



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 9th February 2023

Subject: Early Years Strategy

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The purpose of the note is to provide information about the 2022 Good Level of Development data for children aged five. It will also outline the progress of the Early Years Strategy, drawing attention to its alignment with new areas of work, which support and improve school readiness.
- 1.2 The note also provides information about the Marmot Review and the Saplings Programme

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the 2022 dataset for pupils aged 5 in Coventry schools
- 2.2 Note the progress of the Early Years Strategy, within the context of Covid-19 and be aware of new opportunities to address identified concerns related to school readiness.
- 2.3 Be aware of progress in relation to the Marmot Review and initiation of the Saplings Programme.
- 2.4 Identify any areas the Board may want to consider in more detail

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 In England a child's progress is reviewed between the age of 2 and 3 by an early years practitioner or health visitor and again by their class teacher at the end of the school year in which they turn 5 (reception). The teacher uses their judgement to assess a child's attainment against 17 Early Learning Goals which cover 7 areas of learning.
- 3.2 Achievement of some of the 17 goals at the 'expected level' (personal, social and emotional development (PSED), physical development (PD), communication and language (C&L) literacy and mathematics lead to a child meeting an indicator called a 'Good Level of Development (GLD)'. This is the national indicator of whether a child is 'ready for school', even though the assessment takes place at the end of the Reception year.
- 3.3 The Early Learning Goals, attained by children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) changed in 2021. It is important to note that they continue to be measure of attainment, not progress. In addition, Local Authority

moderation of the data is no longer a statutory requirement. Therefore, along with the impact of Covid-19 the data for 2022 is not comparable with previous datasets.

3.4 The September 2021 changes from the previous EYFS framework include:

- Revisions to strengthen all areas of learning, with new educational programmes that set out what children must experience and learn about.
- Revisions to all 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG's) across the 7 areas of learning to make these more precise.
- Revised text to make it easier to understand what is required for a child to be working at the expected level of development and to link more closely with the Key Stage One curriculum.
- Removal of 'exceeding' assessment band. This is because the current policy direction is for children to have knowledge 'in depth' and to be 'ready' for Key Stage One, rather than working within Key Stage One. Children are now assessed as working at the 'expected stage' or 'emerging'.

3.5 **School Readiness: 2022, national statistics show that:**

- In England, 65.2% of children achieved a Good Level of Development in 2022 (Prime Areas of Learning + Literacy and Maths)
- A higher percentage of girls than boys were at the expected level of development across all 17 early learning goals and areas of learning.
- Physical Development had the highest percentage of children at the expected level of development (85%), and the literacy area of learning had the lowest (68%).
- Of the regions, Outer London had the highest percentage of children with a good level of development (68%) whilst the North- West had the lowest (62%).

3.6 **School Readiness: Local Position**

3.7 Overall achievement of a 'good level of development' in Coventry is 61.2%. There is a higher gap to national for the area of communication and language which may suggest that children in Coventry have been affected by the impact of Covid-19 to a greater extent than other children nationally. Compared to the West Midlands, Children in Coventry are not achieving as well as their peers, where achievement of GLD is 63.7%.

3.8 The data for groups shows the positive impact of approaches to 'SEND support' in the early years with outcomes are significantly above national performance. Children supported by an education and health care plan also achieve slightly above national outcomes. Those with an identified SEND need related to communication and language need achieved notably above national

3.9 The outcomes for children who are looked after by the Local Authority appears to be of significant strength, but the small cohort size is not statistically significant.

3.10 Programmes of support are in place to further support disadvantaged groups and White British Boys, where outcomes are lower than national.

3.11 Outcomes for children who have English as an additional language are below national, but only by a very small amount.

3.12 Appendix One provides examples of activity in response to data, the links to the Early Years Strategy and new opportunities to continue to improve School Readiness.

4 Coventry Early Years Strategy: Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day

- 4.1 The Early Years Strategy developed from a November 2020 workshop ‘Doing it together to achieve early help outcomes’. The purpose of the workshop was to look across services to determine how school readiness could be improved, considering this across the birth to five remit, with the knowledge that the ‘achievement gap’ is apparent from age 4 for disadvantaged and vulnerable children’. Services collaborated to address recommendations from a needs assessment completed during the summer of 2020. Appendix Two outlines the recommendations and objectives. Throughout the response to Covid-19, teams from Early Help, Public Health, Health Visiting, SEND, Birth to Five, The Early Years Service and Family Learning continued to meet to develop a document with a clear vision, aim, objectives. Individual area service plans are in place, with both linked and independent actions to meet the identified recommendations. A coalition approach is proving to be a successful delivery model.
- 4.2 The strategy document was built around the Marmot Review Priority Objectives for 2020
- Reduce inequalities in the early development of physical and emotional health, and cognitive, linguistic, and social skills
 - Ensure high quality maternity services, parenting programmes, childcare and early years education to meet need across the social gradient.
 - Build the resilience and well-being of young children across the social gradient.
- 4.3 During development of the strategy the Leadsom Report 2021, was published and the relevant messages from this work were also incorporated. The strategy was published in September 2021, alongside 4 Service Area plans.
- 4.4 Revised mapping of available services and support for children and families from birth to five across the city was completed. A key piece of work within the strategy included a new website
- 4.5 In March 2022 A ‘one year later’ session reviewed progress. The ongoing cross service commitment to improving school readiness was evident through the numbers attending.
- 4.6 Over the last 9 months delivery of actions in each service plan has continued. The next step is to monitor progress more closely and implement the outcomes framework developed at the beginning of the strategy to track impact. Appendix Three provides examples of progress and impact to date. Until October 2022 the capacity for leadership of the strategy has been limited. New appointments within the Early Years Service have made this possible.
- 4.7 Currently, strategic work related to the Early Years Strategy includes submission of an Integrated Care System Health Inequalities Bid, The Family Hubs: Best Start in Life Programme bid, Responding to the September 2022 Speech, Communication and Language Needs Assessment (SCLN) and considering the draft Marmot Partnership Action Plan priority objectives and aims for 2023. These all evidence the commitment and support for the One Coventry approach in relation to Early Years with the aim of improving outcomes for children at the age of five.

5 Marmot Review

- 5.1 Coventry’s Marmot Action Plan is currently being refreshed to address potentially widening health inequalities as part of Coventry’s post COVID-19 recovery. Work is

taking place with partners to collate programmes of work and activities under the headings of the Marmot principles and scoping which high level indicators we should have for Coventry to help measure progress towards reducing inequalities. University College London (UCL) Institute of Health Equity (IHE) are supporting Coventry to refine these indicators.

- 5.2 On behalf of the Marmot Partnership, the Public Health Inequalities team are working in partnership with the Senior Adviser for Early Years and partners to capture the work to reduce health inequalities; the city-wide programmes of work and updating the indicators aligned to the Marmot policy objectives work 'give every child the best start in life'. By February 2023 a final draft of the Marmot action plan will be presented to the Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

6 The Saplings Pilot Programme

- 6.1 Over the past five years, the number of Early Years and Reception Year children with additional needs has increased significantly. This can be seen in the table below.

Pupils in Early Years	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Early Years pupils with SEN	122	88	133	142	179
Number of EHCPs issued to Early Years pupils during academic year	55	54	96	110	125
Number of Early Years pupils allocated special school for reception	15	39	43	53	55

- 6.2 This is in part due to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is a national trend which is evident locally. The Saplings Programme complements our existing SEND provision by enhancing our local offer to children who need extra help during their Reception Year. This includes children who:
- Are working up to one year below their peers in the early years' curriculum.
 - Have delayed language and communication skills.
 - Need help to develop their social and play skills.
- 6.3 The programme aims to provide all Coventry Children with the resources and support they need to thrive in school and maximise the number of children who achieve a 'good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.
- 6.4 Children enrolled on the programme spend part of their time learning in the Saplings Base at Little Heath Primary School. Each child receives a personalised programme and transition plan.
- 6.5 The Saplings Base is made up of two learning rooms and a shared outdoor area. It has a range of early years resources and equipment and offers a rich learning experience. The base is located next to Little Heath Primary Schools own Reception Class and there will be opportunities for collaboration and joint learning.

- 6.6 In the Autumn term of 2022, a total of 33 children were referred to the programme, 18 of whom were identified as appropriate for the intervention. These children came from 15 different schools, between 1 and 6 miles from the Saplings Base.
- 6.7 The programme will be evaluated by the Local Authority's Educational Psychology Team, in collaboration with the parents and carers of the children enrolled on the programme and Saplings staff. The outcome of the evaluation will help refine programme delivery and, if appropriate, inform a wider roll out of support.

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Further Information

[Framework for the early years foundation stage \(EYFS\)](#)

The 7 Areas of learning within the EYFS

[Early years foundation stage profile handbook 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) This document explains how the assessment system works at the end of reception.

[Ready, Steady, Grow](#) is the website developed as part of the early years strategy to improve access for families to information about early learning, health and child development.

[Leadsom Report: The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days](#) was a review led by Early Years Health Adviser Andrea Leadsom MP. It sets out a vision for best practice across the health system to ensure babies and children can get the best possible start.

Appendix One Activity in response to data and link to early years strategy and new opportunities.

Group	Area	Activity	Links to Current and New Opportunities
<p>Disadvantaged</p>	<p>Negative gap to national in</p> <p>Good Level of Development</p> <p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Personal, Social & Emotional Development</p> <p>Physical Development</p>	<p>Health Inequalities Fund Bid</p> <p>To improve early language and communication skills for children (aged birth to 4 years), in socially disadvantaged areas through delivery of an Early Years' time to talk programme.</p> <p>This will provide tiered training and development of Speech and Language champions in early years settings.</p> <p>The programme supports early years practitioners, Special Education Needs Officers, volunteers, and other professionals (health visitors, family hubs and librarians) within localities that fall inside the top 20% areas of deprivation as defined by the index of multiple deprivation (IDACI)</p> <p>The Easy Peasy App is in use with 400 families - with a revised higher target to reach 500 and plans to extend this project through the Family Hubs bid</p> <p>The 20-week Early Talk intervention for children with language delay is in place with 20 settings trained to date and plans for further expansion of this and an intervention called Talk Boost</p> <p>The Training Programme accessed by early years practitioners is closely targeted using GLD data.</p>	<p>Link to EY Strategy: Aim</p> <p>To improve the education, wellbeing, resilience, safety and health of children from conception to five years of age.</p> <p>Link to Best Start in Life funding strand: Home Learning Environment and Language and Communication</p> <p>Marmot Partnership Action Plan</p> <p>Draft: Priority Objectives and Aims 2023</p> <p>Reduce inequalities in the early development of physical and emotional health, and cognitive, linguistic, and social skills.</p> <p>Ensure high quality maternity services, parenting programmes, childcare and early years education to meet need across the social gradient.</p> <p>Build the resilience and well-being of young children across the social gradient.</p>
<p>EaL</p>	<p>Communication and Language Gap – 5.0 ppt</p> <p>Personal, Social & Emotional</p>	<p>Increased Capacity in Early Years Service with X 2 Teacher Advisers and increased Education,</p>	<p>Coventry's area of focus:</p> <p>To work together so that all children have developed the skills around areas such as social interaction, play, language, emotional</p>

	Development Gap – 1.4 ppt	Improvement and Sufficiency Adviser roles directed to quality improvement support	development, physical skills, literacy and fine motor skills to allow schoolteachers to expand and further develop these skills when children start school.
BME	Good Level of Development – Gap – 1.1 ppt	DfE: Professional Development Programme: - Building on Success:	
	Communication and Language Gap – 2.7 ppt	10 days funded training related to Communication & Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Mathematics	
White British Boys	Good Level of Development – Gap – 3.7 ppt	Criteria for selection:	
	Communication and Language Gap – 2.9 ppt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest numbers of funded two-yr olds • Highest numbers of children with SEND (EHCP/Inclusion Grant) • Highest numbers of children in receipt of EY Pupil Premium • Low GLD in 2022 	<p>Health Inequalities Bid: Population Health, Inequalities and Prevention Board consideration</p> <p>The project is supported by Coventry Warwickshire Partnership Trust, Integrated Care System, Coventry City Council including Education and Social Care</p>
		Summer 2022 Cohort: 33 practitioners from 16 settings including one childminder	
		Spring 2023 Cohort: focus on nominations from Nursery Classes	
		Covid-19 Recovery Programme	
		Practitioners in early years settings and childminders are able to access 18 hours free support from the Covid-19 Recovery Programme focused on improving in practice in the Prime Areas of learning. An early years expert works directly with the setting and a mentor provides remote support through a programme of child development training	

		<p>Initiated in September 2022, Cohort one saw 9 settings participate</p> <p>For Cohort 2, commencing February 2023 a further 11 settings will join.</p>	
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Appendix Two: Early Years Strategy Recommendations and Objectives

Recommendations	Vision	Aim	Objectives: The development plan will:
<p>1. Shared understanding Ensure a shared definition of ‘School Readiness is underpinned by a development plan to improve outcomes</p> <p>2. Use existing knowledge and resources to improve partnership working and information sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that information is clear, easy to understand and accessible across service delivery teams and when sharing with families. • Ensure that the systems and resources already in place are understood by all those who support the education, health, wellbeing and safety of children <p>3. Improve Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure integration at local level, resilience and sufficient 	<p>In the future to meet the Marmot policy objective of ‘giving children the best start in life’ we want to see:</p> <p>Every Child <i>Reduced inequalities in the early development of physical and emotional health, and cognitive, linguistic, and social skills.</i></p> <p>Every Chance <i>Provision of high-quality maternity services, parenting programmes, childcare and early years education meeting the level of need across the social gradient.</i></p> <p>Every day <i>Strong and sustained resilience and well-being in young children across the social gradient.</i></p>	<p>To improve the education, wellbeing, resilience, safety and health of children from conception to five years of age</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with a range of services to define a shared definition of ‘School Readiness’ which is agreed to by all partners, practitioners and professionals. Develop a joint development plan to determine how we will improve outcomes relating to the education, health, wellbeing and safety of children from conception to five years, in which there are shared baseline measures, identified activity, goals, evaluation and monitoring tools and governance are considered 2. Implement evidence-based activities from the development plan to improve the education, health, wellbeing and safety and to achieve school readiness 3. Review the systems and resources already in place to support the education, health, wellbeing and safety of children. Check they are clearly understood and used to their greatest extent by practitioners, professionals and families. 4. Develop and implement approaches to share information about what is available to support delivery teams, and families in ways which are accessible and easy to use 5. Secure commitment to work with more integration, to build resilience and capacity in the system and reduce inequalities across the social gradient. 6. Determine what effective integration at local level will look like when it is successful and deliver a pilot in one Family hub area.

<p>capacity in the system to reduce inequalities, particularly for disadvantaged groups and young children with SEND.</p> <p>4. Improve Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that practitioners working with children and professionals supporting families are resilient well trained, knowledgeable and confident to deliver high quality services. 			<p>7. Identify how different services communicate with each other and act to ensure that information communicated is clear and accessible across service delivery teams and in its delivery to families.</p> <p>8. Develop integrated workforce development plans for practitioners working with children and professionals supporting families, to improve the quality-of-service delivery.</p> <p>9. Support Early Years Providers to improve the quality of early teaching</p> <p>10. Prioritise the needs of disadvantaged groups and those with a SEND requirement</p>
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Appendix Three: Examples of Progress and Impact

Key Priorities	Outcome	Progress	Impact
<p>Accessible data provides a current baseline for children who are accessing 2-year-old funding where they are eligible via Family Hub referral pathways.</p> <p>Commence a pilot of a two-year integrated assessment check</p>	<p>More children will access 2- and 3-year-old entitlement. funding where eligible.</p> <p>2- year development assessments will identify a clear assessment of the child by both services giving opportunity to identify concern and agree a plan if needed and avoid duplication</p> <p>Sharing information between nurseries and health visiting services regarding 2- yr assessment provides a clear view of the child, giving an opportunity to identify concerns, agree support if needed and avoid duplication</p>	<p>Use DWP data to identify individual children who are not currently accessing their 2- and 3-year-old entitlement.</p> <p>Written correspondence used to invite parent/carer to sessions delivered in the Family Hubs, leading increased of attendance. Work completed families in relation to securing places at a local early years settings.</p> <p>The Early Years Service works closely with Health Visitors and Family Hub staff to undertake assisted checks to access a two year old place</p> <p>The Early Years Services works Children's Services colleagues to ensure vulnerable children are accessing a two year old place where they are eligible to do so, using the low income families tool (LIFT)</p> <p>All nursery settings have a named link Health visitor</p>	<p>Uptake of 2 yr old places: Autumn 19: 76% Autumn 20: 61% Autumn 21: 82% Autumn 22: 77%</p> <p>Uptake of 3 & 4 yr old places: Autumn 19: 92% Autumn 20: 90% Autumn 21: 91% Autumn 22: 91%</p> <p>Pilot is in its early stages but being received successfully to date.</p>
<p>Use existing knowledge and resources to improve partnership working and information sharing</p>	<p>Parents and carers will understand the importance of play in relation to their child's learning</p>	<p>5 of the 8 Family Hubs are delivering a school readiness intervention – Stay together, Play Together</p> <p>Structured planning and evaluation template and baseline measure created and used in the session</p> <p>There is co-ordinated delivery by Family Hubs and South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT)</p>	<p>New partnerships created with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library service • Hillfields Nursery school • One Body One Life • SWFT

<p>Professional Development Induction Framework</p> <p>Provide more precise training in relation to areas of need</p> <p>Improve SEND provision in early years settings</p>	<p>A common induction programme will provide a baseline for a minimum standard of practice</p> <p>Sustain Ofsted outcomes at national standards</p> <p>Supportive process in place for transition from nursery to reception</p>	<p>Early Language Development & Quality Interaction Supporting Language & Communication for 2–5-year-olds</p> <p>Child Development (essential & enhanced)</p> <p>Purposeful Provision</p> <p>4 HLTA roles in place in Schools to support transitions into reception and then school readiness in nurseries in preparation for school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% (5) requires improvement • 2% (4) inadequate • 96% are good or outstanding, nationally the figure is 97% <p>Children receiving SEND support and those with a diagnosed Speech, Communication & Language Need (SCLN), achieve outcomes above national performance, in the prime areas of learning and for GLD.</p>
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