies to pupils of compulsory school age in community and foundation schools, including community special schools and foundation special schools, and voluntary aided schools.

Getting children to sit down on a seat in key stage 1 is not a problem. But what we need to ensure is that these children are interested and excited

about their learning, the children need to feel involved in what is taking place and have a level of expectation about what will happen next.

A creative curriculum is not simply about making links between subjects, it is about finding ways to inspire the children by drawing in skills from art, music, technology, dance and drama. Creativity is about inspiring children through the establishment of memorable learning experiences. Creativity can be a platform for establishment of personalized learning, enabling children to think out of the box for themselves. (Teaching expertise online)

This shows that the creative curriculum has been introduced so children are not sitting on chairs and doing what they are being told by the teacher, it has been introduced so children can enjoy learning through different experiences, and be more creative about their learning. However in nursery everything is more play-based, and key stage 1 is more focused on lessons like phonics, numeracy and literacy, this is why the creative curriculum has been launched so children are more motivated and interested in learning, and remembered what they had learned, due to this the children would want to learn for themselves they would be able to expand on the thinking and learn how to be in control.

Within the EYFS it is also stated that the key person also play a vital role in a child's learning and development. Children can form an attachment in the setting with the key person, the benefits of this could be the child settling in different surrounding really quickly, and that the key person could assess and plan for the child individual needs. Sited in Elfer, P et al. (2003 p. 18) it was stated that the key person's role is vital for children and their parents.

The key person makes sure that each individual child within the nursery feels welcome, safe and secure. They also make the child feel that they are taught about by someone in particular while they are away from home. However the key persons approach makes sure that parents are able to build a personal relationship with someone in particular rather than all the staff within the setting. The benefits of a key person are they give parents a peace of mind, it also gives the parents a chance to liaise and interact with somebody whom is fully committed and familiar with their child, and is able to provide the parents with up to date information about their child's learning and development. The Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP) emphasise that effective learning is dependent on secure relationships, an appropriate learning environment and high-quality teaching. Brown, J. (2009, p. 26)

The four main purposes of the National Curriculum are:

1. To establish an entitlement
2. To establish standards
3. To promote continuity and coherence
4. To promote public understanding

Those awarded Early Years Professional Status must demonstrate through their practice that a secure knowledge and understanding of the following underpins their own practice and informs their leadership of others.

The EYP Standards set out the national expectations for anyone wishing to gain EYPS and work as an Early Years Professional. They are outcome statements that set out what Early Years Professionals need to know, understand and be able to do. They cover working safely with babies and

children from birth to the end of the new EYFS. Achievement of the Standards will enable members of the workforce to move across the range of early year's provision, which will encourage and support learning and development.(EYP 2006 online)

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