

# Commentary on the draft revised Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, including the Early Learning Goals and Areas of Learning

## July 2018

### Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	3
The rationale for changes - key policy tests .....	3
Workload .....	4
Communication and language .....	5
Expected levels of development .....	6
The nature and purpose of the ELGs.....	7
The evidence base for the current Early Learning Goals.....	7
The Areas of Learning.....	8
The Characteristics of Effective Learning.....	9
Inclusion and equality issues.....	10
Comparison of current and proposed ELGs .....	12
What needs to happen next .....	30
References.....	30

## Executive Summary

Although government has presented this as a review of the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) only, it is far more extensive than this. Effectively it is a rewrite of the EYFS curriculum by the back door, as the Areas of Learning section has been re-written, and the Characteristics of Effective Learning have been made non-statutory. The DfE claim a mandate to review the ELGs and the EYFSP on the back of the Primary Assessment questionnaire – which is at best dubious given the lack of input from the early years sector. It certainly did not provide a mandate to review the EYFS as a whole. Examples of the changes to the curriculum which would result from the new draft are that Shape, Space and Measure and Technology disappear not only from the ELGs, but also from the Areas of Learning. There are many more detailed changes in the wording of individual areas which will have significant impact. Early Education is keen to help DfE ministers and officials understand the implications of the proposed changes and improve on its current draft amendments to the EYFS Statutory Framework.

We support the Minister's aims to reduce workload and improve children's communication and language skills. Unfortunately, the proposed revisions are unlikely to do either.

- The minister suggests that workload can be reduced by clearer advice that practitioners should not collect excessive amounts of data, and that their professional judgement can be relied on in making assessments of children's learning and development. This is welcome but this will be brought about by changes to guidance and improvements to the moderation process, neither of which are directly linked to the changes to the ELGs.
- The wholesale changes to the ELGs and the descriptions of what educational programmes should cover for each Area of Learning will involve a considerable workload for practitioners across the EYFS in familiarising themselves with the new versions. We support changes where they improve on the current version, but not for the sake of change, as this creates unnecessary work.
- The wording of the new ELGs will add to workload in some cases through the excessively specific nature of the wording (eg "Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs" could require a tick list of 36 items, for just one sub-section of an ELG) and in others through being too vague (what does "Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination" entail?)
- The revised ELGs will not improve children's communication and language, nor practitioners' understanding of how to support this. The new version puts increased emphasis on Literacy by increasing the number of Literacy ELGs, at the expense of Communication and Language. The draft goals in their current form are not based in the extensive research evidence about how young children learn language.

The government's commitment to social mobility and to closing the achievement gap will not be helped by the new draft ELGs, which will exacerbate the current problem of ELGs for literacy and maths being set too high. This will impact most on the children who are summer-born, have EAL or SEND, boys and those from

disadvantaged backgrounds. Unrealistic ELGs will set up more children to fail. The best way to close the achievement gap is not to set unrealistic targets, but to ensure the ELGs support those aspects of the EYFS pedagogy which best ensure children's future success: including, and especially, the characteristics of effective learning (CoEL).

The bulleted format of the new ELGs will encourage a tick-list approach, instead of the best fit model which was - and the document states is still - the intended approach, and which is necessary and appropriate to adhere to the statutory principles of assessment contained in the EYFS. The best fit model is based on the principle, to which the new draft gives welcome recognition, of teachers making professionally informed judgements about children's progress.

It is vital that this draft is now extensively overhauled by those with detailed early years expertise in each Area of Learning.

## Introduction

On 22 June, the Department for Education (DfE) issued the first published drafts of a revised EYFS Statutory Framework, including redrafted Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These are to be piloted by 25 schools in 2018-19, and will form the basis for a wider consultation with the sector.

We welcome the fact that the draft revisions are now in the public domain to allow a full and open consultation with those in the early years who will be directly impacted by the changes, and who have a detailed understanding of the impact that even small changes in wording can have in practice. We encourage ministers and officials to engage with the many experienced practitioners and experts in the sector whose understanding of the research evidence, the pedagogy of early learning and practicalities of implementation must be heeded to ensure that the final version of the Statutory Framework represents a step forward and not a step back from the previous version. Early Education, as the only early years sector body representing early years in schools, will continue to channel our knowledge and expertise and engage in dialogue with DfE ministers and officials on this topic.

## The rationale for changes - key policy tests

Before considering the detail of the proposed changes to the EYFS Statutory Framework, we first note the policy context in which they have been put forward.

The proposal to amend the ELGs was first mooted by DfE in the response to the Primary Assessment Consultation. By its very nature the majority of respondents to that consultation were not working in the early years – 400 Reception Teachers responded, compared to 1600 KS1 and 2 teachers and 1100 headteachers. Respondents from earlier pre-school stages of the EYFS, which will be significantly impacted by the proposed changes, were largely unrepresented. Even then, the key response in the consultation was summarised as:

“The broad view from respondents was that the EYFSP is a well-established, valued assessment and should be retained, but that the ELGs should be

clarified and refined **in a number of areas**, in order to better assess a child's development at the end of the early years foundation stage" (our emphasis).

The feedback from the Primary Assessment consultation provides no evidence of the school sector calling for wholesale changes, but rather for targeted clarifications and improvements. This suggests there should only be changes for which there is a clear evidence base and consensus that this provides a significant improvement on the current version. That consensus should be based on consultation with the early years sector, including, but not solely, those teaching in Reception.

In our detailed comments on the drafts (see below), we are guided by a principle of change only where it would be a well-evidenced improvement on the current framework, and not just for the sake of change. This reflects the robust nature of the current EYFS which may be improved as an evolution without complete overhaul. This is more likely to be acceptable to the early years sector, as well as minimising the burden on the workforce of responding to unnecessary changes. There are some areas where in our view the existing ELGs are preferable to the proposed revisions, and we advise careful consideration of where these would best be retained. This applies to elements of Speaking, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Physical Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development and Expressive Arts and Design.

The consultation response also identified alignment with expectations at KS1 as an issue. We recognise the key importance of transition from Reception to Year 1 (Y1), but since this must be from the foundations upwards, it is necessary to look at least as much at what is taught in Y1 as at what is taught in the Reception Year and is in the ELGs. Regrettably, this is a missed opportunity to review current Y1 curriculum and the EYFS as part of a single holistic process.

We should assess the case for changes to the ELGs against what the changes are intended to achieve, and whether there is evidence this will be achieved. The stated aims in the Minister's announcement (22 June 2018) are

- reducing unnecessary workload for teachers and
- improving children's language and communication skills, particularly for the most disadvantaged children.

Both these aims are entirely laudable, but there are real concerns about whether the new version of the ELGs will succeed in achieving either.

## **Workload**

Changes to the Early Learning Goals will create a significant additional workload for Reception teachers in 16,000 primary and infant schools across England, and other practitioners right across the early years sector, whose practice is directed toward enabling all children to reach those goals through the EYFS and the Areas of Learning. All these practitioners will need to familiarise themselves with the changes to all 17 ELGs and to revise their practice accordingly. Although the assessment is not the curriculum, the reality is that the assessment drives what is taught. So the question to be answered is whether a root and branch review of every single ELG is necessary, and are the benefits to be gained from the changes proportionate to the

workload for the entire early years sector in introducing that change? We believe that in many cases the content of the new ELGs is not an improvement on the previous version and in some cases the reverse.

At a time when workload is a significant issue for practitioners, and in particular when schools are reporting difficulties in recruiting Reception teachers, this is a real concern. Tight budgets also mean there is unlikely to be much resource available to support practitioners who want to engage in CPD to share their professional understanding of the new ELGs and collectively develop their practice in relation to them.

In reality, it has never been the way in which the ELGs were drafted which caused workload issues. If done properly the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile only requires teachers to make simple judgements to summarise what they already know about children's learning and development at the end of Reception, based on the observation and formative assessment carried out throughout the year. The workload problem has arisen from teachers feeling pressured to gather excessive amounts of data to support and "evidence" their observations.

Sometimes this has come from beliefs about what Ofsted wants, sometimes from the leadership within a school, or from poorly informed advice given by local authority moderators. It has been exacerbated by the use of online tracking tools which encourage collection of such data. It has never come from the EYFS Statutory Framework itself, or the requirements of the EYFSP Handbook which expects, and defines, "responsible pedagogy" (2018:12). Reiterating the need to avoid excessive data collection in the Statutory Framework and Handbook documents will not in itself make a difference.

DfE has talked about piloting alternative approaches to moderation, include peer-led moderation activity. A review of approaches to moderation is clearly needed given that the current system has at times compounded the workload issue, and this needs to consider how to balance the need for consistency (across and between schools and local authorities) with workload and and best practice in assessment. Moderation should be part of a wider programme of CPD to promote more holistic formative assessment, with the ELGs as one small part of the assessment picture.

Given that what would make most difference to teachers' workload would be a wider culture change and clearer messaging from DfE, it is very welcome that the minister is now getting behind the message and stating that Reception teachers' professional judgements should be trusted. That could impact on workload immediately without having to wait for new ELGs to be trialled and implemented. The revisions to the ELGs themselves – still 17 goals so not reduced as an assessment task - are an entirely separate matter from workload.

### **Communication and language**

Will the changes proposed to the Early Learning Goals improve children's language and communication, the second of the Minister's aims? Again, we are not convinced. Significantly, the revised ELGs put increased emphasis on Literacy by increasing the number of Literacy ELGs, at the expense of Communication and

Language. The draft goals in their current form are not based in the extensive research evidence about how children learn language. For instance, the existing ELG for "Listening and attention" has lost all reference to attention, and the ELG for Understanding has disappeared altogether. Speech and language experts have shown that these are vital components to children's development of language, and to practitioners' understanding of how to best support language development, but this understanding is not reflected in the new draft. See our detailed comments below.

There is significant evidence that the strongest support for development of language is serve-and-return conversation, following the child's lead and area of interest. The draft has too much emphasis on reading to children, which while important is relatively less useful for young children. Unlike older children who can relate to decontextualised language such as they might hear from text read aloud, younger children need to make immediate connections to their experiences and sensory input in order to make sense of the words. They also need immediate feedback on their own efforts to put ideas into words, with contingent responses which can expand or remodel the child's words, and to understand linguistics by many examples of hearing how grammar shifts with the perspective of the speaker in to-and-fro conversation.

There is also a danger in overly-emphasising vocabulary. Vocabulary is a strong marker of language development and plays a central role in helping children to be specific in their thoughts. But it is also an easily-measured proxy for even more important aspects -- the purposes to which children put their ability to communicate and use language. Researchers count the size of children's vocabulary, but teachers cannot – and what is a "new word" for one child may not be for others. In forming the current EYFS strand of Communication and Language, expert Speech and Language Therapists and the Royal College of SLT advised that it is more useful to describe the way children use language. The strength of vocabulary will be there if more complex use is growing, without the need to list or count knowledge of words. Too much emphasis on "new words" could lead to very narrow planning of teaching discrete vocabulary lists, to the detriment of the well-tuned contingent interactions and serve-and-return conversations which are the bedrock of strong language learning.

### Expected levels of development

Another fundamental principle against which any change in the ELGs should be tested is that they should provide a realistic description of what a child can be expected to achieve at the end of Reception, bearing in mind the significant difference between a child who is not yet 5 and one who is nearly 6, as well as effects of gender, EAL, SEND and individual differences in development. It is notable that the existing ELGs for maths and literacy are already achieved by fewer children than the other ELGs, signalling that these are in greater need of revision than others. In the government's 2011 response to the consultation on the existing ELGs, it was noted that "On literacy: respondents suggested there was too much emphasis on reading and writing at too young an age" and "Year 1 and Reception teachers felt that the goals were set too high for literacy". This has continued to be a

concern that the revised ELGs only exacerbate. Unrealistic ELGs will set up more children to fail. The best way to close the achievement gap is not to set unrealistic targets, but to ensure the ELGs support those aspects of the EYFS pedagogy which best ensure children's future success: including, and especially, the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL).

### The nature and purpose of the ELGs

The aim of the EYFSP is to provide a well-rounded holistic picture of each child's development, **not** a snapshot of how he or she responds to a test on a particular day. It is also to support Year 1 teachers in providing continuity of learning and provision for all children. This is particularly important for those who are very young (for example children born in August who reach the age of five just before entering Year 1) or whose development may be following a slower or different path than the majority (for example children with special educational needs or disabilities). **The Early Learning Goals are a part of this holistic approach to observation and assessment.**

Despite the instructions in the draft handbook that the bulleted format of ELGs should not be used as justification for a checklist approach, we know from experience that it will encourage precisely that, and will deter use of a best-fit model. This is responsible pedagogy and should be the practice. That is particularly the case for very specific items such as "Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs" or "Automatically recall double facts up to 5+5", which teachers will inevitably interpret as meaning that they must tick off every one of these items for every child.

### The evidence base for the current Early Learning Goals

Any changes to the EYFS, need to be made in the context of the extensive work which went into its current form. The first version of the EYFS was the product of an intensive period of development, drafting and re-drafting during 2005/6. The main task was to bring together in one document three existing frameworks

- Birth to Three Matters,
- The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and
- The National Standards for under 8s Daycare and Childminding

Development of the EYFS was taken forward in partnership with key stakeholders across the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors in the early years. A wide range of events and working groups were organised with practitioners, leaders and managers, headteachers, local authorities, higher and further education institutions and national early years organisations, trades unions and academic advisors. All this activity and feedback culminated in a formal online and paper consultation and further regional consultation events organised and managed by the National Strategies for EY across May to July 2006. The final version was published in 2007 and came into force in September 2008.

From the outset, it was planned to conduct an independent review of the implementation and effectiveness of the EYFS after two years. The Oxford Universities' literature review (Evangelou et al 2009) was commissioned by the government to ensure that the review of the EYFS was theoretically well informed

and up-to-date as well as influenced by consultation across the sector on the practicalities of working with the EYFS in settings and schools. The resulting recommendations of the Tickell Review (2011), developed by a group of advisors with extensive expertise in early learning and development, were accepted by the government and incorporated into the revised EYFS.

The Tickell review was responsible for the renewed emphasis on the characteristics of effective learning – building on research which shows that **how young children learn has more long-term impact on future achievement than what they learn**. It also recommended that the areas of learning be divided into prime and specific areas. **The prime areas represent the core of early child development and underpin the specific areas** (see Tickell Review, Annex 9). These important changes which place recent knowledge about emotional, physical and cognitive development at the heart of the EYFS have in turn influenced the EYFS Profile (EYFSP).

***The fundamental design of the EYFS areas of learning should not be changed without a similar extensive review of the evidence and consultation with the sector. Amending the ELGs and Areas of Learning has the potential for a huge impact on the whole of the EYFS.***

## The Areas of Learning

DfE have provided no rationale as to why the statements previously within the Areas of Learning section about what educational programmes should include have now been scattered through the ELGs under the heading of “Educational Programmes”. While clearly the assessments should relate to the curriculum, there is no longer a coherent section on the Areas of Learning as a whole across the EYFS.

This separation in the original version was intentional in an attempt to discourage use of the ELGs, written for the end of the EYFS and not appropriate from birth onwards, shaping and limiting the curriculum through teaching to them from the outset. If they are now put together this will reinforce that tendency. The introduction to the ELGs and the subsequent list of them should be placed within the separate section on Assessment. This would more clearly mark them as assessment statements. The reception year curriculum then, as across the EYFS, would be developed within the educational programmes to meet children’s needs appropriately. Development Matters helps to give guidance about possible progression toward the ELGs across the phase.

The revision of the “Educational Programmes” text to fit with the ELGs has led to a revision of the EYFS curriculum by the back door. The rephrasing of these sections is highly significant, removing whole topics such as Shape, Space and Measure, and Technology, and reframing Areas of Learning such as Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design into a quite different format to that which is in the current EYFS.

## The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The current draft revised EYFS Statutory Framework changes the wording relating to the CoEL in such a way as to make them non-statutory. This is a hugely significant change, and a massive backwards step.

The current wording is:

1.9. In planning and guiding children’s activities, **practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.** Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are: ...

This has been revised to:

1.14. In planning and guiding children’s activities, **practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.** Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are: ...

This removes the requirement on practitioners to reflect the CoEL in their practice. It is not at all clear what the new statement is intended to mean by referring to different rates of development in this context, but it would seem to duplicate what is already covered by para 1.10 (formerly 1.6 within the Areas of Learning).

“Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.”

Regrettably, it is not clear that DfE have understood the significance of this change of wording.

Rather than reducing the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning, our recommendation would be to give greater weight to their status by including them alongside (or as part of) the educational programmes instead of being buried in more general text as they are at present. We suggest amending 1.6 of the new draft as follows:

“Educational programmes must involve activities, *interactions* and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning, *which support them to develop strong dispositions and behaviours for learning, described by the Characteristics of Effective Learning.*” (Italics show our addition.)

The description of the CoEL could be rewritten to better emphasise the importance of developing cognitive self-regulation as a centrally important goal of the EYFS, building strong learners, in keeping with DfE’s concern about the importance of self-regulation. There is significant expertise within Early Education on understanding and supporting the Characteristics of Effective Learning, and we would be glad to help with work on this. (See Appendix 8 of the [Tickell Review](#) for the rationale behind the CoEL.)

In relation to the inclusion of the Characteristics of Effective Learning within the EYFSP Good Level of Development (GLD), we commend the [assessment tools](#)

[developed by Bristol City Council](#), which gives a useful framework for assessing children. It provides a points score on a graduated scale (not yet/rarely/sometimes/often), instead of using a deficit-based binary model. Including the CoEL in this way would not only provide a much more valid assessment of children's learning and development, but would also have a positive impact on early years practice by focussing on aspects of development that are among the most significant for young children.

The CoEL could also have a higher profile within assessment requirements for the EYFSP. Dr David Whitebread from University of Cambridge, a developmental psychologist who is the leading UK researcher and expert on self-regulation in early childhood, has confirmed that the Characteristics -- alongside relationships which promote emotional self-regulation, and talk which develops thinking and metacognition -- describe self-regulation very well. He has also commented that the Bristol assessment material "looks very useful and is very consistent with the evidence about how to support the development of self-regulation with young children."

While we welcome government's recognition of the importance of self-regulation, the attempt to introduce it within the ELGs is deeply flawed. David Whitebread has expressed concern that in the new ELGs "self-regulation is construed as being concerned solely with children's regulation of their emotions. This is a limited and inaccurate understanding of self-regulation. It actually comprises children's growing awareness and control of all their mental processes, including cognitive, motivational and social aspects in addition to emotion regulation. Nadhim Zahawi and the team in the DfE who have put together these new goals need to read the guidance on metacognition and self-regulation recently published by the EEF. This will help them understand this area of children's development more fully and how, properly understood, it is the strongest predictor of children's academic achievement and emotional well-being in the short and long-term."

## **Inclusion and equality issues**

We would remind the DfE that the wording of the ELGs needs to have regard to equality issues, including recognising that children have different development pathways - eg in relation to boys and reading. The wording therefore needs to be applicable to all children and reflect what is a reasonable expectation for children at the end of Reception.

Note the following extracts from the Rochford review:

"Equality is not always about inclusion. Sometimes equality is about altering the approach according to the needs of the pupils" (p11)

"Pupils with EAL can fit a wide range of profiles. Some may be newly arrived to the country and may have come from difficult circumstances in their home country. Others may always have lived in the UK but may come from homes where English is not spoken. Others may already be bilingual or multilingual. The right approach to supporting assessment for all these pupils may be different." (p27)

See also the following extract from *Bercow Ten Years On*:

- 1.2 The Department for Education should strengthen the place of communication and language in its strategy to improve social mobility by:
- 1.2.1 supporting opportunity areas to develop plans to improve communication and language skills across the age range, not just in the early years;
  - 1.2.2 promoting use of best practice for addressing delayed language through the use of evidence-based intervention and training programmes;
  - 1.2.3 identifying communication and language as a focus for the next round of annual Pupil Premium Awards for schools;
  - 1.2.4 ensuring that any new initiatives to work with families, such as the plan to identify and spread evidence-based home learning environment programmes, involve experts in early years practice and speech, language and communication, as well as parents and carers in their development and implementation;
  - 1.2.5 including high-level provider expertise and outcomes in speech, language and communication in the criteria for evaluating tenders for the planned Centre of Excellence for Literacy Teaching and associated English Hubs in disadvantaged areas; and
  - 1.2.6 funding a national programme of roadshows on how to teach language for Reception and Key Stage 1 teachers, similar to the previous phonics roadshows.

Detailed commentary on the changes to the individual “Educational Programmes” and ELGs is provided overleaf.

## Comparison of current and proposed ELGs

Current Statutory Framework	Proposed revised ELG/ Description of educational programme	Comments
<b>Prime Areas</b>		
<b>Communication &amp; language (CL)</b>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning</b> Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b> The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The quality and variety of language that children hear and speak throughout the day is crucial for developing their understanding, vocabulary and their ability to communicate effectively with others. By introducing new vocabulary through reading to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing children with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, all children have the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role-play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary. The frequency and depth of these daily exchanges, and the confidence that develops when children are involved in positive communication, are fundamental to their progress.</p>	<p>The first sentence is out of kilter with the recognition in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 about the interconnected nature of the three Prime Areas, and how all three are foundational for children’s learning. It misleadingly suggests a primacy about spoken language which is neither developmentally nor chronologically correct. This is not to downplay the importance of Communication and Language, but to ensure there is clarity about the importance and interconnectedness of all three Prime Areas.</p> <p>Both here and in the introduction to Literacy, it needs to be made clearer that CL (especially oral language) is the root of literacy. Children need rich to-and-fro conversations about real experiences, where the vocabulary has meaning and where they are stretched to develop their use of more complex language in order to express and clarify their thinking. New vocabulary is not best introduced through reading as suggested here, with first-hand activities serving only as follow-up practice.</p> <p>This misunderstanding reflects the lack of awareness of Understanding as preceding using vocabulary. Children best understand words when they experience them in first-hand contexts, not in the more abstract situations of being read to.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG Listening and attention:</b> children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Listening</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen carefully and respond appropriately when being read to and during whole class and small group discussions;</li> <li>- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;</li> <li>- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.</li> </ul>	<p>This should be <b>Listening and attention</b> –see Development Matters to understand the development of integrated attention. Attention development is an essential prerequisite to listening, and must be highlighted.</p> <p>This section clearly shows no awareness of CL development, no input from Speech and Language Therapists. This is especially surprising bearing in mind the recent specific recommendations for DfE contained within the recent <i>Bercow Ten Years On</i> report. Children seem to be expected to listen when read to, not much else.</p> <p>It is critical that Attention be included as part of this ELG. It is a necessary prerequisite of effective listening, and for children with communication and language delay it is the first aspect that must receive focus in supporting progress.</p> <p>Asking questions does not belong here. It belongs in Understanding.</p> <p>“Hold conversation when engaged in back and forth exchanges” is a tautology. What is meant here?</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>Current ELG Understanding:</b> children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.</p>	<p>No longer an ELG</p>	<p>This needs to be included to address professional understanding of language development. Understanding comes before speaking, and must receive specific attention.</p> <p>Answering questions about “how” and “why” is an appropriate marker for the stage, and should tie in with Development Matters guidance; understanding this sort of question is not typical for younger children</p>
<p><b>Current ELG Speaking:</b> children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Speaking:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in small group, class and 1-to-1 discussions, offering their own ideas, using new vocabulary;</li> <li>- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of new vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;</li> <li>- Express their ideas using full sentences, with modelling and support from their teacher.</li> </ul>	<p>Key aspects of the original ELG have been lost. There is nothing here about expressing themselves effectively and actively communicating with others taking listeners' needs into account; nor clarity around the importance of using language for thinking in narratives and connecting ideas. These are the ways language supports learning across all areas, not just repeating vocabulary.</p> <p>There is no explanation of what is meant by “new vocabulary” – new to whom? How new does it need to be? Is it still new when we use it in different contexts and for different purposes? How much of it is nouns, adverbs, adjectives, verbs, adverbial phrases? What about EAL? Or using foreign language phrases? Or body language etc? Knowing vocabulary is a proxy indicator, and not one we should expect practitioners to measure as part of the ELGs. It can lead to a ‘tick list’ approach of teaching sets of words.</p> <p>Full sentences is not an important element, and can be artificial in conversation. Connecting ideas and events indicates more complex sentence/grammatical structures.</p>

<b>Physical Development</b>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning - Physical Development</b>                      involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity*, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.                      * CMO's guidelines on physical activity</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b>                      Physical activity is important in children's all-round development, and for enabling them to pursue healthy and active lives. Through opportunities to be active and interact with their environment, children develop coordination, control and precision of movement. Children need to develop strength and a love of exercise, as well as precision when using small tools correctly.</p>	<p>This needs some recognition of the importance of physical development and movement for developing cognitive abilities and that children learn through their bodies and senses in active exploration of the world and events. For example, vestibular and proprioceptive development are crucial for moving and handling, but also for understanding oneself in space and how we develop mental maps and concepts through schematic play.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG Moving and handling:</b> children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Gross Motor Skills:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;</li> <li>- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination;</li> <li>- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed ELG Fine motor skills</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold a pencil comfortably using the tripod grip;</li> <li>- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery;</li> <li>- Show accuracy and care when drawing and copying</li> </ul>	<p>Gross motor bullets 2 &amp; 3: This is too vague: What does ‘good’ look like for a 5-year-old, compared to a 3-year-old or a 15-year-old? Needs more on balance, coordination and control. Suggest further advice is sought.</p> <p>Using tripod grip is too prescriptive and not important enough to be an ELG -- the effect is more important than the detail of grip. (Also not inclusive of some children with a disability)</p> <p>The reference to copying is not appropriate – rephrase as “when mark-making or using small equipment”.</p> <p>These two ELGs could be combined to make it possible to keep Health and Self-Care as an ELG – which means that they would receive attention throughout the EYFS at earlier stages.</p>
<p><b>Current ELG Health and self-care:</b> children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.</p>	<p>ELG moved to PSED</p>	<p><b>Health and selfcare does not belong in PSED</b>, it should be in PD. Looking after one’s body and understanding how it works is part of becoming more able to self-regulate one’s physical self and the whole mind/body balance of learning, playing and interacting with other people and the world.</p>

<b>Personal, Social &amp; Emotional Development</b>		
<p><b>Current Areas of Learning – Personal, social and emotional development</b> involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b>                      Children’s personal, social and emotional development is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and should be developed hand-in-hand with their cognitive development. Children who can cooperate are more likely to develop a good opinion of themselves and others, and to be able to learn effectively in a group. These attributes support children to build friendships and important positive attachments, providing a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.</p>	<p>This section should be first in the list. PSED is fundamental to all areas, including CL—it is impossible to communicate or learn language except in relationship with others. When children are stressed, do not feel safe and cared for, their fight-or-flight response impedes brain activity in frontal lobes and impedes learning. A feeling of belonging and self-worth is vital, because we learn through and with others, and so relating to others is essential.</p> <p>There is an attempt here to show the links between PSED and cognitive development, which is important, but with an unnecessary stress on “learning effectively in a group” and achieving at school, ie looking at this only within the context of the educational environment not the child’s life as a whole.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG Self-confidence and self-awareness:</b> children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help</p> <p><b>Current ELG Managing feelings and behaviour:</b> children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Self-Regulation:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and regulate their behaviour accordingly;</li> <li>- Have a positive sense of self and show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;</li> <li>- Pay attention to their teacher and follow multi-step instructions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-regulation does not belong in PSED.</b> There are certainly elements of self-regulation in PSED, but self-regulation includes cognitive self-regulation as well as emotional. It would be far more helpful to increase attention to self-regulation by increasing focus on the Characteristics of Effective Learning.</p> <p>This is very muddled. It attempts to merge the ELG on self-confidence and self-awareness with the ELG on managing feelings and behaviour and also one aspect of the deleted ELG on Understanding (which belonged under Communication and Language, or could better be included under the ELG for comprehension). 'Positive sense of self' is not self-regulation. Nor is paying attention to their teacher and following multi-step instructions, although self-regulation does support that ability. This weak attempt to include self-regulation will not help the sector to understand what self-regulation is, why it matters, how it develops.</p> <p>The original ELG is much more helpful than the proposed replacement in relation to self-confidence and self-awareness as it is about what children do and how they do it. The replacement is far too abstract. Part of resilience is being able to ask for help when needed. Perseverance is part of the Characteristics of Effective Learning, as is play.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>(Currently under Physical Development – see above)</b>  <b>Current ELG Health and self-care:</b>          children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Managing Self:</b>          Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing and going to the toilet;</li> <li>- Understand the importance of healthy food choices;</li> <li>- Explain the reasons for rules and know right from wrong.</li> </ul>	<p>This is a muddle which doesn't distinguish how Managing Self is different from self-regulation. The first two bullets should not be here but in physical development (see notes on PD). By cutting the ELG for Managing feelings and behaviour there is no longer a sensible place for the third bullet - which was in any case better phrased in the original, which had a nuanced understanding of age-appropriate concepts of behaviour and ethics, rather than the current version which is far too abstract and open to interpretation.</p>
<p><b>Current ELG Making relationships:</b>          children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.</p>	<p><b>ELG Building relationships</b>          Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;</li> <li>- Form positive attachments and friendships;</li> <li>- Show sensitivities to others' needs</li> </ul>	<p>There is nothing here about recognising feelings of themselves and others.</p> <p>“Work” is not a word which would often be used to describe activity in the EYFS. If a broader word than “play” is wanted, perhaps “play and learn”?</p> <p>The second bullet is too vague: children from birth onwards form positive attachments, and friendships from at least age 2.</p> <p>There is no clear rationale for a name change from “Making relationships” to “Building relationships”.</p>

Specific areas		
<b>Literacy</b>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning</b>  <b>Literacy</b> development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b>                      Reading consists of two dimensions: word reading and comprehension (both listening and reading). It is important to develop both aspects. Good language comprehension, necessary for both reading and writing, draws from linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. By listening and talking about stories, rhymes and poems, and non-fiction books children develop knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). It is also crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading; by reading books in class and demonstrating their own enjoyment, teachers will pass on the joy of reading.</p>	<p>This description is written as if the educational programme for literacy applies only to children who are beginning to read. It needs to be applicable across the whole of the EYFS. It should start with enjoyment of books, rather than leaving that as an afterthought to skills. It needs to include concepts of print.</p> <p>Both here and in the introduction to CL, it needs to make clearer that CL (especially oral language) is the root of literacy. Children need rich to-and-fro conversations about real experiences, where the vocabulary has meaning and where they are stretched to develop their use of more complex language in order to express and clarify their thinking. <b>Listening comprehension is not part of reading</b> – it is part of underlying Communication and Language, and should be re-instated there. Composition in speech is also CL, not Literacy. Literacy must be seen as a subset of CL, not the other way around.</p> <p>Handwriting is a physical fine motor skill, and depends on PD. It is not necessarily part of writing which is conveying meaning in text – which could be on a computer, magnetic letters, etc.</p> <p>The current ELGs for literacy are pitched too high. Although some children attain these with ease, they are developmentally inappropriate for many children at the end of Reception. Some children can attain these with sustained and unbalanced focus which disadvantages them in the longer term. This is particularly unfortunate given that, notwithstanding the early start to school in England and the downward push on phonics and reading, there is no evidence that early reading supports better eventual reading success. The literacy ELGs therefore need particular attention to ensure they set children up with firm foundations for reading success, without setting unrealistic targets or skewing their learning and development.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG Reading:</b> children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.</p> <p><b>Our suggestion</b> <b>Reading:</b> Children read and understand simple text using a range of strategies including context, visual memory and phonics. They use their phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.</p>	<p><b>ELG Comprehension:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate understanding of what they have read and has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and new vocabulary;</li> <li>- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems;</li> <li>- Use new vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.</li> </ul> <p><b>ELG Word Reading:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;</li> <li>- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;</li> <li>- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including common exception words.</li> </ul>	<p>The statements in Comprehension belong in Understanding in CL, and the two reading strands of Comprehension and Decoding should be combined in one ELG. It is not helpful to divide reading in this way, and places undue emphasis by giving Reading two ELGs.</p> <p>The sole reliance on phonetic decoding before engaging with meaning of words and texts, though supported by the current government, is a highly contested area. This does not reflect much current expert understanding of the development of reading. The approach is inappropriately restrictive and attempts to dictate pedagogy instead of leaving this to teachers’ professional judgement. There is nothing here about using pictures to support the understanding of words and comprehension. Nor is there any reference to enjoyment.</p> <p>Bullet 1 of Word Reading is inappropriate: This is too challenging for many children. How does this fit in with the current expectations in Phonics teaching? For children with EAL, SEND and summer born children this could be a significant challenge. Also this will all be used as a tick list – adding to work load as well as defining children’s progress in a negative way. This is one of the areas which could lead to a significant drop in outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage as children would have to have achieved these before being given the Goal. There is no wiggle room here</p> <p>In order to show progression in language comprehension, this needs to include children understanding 'how' and 'why'.</p> <p>It is not weakness in teaching that leads to many children not achieving the current Literacy ELGs. It is developmentally inappropriate for many children. EYFS should focus on emergent reading. See comment on draft educational programme above.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Commentary on the draft revised Early Learning Goals*

<p><b>Current ELG Writing:</b> children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.</p> <p><b>Our suggestion</b> <b>ELG Writing:</b> children write to record their own ideas in a range of circumstances. They use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. Their writing can be read by themselves and sometimes by others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are often phonetically plausible.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Writing:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;</li><li>- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;</li><li>- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.</li></ul>	<p>Handwriting is not writing. Stephen Hawking couldn't do this, but did he not write? What about communicating, which is the purpose of writing? Can they or others read it? Does it make sense to the child? Do they use writing in their play and for other real purposes? In addition, this expectation is beyond the current level of Yr1 handwriting. The existing ELG is better than this one.</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Mathematics</b>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning</b>  <b>Mathematics</b> involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure.</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b>                      Developing a strong grounding in number is essential for providing children with the platform to excel mathematically. Children should develop a deep conceptual understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns therein. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding, children will develop a secure base of knowledge from which mathematical mastery is built.</p>	<p>We agree that the ELGs for Mathematics need revising. However, a key aspect is that it should be grounded in children’s practical experience, not become an exercise in rote learning. The use of the word “Mastery” in the preamble linked with the word “knowledge” may mislead people into think this is about a particular programme (Maths Mastery) – which is intended for older stages, not the early years. Mastery should be about understanding and applying confidently in their own embedded learning, i.e. a mastery orientation. Better to avoid the word because of this likely misunderstanding.</p> <p>Learning about shape, space, pattern and measure is an essential element of mathematics and also provides opportunities to apply and deepen understanding related to number such as estimating, relationships, predicting and pattern whilst promoting statutory CoELs. <b>This is a fundamental element of mathematics across the entire age range of the EYFS, and should not be removed from the curriculum.</b></p>

<p><b>Current ELG Numbers:</b> children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.</p> <p><b>Early Education’s suggested revision to the current ELG Numbers:</b> children use numbers in a range of circumstances. They can reliably count sets of objects to at least 10, and can say which set has more or less. They recognise and order numerals to at least 10. They solve everyday problems in practical contexts using addition and subtraction by joining or separating sets.</p> <p><b>Early Childhood Maths Group suggested revision:</b> Children: - count out up to 12 items from a larger group - recognise small numbers of items without counting - match numerals to amounts They compare and estimate numbers They predict adding or taking one with numbers to 12. They recognise how numbers are made up of other numbers and solve practical problems including adding.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Number</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have an understanding of number to 10, linking names of numbers, numerals, their value, and their position in the counting order;</li> <li>- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;</li> <li>- Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0-5 and for 10, including corresponding partitioning facts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed ELG Numerical Patterns</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Automatically recall double facts up to 5+5</li> <li>- Compare sets of objects up to 10 in different contexts, considering size and difference;</li> <li>- Explore patterns of numbers within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds.</li> </ul>	<p>Focusing on a deep understanding of the numbers to 10 is an improvement on the previous focus on counting to 20, although it might be helpful to add “at least to 10”.</p> <p>Research on subitising generally says it is not really possible beyond 4; some adults can do 5, but generally we have to mentally add 2 +3, because we can actually perceive only up to 4.</p> <p>The ELG Numerical Patterns is not necessary as in the main these bullets are part of Numbers. They will just become another way or being able to ‘test’ children – easily measurable and show a superficial rather than deeper understanding of mathematical patterns. Much better to keep Shape, Space and Measures as it gives children a wider experience of mathematics which they are actually tuned in to develop. Many schematic patterns of thinking are the basis for these aspects of learning so crucial to keep them.</p> <p>The ELG should not be about “recall” or rote learning.</p> <p>“Patterns of numbers” not clear – this needs to be more explicit.</p> <p>Inclusion of evens and odds is not appropriate for all children at this stage.</p> <p>More work with early years maths experts is recommended but as a starting point two alternative drafts are given in column 1.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Commentary on the draft revised Early Learning Goals*

<p><b>Current ELG Shape, space and measures:</b> children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.</p>	<p><b>No proposed ELG -Shape space and measure removed from EYFS</b></p>	<p>It is absolutely crucial that the maths ELG doesn't become purely number focussed. We are extremely concerned by the fact that there is no SSM ELG, and that this has also been removed from the educational programme. The current ELG as it stands is largely appropriate and could perhaps be fine-tuned with input from early maths expert groups. Shape, space and measure must be included in the ELG to avoid a narrowing of the maths EYFS curriculum.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>Understanding the World</b></p>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning Understanding the World</b> involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b> The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. And enriching and widening their vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.</p>	<p>The new text is unduly specific – UW is now framed in terms of the experience provided by the school or setting (visits from or to the setting) and being read to. It fails to capture the broad experiences children have within their homes and communities, and when out and about in their local area or further afield. All reference to technology has been lost, not just the ELG. The role of UW in supporting language does not need to be spelt out as part of the Educational Programme. This is not an improvement on the previous text.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG People and communities:</b> children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Past and Present</b> Children at the expected standard will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;</li> <li>- Know some similarities and differences between people's lives now and in the past, drawing upon what has been read in class;</li> <li>- Recall some important narratives, characters and figures from the past encountered in books read in class</li> </ul>	<p>The original ELG is better, with a deeper approach and supporting development of British Values and social mobility</p> <p>UoW: should not be about "books read in class" (repeated here twice), it is about experience and conversation. It needs to start with the familiar, and children's daily lives and the lives, similarities and differences of people around them, and meaningful personal histories. Recall of historical facts is inappropriately bringing in aspects of the Y1 curriculum.</p> <p>Evangelou et al (2009) used a version of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of child development to structure the research report which informed the review of the EYFS. The child reaches out to, and is influenced by, first their family, and then settings and community. The setting or school sits within the family and community spheres of influence and should not be seen as separate from them. Learning and development takes place within this broad and flexible context and both what children learn (the areas of learning) and how they do it (the CoEL) are part of it.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>Current ELG The world:</b> children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Place and Culture</b> Children at the expected standard will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories non-fiction texts and maps;</li> <li>- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on what has been read in class;</li> <li>- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed ELG The Natural World</b> Children at the expected standard will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the natural world around them making observations and diagrams of animals and plants;</li> <li>- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting ones described in what has been read in class;</li> <li>- Understand the effect of the changing seasons on the natural world around them</li> </ul>	<p>Past &amp; Present/Place and Culture:</p> <p>These two proposed ELGs are muddled. “Lives of people around them... and roles” is about place and culture. Past is personal at this age, and it is not about learning history from books, non-fiction texts, reading in class, etc. This is not at all appropriate for YR.</p> <p>Natural World:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again, this is a Key Stage 1 requirement, not Foundation Stage in its focus on diagrams and reading in class.</li> <li>• How do we know they understand the seasons? Where is explanation, talk about changes, differences, etc.?</li> </ul>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>Current ELG Technology:</b> children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.</p>	<p>No longer included</p>	<p>We recognise that this is a highly contested area, and the fast-changing nature of technology means this cannot be too specific, but it is also an area of the EYFS which helps children and families as learners and communicators and which is looking to the future. This ELG recognises that it is appropriate for children to learn about all sorts of technology – not just computers. There is already concern that we are losing the type of thinking, dispositions and skills that are needed for the future in terms of developing technologies, and it would therefore seem a backward step to abandon this ELG, and even more so to remove references to technology from the educational programme.</p>
<p><b>Expressive Arts and Design</b></p>		
<p><b>Current Area of Learning Expressive Arts and Design</b> involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology</p>	<p><b>Proposed Educational Programme</b> The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.</p>	<p>This description no longer sets out an educational programme for arts and design – it may give a rationale for why this is important, but not a helpful indicator of what opportunities children need to be given.</p> <p>There is barely any mention of music, dance or imaginative play. Technology and the importance of generating ideas and representation are missing completely.</p> <p>Expressive arts and design is about exploring and expanding creative boundaries, developing the imagination and critical thinking. Sadly, these new goals limit these possibilities.</p>

<p><b>Current ELG Exploring and using media and materials:</b> children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function</p> <p><b>Current ELG Being imaginative:</b> children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.</p>	<p><b>Proposed ELG Creating with Materials:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draw and paint using a range of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;</li> <li>- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;</li> <li>- Make use of props and materials when role-playing characters in narratives and stories.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed ELG Performing:</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;</li> <li>- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – move in time with music;</li> <li>- Co-construct, invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.</li> </ul>	<p>Creativity is not the sole preserve of the arts – in the EYFS it is in the CoEL and runs through all areas of the curriculum (eg maths, language, making relationships with others).</p> <p>“Draw and paint” is a very restrictive definition – what about clay, woodwork, collage, etc? A broader word is needed. The process is more important than the product, so the emphasis should be on the experimenting, not the drawing and painting (etc).</p> <p>Performance should not be an ELG. Children should be engaging in singing and dancing, but this puts too much focus on an “end-product”, ie “performing”. The aim may have been to acknowledge “performance arts”, ie. singing or storytelling, but this could be misinterpreted leading to inappropriate expectations that children should perform.</p> <p>Reference to make music and dancing have been lost other than an overly specific reference to well-known nursery rhymes and songs. The vital creative aspect of children experimenting with and changing music and movement have been taken out.</p> <p>Children can construct narratives alone, as well as with peers and teachers.</p> <p>The two existing ELGs are far better than these. The current ELGs highlight becoming familiar with media and materials, and then using them to express their own ideas. The draft has basically framed what was “Exploring and using” as “creating”, and left out all the imaginative side of children expressing their own ideas.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## What needs to happen next

DfE have noted that they will “pilot” the draft ELGs with 25 schools, and that the pilot will be evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation. They have also committed to the release of the draft being “the first step of a full consultation process working closely with the early years sector”. It is vital that government now:

- Recognise that the current draft requires major changes
- Provide a clear rationale for all changes when going out to consultation with the sector, including any research evidence and practitioner feedback on which they are based
- Commit to working with those from the early years sector with an in-depth understanding of how these proposed changes will impact on practice, and engage those experts to provide an extensive re-write of the current draft to make the new ELGs fit for purpose
- Commit to reviewing the impact on the whole EYFS of the proposed changes to the Areas of Learning, including of bringing these together with the ELGs and of making the CoEL non-statutory, to minimise any unintended impacts of the changes.
- Consult with the whole early years sector about these changes, and ensure that the format of the final version distinguishes clearly between the role of the ELGs as an assessment at the end of Reception and the role of the Areas of Learning, which set out what educational programmes should include within their curriculum for children in the EYFS
- Clarify what the aim of the pilot will be, and how it will be evaluated, including
  - whether the pilot will assess the impact of the changes on how children’s outcomes are assessed, considering the impact for the individual child as well as cohort data such as the potential impact on GLD scores, and any equality issues resulting.
  - whether there will be a control group to test the impact on workload, including the workload of familiarisation with the changes, and the workload involved in assessing against the new ELGs compared to the old version.
- Commit to putting in place sufficient additional resource to cover the additional CPD needs of the sector in learning to implement the changes as finally agreed.

## References

The Early Years Foundation Stage, consultation on a single quality framework for services to children from birth to five (2006) available from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8215/1/Complete%20for%20WEB.PDF>

Tickell, C. (2011) *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning*, An independent report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty’s Government available from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/180919/DFE-00177-2011.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180919/DFE-00177-2011.pdf)

Early Education (2012) *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage*, London: Early Education, Crown copyright Available from [www.early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/Development%20Matters%20in%20the%20Early%20Years%20Foundation%20Stage%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/Development%20Matters%20in%20the%20Early%20Years%20Foundation%20Stage%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

Evangelou, M., Sylva, K., Kyriacou, M., Wild, M. and Glenny, G. (2009) *Early Years Learning and Development Literature Review* Department for Children, Schools and Families, Research Report No. DCSF-RR176 Available at <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2012/08/early-years-learning-and-development-literature-review/>

*Commentary on the draft revised Early Learning Goals*

\*ICAN & Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2018) Bercow Ten Years On An independent review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in England. Available from <http://www.bercow10yearson.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/337644-ICAN-Bercow-Report-WEB.pdf>

Rochford, D. (2016) Review of assessment for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests available to download at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/rochford-review-final-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rochford-review-final-report)