Research Report DFE-RR144

Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund

Final report

Sandra Mathers, Helen Ranns, Arjette Karemaker, Alison Moody, Kathy Sylva, Jenny Graham, and Iram Siraj-Blatchford

Department for Education

Acknowledgements

Social surveys are the work of a team, and the authors would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of many colleagues. We would like to thank Deborah Sanders, Patrick Towgood, and Leila Allsopp at the DfE for their support during the course of the project. We are also grateful to Mary Baginsky, Thom Crabbe, Christopher Price and Rebecca Bull at the Children's Workforce Development Council, and to the members of our Steering Group, for their assistance and advice.

Within Oxford University our appreciation goes to Zeenat Ghumra, Natalia Kucirkova, Jenny Good, Victoria Vincent, Sophie Walsh, Harriet Alexander, Lucinda Turnpenny, Lauren Cross and Emma Watson who worked on the fieldwork, data cleaning and writing up of the evaluation. In addition, we would like to thank Faye Linskey for her help in coordinating the baseline fieldwork, Keith Levy, Steve Henshaw and Sandra Henshaw for software support and James Hall and Julia Hall for their statistical advice. Last but not least, we thank all the fieldworkers who carried out the observations and collected the data.

At the National Centre for Social Research we would like to thank Naomi Stoll and Alice Mowlam for conducting fieldwork and analysis for the qualitative impacts case studies, Natasha Reilly for her assistance with the telephone survey and Emily Diment for data management. We would also like to thank Nafiis Boodhumeah and Bhavna Patel for programming the telephone interview, Chris Massett, Sonia Shirvington, and the telephone interviewers for carrying out the work. Thanks also go to Sam Clemens and Clarissa White for their input throughout the evaluation.

Beyond the Oxford University and NatCen team we gratefully acknowledge our collaborator Susan Purdon from Bryson Purdon Social Research for her statistical advice and guidance.

We also thank all the settings, their managers, staff and parents – without their participation there would be no study and no report.

Content

Tables

Figures

Glossary

CIS	Caregiver Interaction Scale
CPD	Continuing professional development
CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECAT	Every Child a Talker
ECSD	Early Childhood Studies Degree
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECERS-E	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition
ECOI	Early Child Observation Index
EIG	Early Intervention Grant
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-school Education project
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYP	Early Years Professional
EYPS	Early Years Professional Status
EYSEFD	Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree
GLF	Graduate Leader Fund
HGGI	Home Grown Graduate Incentive
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IQF	Integrated Qualification Framework
ITERS-R	Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition
LA	Local authority
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent (settings)
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
QP	Quality Premium
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RI	Recruitment Incentive
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPS	Senior Practitioner Status
SST	Sustained Shared Thinking (techniques)
TF	Transformation Fund

Executive summary

Introduction and background

Since 2006 the Government has provided funding through the Transformation Fund (TF) to help professionalise the early years workforce and to deliver the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare. The aims of the TF were based on evidence highlighting the relationship between qualifications and the quality of early years provision, as well as differences in quality between the maintained and the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2006; Sylva et al., 2003; Taggart et al., 2003). A total of £250 million was made available for local authorities (LAs) to develop a graduate-led workforce within the PVI sector.

In August 2007 the TF was replaced by the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF) which provided a further £305 million in funding between April 2008 and March 2011. The GLF supports all full day care PVI sector providers in employing a graduate or **Early Years Professional (EYP)** by 2015, to lead practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The role of these graduate leaders is to support and mentor others, as well as to model skills and good practice to secure high quality provision. From April 2011 LAs have been funding support for EYPs in PVI settings through the Early Intervention Grant.

The National Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund (2007-2011) was commissioned by the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES)[1] and carried out by a consortium of researchers from the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), the University of Oxford and the Institute of Education (University of London). The main aim was to **assess the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund and its impact on the quality of early years provision in the PVI sector**. This report presents the findings from the final three components of the evaluation: the literature review, the impact study and the qualitative case studies.

Evaluation design

At the heart of the GLF evaluation is the impact study, designed to **identify the impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) on quality**, both at a single time-point and the impact of gaining a graduate leader on change in quality over time.

Findings are based on data gathered from a sample of 238 settings visited at two time-points, with two years between visits. Quality was assessed using three rating scales: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R), designed to assess provision for children from 30 months to 5 years; the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension **(**ECERS-E), designed to assess curricular provision for children aged 3 to 5 years; and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition

[1] Most recently Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and since May 2010 the Department for Education (DfE).

(ITERS-R), which assesses provision for children from birth to 30 months.

Qualitative case studies in 12 settings were undertaken to complement the impact assessment by describing the nature of improvements made and identifying the levers, barriers and facilitators to quality improvement. Managers, EYPs and setting staff took part. A survey was also conducted with parents in these 12 settings to elicit their views on the quality of provision and changes over time.

Sample and characteristics of EYPs

Of the 238 impact study settings, 32 gained an EYP during the course of the evaluation. Three settings employed two EYPs, giving a total of 35 EYPs in the sample. All EYPs had held their status for six months or more at the time of the follow-up. Around one third had held their status for 12 months or more, with the longest any EYP had held their status being 24 months. This evaluation therefore assesses the impact of EYPs within the first 6 to 24 months of attaining their status.

The majority of EYPs had achieved their status via the validation pathway or the short professional extended development pathway. Almost all (94 per cent) of EYPs held a managerial position, either describing themselves as senior managers or line managers. On average, EYPs spent 35 per cent of their time working 'hands-on' with the children (down from 48 per cent before gaining EYPS). EYPs reported taking on greater responsibility for the support and mentoring of other staff after gaining their status.

Key findings

The impact of gaining EYPS

- Settings which gained a graduate leader with EYPS made significant improvements in quality for pre-school children (aged 30 months to 5 years) as compared with settings which did not. Gains were seen in overall quality and in a number of individual dimensions of practice, including: positive staff-child interactions; support for communication, language and literacy; reasoning/thinking skills and scientific understanding; provision of a developmentally appropriate schedule; and providing for individual needs and diversity.

- EYPS provided 'added value' over and above gaining a graduate in terms of overall quality and (to a lesser extent) provision to support literacy/language, and planning for individual needs/diversity.

- Improvements related most strongly to direct work with children, such as support for learning, communication and individual needs, reflecting the role of EYPs as 'leaders of practice'. Fewer measurable improvements were seen in the more 'structural aspects' of provision, including the quality of the physical environment, care routines and provision for parents and staff members.

- EYPs were more influential on the quality of practice in their own rooms than on quality across the whole setting. The more time EYPs spent in rooms with children, the greater the impact they had on the quality of provision in that room.

- EYPs are tasked with 'leading practice across the full age range from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage'. However, in contrast to the positive findings in relation to quality for pre-school children, there was little evidence that EYPs improved the quality of provision for younger children (birth to 30 months). The low number of EYPs working in these rooms means that we cannot draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYPS on provision for infants and toddlers. Further research is needed to establish the most effective ways of raising quality for under 3s through workforce development.

Other predictors of quality

- The overall qualification level of staff working with the older children (30 months to 5 years) was a predictor of quality in more 'educational' dimensions of provision. Better qualified staff teams offered higher quality support for children's developing communication, language and literacy skills and their reasoning, thinking and mathematical skills, as well as higher overall curricular quality. As with the EYP findings, qualifications and quality were less related for the infant/toddler age range.

- Other factors, such as staff experience and adult-child ratios, were identified as being important for the more nurturing and 'care-based' aspects of provision (e.g. staff-child interactions and personal care routines) across the birth to five age range.

- Settings which catered for a greater proportion of children with SEN offered more developmentally appropriate schedules for children from birth to five, and higher quality interactions for the younger age range.

- The evaluation identified a link between disadvantage and the quality of provision offered to children. Settings catering for higher proportions of minority groups and children speaking English as an additional language (EAL), and settings in more income deprived areas, were rated as lower quality.

- A number of other setting characteristics were identified as predictors of quality, including the sector or 'aegis' of settings (e.g. private, not-for-profit), the number of recent changes experienced (e.g. in staffing, management or organisation), setting size and group size.

Improving practice in settings

- The case studies found that improvements made within settings were largely in response to the implementation of the EYFS, which was considered to be an important catalyst for change. Many of the reported improvements centred on child-led learning and meeting the needs of the individual child. Improvements

were driven by EYPs, other staff, sources of advice external to the setting, changes in management and other programmes and schemes supporting the EYFS.

- EYPs, managers and staff reported improvements in: planning and observation procedures; the use of key worker systems; a greater emphasis on child-initiated activities; the use of free flow to support children's choice; parent-practitioner relationships and parental involvement with the setting; staff support and evaluation; the physical environment of the setting; and health and safety practices/procedures.

- The scale of improvements ranged from those undertaking large-scale change to settings making small improvements. Those undertaking large-scale change did so in order to improve provision. Where smaller changes were made, this was more likely to be part of a continuous process of development in a setting already felt to deliver high quality provision.

Factors affecting improvements

A range of factors affected settings' abilities to successfully implement improvements to practice. These were:

- The degree of strategic planning undertaken ahead of improvements, and the extent to which planned changes were related.

- The role of the EYP as defined by three interrelated factors: leadership and skills; the EYP's position within the setting; and the extent to which the role and remit of the EYP was defined and agreed.

- Other staff's engagement and understanding of proposed improvements, including their understanding of how improvements would be delivered in practice and of why these changes would improve quality.

- Parental willingness for the proposed improvements to take place, alongside parental engagement in their child's development.

- External advice and support from early years advisors, who were seen as experts in the delivery of high quality provision, and from EYP networks.

- Setting features such as the outdoor space available and setting size. Planning and implementing improvement was considered to be more straightforward in smaller settings.

Parents' views of improvements, qualifications and their involvement in their child's learning

- Parents' assessments of change in quality did not reflect the changes in quality measured in the impact assessment. Only 27 per cent of parents with children in

'improved' settings recognised that the quality of provision had improved; 29 per cent of parents with children in settings that remained stable thought their provision had improved.

- Staff qualifications were not cited amongst the primary reasons for selecting a setting, with only 26 per cent of parents citing this as one of their top three factors.

- Parents exhibited a limited awareness of the presence of an EYP, and of qualifications more generally within their child's setting; only 25 per cent of parents in EYP settings knew that their setting had an EYP in place. Forty per cent of parents did not know what the highest qualification held by staff in their setting was and parents saw staff experience as more important than qualifications.

- Parents reported high levels of involvement in their child's learning and development, with 83 per cent reporting that they were actively encouraged to input into their child's learning and development records.

Conclusions

This evaluation provides positive evidence that the use of specialised early years graduate training pathways can lead to improvements in quality within the PVI sector. The impact assessment findings show that EYPs were effective in leading change for pre-school children (30 months to 5 years); settings which gained an EYP made significant improvements in quality over those that did not.

The evidence also suggests that EYPs were successful in leading implementation of the EYFS, with the positive benefits relating very strongly to direct 'hands-on' work with children. The dimensions of practice in which positive impacts were identified could also be described as 'process quality', defined as 'actual experiences that occur in [early years settings] including children's interaction with caregivers and peers and their participation in different activities' (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Process quality is important because of the widely held view that it is these interactions which impact most on children's outcomes (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Pianta, 1999).

The impact study identified fewer measurable changes in the quality of the physical environment, personal care routines and provision for parents and staff. This is surprising since the EYP Standards place emphasis on these areas, and the EYPs themselves reported making changes in these aspects of provision. Working with parents and leading and supporting other staff are viewed as important aspects of an EYP's role (CWDC, 2010). The absence of measurable change may have arisen because the ECERS and ITERS quality scales focus on the more 'structural' aspects of provision in these areas (i.e. aspects within the remit of managers rather than EYPs), or because the impacts EYPs had in these areas were restricted to a specific room rather than being setting-wide. This is supported by the finding that 'EYP hours in the room observed' was a stronger predictor of quality in that room than 'EYP hours in the setting'. It is also possible that the EYPs, many of whom who had gained their status relatively recently, were yet to have a measurable impact in these areas.

The role of EYPs is to lead practice across the full age range from birth (CWDC, 2010). Our evidence suggests that positive impacts were seen only for older children, with little evidence that EYPs improved the quality of provision for younger children (birth to 30 months). The low number of EYPs deployed in the infant/toddler rooms observed (less than half, as compared with 91 per cent working in the pre-school rooms observed) mean that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the impact of EYPS on provision for this age range. If, as with pre-school findings, EYPs have a stronger influence on practice in their own rooms, their absence in the infant/toddler rooms may have limited their potential to improve quality for the under threes.

The evaluation findings indicate that both EYP training and EYP roles are key factors for facilitating the future positive impact of EYPS. Key issues include: knowledge and skills gained via EYP pathways and later CPD opportunities; leadership skills; a clearly defined role and remit; and having both managerial authority and time spent 'hands-on' with children. The quality of a setting depends on many variables, the quality and qualifications of their leaders being only one of them. A number of factors 'beyond the EYP' were identified as contributors to quality, and as potential facilitators for the future impact of EYPS. These include: the qualifications and experience of the wider staff team; positive relationships with parents and other professionals; careful planning of changes; and supportive structural characteristics such as ratios and high quality physical environments.

Issues for consideration

The recent review of the Early Years Foundation Stage suggests that 'without continued investment in the early years workforce, the Government will continue to struggle to raise attainment, and in particular to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers' (Tickell, 2011). On the basis of this evaluation, we raise the following issues for consideration:

- Continued support and financial assistance for the development of a high level graduate-led workforce, on the basis that effective leaders are central to implementing government policy in improving the quality of early years provision. Alongside this, the further development of a long term workforce and qualifications strategy for all levels of staff, to ensure high quality early years provision for future generations.
- Based on evidence that EYPs are not being deployed to work with the youngest children, settings should be encouraged to consider whether their graduate leaders are leading practice across the birth to five age range. Coupled with this, research is required to establish the most effective ways of raising quality for our youngest children through workforce development.
- Ensuring that training for EYPs contains effective and high quality support to help them achieve their full potential in leading quality across the EYFS and across settings, and to overcome barriers to improvement. This should include training in effective leadership skills, change management and reflective self-evaluation, as well as effective strategies for working in partnership with parents.

- Ensuring that opportunities are provided for EYPs and other staff to develop ‘purposeful’ hands-on experience, alongside their development of specialised knowledge.
- Ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) for EYPs once they have achieved their status, to enable them to embed and further develop their skills as change agents and leaders of learning.
- Ensuring that EYPs and other staff are supported by the structural characteristics of settings which provide the bedrock for high quality, such as supportive adult-child ratios and physical environments.
- A defined role and remit for EYPs, as well as clear guidance for settings on how to develop these and communicate them to staff. An effective remit should provide EYPs with the authority needed to act as a catalyst for change, while also reflecting the importance of time spent working hands-on with children.
- Continued movement towards the recognition of EYPS as a specific leadership profession.

The evaluation also makes a number of recommendations for future research, which are outlined in Chapter 9 of the full report.

1 Introduction

1.1 Graduate Leader Fund policy background

The Government has provided funding since 2006 to help transform and professionalise the early years workforce and to deliver the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare. A key element of this approach has been the development of a graduate-led workforce, based on the findings of research such as the EPPE project (Sylva et al., 2003), which highlighted the relationship between qualifications and the quality of early years provision, as well as differences in quality between the maintained and the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors.

The 2006 Childcare Act abolished the distinction between care and education for young children and set the scene for the introduction of a new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum for the birth to five age range (DCSF, 2008c), as well as the introduction of a new professional status for the early years workforce; the **Early Years Professional Status (EYPS).**

Funding to support workforce reform in the PVI sector was provided by the Transformation Fund (TF), also established in 2006 and providing £250 million in funding to early years settings via their local authorities (LAs). In April 2008 the TF was superseded by the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF), which provided a further £305 million in ring-fenced funding to support all full day care PVI sector providers in employing a graduate or Early Years Professional (EYP) by 2015. The ring-fenced GLF funding ended in March 2011; from April 2011 LAs are required to support the development of EYPs in PVI settings through the Early Intervention Grant.

1.1.1 Early Years Professional Status

The role of Early Years Professionals is to lead practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), supporting and mentoring others as well as modelling skills and good practice to secure high quality provision. Responsibility for the new EYP role falls under the remit of the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), who describe EYPS as a 'gold standard for working in early years'. The remit of EYPs is to *'act as change agents to lead the Early Years curriculum from birth to five, improve and shape practice'*, and their role is seen as '*key to raising the quality of early years provision'* (CWDC, 2008).

A number of different EYPS training pathways have been developed to meet the needs of practitioners with a diverse range of previous qualifications and experience. Four training routes were in place when the National Evaluation was commissioned (CWDC, 2006a)[2]:

[2] A fifth pathway was introduced in September 2009 (the Undergraduate Pathway) and is therefore outside the scope of this evaluation.

- the **Validation Pathway** (part-time, four months and aimed at those holding a relevant degree with practice experience)
- the **Short Extended Professional Development Pathway** (part-time, six months and aimed at those with a relevant degree but in need of additional training to develop their knowledge and skill base)
- the **Long Extended Professional Development Pathway** (part-time, 15 months and aimed at those who already have a foundation degree in early years or a relevant area and need to obtain an ordinary degree before completing EYPS)
- the **Full Training Pathway** (full-time, 12 months and aimed at those with a non-relevant degree to undertake intensive training over a year)

EYPS is awarded to graduates who successfully demonstrate that they meet a set of 39 professional standards when working with children from birth to five. The Early Years Professional National Standards (CWDC, 2008) define what EYPs should 'know, understand and be able to do' and are organised into six areas: *knowledge and understanding; effective practice; relationships with children; communicating and working in partnership with families and carers; teamwork and collaboration and professional development* (CWDC, 2008). A summary of the EYP Standards is shown in Appendix B.

Further discussion on the policy context for EYPS, and on workforce reform more broadly, is provided in the literature review (Chapter 2).

1.1.2 Implementation of the GLF

In contrast to the TF, which prescribed funding strands and levels at which incentives should be set, the GLF was designed to allow local authorities (LAs) greater flexibility to develop, target and publicise their own incentive systems. As a consequence, each LA was free to design an approach which would reflect the needs of their local PVI childcare sector and address the aim of employing at least one EYP in every PVI setting by 2015. The approach developed was intended to feed directly into local strategies for workforce development[3]. In the most disadvantaged areas, LAs could fund two graduate professional leaders per setting in order to improve early years experience for children in these areas. An additional allowance was incorporated for this purpose within LA allocations.

Each LA was expected to set its own targets for local workforce development for the duration of the GLF (i.e. until 2011) or beyond. Outcomes would then be measured against the baseline of the number of graduates leading practice in PVI full day care settings in each area.

[3] The implementation of the GLF is explored in a separate evaluation report (Ranns et al 2011).

1.2 The National Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund

In June 2007, the (former) Department for Education and Skills (DfES)[4] commissioned a consortium of researchers from the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), University of Oxford and the Institute of Education (University of London) to undertake an evaluation of the TF. The aims and design of the evaluation were revised in August 2007 to reflect the policy transition from the TF to the GLF.

The main aim of the national evaluation was to **assess the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund and its impact on the quality of early years provision in the PVI sector**. This report presents the findings from the final three elements of the evaluation programme (carried out between 2008 and 2010):

- The (updated) literature review
- The impact study
- The qualitative case studies

All components of the evaluation are summarised in Figure 1.1, along with details of where each element is reported.

1.3 Structure of this report

- Chapter 1 (this chapter) introduces the policy context as well as the design and methodology of the evaluation.
- Chapter 2 sets the literature and policy context for the evaluation.
- Chapter 3 presents a profile of the impact study settings and the EYPs at follow-up.
- Chapter 4 assesses the impact of gaining an EYP on change in quality over time.
- Chapter 5 identifies the predictors of quality at the follow-up time-point.
- Chapter 6 describes the improvements which took place within settings.
- Chapter 7 considers the factors which affected the delivery of improvement within settings.
- Chapter 8 provides the parents' assessment of changes in settings.
- Finally, Chapter 9 reflects on the value and role of the GLF and presents policy issues for consideration.

Chapter summaries are provided at the beginning of Chapters 2 to 8.

[4] Most recently Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and since May 2010 the Department for Education (DfE).

Figure 1.1 Elements of the evaluation design and reporting details

Qualitative 'early implementation' case studies (2007)
Aim: to explore the early implementation of the Transformation Fund
Reported in: internal DfES interim report

Updated April-September 2009: GLF implementation case studies
Aim: to explore the early implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund
Reported in: Ranns et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: GLF Implementation Case Studies

Baseline telephone survey (August-December 2007)
Aim: to assess take-up, interest in and implementation of the TF and to select the sample for the impact study
Reported in: internal DfES report

Literature review (initial review 2007; updated 2010)
Aim: to set the context for the study, inform the study design and aid interpretation of findings
Reported in: Chapter 2 of this report [Mathers et al (2011a) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Final Report]; full review published separately (in press)

Impact study (November 2007-2010)

Baseline visits (November 2007-July 2008)
Aim: to gather baseline data on quality and setting characteristics prior to any settings gaining an EYP
Reported in: Karemaker et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Factors relating to Quality (findings from the baseline study)

Analysis of change between baseline and follow-up
Aim: to assess changes in quality between baseline and follow-up, comparing settings which gained an EYP with those which did not
Reported in: Chapter 4 of this report (Mathers et al (2011a), see above)

Follow-up visits (February-October 2010)
Aim: to gather follow-up data on quality and setting characteristics, both for settings that had gained an EYP or graduate since baseline and those that had not
Reported in: Chapter 5 of this report (Mathers et al (2011a), see above)

Qualitative case studies (June-October 2010)
Aim: to explore the facilitators and barriers to EYPs making a positive impact on quality within their settings, and to assess the views of parents
Reported in: Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this report (Mathers et al (2011), see above)

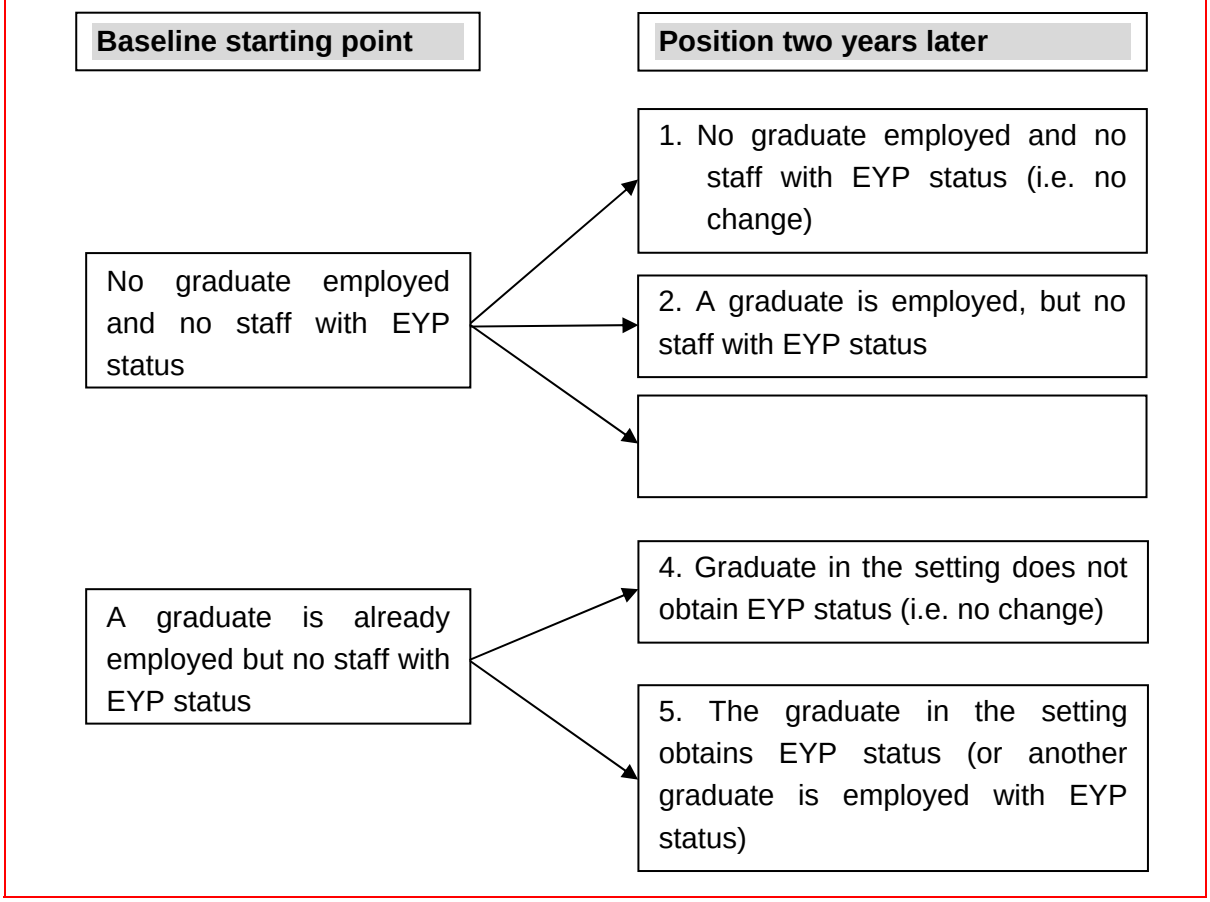
1.4 The impact study

At the heart of the GLF evaluation is the impact study, which aimed to **identify the impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) on quality** – both at a single time-point, and the impact of gaining a graduate leader on change in quality over time. It was designed to answer two questions:

- does having an Early Years Professional improve quality?
- if so, which aspects of practice (and of quality) are most closely associated with EYP status?

To achieve this, data were collected from a sample of PVI settings visited at two time-points (Nov 2007-July 2008 and Feb-Oct 2010), with approximately two years between the baseline and follow-up assessments. The impact study explored the impact of EYPS by comparing settings which changed their leadership status during the course of the study with settings that did not. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the different leadership trajectories explored.

Figure 1.2 Leadership change scenarios to be tested in the impact study



1.4.1 Sample

The impact study sample was selected from the 3489 PVI settings that took part in a baseline telephone interview between August and December in 2007 (see box below).

The baseline survey

The baseline survey was carried out between August and December 2007[5]. It measured the take up, interest in and implementation of the TF, with a focus on the Quality Premium, the Recruitment Incentive and the Home Grown Graduate Initiative[6]. Funding under these strands of the TF was not available for all full day care settings, therefore the survey only 'screened in' those nurseries that were eligible for TF[7], i.e.:

- private, voluntary or independent sector (89 per cent of nurseries screened fulfilled this criteria)
- providing full day care (sessions of at least four hours a day) (95 per cent)
- open for 38 weeks or more a year (95 per cent)
- with at least 20 registered places (92 per cent)

In total, 4420 nurseries were screened, and 79 per cent (3489) fulfilled all four criteria, and completed the full interview. The settings interviewed at the baseline survey were representative of settings eligible for the main graduate strands of the TF and, as a consequence of this, are not representative of all full day care settings (this is discussed further in Chapter 3).

A total of 327 settings were selected for the impact study on the basis that they had potential to improve their qualification levels (either from graduate level to EYP or from non-graduate level to graduate) and that they appeared motivated to do so. Motivation was indicated by taking up or intending to take up one of the TF strands (whilst this was running)[8], or by stating that they were interested in gaining a graduate/EYP (when GLF was announced)[9].

In total, 323[10] settings had a baseline quality assessment carried out between November 2007 and July 2008 by the University of Oxford (reported in Karemaker et al., 2011). At this time-point, none of the settings had an EYP in place. Follow-up assessments took place in 254 of the sample settings between February and October 2010[11]. By this stage,

[5] The technical details and findings of the baseline telephone survey were reported in an internal DfES report (Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Report on the Baseline Survey), submitted in July 2008.

[6] *Quality Premium (QP)*: funding to reward settings where staff achieve EYPS, used to improve the delivery of the EYFS (through staff training or purchase of resources) and to assist settings in retaining an EYP

Recruitment Incentive (RI): funding to enable settings to recruit an EYP or graduate who could take up EYP training, to be used to cover recruitment and salary costs.

Home Grown Graduate Incentive (HGGI): funding for existing staff within settings to train up to graduate or EYP level, paid in addition to course fees, for example to enable settings to pay for staff cover.

[7] In addition, to apply for TF, nurseries had to satisfy two further criteria not asked about in the survey (fees of no more than £175 a week and a satisfactory or better Ofsted report).

[8] The TF strands of interest were the QP, RI and the HGGI (see definitions in footnote 5 above).

[9] The GLF was not structured in the same way as the TF had been, and varied from area to area, therefore the questions were about general intention to up-skill staff, rather than intent to apply for particular funding packages.

[10] In fact, all 327 settings selected for the impact study had a baseline assessment carried out. However, four had an EYP and were therefore removed from the sample.

[11] Out of 323 baseline settings, 78.6 per cent (254) were also visited at follow-up; 10.5 per cent of the settings did not consent to participate in the follow-up and a further 10.9 per cent of the settings were not visited because they did not have an EYP at follow-up and no further settings in this group were required.

100 had a member of staff with a relevant Honours (level 6) degree and 38 settings had an EYP in place[12].

In order to attribute a possible change in quality to the presence of an EYP, it was important to ensure that the EYP in question had been in place for long enough to have implemented changes. Therefore, we used only settings which had their EYP in place for six months or more at the time of the follow-up observation. There were 32 settings in which the EYP had held their status for six months or longer (the longest any EYP had been in post was 24 months; see Chapter 3). A total of six EYP settings were not included in the analysis on the basis that the EYP had not been in post long enough to have effected change. A further 10 settings were excluded from the analysis due to missing data on qualifications at follow-up[13]. The final sample size was therefore 238 settings.

1.4.2 Data collection

At each time-point, data were gathered on the status/qualifications of staff working across the whole setting, and quality was assessed using three observational rating scales:

- the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (**ECERS-R**) (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005), designed to assess provision for children from 30 months to 5 years
- the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension (**ECERS-E**) (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2003), designed to assess curricular provision for children aged three to five years
- the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (**ITERS-R**) (Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2003), which assesses provision for children from birth to 30 months

An overview of the three rating scales is provided in Appendix A. Where settings provided for the birth to five age range, one ECERS-R/E observation was carried out in the pre-school room and one ITERS-R observation in the infant/toddler room[14]. Where settings catered only for the older age range, only the ECERS-R/E observation was conducted. All settings in the sample had an ECERS-R/E observation carried out and 171 also had an ITERS-R observation.

Although the primary focus of the evaluation was to assess the impact of having an EYP on quality of provision, this needed to be set within the context of the settings themselves. Questionnaires were used to collect general information about setting characteristics, particularly those thought to relate to quality of provision. Data were gathered on:

- other characteristics of childcare staff (e.g. experience, age)
- characteristics of the settings themselves (e.g. size, sector)
- characteristics of the rooms observed (e.g. age of children, staff-child ratio)

[12] Estimates of EYP numbers at the interim stage were higher (an internal interim survey in 2009 was carried out to provide an early indication of changes in qualification levels). However, it took practitioners working towards EYPS longer than they estimated when asked at the interim stage to gain their status, so reducing the potential sample size at follow-up.

[13] It was not possible determine whether these settings had an EYP.

[14] Where more than one room was available for a particular age range, a room was selected at random.

- detailed information about practitioners with high-level qualifications (e.g. EYP pathway completed, degree subject)

The majority of characteristics were gathered at both time-points (i.e. baseline and follow-up). However some questions were added for the follow-up visits and were available at this time-point only. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the characteristics of the impact study settings at follow-up, and further details are provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

1.4.3 Analysis

Analysis of the impact study data was carried out in two ways:

- Analysis of changes in quality between baseline and follow-up, with the aim of identifying the impact of gaining an EYP on quality of provision
- Analysis at a single time-point, designed to consider the relationship between EYPS and quality alongside other possible predictors of quality

Changes in quality over time

This analysis (reported in Chapter 4) was designed to measure changes in quality of provision between the baseline and follow up time-points. It aimed to identify the impact of gaining an EYP on changes in quality. Two analyses were carried out, comparing settings which gained an EYP during the course of the evaluation with those which did not.

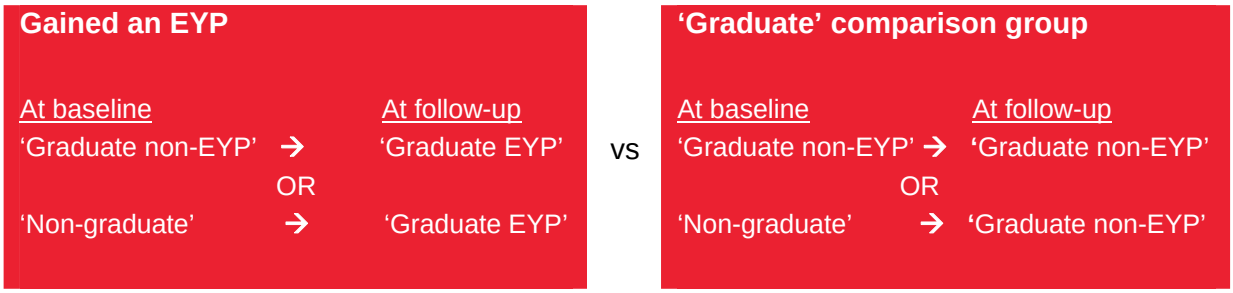
Comparison A compared settings which gained an EYP with settings that did not change their 'graduate leader status' at all (i.e. 'no change' settings):[15]

Gained an EYP				**'No change' comparison group**		
At baseline		At follow-up	vs	At baseline		At follow-up
'Graduate non-EYP'	→	'Graduate EYP'		'Graduate non-EYP'	→	'Graduate non-EYP'
OR				OR		
'Non-graduate'	→	'Graduate EYP'		'Non-graduate'	→	'Non-graduate'

Some of the settings which gained an EYP during the course of the study already employed a graduate at the baseline time-point. Others went from being 'non-graduate' settings to 'graduate EYP settings' – essentially gaining both a graduate *and* an EYP (although of course in most cases these were the same person). Comparison A could therefore be described as a testing the impact of **'gaining a graduate leader who is an EYP'.**

Comparison B was designed to explore the **added value of EYP Status** *over and above* the effect of gaining a graduate. It identified whether settings which gained an EYP made greater gains than they would have done if they had simply gained a non-EYP graduate:[16]

[15] This means we compared 'change groups' 3 & 5 with groups 1 & 4 (see Fig. 1.2 for details of the change groups).



In each analysis, EYPs and their comparison groups were compared on their 'quality change' scores, i.e. the change in quality between baseline and follow-up. Further detail on the analysis strategy, and matching techniques used to select the most appropriate comparison groups, are provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

Predictors of quality at the follow-up time-point

The 'change' analysis was designed to identify the specific impacts of changes in graduate and EYP status on changes in quality. It provided us with clear and simple comparisons – for example, 'did settings which gained an EYP make more progress than settings which did not'?

A second analysis strategy – multiple regression analysis – allowed a more detailed exploration of possible predictors of quality. Its first aim was to explore the relationship between Early Years Professional Status and quality at the follow-up time-point, i.e. was having an EYP a significant predictor of quality and, if so, in which areas could this relationship be seen most strongly?

However, this single time-point analysis also allowed us to explore the relationships between EYPS and quality alongside *other* possible influences on quality. Which other characteristics of the staff, settings and rooms observed (e.g. staff experience, ratios) were related to quality of provision – and how did the presence of an EYP relate to the context of the setting in which they worked?

Regression analysis allows many possible 'predictors' to be entered into an analysis at one time, to explore their impact on the outcome measure (in this case, quality). The regression model therefore allowed the *individual* impact of each variable to be seen, while all others were 'held constant' or accounted for. In this way we could put the magnifying glass onto one characteristic at a time. The findings of this analysis are reported in Chapter 5. A similar analysis was also carried out at the baseline time-point, to inform the development of the study and later analysis (although obviously at this point none of the settings had an EYP). The baseline analysis is presented in a separate published report (Karemaker et al., 2011).

[16] This means we compared 'change groups' 3 & 5 with groups 2 & 4 (see Fig. 1.2 for details of the change groups).

1.5 Qualitative case studies

The impact study was complemented by a series of qualitative case studies which explored the facilitators and barriers to EYPs making a positive impact upon the quality of provision within childcare settings.

Twelve case studies were carried out to provide in-depth evidence of the changes which had occurred within settings where an EYP was in post for longer than nine months. Within each setting, in-depth interviews or focus groups were conducted with managers, EYPs and staff working in the setting. Parents of children who attend the setting were asked to complete a brief paper questionnaire.

The case studies were selected from the 32 settings where an EYP had been in post for at least six months at the time of the follow up assessment. Settings were chosen according to whether they had improved their quality ratings since obtaining an EYP (i.e. between the baseline and follow-up time-points) based on the ITERS-R, ECERS-R and ECERS-E assessments. Settings which had improved their provision by over one point[17] were classified as 'improved' while settings whose quality had either improved or declined by less than 0.6 of a point were classified as 'stable'. Improvers were included to allow for the exploration of improvements made to quality and stable settings were included to permit exploration of the barriers to improving quality.

Settings were also selected to reflect variation across a number of other factors that might have a bearing on the ability of an EYP to bring about positive change, including:

- the status of the EYP (whether they were also managing the setting)
- when they acquired EYP status (whether they obtained the status while working at the setting or were recruited into the setting with the status)
- size of the setting (small, medium or large)
- status of the setting (whether it was part of a national or local chain or a sole operator)

A total of 32 interviews/group discussions were carried out across the 12 settings (six interviews with managers, six interviews with EYPs, seven interviews with manager EYPs and 13 interviews and small groups with setting staff). Interviews were based on a topic guide and carried out between July and November 2010. A profile of the achieved sample is provided in Table 1.1.

Parents of children at the setting were invited to fill in a short self completion questionnaire (provided in the Technical Report; Mathers et al., 2011b). A total of 157 completed questionnaires were collected by the 12 settings and were then analysed by the NatCen research team.

[17] On a scale of 1 to 7 (see Appendix A for more details on the ECERS and ITERS quality scales)

Table 1.1 Sample profile (settings taking part in the qualitative case studies)			
	Improved (7)	**Stable (5)**	**Total (12)**
Status of EYP			
Solely EYP	3	1	4
Manager and EYP	4	4	8
How EYP gained			
Recruited	1	-	1
Home grown	6	5	11
Size of setting			
Small (0-35 places)	3	2	5
Medium (36-60 places)	3	2	5
Large (61+ places)	1	1	2
Chain			
Local chain	3	-	3
National chain	1	1	2
Sole operator	3	4	7

1.5.1 Analysis

All interviews were recorded with participants' permission, and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using 'Framework', a method developed at NatCen. Framework involves the systematic analysis of verbatim interview data within a thematic matrix. The key topics and issues emerging from the interviews were identified through familiarisation with interview transcripts, as well as reference to the original objectives and the topic guides used to conduct the interviews. A series of thematic charts were then drawn up and data from each transcript were summarised under each topic. The final stage of analysis involved working through the summarised data in detail, drawing out the range of experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences, and interrogating the data to seek to explain emergent patterns and findings. The process of drawing the material together allowed the differences and similarities in the perceptions of participants in different case study settings, who improved in quality or remained stable, to be explored.

The data from the completed parents' questionnaires were analysed using SPSS and comparisons were drawn between completed questionnaires from parents from improving and stable settings. The findings from the parents' questionnaire are presented within Chapter 7 of this report.

Further details of the design and conduct of the case studies can be found in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

2 Literature Review: the relationship between professional development and the quality of early childhood provision

Chapter summary

- EYPs lead the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in private, voluntary and independent settings.
- EYPS is a specialised early years graduate status.
- Effective and reflective leaders are central to implementing government policy.
- EYPs lead change, shape and improve practice.
- Financial incentives from the TF and GLF enabled practitioners to access professional development opportunities in higher education and graduate leadership training programmes, particularly for experienced women practitioners.
- Continuing professional development and training raises practitioners' professional knowledge, skills and confidence.
- A coherent progression pathway for practitioners is provided by changes in the award of qualifications.
- The number of well-qualified staff working in a setting affects quality of provision and the interactions between adults and children.
- Qualified practitioners with good understanding of child development and educational pedagogy affect quality.
- Graduates with a cogent early childhood degree impact upon provision quality.
- Staff qualifications in early years improve the quality of the learning environment and children's educational outcomes.

2.1 Policy context

The early years landscape is continually changing, evolving through the policies of two governments; Labour 1997-2010 and the Coalition government from 2010. Major changes in educational policy highlighted the importance of the early years through: the introduction of the EYFS; multi-agency working within integrated practice; and early intervention for vulnerable children. The introduction of government strategies, including the National Childcare Strategy (1997), the Children's Workforce Strategy (2005), and the 2020 Workforce Strategy, aimed to improve quality of provision through a more highly qualified workforce and by raising the status of those working in the early years. The introduction of graduate leadership, in the EYP role, is significant in this reform. The creation of the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) led the development of the early years workforce and the training of practitioners with EYPS. The Department for Education's Business Plan (2011-2015) Structural Reform Priorities include: the training and development of professionals who work with children; more robust academic

and vocational qualifications up to the age of 19 years; new support for the early years in a universal offer for young children; and improving support for disadvantaged children (DfE, 2010).

The EYFS curriculum provides 'A single quality framework for services for children from birth to five' (DCSF, 2008b) bringing together Birth to Three Matters, the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the National Standards. Evidence from Ofsted identifies that childcare in England has improved since the introduction of the EYFS. In the best provision, childcare providers have established routines, high expectations of children's behaviour and a good understanding of learning needs. Practitioners are also committed to their own professional development (Mahadevan, 2011). In a national review of practitioners' experiences of the EYFS, EYPs identified their EYPS training was based around the EYFS and supported leadership of it (Brooker et al., 2010). The EYFS has recently been subject to a major review, reported in the Tickell Review (Tickell, 2011).

Every Child Matters (HM Government, 2003) and the Children's Plan (DCSF, 2007) introduced multi-professional working and integrated practice, with the aim of achieving better educational outcomes for children. Education is the most effective route out of poverty (Knowles, 2009), and integrated practice aims to close gaps in educational achievement, as well as raising attainment and aspirations for children. The Frank Field Review (Field, 2010) and the Graham Allen Review (Allen, 2011) identify the importance of early intervention for young children's learning and development, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children to access the services they need. Key to this policy shift is the quality of leadership for provision and practice and securing better educational outcomes for children (C4EO, 2010). Practitioners with reflective abilities are central to implementing government policy into practice (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2008) and to effecting change. The provision of training and continuing professional development opportunities are essential in the development of effective, reflective leaders and practitioners. The changes in qualifications are discussed in detail later in this Chapter.

2.1.1 Workforce reform: training, education and continuing professional development

What do we mean by 'training' and 'education'? It is important to clearly define what is meant by these commonly and sometimes interchangeably-used terms, as they lack a unified definition. Maxwell et al. (2005 in Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2005) define education as 'the professional development activities that occur within a formal education system'. Training refers to 'the professional development activities that occur outside the formal education system' (Maxwell et al., 2005). Another important and commonly used term is continuing professional development (CPD), defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) as 'an ongoing and planned learning and development process that contributes to work-based and personal development' (Skills for Care and CWDC, 2006). CPD enables employees to expand and fulfil their potential, through building on their confidence and competence, particularly in ever-changing environments. This idea encompasses many different types of learning and "includes, but is more than, 'training', 'qualifications', 'registration', and 'post-registration training and learning'. It reflects a social development model, which values and promotes greater recognition of all

work and roles" (Skills for Care and CWDC, 2006). CPD involves evidence-based practice and reflective practice. The former provides a means to look at evidence which can be used to make decisions and the latter involves a retrospective look at a situation or experience to analyse what was learned (De Vera Berrado, 2005). EYPS as a graduate training programme is assessed through work-based evidence, including evidence of reflective practice, producing a CPD model between these two definitions. The GLF's financial incentives enabled staff to access training; the 'grow your own' leader route encouraged existing practitioners' CPD, with their specialised early years qualification adding to the setting and to practice (Ranns et al., 2011).

2.1.2 Creating policy to improve practitioners' knowledge and skills

A significant development in the sector was the introduction of the Transformation Fund (TF). Over the period April 2006 to August 2008 the Government invested £250 million into the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. The TF was a large scale attempt to raise the standards of early years settings with an emphasis on the link between training and qualifications, and on the quality of early childhood education (ECE). The TF developed into the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF), in 2008-2011, specifically supporting all PVI providers of full day care provision to employ a graduate or an EYP in a professional leadership role (Ranns et al., 2011). There were three main strands to the GLF; the Quality Premium (QP), the Recruitment Incentive (RI) and the Home Grown Graduate Incentive (HGGI). The strands identified effective workforce development strategies. The HGGI funded existing staff within settings to train up to graduate or EYP level. Funding via the RI enabled settings to recruit an EYP or graduate who could take up EYP training. The QP rewarded settings where staff had achieved EYPS, and the funding was used to improve delivery of the EYFS and to help settings to retain an EYP (Ranns et al., 2011). The ring-fenced GLF funding ended in March 2011; from April 2011 LAs are required to support the development of EYPs in PVI settings through the Early Intervention Grant.

The Thomas Coram Research Unit (Cameron et al., 2003) recognises that financial incentives are required for staff to improve qualifications. Tatton (2005) puts forward the suggestion that to improve the quality of provision we must start with the professional development of the staff.

The support package for EYPs after achieving their status, provided through local Early Years Professional networks, offers further professional development opportunities. Although the provision varies from one local authority to another, the opportunities for professional dialogue has influenced graduate leaders' professional learning and development (Hallet & Roberts-Holmes, 2010). Initial findings in the Children's Workforce Development Council's survey of EYPS training indicates the positive contribution that graduate-led professional development is making to improving early years provision, particularly on practitioner's ability to effect change. EYPS has a positive effect on experienced staff and a substantial impact on early career professionals and those working in the PVI sector (Hadfield & Waller, 2011). Similarly, research by Hallet and Roberts-Holmes (2010) about the impact of EYPs upon the quality of provision in a local authority, found that EYPs were leading change in pedagogy and educational practice.

2.1.3 Changes to qualifications

We now consider the major changes in government policy in terms of the qualifications themselves. The specific legal requirements in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DCSF, 2008b) requires at least one member of staff to be level 3 qualified and half of all other staff to be level 2 qualified; the qualifications should be full and relevant awards as defined by CWDC (DCSF, 2008b:32). Graduate staff with degrees such as Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), EYPS or another suitable level 6 qualification are included in the adult and child staffing ratios (DCSF, 2008b:32). The then government paper 'A ten year strategy for childcare' acknowledged that many of the staff working in early years settings do not yet meet the National Standards of being qualified to at least level 3 (Tatton, 2005). The 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy (DCSF, 2008a) sets out an aspiration for the children and young people's workforce to be graduate-led and qualified to level 3.

Historically, a plethora of early years and childcare qualifications held by practitioners working within the early years sector has evolved. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a system for recognising skills and qualifications by awarding credit for qualifications and units of learning (Ofqual, 2010). The flexibility of the system allows learners to gain qualifications at their own pace in routes relevant to their work with children and young people. The units of learning are building blocks of qualifications with credit value and level, producing national recognition for achievements (Ofqual, 2010). The Qualifications Credit Framework ensures that the qualifications of everyone who works with children and young people include the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge (CWDC, 2010) for working with children and young people from birth to 19 years and reflect an integrated working culture. These form a set of common values for practitioners that promote equality, respect diversity and challenge stereotypes, helping to improve life chances for all children and young people, and providing more effective and integrated services in six areas of expertise (CWDC, 2010).

Central to developing a more qualified workforce is the evolution and development of qualifications to provide clear progression, avoid repeat learning and focus on the right skills and knowledge. The Level 3 Diploma for Children and Young People's Workforce, introduced in September 2010; CWDC aims to make this Diploma the only Level 3 for those joining the workforce in England. Those with existing qualifications have to demonstrate they meet level 3 equivalency or undertake further professional development based upon the CWDC recognised qualifications equivalency list. The Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce, introduced from September 2010 also provides an entry qualification for school leavers and a progression route to the Level 3 Diploma. The sector-endorsed Early Years Foundation Degree includes the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge in the curriculum content. Further graduate professional development is provided in EYPS Training Pathways (CWDC, 2006b). The recent introduction of the 'New Leaders in the Early Years' programme has been designed to further drive up graduate leadership in the sector, by recruiting and retaining high calibre graduates from outside the early years sector, who have the capability to become outstanding leaders, lead change in early years and demonstrate high levels of knowledge

and skills and a strong commitment to achieve the best for all young children. The qualifications provide a progression pathway for practitioners.

2.1.4 Early Years Foundation Degrees

Foundation Degrees were introduced in 2001 as a level 5 higher education qualification combining work-based learning with theoretical knowledge (QAA, 2004), covering many academic subjects. The Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree (EYSEFD) was introduced in 2002 by the DfES with a curriculum of Core Learning Outcomes and Route Specific Outcomes (DfES, 2001). Higher education providers with a foundation degree curriculum that met these curriculum criteria became a SureStart Recognised provider. The EYSEFD was initially for experienced practitioners who on graduation were awarded Senior Practitioner Status (SPS). SPS was widely accepted to recognise the value of experienced practitioners working in the early years sector and to provide a career structure (DfES, 2001). However, the role was never defined and nationally implemented (O'Keefe & Tait, 2004).

From its introduction, the TF supported raising the qualifications of practitioners through funding support packages for Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degrees (Hallet, 2008). Funding incentives encouraged practitioners to further their professional learning by accessing GLF for EYP training (Ranns et al., 2011). Financial support from these two funds made a significant contribution for experienced women practitioners in particular, to access higher education, professional awards and graduate leadership training previously financially inaccessible to them. These CPD opportunities developed a more highly qualified workforce whose personal and professional confidence increased through early years specialist knowledge (Hallet, 2012, forthcoming, Lumsden, 2008). For professional development to be effective it must be clearly focussed, emphasise individual and organisational change, be ongoing and embedded in practitioners work (Guskey in Barnett & O'Mahony, 2006). Research by Munton et al. (2002) identified that staff with greater experience, better formal education and more specialist child development knowledge provided better quality care for children. Work-based reflective practice became a change agent for improving practice for experienced foundation degree graduates, as reflective practice is a principle of continual improvement (Campbell-Barr, 2009, Hallet, 2012, forthcoming).

2.1.5 Early Years Professional Status

The development of a graduate-led workforce is central to the reform of the early years workforce, 'to improve workforce skills, knowledge and competencies to raise the quality of children's experiences in the early years' (CWDC, 2007 in Whalley, 2008:2). Candidates are awarded Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) by meeting 39 Standards through their own practice and demonstrating the ability to lead and support others (CWDC, 2007 in Whalley, 2008:2). The Standards are organized into six areas: knowledge and understanding; effective practice; relationships with children; communicating and working in partnership with families and carers; teamwork and collaboration; and professional development. The award of these nationally recognized professional standards show that anyone with EYPS 'has reached the same high level of professional competence' (CWDC, 2008:12).

Early Years Professionals (EYP) have a defined 'leadership of practice' role (Whalley, 2008) within the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, acting as 'change agents' to improve and lead practice, support and mentor other practitioners and model the skills and behaviours that safeguard and support children (CWDC, 2008:4). Research in a local authority further defined the EYP's role as 'leaders of learning' who led change in pedagogy and shaped and improved professional practice in a range of settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector (Hallet and Roberts-Holmes, 2010).

The transformational leader who acts as a 'change agent' will motivate others towards higher goals (Bolman and Deal in Miller & Cable, 2011:16). This model of leadership has resonance with research about pedagogy and leadership in the early years. The EPPE project (Sylva et al., 2010) highlighted the connection between the higher qualifications of staff and higher quality of provision in settings. The Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEYS) Project similarly demonstrated 'distributed', 'participative', facilitative' or 'collaborative' models of leadership to be effective within early years schools and settings (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008:19).

The Labour Government financially invested in EYPS training and the development of EYPs in graduate leader roles through the Graduate Leader Fund (Whalley, in Miller & Cable, 2011). Evidence from the longitudinal study of EYP training commissioned by CWDC indicates the impact of graduate-level professional development is improving early years provision and that EYPS has contributed to practitioners' ability to effect change (Hadfield & Waller, 2011). The Coalition Government continues to be committed to raising the qualifications and skills of the early years workforce, further developing a graduate-led early years sector 'to help give every child the chance to thrive in their earliest years' (Teather, 2011:12).

2.2 The relationship between qualifications and quality

Before exploring the relationship between staff qualifications and quality, we need to consider definitions of quality. Donabedian (1980, cited in Munton et al., 1995) breaks the term quality down into three dimensions: **structure**, **process** and **outcome**; terms consistently used in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) to assess quality of provision (Phillipsen et al., 1997; Dunn, 1994; Holloway & Reichhart-Erickson, 1988). Structure is referred to as 'the resources used in the provision of care, the more stable aspects of the environment in which care are produced' (Munton et al.,1995:14). This would refer to aspects such as the adult-child ratio, group size, staff education and training, space and materials. Process quality refers to 'the activities that constitute provision' (Munton et al., 1995:14) and include the less stable elements of provision such as staff-child interactions, e.g. academic and social development of the children in care, cognitive and reading skills achieved.

Most research on the quality of ECE examines the relationship between these dimensions. Structural variables are fairly easy to identify in a setting. Both structural aspects and process variables are generally measured using observational rating scales,

the most widely used being the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised and Extended versions (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005) and ECERS-E, Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2003) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) (Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2003). For measures of adult and child interaction, the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) is the most popular (Arnett, 1989). The reason for the focus on this division of structure, process and outcome is purely because it allows us to see the impact of one on another. Structural quality is only important in that these characteristics (e.g. adult-child ratios, qualifications) affect process quality. The only reason we are interested in process quality (e.g. interactions between the adult and the child) is because this affects children's outcomes, this being ultimately what is important.

2.2.1 Links between structure and process quality

Tout et al. (2005, cited in Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2005) highlight that education, both general and specifically related to ECE, is almost always included in studies linking qualifications and quality. In Phillipsen et al's (1997) study, process quality was measured using the ITERS, ECERS and the CIS. The Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) are tools for research, self audit and inspection for assessing environments and practices in early years settings (Sylva et al., 2003). The results show that in the pre-school rooms observed the quality was higher when the teachers working in the room had more education (education was measured using three distinctions: secondary school education, college education and degree). A significant positive relationship has also been found between the level of formal education and quality (Blau, 2000, cited in DfES publication 2003; Honig & Hirallal, 1998 cited in Tout et al. 2005; & Howes et al., 1992).

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project was the first major longitudinal study in Europe which looked at children's development between the ages of three and seven. The researchers looked a range of variables and their effects, one of which was qualifications. The findings show a strong relationship between the qualifications (measured using the Levels 2 (NVQ)-5 (QTS)) of the setting manager and the quality of the setting. Statistical analysis revealed a significant effect of the level of qualification and the mean ECERS-R and ECERS-E scores: the higher the ECE qualification, the higher the quality score. The same positive trend was seen in six out of the seven ECERS-R subscales (Taggart et al., 2003).

The number of trained staff also seems to play an important role. The work of Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2006) shows us that the higher the proportion of staff in the setting with a formal level of education, the higher the quality as measured by the ECERS-R, ECERS-E, and CIS. In another piece of research settings were evaluated to see how well they implemented the Foundation Stage curriculum. Those which had made very good advances were found to have some common characteristics, one of which was having well trained and qualified staff with a good understanding of child development and pedagogy (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2006). Some studies have found the specific content of the education of the staff to be linked with the quality of the setting (Blau, 2000, cited in DfES publication 2002; Philips et al., 2000 cited in Tout et al. 2005, Howes et al., 1992).

Burchinal et al. (2002) found that training (a structural variable) contributes to environmental quality and adult-child interaction. They looked at three types of training; in-service workshops, workshops in the community and workshops at professional meetings. The research found a degree in a childcare related subject to be the best predictor of quality although training did raise quality but not to the level that academic qualifications did. Another study focused on whether staff members held a degree. Those holding an ECE related degree were found to be less authoritarian, engaged in more positive interaction with the children and were less detached (Arnett, 1989). This was measured using the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS).

There is a distinct pattern of higher quality care being associated with a well-trained and qualified workforce and a clear relationship can be seen showing the effects of structural variables on process quality. There is the possibility that other variables are contributing these effects, as Melhuish (2004) found the adult-child ratio combined with staff qualifications produced a larger effect in terms of quality. The higher the level of education, training and salary combined with a lower level of staff turnover also produced measures of higher quality care. This demonstrates the close link between some of the variables, as when combined, they can produce a larger effect. The quality of a setting depends upon many structural and process variables, the academic ability of the staff being only one of them, along with professional skills and knowledge.

2.2.2 Child outcomes

There are few studies which specifically take staff education and training as a variable, to examine whether this has an influence on the child later in life. We do find however, research which has included this measure along with other variables (e.g. adult-child ratio, groups size) and developmental outcomes have been considered. Burchinal and Cryer (2003) took both structural and process variables into account, including training, and found that measures of ECE quality were positively associated with cognitive and social development to school age. Mathers and Sylva (2007) looked at developmental outcomes of children in the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. They found the presence of a qualified teacher was the strongest predictor of children's behavioural outcomes, specifically related to higher levels of cooperation and conformity. Teacher presence also had a positive influence on children's level of sociability.

Another large UK piece of research, the Millennium Cohort Study (Mathers, Sylva & Joshi, 2007) followed the lives of nearly 19,000 babies born between 2000 and 2002 in the UK. Quality was assessed using the ECERS-R, ECERS-E and the CIS and results show the childcare qualifications of staff were a predictor of quality of provision, especially related to aspects of provision which foster children's developing language, interactions and academic progress. The number of unqualified staff was also important and had a negative effect on quality.

Holloway and Reichhart-Erikson (1988) were interested in looking at children's reasoning in social issues, their interaction with peers and solitary free-play behaviour. To measure process quality, the Early Childhood Observation Instrument (ECOI, Bredekamp, 1985) was used. The results show that higher quality settings (as measured by the ECOI)

allowed children to engage in more focussed solitary free-play, suggesting a relationship between quality and children's behaviour.

2.3 The relationship between a higher qualified workforce and provision

There is a strong body of research demonstrating the importance of higher qualified staff impacting upon quality of provision. The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education project (EPPE, 2003) showed that in pre-school settings with a qualified graduate teacher there was higher quality provision. The quality of the learning environment increased with early years leaders qualifications, and there were improved educational outcomes at Key Stage 1 when children's pre-school experiences combined care and learning experiences (Sylva et al., 2010).

The Children's Plan states 'our 2020 goal is that every child will be ready for success in school with at least 90 per cent developing well across all areas of the EYFS Profile by age 5' (DCSF, 2007:5). Training with a focus on education, children's learning and working with families to support their children at home is important for children's educational outcomes. (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, in House of Commons 130-11:23). Siraj-Blatchford (2008:2) emphasises practitioners with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) are 'vital to this goal given their distinctive training'. In Children's Centres where there is a culture of integrated working there needs to be 'a strong teacher presence to provide a pedagogical lead and support for EYPs, educators with NVQ 3' (Whalley, 2009, in House of Commons 130-11: 11). The EYP role is complimentary with the QTS role; both lead the EYFS curriculum (Hallet & Roberts-Holmes, 2010). SureStart Childrens Centres are able to make a choice of having a practitioner with QTS or a practitioner with EYPS to work in their setting.

In summary, the literature and research discussed in this review demonstrates clear influences on the quality of Early Childhood Education, with an inter-play of many factors contributing to the quality of provision in early years settings. The qualifications of staff working in this field seem to have an impact on the interactions between the adult and child, the responsiveness and warmth shown by the adult and the social and language development of the child. Investments have been made to raise the qualifications of the early years workforce, providing better early years setting provision and services for children and families.

3 Characteristics of impact study settings and the EYPs

Chapter summary

- All impact study settings were from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector; 77 per cent were private settings and 23 per cent not-for-profit providers.
- On average, staff working with children in the rooms observed for the impact assessment were qualified to level 3 or just above.
- Average qualification levels were slightly higher in the pre-school rooms than in the infant/toddler rooms (3.22 as compared with 3).
- There were a total of 35 EYPs working within the 32 EYP settings, with three settings employing more than one EYP.
- All EYPs had held their status for at least six months by the time of the follow-up assessment. Around one third had held their status for 12 months or more, with the longest any EYP had held their status being 24 months. This evaluation therefore assesses the impact of EYPs within the first 6 to 24 months of attaining their status.
- The majority of EYPs (28) had achieved their status via the validation pathway or the short professional extended development pathway.
- The vast majority of EYPs (33) held a managerial position, either describing themselves as senior managers (e.g. setting manager) or line managers (e.g. deputy or room leader).
- On average, EYPs spent 35 per cent of their time working 'hands-on' with the children (down from 48 per cent before gaining EYPS).
- EYPs reported taking on greater responsibility for the support and mentoring of other staff after gaining EYPS.
- The sample was carefully selected to enable the impact study research question to be answered (i.e. what is the impact of EYPS on quality in the PVI sector). In other ways it cannot therefore be considered representative of the wider population of providers.

3.1 Characteristics of the impact study sample

This section describes the characteristics of the 238 impact study settings at follow-up, focussing particularly on characteristics which were related to quality and which were used in the analysis reported in Chapter 5 (Predictors of quality at follow-up). The data reported were collected via questionnaires at the time of the follow-up quality assessments. Further detail on the setting characteristics, including characteristics at baseline, are provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

Just over three quarters of the settings (77 per cent; 183 settings) described themselves as being **private** providers. The remaining 23 per cent (55 settings) were settings operating on a **not-for-profit** basis. These were largely voluntary (e.g. playgroups, settings run by charitable organisations). A very small number were categorised as 'other'. These included settings at FE colleges or NHS sites and some workplace settings.

In terms of the workforce, 32 of the 328 settings had an **EYP** at the follow-up time-point (all of whom had held their status for six months or more, see Section 3.2), while 42 per cent had a graduate. Just under a quarter of settings (24 per cent) had a staff member at the setting working towards EYPS.

Table 3.1 summarises a number of additional characteristics of the impact study settings at follow-up, including the characteristics of staff, settings and the rooms observed.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of the settings at follow-up that were related to quality

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Missing
STAFF CHARACTERISTICS					
Mean childcare qualification level of staff (infant/toddler room observed)*	170	2.0	6.0	3.0	68
Mean childcare qualification level of staff (pre-school room observed)*	238	2.0	6.0	3.2	0
Mean childcare qualification level being worked towards**	213	2.0	7.0	4.2	25
Mean years of relevant experience**	235	2.5	22.3	8.8	3
Mean age of staff team**	233	20.3	51.3	32.4	5
SETTING CHARACTERISTICS					
Staff turnover***	238	0.0	68.4	12.2	0
Number of paid childcare staff (setting size)**	238	3.0	41.0	13.4	0
Per cent of children on register with SEN (early years action or above)**	234	0.0	18.4	2.3	4
Per cent of EAL children on register**	235	0.0	94.3	8.9	3
Per cent of non-white British children**	218	0.0	100.0	22.4	20
Deprivation level of area: IMD Income Rank**	224	170.0	32471.0	17156.3	14
ROOM CHARACTERISTICS					
Highest number of children present during observation (infant/toddler)	170	1.0	22.0	8.0	68
Highest number of children present during observation (pre-school)	227	4.0	39.0	17.2	11
No. of children per childcare staff member in the room (infant/toddler)	171	0.9	6.0	2.8	67
No. of children per childcare staff member in the room (pre-school)	227	0.2	10.2	5.1	11
Proportion of children on register aged over 2 years (infant/toddler)	146	0.0	97.6	11.0	92
Proportion of children on register aged under 3 years (pre-school)	237	0.0	100.0	14.9	1

* Staff working 10 hours or more in the room observed ** Whole setting

*** Turnover = (number of staff left in last year/number of paid childcare staff) * 100

In addition to EYP status, data were gathered on the qualifications of the broader staff team (staff working 10 hours or more in the room/s observed). On average, the staff working (10 hours or more) in the rooms observed were qualified to level 3. Average qualification levels were slightly higher in the pre-school rooms than the infant/toddler rooms (3.2 as compared with 3.0). The average qualification level being worked towards was also recorded, so that this could be controlled for in the analysis.

The experience of staff teams in the observed settings ranged from very inexperienced (2.5 years on average) to very experienced (over 20 years experience on average). The age of the staff teams in sample settings was also recorded (see Table 3.1)

A number of characteristics of the sample settings were recorded, including staff turnover, setting size (number of paid staff) and details of the setting populations (e.g. the proportion of children with Special Educational Needs [SEN] and speaking English as an Additional Language [EAL], ethnic group of children). And finally, data were gathered on a number of characteristics of the rooms observed, including adult-child ratios, the age ranges of the children and the group size. Details of setting and room characteristics are shown in Table 3.1.

Lastly, a measure was taken of 'recent upheaval' (not shown in Table 3.1). At the follow-up visit, managers were asked whether the setting had experienced any significant changes since the baseline visit which might have affected quality of provision. Categories included changes in staffing (e.g. large recent turnover of staff); management (e.g. new manager); physical changes to the building (e.g. new layout); different ways of dividing up the children; or 'other changes'. Over a third of settings (37 per cent) reported no changes since baseline, with 30 per cent reporting one change, 24 per cent reporting two changes and nine per cent reporting three or more changes.

3.2 Characteristics of EYPs and their settings at follow-up

This section provides a profile of the 32 EYP settings on which the impact study analysis is based (i.e. settings which, at follow-up, employed an EYP who had held their status for 6 months or more). It describes the characteristics, firstly of the EYP settings, and secondly of the EYPs themselves. There were a total of 35 EYPs working within the 32 EYP settings, with three settings employing more than one EYP.

3.2.1 Setting and EYP profile

Table 3.2 shows that the majority of EYP settings (26 of 32 settings) were in the private sector, while six operated on a not-for-profit basis (all of which were voluntary providers).

Table 3.2 Sector of EYP settings (n=32)		
	N	**Percentage**
Private	26	81%
Not-for-profit	6	19%

Although all EYPs had a level 6 degree qualification, only 24 settings employed a member of staff with a degree which was relevant to early years and childcare[18] (Table 3.3). A total of eight EYP settings employed a qualified teacher as well as an EYP (five EYPs were also a qualified teacher). Half of the settings which employed an EYP at the follow-up time-point already employed a graduate at baseline, while half had moved from being a non-graduate setting to employing an EYP.

Table 3.3 Setting employs a graduate with a relevant (level 6) degree (n=32)		
	N	**Percentage**
Employs a graduate	8	13%
Does not employ a graduate	24	87%

Moving on now to consider the characteristics of the EYPs themselves, the majority had completed either the 'Short Extended Professional Development Pathway' (15 EYPs) or the 'Validation Pathway' (13 EYPs), probably reflecting the fact that the gap between baseline and follow up was relatively short (i.e. two years), making it less likely that potential EYPs would have time to complete the longer pathways (Table 3.4). A total of five EYPs completed EYPS through the 'Long Extended Professional Development Pathway', and only one completed the 'Full Training Pathway'.

Table 3.4 EYP pathway completed (n=34, missing=1)		
	N	**Percentage**
Validation Pathway only	13	38%
Short Extended Professional Development Pathway	15	44%
Long Extended Professional Development Pathway	5	15%
Full Training Pathway	1	3%

All EYPs had held their status for more than six months by the time of the follow-up visits (this cut-off was set to ensure EYPs had enough time to effect a measurable change). Table 3.5 shows that, in fact, the majority of EYPs in the sample (23 EYPs) had held their status for over a year at the time of follow-up assessment. The longest any of the sample EYPs had been in post by time of the follow up assessment was 24 months.

[18] The following degrees were categorised as not relevant to childcare: Sociology, Music, Finance, English & History, English & Sociology, English & Drama, Ceramics and Biology. Eight settings had an EYP with a non-relevant degree.

Table 3.5 Length of time EYPS had been held at follow-up (n=35)		
	N	**Percentage**
6-8 months	8	23%
9-11 months	4	11%
12+ months	23	66%

The vast majority of EYPs (30) had achieved EYPS while at their current setting, with only five achieving EYPS prior to recruitment (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Proportion of "home-grown" EYPs (n=35)		
	N	**Percentage**
Achieved EYPS at the setting	30	86%
Taken on by setting as an EYP	5	14%

Approximately three quarters of EYPs in our sample (25) already held a relevant degree at the point of deciding to complete EYPS (Table 3.7). This is not surprising, given the proportion of EYPs who reported completing either the Validation or the Short Extended Professional Development pathway. The remaining nine EYPs progressed from levels 3, 4 or 5 with the intention of gaining EYPS.

Table 3.7 Proportion of EYPs who held a relevant degree prior to deciding to complete EYPS (n=34, missing=1)		
	N	**Percentage**
Held relevant degree prior to EYPS	25	74%
Progressed from level 3, 4, 5 with the purpose of achieving EYPS	9	26%

Table 3.8 shows that, in addition, 19 of the EYPs already held a degree when taken on by their current setting, whereas 15 EYPs achieved their degree after being taken on, possibly as part of their EYP pathway.

Table 3.8 Proportion of EYPs who achieved their degree while at their current setting (n=34, missing=1)		
	N	**Percentage**
Degree achieved while at setting	15	44%
EYP taken on by the setting as a graduate	19	56%

3.2.2 Roles and responsibilities of EYPs

As shown in Table 3.9, the majority of the EYPs held a managerial position at their setting. The vast majority of EYPs (22) were senior managers, and a further third (11 EYPs) described themselves as line managers[19].

Table 3.9 Reported role of EYPs within their setting (n=35)

	N	Percentage
Senior Manager	22	63%
Line Manager	11	31%
Other staff member	2	6%

While the vast majority (91 per cent) of EYPs worked in the pre-school rooms with the older children, only 44 per cent worked in the infant/toddler rooms observed as part of this study. And finally, comparing the number of hours worked by EYPs with each age range provides the starkest contrast. On average, each EYP worked 18.4 hours in the pre-school room we visited as part of the study but only 4.7 hours in the infant and toddler room. This is discussed further in relation to the impact study findings in Section 4.3.

We move on now to consider how the roles and responsibilities of the EYPs changed after gaining EYP status. On average, EYPs were contracted to work 36 hours each week. EYPs were asked to provide a breakdown of the time they spent on different roles within their settings, as well as an estimate of the time spent on these same roles prior to gaining the status. Their responses are shown in Figure 3.1.

EYPs spent the greatest proportion of their time working 'hands-on' with children, both before and after gaining their status. However, 'hands-on' time tended to decrease after gaining EYPS; on average EYPs reported that they spent 35 per cent of their time working with children, compared with 48 per cent prior to gaining EYPS[20]. This is perhaps not surprising given that they also reported taking on a number of additional leadership/administration roles (see below and Figure 3.1) but is interesting, given the focus on EYPs as 'leaders of practice'.

While they spent less time working hands-on with children, EYPs had taken on greater responsibility for the support and mentoring of other staff. The average proportion of time spent supporting staff through supervision/professional development increased from 16 per cent to 27 per cent after gaining EYPS. Similarly, EYPs reported spending 22 per cent of their time supporting colleagues practically (e.g. modelling practice) as compared with 12 per cent prior to gaining EYP status[21]. An increase of 10 per cent in administration time

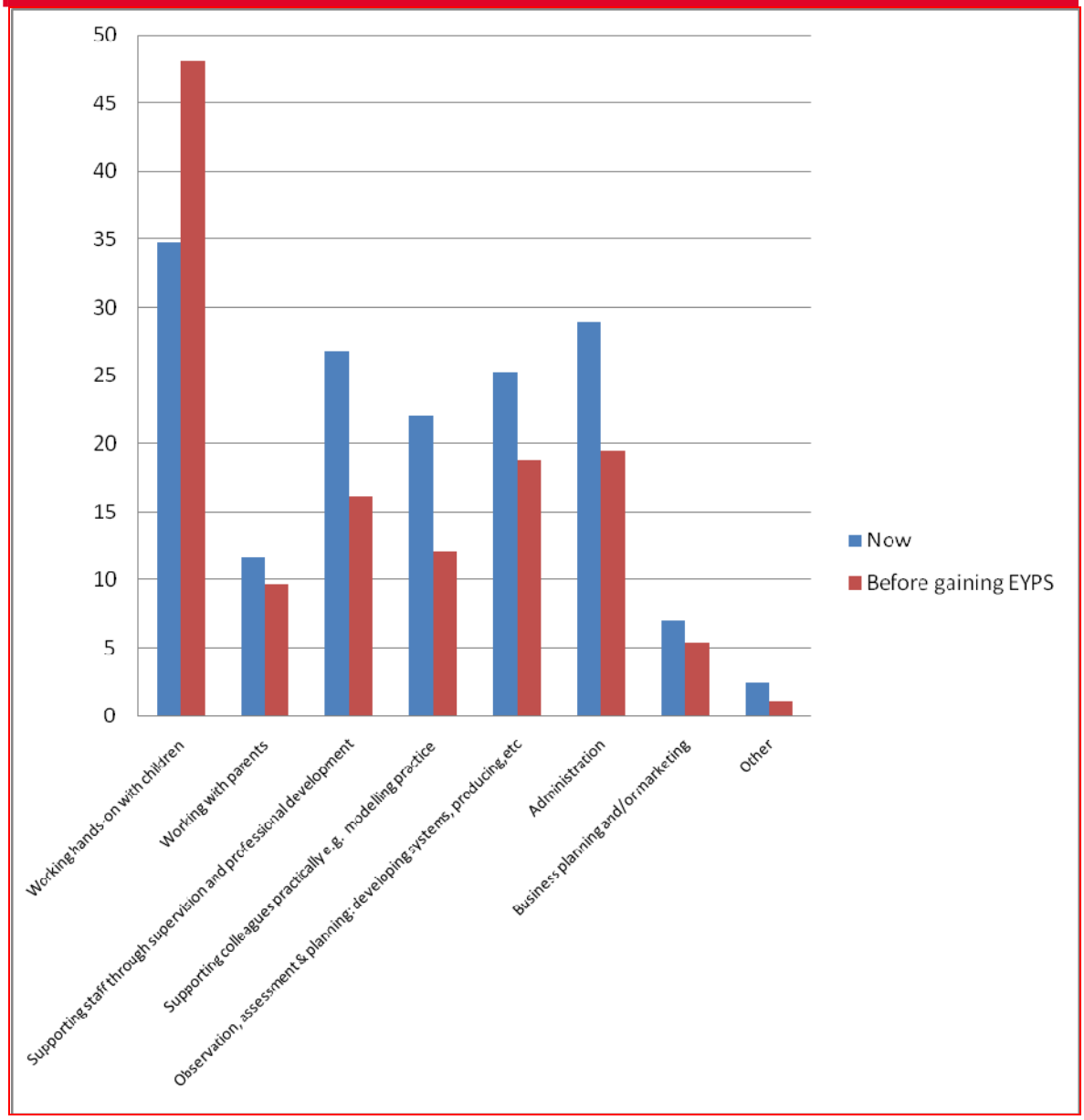
[19] A senior manager was defined as the person with overall responsibility for managing the nursery; line managers were other staff with a supervisory role who managed other adults (e.g. deputy managers room leaders); and 'other staff' were the staff who worked with the children in the setting but who were not responsible for supervising other adults.

[20] There was wide variation within this measure, with reported hands-on time ranging from 0 to 100 per cent.

[21] There is obviously some overlap between these categories (e.g., time spent modelling practice and time spent working hands-on with the children). EYPs were asked to provide a full estimate for each category, including any overlap, so that the proportion of time reported for one individual could add up to more than 100 per cent.

since gaining EYPS was also reported. Smaller changes were reported in other categories.

Figure 3.1 The mean percentage of time spent on different roles before and after gaining EYPS (n=35)



For more detail on how the different role categories were described and what they included, see the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

3.3 Representativeness of the sample: what are we measuring?

3.3.1 Impact study settings

The impact study findings are based on 238 settings visited at both the baseline and follow-up time-points. The sample was selected on the basis that they had potential to improve their qualification levels (either from graduate level to EYP or from non-graduate level to graduate) and that they appeared motivated to do so. At baseline, settings were necessarily unrepresentative in terms of qualifications: settings with EYPs were excluded at the baseline stage, and the sample was selected to include equal numbers of settings with and without a degree (54 per cent of baseline settings[22] had a graduate[23] on their staff compared with a national figure of 23 per cent (Phillips et al., 2009)). Since the sample was selected specifically to answer the research questions and to assess the impact of EYPS, it is *not* fully representative of full day care settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector. These differences between the sample and wider full day care settings were an inherent part of the research design and enabled changes to be measured. For other characteristics of the sample settings there were some similarities when the sample was compared to national figures from the Childcare Providers Survey 2008; (Phillips et al., 2009) the impact study sample of settings were similar in terms of number of registered places, children attending in an average week, and only slightly larger in terms of the number of paid childcare staff. A more detailed comparison of the impact study sample and the Childcare Providers Survey 2008 (Phillips et al., 2009) is provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

3.3.2 EYP settings and EYPs

Of the 238 impact study settings, 32 gained an EYP during the course of evaluation. All EYPs had held their status for six months or more, and the majority (23 EYPs) had held their status for at least 12 months. We are therefore measuring the impact of EYPs within the first 6 to 24 months of gaining their status.

The majority of EYPs (28) had achieved their status via the validation pathway or the short professional extended development pathway. This is not surprising given that the gap of two years between baseline and follow-up made it less likely that potential EYPs would have time to complete the longer pathways. Our EYPs are therefore the most experienced, and could also be viewed as the 'front-runners' in that they have gained EYPS relatively early. In fact our sample was specifically selected to represent settings most motivated to improve their qualification levels. Most described themselves as either senior managers (e.g. setting manager) or line managers (e.g. deputy or room leader) and on average, they spent 35 per cent of their time working hands-on with the children.

[22] As assessed by the baseline telephone interviews.

[23] Defined as level 5 in the baseline telephone interview.

Finally, it should be noted that this is a fairly small sample of EYP settings from which to draw conclusions[24]. We have therefore undertaken a number of thorough checks and additional measures to ensure the robustness of our findings. This included carrying out two separate analyses to test the impact of EYPS: analysis of changes in quality over time and analysis of quality at the follow-up time-point. We have tested the impact of EYPS over and above the impact of graduate presence and the qualifications of other staff. We also used matching techniques[25] in the change analysis to ensure that our EYP and comparison groups were as similar as possible, *except* for the fact that one group gained a graduate EYP during the course of the study and the other did not. And finally, the qualitative research adds extra depth to the quantitative findings.

[24] Estimates of EYP number at the interim stage were higher (an internal interim survey in 2009 was carried out to provide an early indication of changes in qualification levels). However, it took practitioners working towards EYPS longer than they estimated when asked at the interim stage to gain their status, so reducing the potential sample size at follow-up.

[25] Further details on the matching techniques used are provided in Chapter 4 and in the Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b).

4 Impact of gaining an EYP on change in quality over time

Chapter summary

This chapter explores the impact of gaining a graduate leader with EYPS on changes in quality between the baseline and follow-up time-points. The main evaluation questions to be answered were "does having an EYP improve quality" and if so "which aspects of practice (and of quality) are most closely associated with EYP status"?

- The findings indicate that gaining a graduate leader with EYPS significantly improves the quality of provision for pre-school children (aged 30 months to 5 years). Settings that gained an EYP made significant gains in quality compared with settings that did not, particularly in relation to:
    - Staff-child interactions (i.e. the 'emotional environment')
    - Communication, language and literacy
    - Reasoning/thinking skills and scientific understanding
    - The provision of a developmentally appropriate schedule
    - Providing for, planning for, and celebrating individual needs and diversity
- While some of these improvements may relate to gaining a graduate rather than specifically an EYP, findings suggest that EYPS provides 'added value' in terms of overall quality, and provision to support language/literacy and individual needs/diversity.
- No EYP effects were identified for the younger (birth to 30 months) age range, possibly due to the low numbers of EYPs working in the rooms observed. It is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYPS on provision for infants and toddlers. However, the findings do highlight the need to ensure that EYPs are leading practice across the birth to five age range.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of the impact study, based on data gathered from 238 sample settings visited at two time-points (baseline and follow-up) between 2007 and 2010. The main evaluation questions to be answered were "**does having an EYP improve quality" and if so "which aspects of practice (and of quality) are most closely associated with EYP status"?**

At each of the two time-points, data were gathered on the professional status and qualifications of staff and on other characteristics of the sample settings (e.g. size, sector). Quality was assessed using three observational rating scales:

- the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (**ECERS-R;**

Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005), designed to assess provision for children from 30 months to 5 years

- the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension (**ECERS-E;** Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2003), designed to assess curricular provision for children aged three to five years
- the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (**ITERS-R;** Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2003), which assesses provision for children from birth to 30 months

Further detail on the ECERS and ITERS scales is provided in Appendix A.

This chapter explores the impact of gaining a graduate leader with EYPS on changes in quality between the baseline and follow-up time-points. Two analyses were carried out, comparing the 32 settings which gained an EYP during the course of the evaluation[26] with those which did not. These analyses are described in detail in Section 1.4.3 and are summarised below:

- **Comparison A** compared settings which gained an EYP with settings that did not change their graduate leader status at all (i.e. 'no change' settings). Some of the settings which gained an EYP during the course of the study already employed a graduate at the baseline time-point. Others went from being 'non-graduate' settings to 'graduate EYP settings' – essentially gaining both a graduate *and* an EYP (although of course in most cases these were the same person). Comparison A could therefore be described as testing the impact of 'gaining a graduate leader who was an EYP'. We then needed to carry out a more refined analysis to identify the added value of EYP Status *over and above* the effect of gaining a graduate.

- **Comparison B** was designed to explore the 'added value' of EYP Status. It identified whether settings which gained an EYP made greater gains than they would have done if they had simply gained a non-EYP graduate.

In each case, EYPs and their comparison groups were compared on their quality 'change scores', i.e. the change in quality between baseline and follow-up. Findings from both 'change analyses' (A and B) are presented below. Chapter 5 then goes on to explore the impact of EYPS in a slightly different way, by considering the 'predictors' of quality at the follow-up time-point.

4.1 Impact on overall quality for children aged 30 months to 5 years (ECERS-R)

The ECERS-R considers the quality of the learning environment for pre-school children aged 30 months to 5 years. The 'learning environment' is viewed in its broadest sense, (i.e. the context needed for learning to take place) and the ECERS-R assesses both the characteristics of the physical environment and the pedagogical, social and 'emotional'

[26] EYPs at these settings had been in place for six months or more at the time of the follow-up visits (our criterion for inclusion in the study).

environment. It aligns closely with the EYFS and addresses many of the same broad aspects of practice.

Table 4.1 presents the findings on quality for pre-school children, as measured by the ECERS-R. Two overall quality scores are shown: '**childcare quality'**, which is the average of ECERS-R subscales one to six; and '**overall quality'**, which includes the seventh subscale 'parents and staff'. The table also shows findings for each of the individual dimensions of childcare quality, as assessed by the seven ECERS-R **subscales**. Findings for Comparisons A and B are presented separately, with a '+' indicating a significant gain in quality[27] made by the EYP group as compared to the comparison group[28].

Table 4.1 Impact on overall quality for children aged 30 months to 5 yrs (ECERS-R)

	A: Gaining an EYP vs 'no change' comparison group	*B: Gaining an EYP vs 'graduate' comparison group*
Childcare quality (mean of items in subscales 1-6)	+	+
Overall quality (mean of items in subscales 1-7)	+	+
1. Space and furnishings		
2. Personal care		
3. Language/reasoning	+	
4. Activities		
5. Interaction	+	
6. Programme structure	+	
7. Parents and staff		

NB: '+' indicates a significant gain in quality made by the EYP group as compared with the comparison group.

Comparison A shows that settings which gained a graduate leader with EYPS made significant improvements in quality for pre-school children, compared with settings that did not change their 'graduate leader status' at all. Gains were made in overall quality, and in a number of specific dimensions of practice ('*language/reasoning*', '*staff-child interactions*' and '*programme structure*'). The findings for the '*language/reasoning*' subscale of the ECERS-R suggest that settings which gained an EYP improved their level of support for children's communication, language and thinking skills as compared with the 'no change' group of settings. The '*interaction*' subscale assesses the extent to which interactions between staff and children are warm and respectful and whether staff members are responsive to and engaged with children. The '*programme structure*' subscale assesses

[27] At p<0.05 or less (see Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b)). The p-value represents the estimated probability that the difference between the groups could have occurred by chance alone. A p-value of *less* than 0.05 represents a statistically significant difference between the two groups (based on a two-tailed statistical test with a 5 per cent significance level).

[28] It is of course possible that the EYP group could have made significantly smaller quality gains than the comparison group, since this was not found to be the case for any of the analyses, the opposite (-) symbol is not used.

the extent to which settings provide an appropriate schedule (e.g. with a balance of adult and child-initiated play, smooth transitions between activities, and routines which are planned to meet individual needs). Scores on all three of these subscales significantly improved in settings which gained an EYP during the course of the study, as compared with settings which did not.

Comparison A tested the impact of gaining a '**graduate leader with EYPS'** but did not allow us to determine which of the effects found were due to the 'EYPS' and which to the 'graduate' elements. Comparison B allowed us to disentangle these effects and assess the **impact of gaining an EYP *over and above* the effect of gaining a graduate**. Table 4.1 shows that settings which gained an EYP made significant improvements in overall quality as compared with the 'graduate comparison' group (i.e. greater gains than they would have done if they had simply gained a non-EYP graduate). However, in contrast to Comparison A, no effects were identified for the individual ECERS-R subscales. The 'added value' of EYPS appears to relate to overall quality rather than to any specific dimension of quality.

4.2 Impact on overall curricular quality for children aged three to five years (ECERS-E)

The extension to the ECERS-R (the ECERS-E) supplements the broad and balanced focus of the ECERS-R by providing more curricular focus. Its subscales contain additional items covering four specific aspects of learning and development (literacy, mathematics, science/environment and diversity).

Table 4.2 shows the impact of changes in graduate leader status on curricular quality for pre-school children (aged three to five years) as measured by the ECERS-E. A '+' indicates a significant gain in quality[29] made by the EYP group as compared to the comparison group.

Table 4.2 Impact on curricular quality for children aged 3 to 5 yrs (ECERS-E)

	A: Gaining an EYP vs 'no change' comparison group	*B: Gaining an EYP vs 'graduate' comparison group*
Overall quality (mean of items in all subscales)	+	+
1. Literacy	+	+
2. Maths		
3. Science/environment	+	
4. Diversity	+	+

NB: '+' indicates a significant gain in quality made by the EYP group as compared with the comparison group.

29 At p<0.05 or less (see Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b)).

Settings which gained an EYP made significant improvements in curricular quality between the baseline and follow-up time-points, as compared with settings which did not change their 'graduate leader status' at all (Comparison A). Significant gains were seen in '*overall curricular quality'* (mean total ECERS-E scores) and on the '*literacy'*, '*science'* and '*diversity*' subscales.

The findings for the '*literacy'* subscale suggest that settings which gained an EYP significantly improved their provision to support children's emerging communication, language and literacy skills, as compared to the 'no change' comparison group. Items in the '*literacy'* subscale assess the extent to which adults make appropriate use of environmental print and books, encourage awareness of sounds, letters and words, and support children's oral language skills.

The positive findings on the '*science'* subscale show that EYP settings also improved their support for children's scientific thinking and for their understanding of the natural/physical world more significantly than settings which did not change their 'graduate leader status'.

And finally, the '*diversity*' subscale – on which EYP settings also made significant gains as compared with the 'no change' settings – assesses the extent to which settings value and respect difference and diversity, and plan for children's individual learning needs. Typical indicators consider whether '*the range of activities provided draws on children's interests and caters for all developmental stages and backgrounds'*, '*observations and records of children's progress are used to inform planning'*, '*children play with toys, resources or materials drawn from a range of cultures'* and '*participation in activities which cross gender boundaries is common practice and staff explicitly encourage this where necessary'*.

Thus, settings which gained a **graduate leader with EYPS** made significant gains in curricular quality as compared with settings that did not change their graduate leader status, as well as gains in the specific areas of literacy, science/environment and diversity/meeting individual needs (Comparison A).

Comparison B showed the 'added value' of EYPS over and above gaining a graduate. It appears that gains in the quality of '*science/environment*' provision identified in Comparison A may have been related more strongly to the 'graduate' element than to the 'EYP' element, as this effect was lost in Comparison B. However, findings for '*overall mean quality'* and for the *'literacy'* and '*diversity*' subscales were retained. This suggests that gaining a staff member with **EYPS brought added value** over and above gaining a graduate in terms of overall curricular quality, and provision to support language/literacy, and individual needs/diversity.

4.3 Impact on overall quality for children from birth to 30 months (ITERS-R)

No EYP effects were identified for the younger age range; settings which gained an EYP did not make significant improvements in quality for infants and toddlers during the course of the evaluation, compared with settings that did not gain an EYP.

There are several possible reasons for the lack of significant quality effects for this age group, as compared with the older children. It is possible, for example, that EYPs are not being deployed to work in these rooms, that staff in rooms for younger children are not receiving the same professional development opportunities as colleagues working with older children, or that the EYP training provides better preparation for working with older children than with infants and toddlers. Alternatively it is possible that qualifications and quality are simply not so closely related for this age range.

Although we are not able to explore these issues fully within the context of this evaluation, analysis of staff deployment provides some evidence to support the first of these explanations. Table 4.3 shows that while the vast majority (91 per cent) of EYPs worked in the pre-school rooms with the older children, only 44 per cent worked in the infant/toddler rooms observed. Just over two thirds (69 per cent) of EYPs worked 10 hours or more in the pre-school rooms observed, compared with 19 per cent working in the infant/toddler rooms. And finally, comparing the total number of hours worked by EYPs with each age range provides the starkest contrast. On average, each EYP worked 18.4 hours in the pre-school room we visited as part of the study but only 4.7 hours in the infant and toddler room.[30]

Table 4.3 EYP deployment

	Infant/toddler rooms (0-30 months)	Pre-school rooms (30 months-5 yrs)
Number of EYP settings catering for this age range	24	32
Number of EYPs working in settings catering for this age range	27	35
Per cent of EYPs who worked in room observed	44.4%	91.4%
Per cent of EYPs who worked over 10 hours per week in room observed	18.5%	68.6%
Average hours worked in room observed (across all EYPs working in settings)	4.7 hrs	18.4 hrs

[30] It should be noted here that we do not have information on the number of rooms at each setting. It is possible that settings had only one room for pre-school children, and several rooms for infants and toddlers (e.g. they separated the babies from the toddlers). It is therefore possible that there were simply more infant/toddler rooms amongst which EYPs needed to divide their time. Nonetheless, the figures do provide an accurate picture of the 'EYP hours' experienced by the infants and toddlers in the rooms we observed.

The small number of hours worked by EYPs in the infant/toddler rooms observed makes it significantly more difficult to identify an impact of EYPS on quality for this age group, should one exist. We are therefore not able to draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYPS on provision for children under the age of 30 months. However, our findings do highlight the need to explore EYP deployment and, in particular, whether EYPs are leading practice across the birth to five age range.

4.4 Summary of findings

In summary, gaining a graduate leader with EYPS was associated with gains in quality for children aged 30 months to 5 years, as compared with settings that did not change their graduate leader status at all. Gains were seen in overall quality, and in a number of individual dimensions of practice, including support for learning and communication, positive relationships and meeting individual needs (as measured by the ECERS subscales 'language/reasoning', 'interactions', 'programme structure', 'literacy', 'science' and 'diversity'). The fact that these dimensions relate very strongly to direct work with children rather than to setting management may be an accurate reflection of the role of EYPs as 'leaders of practice'.

Gaining a staff member with EYPS brought **added value** over and above gaining a graduate in terms of overall quality, as well as provision to support language, literacy, individual needs and diversity (as measured by the ECERS-E subscales 'literacy' and 'diversity')

The small number of hours worked by EYPs in the infant/toddler rooms observed made it significantly more difficult to identify an impact of EYPS on quality for this age group, should one exist. No EYP effects were identified for this younger (birth to 30 months) age range.

5 Predictors of quality at follow-up

Chapter summary

This chapter explores the relationship between EYPS and quality at the follow-up time-point, and also considers the role of other setting characteristics in 'predicting' quality.

For children aged 30 months to 5 years, having an EYP working in the room was a significant predictor of the quality of provision they experienced.

- Rooms in which EYPs worked a greater number of hours were of higher quality overall, and also provided higher curricular quality.
- These effects were found *over and above* the effects of staff qualifications and of graduate presence; they therefore represent the 'added value' of EYPS.

For the infant and toddler rooms observed, the relationships between EYPS and quality, (as well as between average staff qualifications and quality) were much less obvious.

A number of other setting characteristics were identified as 'predictors' of quality:

- Findings highlight the importance of having a well qualified workforce at all levels, particularly in ensuring quality in the more 'educational' dimensions of provision for pre-school children.
- Other factors, such as staff experience and adult-child ratios, were identified as being important for the more nurturing and 'care-based' aspects of provision such as positive relationships and personal care routines.
- Settings providing for children with SEN provided more developmentally appropriate schedules to meet individual needs.
- Settings in deprived areas, and settings catering for larger proportions of minority groups and children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), were of lower quality.
- Settings which had experienced a greater number of recent changes offered lower quality provision.
- Once staff-child ratios had been accounted for, larger groups offered higher quality provision in some areas.

Follow-up assessments took place in 254 of the sample settings between February and October 2010. By this stage, 32 settings had an EYP in place who had held their status for six months or longer (our criterion for inclusion in the study). This section explores the relationship between EYPS and quality at the follow-up time-point: was having an EYP a significant predictor of quality and, if so, in which areas could this relationship be seen most strongly?

Although the settings were not fully representative of the broader population of providers[31], the evaluation also provided useful evidence on the role of other factors in ensuring quality. Also presented in this chapter are findings on the other characteristics of the sample settings (e.g. staff qualifications and experience, ratios, staff turnover) which were related to and 'predicted' the quality of provision offered to children from birth to five. These additional contextual findings provide important messages about priorities for childcare and education, and about the contexts in which our EYPs were working.

5.1 Predictors of quality at follow-up for children aged 30 months to 5 years (ECERS-R)

The ECERS-R considers the quality of the learning environment for pre-school children aged 30 months to 5 years, including both the physical environment and the pedagogical, social and 'emotional' environment. It aligns closely with the UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and addresses many of the same broad aspects of practice.

Table 5.1 shows the predictors of overall childcare quality for pre-school children, grouped according to type. Two overall quality scores are shown: '**childcare quality'**, which is the average of ECERS-R subscales one to six; and '**overall quality'**, which includes the seventh subscale 'parents and staff'. The table also shows which of the individual dimensions of childcare quality, as assessed by the seven ECERS-R **subscales**, were significantly[32] related to each of the characteristics measured. In each case, the direction of the effect is indicated by '+' or '-'. So, for example, a positive relationship between the experience of childcare staff and the quality of personal care routines is represented by a '+', indicating that *more experienced* childcare staff teams provide *higher quality* care routines for children. Full details of the analysis are shown in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

5.1.1 EYP and qualification effects

For children aged 30 months to 5 years, the presence of an **EYP** was a significant predictor of the overall quality of provision. EYP presence was measured using the number of hours an EYP worked in the room observed each week. The findings show that the more hours EYPs worked in the room observed, the higher the overall quality of provision. No specific effects were identified for individual ECERS-R subscales, suggesting that the relationship between EYP hours and quality was broad rather than relating to specific areas of practice.

[31] All settings were from the PVI sector, and were selected because they reported a particular interest in gaining a graduate or an EYP in the near future (i.e. they were most pro-active of settings, selected specifically to answer the question 'does having an Early Years Professional improve quality?'). See Chapters 1 and 3 for more detail on the sample.

[32] At $p<0.05$ or less (see Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b)).

'+

Table 5.1 Predictors of pre-school quality at follow-up as measured by the ECERS-R (multiple regression)

	Childcare quality (mean of items in subscales 1-6)	Overall quality (mean of items in subscales 1-7)	1. Space & furnish-ings	2. Personal care routines	3. Language & reasoning	4. Activities	5. Interact-ion	6. Prog-ramme structure	7. Parents & staff
STAFF CHARACTERISTICS									
EYP hours in room observed	+	+							
Mean childcare qualification level of staff*					+				
Staff member at setting working towards EYPS									
Mean childcare qualification level being worked towards**									
Mean age of staff team**			-	-					-
Mean years of relevant experience**	+	+	+	+					
SETTING CHARACTERISTICS									
Number of recent changes (measure of 'upheaval')	-	-	-	-			-		
Staff turnover									
% of children on register with SEN (early years action or above)								+	
% of EAL children on register ***								-	
% of non-white British children	-							-	
*Deprivation level of area: IMD Income Rank****	-	-		-	-	-		-	
Private vs not-for-profit		-	-	-					
Number of paid childcare staff (measure of setting size)									+
ROOM CHARACTERISTICS									
Highest number of children present during observation (group size)			+			+			
No. of children per childcare staff member in the room (ratio)	-						-		
Proportion of children on register aged under 3 years									+
Bases	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*

'+' indicates a significant positive relationship between quality and the relevant staff/setting/room characteristic (significant at the 0.05 level) '-' indicates a significant negative relationship

* Staff working 10 hours or more in the room observed ** Whole setting

*** Not included in main model due to correlation with the 'percentage non-white British children' variable. Findings are from a different model in which the non-white British variable was excluded.

The choice of 'hours in the room' as a measure of EYP impact was an important one. Alternative ways of measuring EYP presence were tested, including EYP presence at the setting (yes/no) and EYP hours across the whole setting. However simply having an EYP at the setting, however many hours they worked, was not enough to significantly affect the quality of the rooms observed. It was only when the number of hours EYPs actually worked in these rooms was taken into account that a significant relationship with quality was identified. Thus, the EYPs in our sample had a more significant impact on practice in their own rooms than they did on overall quality within their settings. This may well be an accurate reflection of the role of EYPs as 'leaders of practice', highlighting the importance of their role in working hands-on with the children.

Table 5.1 also shows that the relationship between 'EYP hours in the room' and quality could be seen *over and above* the influence of other staff qualifications (i.e. the EYPs brought 'added value'). Regression analysis allows us to include many different predictors in the same model, and so to identify the impact of each variable when controlling for others. Here, the EYP effect is seen even when controlling for the qualification level of other staff working in the rooms observed[33]. We also controlled for the fact that settings may have staff working towards EYPS but not yet at the stage of achieving validation, and for the more general level of qualifications being worked towards by the staff team as a whole (since these 'training effects' were possible influences on quality).

The **qualification level of staff working in the rooms observed** was a significant predictor of scores on the *'language and reasoning'* subscale of the ECERS-R. The higher the average qualification level, the higher the quality of provision to support children's developing language and thinking skills. '*Language and reasoning'* is possibly the most educational of the ECERS-R subscales and measures, for example, the extent to which staff extend children's verbal contributions in conversation, scaffold conversations[34] and use sustained shared thinking (SST) techniques. Typical indicators include: '*staff encourage children to reason throughout the day, using actual events and experiences as a basis for concept development*', '*staff read books to children informally'*, and *'staff add information to expand on ideas presented by the children'*.

As with the EYP measure, and perhaps not surprisingly, the qualifications of staff working in the rooms observed was more strongly related to quality in those rooms than the mean level of qualifications across the setting as a whole. The measure used in this analysis was the average level of qualifications of staff *working 10 hours or more in the room observed*.

[33] The measure of 'mean qualifications' can to some extent be viewed as a control for the level of 'graduate presence' in the room, since rooms with a level 6 graduate had a higher mean qualification level as a result. As an additional test, a 'graduate' variable was included in a test model alongside the 'EYP hours' variable. The EYP effect remained, providing further evidence that EYPs offer added value over and above employing a graduate.

[34] Scaffolding provides a 'framework' for children's talk, for example accepting and extending children's verbal contributions in conversation.

5.1.2 Other characteristics of the staff team

Turning now to the other characteristics of staff teams in the sample settings, some interesting findings were identified in relation to staff age and experience. These variables are clearly closely related. Both variables were entered into the regression model at the same time; thus the findings for each are independent of the other (i.e. 'age' has been accounted for when considering the findings for 'experience' and vice versa).

The **average age of the staff team** (across the whole setting) was negatively related to quality in a number of areas. The older the staff team, the *lower* the quality of '*space and furnishings'*, *'personal care routines'* and '*provision for parents and staff*'. The '*space and furnishings'* subscale assesses the quality of the physical environment, including the building, room arrangement, furniture for routine care, play and learning, display and space/equipment for gross motor play. *'Personal care routines'* measures the extent to which the children's basic welfare requirements are met, and considers areas such as health, safety and routines for sleeping, toileting and mealtimes. The *'parents and staff'* subscale assesses how well settings work in partnership with parents, and how effectively they provide for their staff members' personal and professional needs (see Appendix A for a full list of items in each ECERS-R subscale).

While older staff teams provided lower quality, **more experienced staff teams** offered *higher* quality in several of these areas ('*space and furnishings*' and '*personal care routines*') as well as higher overall quality of provision. Interestingly, the relationship between experience and quality was only visible when controlling for the age of the staff team. It may be that, because staff teams which are on average more experienced are also likely to be older (and in this analysis, age was negatively related to quality), the positive impacts of having an experienced staff team were only evident once age was accounted for.

5.1.3 Characteristics of the setting

Data was gathered on a number of characteristics of the sample settings, using knowledge from previous research about factors likely to be related to quality. The strongest predictor was a measure of **'recent upheaval'**. At the follow-up visit, managers were asked whether the setting had experienced any significant changes since the baseline visit which might have affected the quality of provision. These changes could have been for the better (e.g. a new outdoor area), changes which one might expect to have a negative impact at least in the short term (e.g. a large turnover in staff), or changes which were more difficult to label as 'good' or 'bad' but which were nonetheless significant (e.g. a change in ownership/management, or in the way children were divided into age groups). However, all the change categories assessed some measure of recent 'upheaval' or change in the two years since the baseline visit[35]. The findings show that this measure was negatively related to quality. Settings which reported a greater number of recent changes were offering lower quality of provision, both overall and in relation to the specific quality of '*space and furnishings'*, *'personal care routines*' and '*staff-child interactions'*. This finding effectively illustrates the impact of major disruptions within the setting. In

[35] Details of how these changes were measured and coded are provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b).

terms of the analysis, it helps us to feel confident in our findings since we have taken steps to control for otherwise unmeasurable influences on quality. However it is also a valuable finding in its own right, reminding us that settings need to devote time and energy to settling in following a large change (even where this change is ultimately for the better) and that constant change might make it more difficult to provide a consistently high quality environment for children[36].

Settings which catered for a greater proportion of children with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** offered higher quality of provision, specifically in relation to the '*programme structure'* subscale. This subscale of the ECERS-R relates to schedule of the day, for example the balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities, opportunities for children to experience free play (both indoors and out), the smoothness of transitions and the quality and appropriateness of group times. It also contains an item which assesses the quality of provision for children with identified SEN, so it is likely (although not conclusive) that settings which have a need to provide for children with particular educational requirements are better equipped to do so.

However, settings catering for a high **proportion of non-white British children**[37] scored significantly *less* well overall and also on the '*programme structure'* subscale. Greater proportions of children speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL) were also associated with lower scores on the *'programme structure'* subscale. These findings are supported by previous US research showing that settings and/or rooms catering for higher proportions of children from non-Caucasian, low income and low maternal education families are of lower quality (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Pianta et al., 2002; Loeb et al., 2004; Phillips et al., 1992). In England, while the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative (Mathers & Sylva, 2007) found no relationship between quality and the characteristics of the populations served (e.g. proportion of minority groups, proportion of children from deprived postcodes), a more recent Ofsted report found that that the more deprived the area, the lower the proportion of providers rated as either 'good' or 'outstanding' (Ofsted, 2010).

To further test this hypothesis, we also tested a measure of disadvantage using the **Index of Multiple Deprivation** (IMD) scores from 2007[38]. This measure was based on the postcode of the setting and therefore relates to the deprivation of the *area* in which the setting was based rather than to the population of families using the setting. The overall IMD ranking was not related to quality, but a significant relationship was identified for the **Income Deprivation Index.** This measure had a negative relationship with quality: settings in areas which were *more income deprived* offered significantly *lower* quality.

---

[36] Interestingly, the measure of **staff turnover** included in the analysis was not a significant predictor of quality in its own right (even when the 'recent upheaval' variable was excluded from the analysis).

[37] 'Non-white British' categories: white other (e.g. European, Irish), black/black British, Asian/Asian British, Chinese, mixed race, other ethnic group.

[38] The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation identify the most deprived areas across the country. They combine a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England.

Another effect of including the IMD Income Ranking in the model was to lessen the effects found for 'percentage of non-white British children'. This suggests there may be some relationship between these two variables, i.e. that a common factor underlies both effects to some extent. However, findings also indicate that there are characteristics of these minority groups other than income deprivation that are related to the quality of provision they receive[39]. It appears that these factors (i.e. proportion of minority children, income deprivation and proportion of EAL children) are inter-related measures of disadvantage which are all related in some way to the quality of provision experienced. This is discussed further in a later section.

Private settings offered significantly lower quality than not-for-profit settings (primarily voluntary providers)[40], with lower scores achieved overall as well as on the *'space and furnishings'* and '*personal care routines'* subscales.

Larger settings (measured by the number of paid childcare staff) achieved significantly higher scores on the '*parents and staff*' subscale of the ECERS-R. This is supported by findings from the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative (Mathers & Sylva, 2007) which found the same relationship between setting size and scores on the *'parents and staff'* subscale. This subscale primarily assesses the quality of provision for staff personal and professional development, including staff induction, opportunities to attend courses, procedures for staff evaluation and appraisal and facilities for staff members. It may be that settings with larger staff teams have more formal and identifiable structures for staff support and development, allowing them to provide more successfully for their staff in these areas. Larger settings can also sustain more extensive facilities for staff and parents, for example staff and/or meeting rooms.

5.1.4 Characteristics of the rooms observed

The **size of the groups observed**[41] was identified as a predictor of observed quality; larger groups offered better quality '*space and furnishings'* and '*activities*'. Both of these ECERS-R subscales relate to the physical provision, i.e. the building, furnishings, resources and materials. It is possible that larger groups are able to provide a broader spread of resources and activities for children and, through economies of scale, are able to provide higher quality facilities.

In line with previous research (NESS Research Team, 2010; Mathers et al., 2007; Goelman et al., 2006; De Schipper et al., 2006; NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Phillips et al., 2000; Burchinal et al., 2000)**, staff-child ratio** was identified as a significant predictor of quality, both in relation to overall (childcare) quality and to the quality of staff-child interactions. The *'interaction'* subscale of the ECERS-R measures the quality of the emotional environment and the appropriateness of supervision and behaviour

[39] Some effects for the 'minority children' measure were seen over and above the income deprivation effects. In addition, the 'percentage non-white British' variable accounted for a larger part of the variation in quality than the IMD measure.

[40] Not-for-profit settings were largely voluntary (e.g. playgroups, settings run by charitable organisations). A very small number were categorised as 'other'. These included settings at FE colleges or NHS sites and some workplace settings. See Chapter 3 for details.

[41] Defined as the highest number of children present on the day of the observation.

management. For the rooms observed, the fewer children per staff member, the higher the quality of interactions; conversely, more children per adult meant lower quality interactions. This is of particular importance in light of the fact that settings with an EYP can operate ratios of 1:13 rather than the more usual 1:8. Settings need to be encouraged to plan staffing schedules that allow high adult involvement with each child for at least some time during each session.

Finally, the **age of the children in the group** was identified as a significant predictor of quality for parents and staff members: the greater the proportion of children under three years on the register, the higher the quality of provision for parents and staff. This subscale assesses how well settings work in partnership with parents, and how well the personal and professional needs of staff are met (see Appendix A for a full list of items). It may be that this finding relates to a particular characteristic of settings which tend to provide for under threes.

5.2 Predictors of curricular quality at follow-up for children aged three to five years (ECERS-E)

The extension to the ECERS-R (the ECERS-E) supplements the broad and balanced focus of the ECERS-R by providing more curricular focus. Its subscales contain supplementary items covering four specific aspects of learning and development ('*literacy*', '*mathematics*', '*science/environment*' and '*diversity*').

Table 5.2 shows the predictors of curricular quality within the sample settings, grouped according to type. It presents the relationships between each of these characteristics and overall mean quality, as well as findings for each individual dimension of quality assessed by the ECERS-E subscales (literacy, mathematics, science/environment and diversity). In each case, the direction of the effect is indicated by '+' or '-'. So, for example, a positive relationship between the qualifications of childcare staff and the quality of literacy provision is represented by a '+'.

5.2.1 Qualification effects

In line with the findings for the ECERS-R, **the presence of an EYP** was significantly related to curricular (ECERS-E) quality for pre-school children. Again, it was the hours worked by EYPs in the rooms observed that had the strongest relationship with quality; the more 'EYP hours' worked, the higher the quality of curricular provision. As with the ECERS-R analysis, the relationship between EYPS and quality was found over and above any more general impact of average staff qualifications, which were included (and thus controlled for) in the model. The EYP impact remained even when the 'graduate' measure was included in the same analysis model, indicating that EYPs bring added value in terms of curricular quality over and above the presence of a non-EYP graduate.

Table 5.2 Predictors of curricular quality at follow-up for the pre-school age range, as measured by the ECERS-E (multiple regression)					
	Overall quality (mean of all items)	Literacy	Maths	Science & environment	Diversity
STAFF CHARACTERISTICS					
EYP hours in room observed	+				
Mean childcare qualification level of staff*	+	+	+		
Staff member at setting working towards EYPS					
Mean childcare qualification level being worked towards**					
Mean age of staff team**					
Mean years of relevant experience**					
SETTING CHARACTERISTICS					
Number of recent changes (measure of 'upheaval')	-				-
Staff turnover					
% of children on register with SEN (early years action or above)					
% of EAL children on register ***					
% of non-white British children			-		
*Deprivation level of area: IMD Income Rank****					
Private vs not-for-profit					
Number of paid childcare staff (measure of setting size)					
ROOM CHARACTERISTICS					
Highest number of children present during observation (group size)	+	+	+		
No. of children per childcare staff member in the room (ratio)					
Proportion of children on register aged under 3 years					
Bases	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*	*193*

'+' indicates a significant positive relationship between quality and the relevant staff/setting/room characteristic (significant at the 0.05 level) '-' indicates a significant negative relationship

* Staff working 10 hours or more in the room observed ** Whole setting

*** Not included in main model due to correlation with the 'percentage non-white British children' variable. Findings are from a different model in which the non-white British variable was excluded.

No specific effects were identified for individual ECERS-E subscales. This suggests that the positive relationship between EYP 'contact hours' and quality cannot be attributed to specific dimensions of provision, but instead is broad and more holistic in nature.

The **qualification level of the broader staff team** was also an important predictor of curricular quality. Rooms with a higher mean qualification level[42] offered higher quality provision overall, and also achieved significantly higher scores on the '*literacy*' and *'mathematics'* subscales of the ECERS-E. The '*literacy*' subscale assesses the extent to which staff support children's developing oral language skills, provide opportunities to encourage emergent writing, and support children's awareness of sounds, letters and words. Items in the '*mathematics'* subscale assess how effectively adults support children's knowledge of counting, their sorting and matching skills and their developing understanding of shape and space. It has a particular focus on the provision of age-appropriate and concrete experiences for children, as well as the extent to which adults encourage children to talk about and discuss their ideas to promote active learning. These findings highlight the importance of a continued focus on raising qualification levels across the board as well as encouraging high-level leadership, in order to have the greatest impact on quality (and by extension, on children's outcomes).

5.2.2 Other characteristics of the staff team

Staff age and **experience** were less related to curricular (ECERS-E) quality than to the more general quality measure provided by the ECERS-R, with no significant effects identified in relation to ECERS-E scores. The average experience of the staff team was nearing significance in relation to the quality of *'literacy'* provision[43] but the effect was not strong enough to be detected once all other variables were taken into account.

5.2.3 Characteristics of the setting

As with the ECERS-R analysis, the measure of **'recent upheaval'** was a significant predictor of provision quality, with settings that had experienced a greater number of recent changes achieving lower ECERS-E scores (overall mean and *'diversity'* subscale). The '*diversity*' subscale assesses how well settings cater for the individual needs of children, and how successfully they celebrate and acknowledge different interests, developmental stages, genders and cultures. It may well be that settings which have experienced many recent changes and disruptions are less able to invest the time and energy needed to meet children's individual needs.

The second predictor of curricular quality identified at the setting level was the proportion of children on the register from minority groups (the **percentage of non-white British children**). Settings catering for a high proportion of non-white British children scored significantly less well on the '*mathematics*' subscale of the ECERS-E. This supports the findings of the ECERS-R analysis (Section 5.1.3), which also identified a relationship between quality and the proportion of minority group children catered for. Unlike the

[42] Mean qualification level of staff working 10 hours or more in the rooms observed.
[43] p=0.05

ECERS-R analysis, no relationship between quality and **income deprivation**[44] was identified.

5.2.4 Characteristics of the rooms observed

The **size of the groups observed**[45] was identified as a predictor of curricular quality; larger groups offered better overall quality, as well as higher quality provision to support children's developing literacy and mathematical skills. It is possible that larger groups may have a larger staff team with a broader base of experience and expertise on which to draw. Neither staff-child ratios nor the age ranges of children catered for were significantly related to the quality of curricular provision.

5.3 Predictors of quality at follow-up for children from birth to 30 months (ITERS-R)

The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (**ITERS-R**) is a partner scale to the ECERS-R, identical in structure but adapted to assess provision for very young children between birth and 30 months.

Table 5.3 shows the predictors of overall childcare quality for infants and toddlers, grouped according to type. Two overall quality scores are shown: '**childcare quality'**, which is the average of ITERS-R subscales one to six; and '**overall quality'**, which includes the seventh subscale 'parents and staff'. The table also shows which individual dimensions of childcare quality, as assessed by the seven ITERS-R **subscales**, were significantly related to each of the characteristics measured. In each case, the direction of the effect is indicated by '+' or '-'. So, for example, a positive relationship between the experience of childcare staff and the quality of interactions is represented by a '+', indicating that *more experienced* childcare staff teams provide *higher quality* staff-child interactions.

[44] As measured by IMD Income Rank for the setting's postcode area.
[45] Defined as the highest number of children present on the day of the observation.

Table 5.3 Predictors of quality at follow-up for the birth to 30 month age range as measured by the ITERS-R (multiple regression)

	Childcare quality (mean of items in subscales 1-6)	Overall quality (mean of items in subscales 1-7)	1. Space & furnish-ings	2. Personal care routines	3. Listening & talking	4. Activities	5. Interact-ion	6. Prog-ramme structure	7. Parents & staff****
STAFF CHARACTERISTICS									
EYP hours in room observed			+						
Mean childcare qualification level of staff*									
Staff member at setting working towards EYPS									
Mean childcare qualification level being worked towards**									
Mean age of staff team**						-			
Mean years of relevant experience**	+	+				+	+		
SETTING CHARACTERISTICS									
Number of recent changes (measure of 'upheaval')	-	-		-			-	-	
Staff turnover									
% of children on register with SEN (early years action or above)	+	+					+	+	
% of EAL children on register ***								-	
% of non-white British children	-	-			-		-	-	
*Deprivation level of area: IMD Income Rank****									
Private vs not-for-profit									
Number of paid childcare staff (measure of setting size)									
ROOM CHARACTERISTICS									
Highest number of children present during observation						+		+	
No. of children per childcare staff member in the room (ratio)	-	-	-	-				-	
Proportion of children on register aged over 2 years									
Bases	*128*	*128*	*128*	*128*	*128*	*128*	*128*	*128*	

* Staff working 10 hours or more in the room observed ** Whole setting

*** Not included in main model due to correlation with the 'percentage non-white British children' variable. Findings are from a different model in which the non-white British variable was excluded.

**** The parents and staff subscale was only completed once per setting and findings are reported in the ECERS-R analysis (Table 5.1)

5.3.1 Qualification effects

There was no significant relationship between 'EYP hours' and overall quality for this younger age range, although one effect was identified for the '*space and furnishings'* subscale of the ITERS-R (i.e. rooms led by EYPs offered higher quality physical environments for children[46]). The fact that EYP presence was not related to overall quality may be due to the low number of EYPs working with children under 30 months. Very few of the EYPs in our sample were deployed to work in the infant/toddler rooms observed as part of the evaluation (see Section 4.3). It is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYPS on provision for children under the age of 30 months. However, our findings do highlight the need to ensure that EYPs are leading practice across the birth to five age range.

No other qualification measures were identified as predictors of quality for this age group.

5.3.2 Other characteristics of the staff team

In line with the ECERS-R findings, both the age and experience of the wider staff team were identified as predictors of quality. Staff experience was a positive predictor of quality: more experienced staff teams offered higher quality overall, as well as higher quality '*activities*' and '*interactions*'. The '*activities'* subscale considers the range and accessibility of resources to support different types of play, learning and development, while the *'interaction'* subscale measures the quality of the emotional environment and appropriateness of supervision and behaviour management. Older staff teams offered lower quality '*activities'* for children.

5.3.3 Characteristics of the setting

As with both the ECERS-R and ECERS-E, one of the most consistent predictors of quality for the ITERS age range was the measure of **'recent upheaval'**. Settings which reported a greater number of recent changes (e.g. turnover in staff, change of management or ownership, introduction of new systems or procedures) achieved lower scores on the ITERS-R. This relationship was identified for overall quality, and for the quality of '*personal care routines'*, '*interactions*' and '*programme structure'*. This provides further support for the conclusion that major changes in a setting, even where these are designed to improve quality in the long term, can be disruptive in the short term.

Settings which catered for a greater proportion of children with **Special Educational Needs** (SEN) offered higher quality overall, as well as higher quality *'interactions'* and '*programme structure'.* The '*programme structure'* subscale includes a specific item which assesses the quality of provision for children with special needs. These are positive findings, suggesting that settings which need to provide for these potentially vulnerable children are doing a good job of offering supportive and nurturing interactions, and a schedule which is appropriate and which meets individual needs.

[46] While this finding was identified *over and above* the effects of mean staff qualifications, it was lost when a measure of 'graduate presence' was added to the model. It is therefore difficult to determine whether it relates to the 'EYP' or 'graduate' elements of EYPS.

Another consistent finding, identified for the ITERS as well as for the ECERS scales, was that settings providing for a large **proportion of non-white British children** offered lower quality in a number of areas (overall quality, '*listening and talking'*, '*interaction*' and '*programme structure'*). These subscales assess the quality of practice and interactions between staff and children, including the 'emotional environment', the quality of support for children's developing communication skills, and the provision of an appropriate schedule which is tailored to meet individual needs. Settings catering for high proportions of children speaking **English as an Additional Language (EAL)** also achieved lower scores on the '*programme structure'* subscale. These finding are discussed in greater depth in Section 5.1.3. No relationships were identified between the level of **income deprivation**[47] and quality.

5.3.4 Characteristics of the rooms observed

Ratio was identified as an important predictor of quality for the infant/toddler age range. Rooms with a smaller number of children per staff member offered higher overall quality, as well as higher quality '*space and furnishings'*, '*personal care routines'* and '*programme structure'*. Conversely, rooms with a greater number of children per staff member offered lower quality in these areas.

As with both the ECERS-R and ECERS-E, a relationship was also identified between quality and the **size of groups** being observed[48]. This finding is discussed in greater depth in the summary (Section 5.4).

5.4 Summary of findings on predictors of quality (birth to five)

5.4.1 Staff qualifications and experience

For children aged 30 months to 5 years, the presence of an **EYP** was a significant predictor of the overall quality of provision, as measured by both the ECERS-R and the ECERS-E. EYP presence was measured using the number of hours an EYP worked in the room observed. The findings show that the more hours an EYP worked in the room observed, the higher the overall quality of provision and the higher the curricular quality. These effects were found *over and above* the effects of staff qualifications and of graduate presence; they therefore represent the 'added value' of EYPS.

In addition to the findings on EYPs, the average qualification level of staff working in the rooms observed was identified as an important predictor of quality for pre-school children (aged 30 months to 5 years). Better qualified staff teams offered higher quality support for children's developing communication, language and literacy skills and their reasoning, thinking and mathematical skills, as well as higher overall curricular quality. Perhaps not surprisingly, the qualification level of staff working in the rooms observed was more strongly related to quality in those rooms than the mean level of qualifications across the setting as a whole.

[47] As measured by the IMD Income Rank for the postcode of the setting.
[48] Defined as the highest number of children present on the day of the observation.

Very few EYP and qualification effects were identified for the younger age range (only one relationship was identified between EYP hours and the quality of '*space and furnishings'*). The low numbers of EYPs deployed to work in the infant/toddler rooms observed (see Section 4.3) mean that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYP status on quality for this age group. It is also difficult to draw conclusions on the broader impact of qualifications on quality for infants and toddlers: looking at the mean qualification levels of staff working with each age range, the average level for infant/toddler rooms was 3 (SD 0.52), compared to 3.2 (SD 0.63) for pre-school rooms. The difference between these was statistically significant[49] and it may be that qualification levels in the infant/toddler rooms were simply too low to detect an impact on quality.

Overall, the findings on qualifications highlight the importance of a continued focus on raising qualification levels across the board as well as encouraging high-level leadership, in order to have the greatest impact on quality for pre-school children (and by extension, on children's outcomes). They also highlight the need for further research into the relationship between qualifications and quality for infants and toddlers.

The follow-up analysis also provided evidence that **more experienced staff teams** offered higher quality in a number of areas, both relating to the physical environment (e.g. space, furnishings, resources and activities) and to dimensions of direct work with children such as '*personal care routines*' and the quality of '*staff-child interactions*'. This relationship between experience and quality was identified for both the younger and older age ranges (i.e. on both the ECERS-R and ITERS-R scales). There were no significant relationships between staff experience and curricular quality (as measured by the ECERS-E), suggesting that experience is a stronger predictor of the more care-based dimensions of quality assessed by the ECERS-R and ITERS-R.

While staff experience was a positive predictor of quality, the **average age** had a negative relationship with quality: older staff teams offered significantly *lower* quality in a number of areas for both infants/toddlers and pre-school children. While it might seem counter-intuitive, this finding is not unique in the research literature; a Portuguese study by Pessanha and colleagues (2007) found quality was higher in rooms with younger teachers and speculate that 'younger teachers, with more recent and up to date training may be better prepared for their practice' as well as better able to cope with the often exhausting demands of an early years environment. The relationship between age and quality is not always consistent, however, and other research studies have found either no relationship (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007) or a positive relationship between age and quality (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 1998). The impacts of staff age are clearly complex and may be non-linear or depend on a number of other factors not measured here.

Of course it is likely that staff teams which are more experienced on average are also likely to be older. The analysis controlled for the relationship between these two factors –

[49] t (169) = -4.136, p < .001

and in fact, the positive relationship between quality and experience was only 'visible' when age was accounted for.

5.4.2 Other predictors of quality

Characteristics of the setting

One of the most consistent predictors of quality at follow-up was a measure of 'recent upheaval'. Settings which reported a greater number of **recent changes** provided lower quality in a number of areas. These changes could have been for the better (e.g. a new outdoor area), changes which might be considered 'for the worse', at least in the short term (e.g. a large turnover in staff), or changes which were difficult to label as positive or negative but which were nonetheless significant (e.g. a change in ownership or management)[50]. However, all the change categories assessed some measure of recent 'upheaval' in the time period between baseline and follow-up visits, and the resulting measure was *negatively* related to overall quality as measured by all three quality scales (ECERS-R, ECERS-E and ITERS-R). This finding effectively illustrates the impact of major disruptions within the setting. It reminds us that settings need to devote time and energy to settling in following a large change, even where this change is ultimately for the better, and that constant change might make it more difficult to provide a consistently high quality environment for children. It is interesting to note that it was the more general measure of change, rather than the specific measure of staff turnover, which was significantly related to quality for all three quality scales (ECERS-R, ECERS-E and ITERS-R).

Settings which catered for a greater proportion of children with **Special Educational Needs** (SEN) offered higher quality for both the younger and older age ranges (as measured by the ECERS-R and ITERS-R). One finding was consistent across both age ranges: settings which provided for SEN children scored more highly on the '*programme structure*' subscale. Among other things, this subscale assesses the extent to which adults provide a developmentally appropriate schedule which meets the needs of individual children. It also includes a specific item which assesses the quality of provision for children with identified Special Educational Needs. Further significant effects were identified for the younger children, with overall quality and the quality of '*interactions*' also higher in settings catering for children with SEN. These are positive findings, suggesting that settings which cater for these potentially vulnerable children are doing a good job at providing supportive and nurturing interactions, and a schedule which is appropriate and meets individual needs[51].

A number of measures of disadvantage were found to be associated with lower quality of provision, mainly in relation to the populations served by the sample settings. Settings catering for a high proportion of non-white British children scored significantly less well overall for both age ranges (i.e. on the mean ECERS-R and ITERS-R) and on a number

[50] Details of how these changes were measured and coded are provided in the Technical Report (Mathers et al, 2011b).

[51] The relationship between SEN and quality was not identified at baseline (Karemaker et al, 2011). However, it is likely that this was due to the measure used at baseline (number of children in the room observed with SEN). The measure of SEN was refined for the follow-up analysis, and the new measure (% of children in the setting with SEN) proved more robust.

of the individual dimensions of quality assessed. Greater proportions of children speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL) were also associated with lower scores on the *'programme structure'* subscale for both age ranges. Settings situated in more income deprived areas[52] offered significantly lower quality in a number of areas (effects found for the older age range only).

Since our study is correlational, our findings do not shed any light on *why* settings in income deprived areas or catering for minority groups should be providing lower quality. For example, it could be that settings find it more challenging to offer high quality provision to these groups, or that families from more affluent or white-British backgrounds are more likely to choose high quality provision (e.g. Dearing, McCartney & Taylor, 2009). Alternatively it could be related to demand or supply issues, for example settings in income deprived areas offer lower quality due to difficulties with sustainability and cash-flow. More research is needed in this area, possibly using the IDACI index[53] rather than the income deprivation measure used here.

Finally, the evaluation identified a number of sector effects, with **private settings** offering lower quality in a number of areas, as compared with not-for-profit settings[54]. This is supported by previous research from other countries. For example in the US, where the majority of provision is for-profit, a number of studies have concluded that for-profit settings offer lower quality than not-for-profit settings (Sosinky et al., 2007; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Friesen, 1995; Phillips, Howes & Whitebook, 1992; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). Similarly in Canada, Cleveland (2008) concluded that non-profit regulated provision offered higher quality experiences for children than for-profit regulated care. In England, the picture is complicated slightly by the fact that not-for-profit provision includes both the maintained and the voluntary sectors. UK research has consistently identified the maintained sector as offering higher quality provision than both the private and voluntary sectors (NESS Research Team, 2010; Mathers, Sylva & Joshi, 2007; Mathers & Sylva 2007; Sylva et al., 2004), findings which contributed to the Government's decision to invest in the PVI sector via the Graduate Leader Fund. Differences between the private and voluntary sectors are less clear-cut. For example, the EPPE research found that private day nurseries offered significantly higher quality than playgroups (Sylva et al., 2010), whereas the Neighbourhood Nurseries National Evaluation found no significant differences between voluntary and private providers (Mathers & Sylva, 2007). In a mixed economy of childcare, the sector or 'aegis' of settings is clearly an issue of interest and relevance in the quality debate.

Characteristics of the room

In line with previous research (NESS Research Team, 2010; Mathers et al., 2007; Goelman et al., 2006; De Schipper et al., 2006; NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Phillips et al.,

[52] As measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Income Ranking.

[53] Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures in a local area the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in low income households. It is supplementary to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and is used for calculation of the contextual value added score, measuring children's educational progress.

[54] Not-for-profit settings were largely voluntary (e.g. playgroups, settings run by charitable organisations). A very small number were categorised as 'other'. These included settings at FE colleges or NHS sites and some workplace settings. See Chapter 3 for further details.

2000; Burchinal et al., 2000)**, staff-child ratio** was an important predictor of quality at the 'room level'. The relationship between ratio and quality was identified for both age ranges, but was particularly strong for the infant/toddler age range. The effect was not evident for curricular quality as measured by the ECERS-E, suggesting that ratio is more strongly related to the holistic and 'care-based' elements assessed by the ECERS-R and ITERS-R.

For older children, ratio was related to the quality of staff-child interactions – the fewer children per staff member, the higher the quality of interaction. Conversely, more children per adult meant *lower* quality interactions. The *'interaction'* subscale of the ECERS-R measures the quality of the emotional environment and the appropriateness of supervision and behaviour management. Typical indicators consider whether staff *'play with children and show interest in what they do'*, '*react quickly to solve problems in a comforting and supportive way', 'help children develop appropriate social behaviour with their peers'* and provide '*appropriate supervision'*.

For younger children, ratios were linked to the quality of '*care routines*', '*programme structure*' and '*space and furnishings*'. All of these were of higher quality in rooms with fewer children per staff member. With the exception of '*space and furnishings*', these subscales have a common theme of secure and positive relationships, and ensuring that routines and daily schedules meet individual needs. They are the areas which relate most closely to attachment, the key person approach and relationships – all essential for this young age range.

These highly consistent findings suggest that supportive adult-child ratios are an important factor in ensuring high quality provision for children across the birth to five age range.

Finally, **group size** was identified as a consistent predictor of quality. Larger groups offered higher quality provision across all three quality scales, both in relation to the quality of the physical environment and resourcing ('*space and furnishings'* and '*activities*') and to elements of practice (e.g. literacy and numeracy skills, provision of a developmentally appropriate schedule). It is possible that larger groups are able to provide a broader spread of resources and activities for children and, through economies of scale, are able to provide higher quality facilities. They may also have a larger staff team with a broader base of experience and interests on which to draw. While this appears to be a sound argument, and previous UK research has identified similar relationships (Mathers et al., 2007), US research generally suggests that *smaller* group sizes are beneficial for quality (e.g. Howes & Smith, 1995; Kontos & Fiene, 1987; Howes & Rubenstein; 1985) or find no relationship (Pianta et al., 2002; Scarr et al., 1994). This is an area which would benefit from further research in the UK context if policy conclusions are to be drawn.

In summary, these contextual findings on the 'predictors' of quality provide important messages about priorities for childcare and education, and about the contexts in which our EYPs were working. They highlight the importance of having a well qualified workforce at all levels, particularly in ensuring quality of the more 'educational' aspects of provision.

Other factors, such as staff experience and adult-child ratios, were identified as being important for the more nurturing and ‘care-based’ aspects of provision such as positive relationships and personal care routines.

6 Improvements made and how they happened

Chapter summary

While the EYFS was the primary catalyst for driving improvements, other levers were key in making change happen. These included EYPs, other staff, external advisors and changes in ownership or management of a setting.

The scale of improvements undertaken varied – some settings engaged in wholesale change across the setting whilst others introduced smaller changes. This was driven by the quality of provision already offered by the setting; those making smaller changes often described improvements as part of a continuous reflection on practice. Those making large scale changes did so because the setting was seen as delivering a service that needed improvement.

Case study settings had made improvements to: planning and observation; the key worker system; the activities offered; the physical environment; parental communication and involvement with the setting; staff practice, support and evaluation; and health and safety.

The improvements described were driven by the EYFS and centred on child-led learning and meeting the needs of the individual child. This echoes findings from the impact study which showed associations between the presence of an EYP and quality improvements in the curriculum, and in planning for individual needs and diversity.

In order to help illustrate the findings from the impact assessment, twelve qualitative case studies were carried out with settings with an EYP in place for at least nine months. These case studies were selected from settings where there had either been an improvement in the quality of provision since the baseline quality visits or where the quality of provision remained stable between the two visits.

This chapter reports the changes described by case study settings. These were improvements as described by managers, EYPs and staff members that had taken place across the setting since gaining an EYP. These improvements happened for different reasons and were prompted by a range of factors in addition to the EYPs themselves. The following Chapter (7) discusses the facilitators and barriers to making improvements, and explores of the role of the EYP in facilitating change.

6.1 What prompted improvement

The introduction of the EYFS was a crucial trigger to improvements being made within settings; its introduction provided settings with a template for what early years provision should include and a model for its delivery. EYFS acted as a prompt, a reason to reflect on practice within settings and to think about change. This catalyst in particular drove the changes that were focused on child-led planning, described below. Improvements were also aimed at improving communication with parents in order to foster a greater involvement in their child's learning and development.

Other levers operated to instigate change, building on the catalyst of the EYFS. These were:

- **EYPs.** As set out in the guidance to the EYPS standards (CWDC, 2008) and summarised in section 2.5 of the literature review, the role of an EYP is to lead the EYFS curriculum, and to support practitioners to shape and improve provision and practice in settings. Unsurprisingly then, EYPs themselves were identified as key levers for improvement within settings. EYPs were often identified as leading the development and delivery of the EYFS in their settings.
- **Other staff.** It was not only EYPs who acted as levers for improvement within settings, other members of staff including managers, team and room leaders and room staff also performed this role. Managers were able to improve structures and processes within settings, in order to more effectively deliver the EYFS. This could be done in close collaboration with EYPs, and where managers acted as a lever for this kind of change, they also tended to have higher level qualifications (such as foundation and honours degrees).
- **Other sources of advice**. In addition to setting staff, early years advisors from local authorities were also reported to have made specific suggestions to staff members about areas of provision, and these advisors were seen by both managers and EYPs to be an expert guide in best practice delivery of the EYFS. Ofsted also offered specific suggestions for developing provision, as did Montessori Assessors working in Montessori settings.
- **Change in setting management**. New managers were seen to have had a desire to stamp their own mark onto the setting, along with bringing a new focus on quality and the delivery of the EYFS. New managers were also bought into '*failing*' nurseries by owners to improve practice. This had happened where a previous manager's performance was poor or where no one had been performing the manager's role for some time.
- **Other schemes and programmes supporting the EYFS.** Alongside the EYFS, other schemes have been set up to support and promote the development of the curriculum. These also acted as levers for change in certain areas of the EYFS. Schemes included The Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme (directed at developing children's early language and communication development) and the 'I CAN Early Talk' accreditation, designed to improve the knowledge and skills of early years' practitioners in delivering speech, language and communication within settings. Specific advice was available to a setting who participated in these schemes, from local advisors and national guidelines.

- **Quality assurance and accreditation schemes,** such as a local 'baby quality' scheme, also acted as levers for improvement and encouraged development of certain areas.

6.2 The scale of improvements

Once the idea of change and improvement had been identified, the next step for settings was to assess specifically what the need for improvement was (i.e. which elements of provision required change). Settings used a range of tools to undertake these assessments, with some focusing primarily on the Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF) and others supplementing their use of the SEF with informal self assessment, evaluation of parents' views, other self-evaluation tools and/or formal observations of practice (e.g. ECERS and ITERS), or a combination of options. Practitioners also used training and CPD opportunities as a means of reflecting on where the quality of their provision could be improved and identifying the specific changes that could be made. The EYP pathways in particular were cited as prompting changes in this way.

Settings which had made no improvement had concluded through their assessments that they already offered high quality provision and delivery of the EYFS, having successfully implemented free flow, a suitable planning process and full delivery of the EYFS. Other settings identified specific elements of their provision, such as an emphasis on child-led planning, the introduction of key worker systems, or the development of outdoor space, which specifically required improvement. These changes were seen as contained, specific and sometimes small. This type of improvement was described by settings who felt they were delivering a high quality provision, and changes in practice were described as part of a continuous reflection on best practice.

Settings where changes were more widespread and large scale were described as settings in which provision had not fulfilled a number of elements of the EYFS.

6.3 Improvements made to settings' practice

Where improvements were made they covered seven core areas:

- Planning and observation
- Introduction of a key worker system
- Activities offered
- Changes to the physical environment
- Parental communication and involvement with the setting
- Staff practice, support and evaluation
- Health and safety

Changes made across the first four areas were driven by a move towards child-led learning underpinned by the EYFS. As a consequence changes in these areas sought to place the child at the centre of learning experiences, striving to tailor interactions and activities to the individual needs and learning journey of each child. This echoes findings from the impact assessment where quality improvements (linked to the presence of an

EYP) were seen in the curriculum for children aged 30 months to five years, and in the extent to which settings provided for individual needs and diversity.

> *"I think the biggest change has been the EYFS, the child-led aspect …I think has probably had the biggest impact because it [free flow] has kind of impacted the way we do other parts of our day"*
>
> (EYP working in Setting 5)

6.3.1 Planning and observation

All settings described having some form of planning system in place prior to having an EYP in post. Following the arrival of an EYP the changes that were made to planning ranged from slight adaptations of what was already in place to a complete overhaul of procedures. Some of these changes strove to make planning simpler and easier for staff: such as reducing two planning sheets to one. In other cases planning was being orientated around the observation or learning diaries to more specifically reflect the development of individual children.

> *"We always used a planning sheet.. but before the changes came in it was more like a toy list. It was most just……putting like what toys are going out each day, whereas now it's much more linked to the next steps of the children, and that's another thing that's sort of been really highlighted, is making sure that the planning does reflect the children's next steps, and that the activities are, you know, sort of helping them along."*
>
> (Leader of toddler room in Setting 8)

In order to facilitate better planning, settings increased the frequency of their observations (from monthly to several times a week), or introduced more structured requirement for observations (instead of writing observations whenever staff felt they had observed something significant, staff spent ten minutes, twice a week, specifically observing each of the children for whom they were the key worker).

Previously where observations had been '*filed away'* settings asked staff to actively use weekly observations in planning for each child. For example, in one setting room the 'planning' document was shared amongst staff. Room staff each contributed to the plans for the week, marking their charges' initials next to key or relevant activities. Planning could also be displayed in settings for parents to see.

Learning journals or ongoing records of progress had also been introduced or revised in order to be closely linked to planning and to put the individual child at the centre of their learning 'journey'.

Example: Setting 3. Here the EYP was the manager and had introduced learning diaries to her setting after seeing them in another nursery. These were introduced in order to help planning: "*Now you do the child's folders, then link them to the play plan, then link the play plan to their observations… before it didn't follow anything like that*." The EYP also used these diaries to check on staff's planning and offer support and development in the way staff approached planning. These learning folders were shared with parents on a monthly basis who were also encouraged to contribute to them.

A final change in the way settings planned involved a move away from long term and specific activity planning to shorter term planning within broader themes. This was done in order to cater for children's individual and changing interests and development. So, for example, instead of having pre-decided themes and activities for a whole term, planning was done more frequently and activities might fall under an umbrella theme such as 'autumn' but would be tailored to the children's' development needs.

6.3.2 Introduction of a key worker system

Where it was not already in place, settings had introduced a key worker system in the 18 months prior to interview. The purpose of this was to support the individual child in providing a member of staff who had continuous contact with each child, observed them and contributed to their individual planning. As well as supporting individual learning, the key worker system was felt to help quickly identify where a child was not developing and learning. The importance of a key person approach within the EYFS has been explored in Evangelou et al. (2009) and has strong links to attachment theory developed by Bowlby (1969) which highlights the importance for child development of forming secure attachment in the early years.

6.3.3 Activities offered

An increased emphasis on child-initiated learning was reported, ranging from a whole change of emphasis to child-led activity choices, to achieving a balance between adult-initiated and child-led activities. When planning for adult-initiated activities, a greater emphasis was put on the child's ability to choose whether or not to participate.

> "*It's much more relaxed with what the children are doing. Rather than our agenda, [it is] their agenda"*
>
> (Manager EYP in Setting 7)

Example: Setting 1. Previously where activities were planned on a room basis, it was expected that all children would take part in each activity. Since changes were introduced, planning placed more emphasis on child choice, activities were offered but children could decide whether they took part. An example was given where resources were put out on the table to make a shaker in a bottle. Children could either come to the table or not and were welcome to make something other than a shaker if they wanted to.

The introduction of 'free flow', whereby a number of activities were set up (both within the room and outdoors) and children could decide which activity they did and where they played, had been at the heart of changes in activity across the settings in the research.

Also included within the delivery of free flow were 'rolling' snack times for some settings. This, it was felt, meant a child was not expected to cut short an activity they were engaged with in order to have a snack and instead would be able to have a snack in between their choice in activities.

6.3.4 Physical environment

Changes were made to both indoor and outdoor spaces which were designed to facilitate 'free flow' and child-led choice in activities. The changes included combining two rooms into one and then differentiating areas within the room, such as 'messy' and 'construction' areas. Improvements were also made to the way toys, books and resources were stored. These changes sought to make activities more accessible to children. This meant leaving things out that had previously been put away when not part of the day's activity, or changing storage systems and display boards to be on lower levels, with the contents of boxes or shelves identifiable to children.

> *"we changed the way the room was laid out, like how and where we put things allowing us more space, making it look more interesting... although they weren't wandering around aimlessly, they looked like they were but because it's all so close to them now …and we can obviously just say, hey, 'what's this?' fairly quickly if they need distracting."*
>
> (Member of staff working in baby and toddler room in Setting 5)

Settings described making changes to their outdoor space too as part of improvements to increase child-led activity. For some this was about improving access to the outdoor space; adding in a new external door, erecting awnings to allow all-weather outdoor play or introducing strategies for children in first floor classrooms to indicate they wanted to play outside (e.g. putting a pebble in a bucket by the door).

In other settings, improvements were centred on increasing the range of activities and providing equipment in outdoor areas. This was described as shifting the emphasis to recognising outdoor areas as places of learning, rather than '*just somewhere they went to run around'.* These changes, alongside good access to outdoor areas allowed activities to free flow from indoor to outdoor and assisted child-led learning.

Example: Setting 12. The EYP described a boy in their pre-school room who had social difficulties and challenging behaviour. The EYP wanted to encourage him to write and sought to combine this with his interest in insects. The EYP made a sheet with insect stickers and the boy was asked to write the letter at the beginning of each insect's name then to go outside and mark the sheet when he saw each insect.
"*He had quite bad behaviour sometimes but if you saw him leading the group: 'come and see what I've found', negotiating, turn-taking, mark-making, counting, everything was going on outside in how many ants and spiders he could find."*

6.3.5 Parental communication and involvement with the setting

Improvements were introduced to the ways in which settings interacted with parents, and were achieved in a variety of ways:

- **Increasing parental involvement in their child's development.** This involved sending learning journals home and asking parents to sign or contribute (for example filling in statements like 'this weekend I have'; introducing take-home activities (such as games packs, 'story sacks' or activity bags) and either setting up or increasing the number of parents' evenings to discuss a child's development. In one setting, a more informal approach was favoured and staff were asked to emphasise to parents the 'open door' policy for discussing their child's development and needs.

- **Improving staff awareness of the importance of parent-practitioner relationships.** EYPs described how they had raised awareness of the importance of building closer relationships with parents, discussing why it was an important relationship in staff meetings and asking staff to get more actively involved in new parent activities, parent involvement in learning, or in their general approach to parents at drop off and pick up times. The impact of these efforts was seen in improved relationships, particularly at drop off and pick up times.

"And mine [parents] actually come in the room as well now, they don't just hang over the gate, they'll actually come in the room and sit down and talk [to staff]…they've got more time, they're not just dumping and running now"

(Leader of baby room in Setting 3)

Parents responding to the questionnaire used in the case studies (see Chapter 8) sometimes commented on their increased involvement in their child's learning as well as practitioner's engagement with them.

"Communication with the staff has been very good. I'm able to speak directly to the key worker, deputy or manager re: any aspects of my daughter's day at the nursery. The home/nursery comments book [and] availability of the key worker for consultation has been especially effective."

(Parent, setting 8)

- **Involving parents in activities and social events.** Settings described making concerted efforts to get parents to come in to the setting. This had been achieved by asking parents to help run specific activities – like cooking, or gardening or introducing Christmas parties or other social events with the children where parents were also invited to attend. Settings also described the introduction of parent-staff social events, such as a 'mums' night out' in order to strengthen relationships.

- **Improving communication with parents about the nursery more generally.** Here, settings described the introduction or regular circulation of parent

Increasing the involvement of parents in their child's learning creates a supportive home learning environment, which has been well documented as leading to benefits for a child's development and achievement (Evangelou et al., 2009). The involvement of parents in settings was surveyed from the parents' point of view through the parents report which forms Chapter 8 of this report.

6.3.6 Staff practice, support and evaluation

Staff, managers and EYPs described the introduction of systems and changes specifically geared to support staff practice and development. These were typically instigated by EYPs and managers and could involve changing and introducing a number of initiatives to support staff in delivering the curriculum. This EYP described her distinct role as the EYP in the settings as being to:

> *"Assist staff in the curriculum area, so if a member of staff is struggling with one particular area they might come and speak to me as curriculum lead, and we can discuss together, what they need to know, and how they can achieve the end that they want to achieve. I oversee all their planning, so I check their planning every week to make sure it's appropriate and the next steps are appropriate, that they're providing broad balance to curriculum."*
>
> (EYP and deputy manager in Setting 8)

This kind of staff support happened in the form of:

- **Modelling and mentoring within settings.** The EYP was described as acting as a curriculum and practice leader and this was particularly evident in descriptions of their 'modelling' and mentoring practice in the setting. This took the form of observing staff in their work and providing tailored feedback on areas for improvement in their interactions with children. EYPs also described working in rooms to model practice, sometimes working in rooms across the setting. This supports the finding in the impact study about the importance of an EYP having time in rooms with children and other staff.

- **Improved supervision, appraisals and evaluation.** Improving the quality of provision in a setting involved improving the systems in place to supervise and appraise staff. This ranged from monthly supervision to more formal annual appraisals. Efforts were made to identify staff's achievements, development needs and areas of interest in order to improve the care and interactions they had with children. Examples included the introduction of staff action plans, regular objective-setting as well as asking staff to evaluate each other's practice.

- **Clarifying staff roles, expectations and objectives.** Where managers and/or EYPs had come into post within the last 18 months, they were likely to describe efforts to formalise staff job descriptions, roles and responsibilities. These were then more clearly linked to appraisals so managers would appraise development in relation to specific roles.

- **Improved communication with staff.** EYPs working in larger settings reported introducing or formalising regular all-staff meetings. These were designed to inform staff of changes as well as foster better relationships across staff working in different rooms. An alternative approach was the introduction of weekly room leader meetings, with a request to room leaders to cascade information to their staff.

- **Increasing opportunities for staff CPD and additional support in training and qualifications.** Training and CPD opportunities were reported to have increased for staff. Improvements were seen both in funding for and availability of external courses and qualifications, as well as in EYPs setting up in-house training on specific issues or areas. This included sessions specifically on the EYFS or on changes being introduced to planning and observation protocols. These changes were linked to better appraisal and identification of development needs as well as to increased availability of funding. Where staff were undertaking training for formal qualifications, such as level 3 qualifications, EYPs and managers provided mentoring support in-house. This meant they acted as a tutor or identified appropriate members of senior staff to discuss assignments and difficulties with.

6.3.7 Health and safety

Improvements were made in some settings to the food on offer at meal and snack times. In one setting this had involved the introduction of healthier food in response to a parental questionnaire which highlighted concerns in this area. Another setting had introduced cooked food. Snacks were changed to be healthier and staff encouraged children to try new foods, particularly fruit and vegetables.

Improvements were also described in changes to facilities that were designed to improve health and safety. These included replacing windows with safety glass, and the addition of security features within settings. These features included the installation of a peephole in the front door and a security word to alert staff in the setting of intruders.

Changes were also made to safety procedures including setting up a security code to alert staff to a safety issue, increased checking of registers and medicine forms and the introduction of safeguarding children training for all staff. These changes were felt to make settings more secure and safe for children.

7 Factors affecting the delivery of improvement within settings

Chapter summary

A range of factors had an influence on the ability of settings to both plan and implement improvements.

The extent of planning for change was important, particularly in settings undertaking large scale change. Planning for change was also more important in larger settings. Settings which planned at a strategic level and which also made links between the planned improvements were felt to be most effective in successfully implementing change.

The EYP was key in driving and facilitating change. Three interrelated features of the EYP role combined to facilitate the most effective implementation of improved provision within settings. These were:

- Strong leadership abilities along with skills to not only design improvements but also to effectively communicate these improvements to staff within settings.
- Being in an appropriate position of management within the setting while also maintaining a level of contact and room time.
- Having a clearly defined remit for the EYP role which sets out clearly what they are responsible for within the setting, and is also communicated to other staff within the setting.

A number of other factors impacted upon the ability of setting leaders to implement improvement within settings. These were:

- Staff receptivity, engagement, understanding and training.
- External support from local authority early years advisors.
- Parental support and involvement in the improvements being made.
- Structural features of the setting.

This chapter explores the factors affecting a settings' ability to make improvements to their provision (either as a re-working of provision or as part of ongoing practice development).

These factors were: the nature and extent of planning for change that was undertaken; the role given to the EYP; the attitudes of and engagement with other staff in the setting; external support; parental willingness and structural features of the setting. The way in

which these factors operated as facilitators or barriers to improvement are explored throughout the chapter.

7.1 Planning

The extent to which the changes described in Chapter 6 were planned varied across settings. The variation in the level of planning was, in part, accounted for by the scale of improvements required. Small adjustments to current practice were not seen to require a good deal of planning but where changes were on a larger scale, effective planning was seen to facilitate the implementation of improvements.

Given the findings from the impact study showing that change and upheaval can have a negative effect on the quality of provision (however temporarily), careful planning of wide ranging reforms may be an important factor in minimising the negative effects of transition.

The degree to which improvements were planned can be characterised by the presence or absence of two key features in planning:

- Strategic planning for implementing change
- Linking improvements in practice across setting

7.1.1 Strategic planning

The level of strategic planning undertaken ranged from a discussion between an EYP and manager to a detailed, written, descriptive strategic plan which considered what improvements could be made, how they would happen, when they would happen, and how they would be subsequently be embedded in practice and evaluated.

Other approaches to planning change took place through setting 'away days' where a development plan was devised in conjunction with all senior staff to address a certain element of provision, such as planning, which needed to be developed to meet the EYFS criteria. Settings which were part of either local or national chains had elements of their improvements, in particular changes to planning, given to them by their central office. These improvements were then taken up within the setting and other setting specific improvements were developed by the staff themselves.

Another aspect of strategic planning described in some settings was a trial or pilot period for planned change. These settings then undertook staff consultation prior to changes becoming permanent. This plan provided the opportunity for all staff to feed into a potential change as well as providing an opportunity to revise or tweak changes based on a pilot phase.

While pre-planning significant changes was seen as essential in larger settings, smaller settings felt they required less formal planning as it was easier to collaborate with a smaller number of staff to implement improvement. Improvements to provision could then be made spontaneously, and could be achieved within a day in a setting. However, this is not to say that none of the smaller settings undertook planning for improvement – in one

setting where there were only four staff, including the EYP and the manager, changes were still carefully planned.

7.1.2 Linking improvements in practice

Where improvements were described as being implemented following a high level of planning, there was also an element of 'cohesive thinking' apparent across the improvements. Here, all of the improvements made were connected or based around a set of interlinked practice areas on which the setting wanted to improve. Improvements in all settings were underpinned by the EYFS goal of developing more child-centred provision, however there were clear differences in the degree of cohesiveness of settings' individual improvements.

Improvements in provision in settings could be made across the board, to all elements of provision and in a cohesive way, where improvements were linked to improvements in another area. Here, thought was given to when changes were made in relation to each other; either having a big period of transition or a series of sequenced improvements to practice. For example in one setting, after improvements were made to the planning processes in the setting, improvements were also made to the physical set-up of the classroom to facilitate free flow. These improvements also then led to the development of more effective communication with parents using learning diaries which enabled staff to build better relationships with parents whilst also feeding into the improved system for child planning. The initial improvements were used to feed in to and refine plans for subsequent improvements.

> *"The changes to the planning, that was to do with the EYFS, because we had to. With everything else I think it's a joint thing. I think the EYFS gives you a good structure as to what you should be doing."*
>
> (Manager EYP within Setting 3)

This cohesive approach contrasts with other settings where improvements had been made in various areas of provision but with no apparent link made between the different improvements. For example in one setting improvements were made to the planning systems and also to the outdoor space at the same time, with no link or connection drawn between the two in interview. Improvements to the planning were made to streamline the child-centred planning process within the setting, while improvements to the outside space were made after the manager had seen the same changes in another setting and thought they would be good for the children's development.

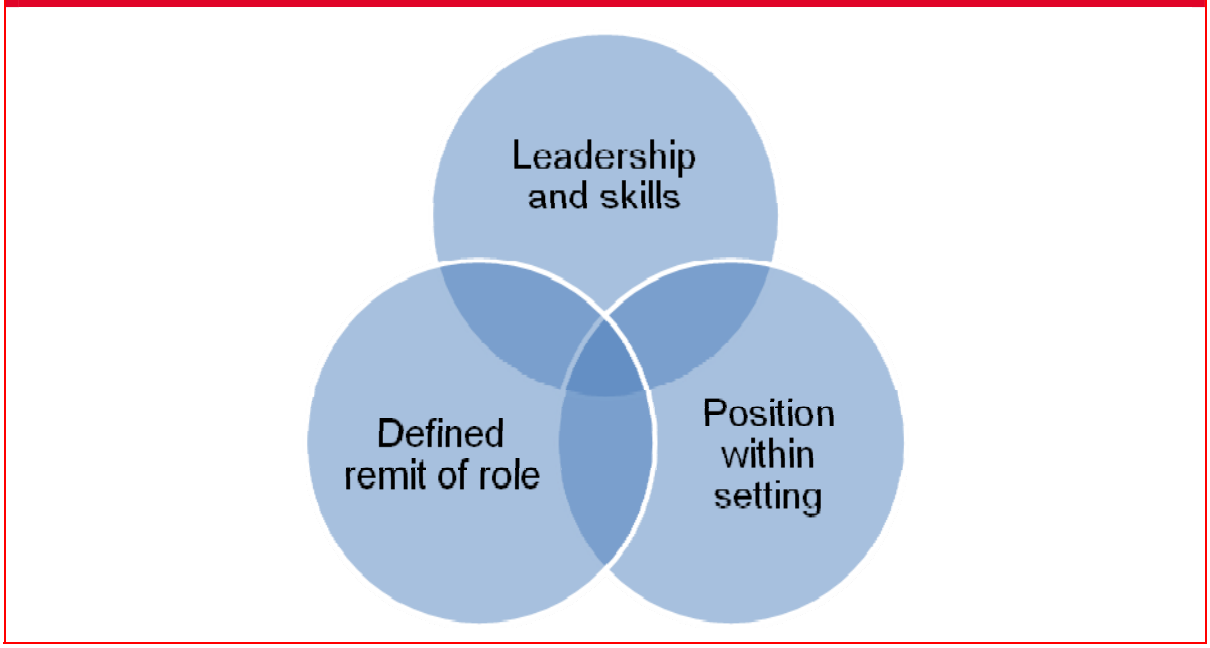
Again, the size of the setting affects the degree to which improvements are linked across the setting; in settings with fewer staff it is often the same staff implementing the changes in the various areas of provision. These changes are therefore prone to be more linked as they are based on the same theory and practice-identified areas for improvement.

7.2 EYP role

The EYP played a key role in prompting and driving improvements within settings, especially in relation to the EYFS and to other practitioner's interaction with children. Interviews with EYPs, managers and setting staff showed that there were three key factors which defined the way in which the EYP was able to effectively lead the curriculum and implement improvements in practice.

These three key factors were: leadership and skills, involvement in management and the extent to which the role and remit of the EYP was defined and agreed. As shown in the Venn diagram below, these three elements are interrelated and combine to create the most effective EYP role in facilitating improvements and leading practice within settings.

Figure 7.1 Role of EYP



7.2.1 Leadership and skills

Leadership and skills were essential for EYPs to be able to lead both improvements and provision within settings in relation to the curriculum. Skills were seen as being developed through the qualifications and training of EYPs as well as through experience working in childcare settings.

The additional knowledge that EYPs had gained through their pathways, and how this could be used to communicate improvements to other staff, was put into practice in settings while EYPs were still undertaking their pathways. Continuous development opportunities were also important for EYPs to ensure that they kept up to date with new developments in provision and practice. EYPs who attended local networks, as described in Ranns et al. (2011), highlighted the potential these opportunities provided for networking and training. There were, however, concerns about the feasibility of attending networks and training which took place during working hours, as staff cover would be needed to release them from managerial and room duties. EYPs who had attended networks in the past were concerned that not being able to do so in the future would

potentially inhibit their ability to make continuous improvements to the provision in their settings.

Skills and knowledge enabled EYPs to perform their role, as well as to lead the provision and improvements within their setting. Leadership was facilitated through effective communication with other staff; EYPs needed to be able to effectively communicate with staff in their settings about changes that they wanted to make to develop the delivery of the EYFS. The EYP themselves played a central role in communicating improvements within settings and supporting staff in their changing practice. EYPs also inspired other staff working within the setting to deliver improved and developed practice and to further their own learning, as demonstrated in the example below.

> *"Staff member 1: I think because she's developing herself all the time and like you say she's been on the Graduate Leader Fund course and everything, I think she brings [new ideas] to the table.*
>
> *Staff member 2: She's enthusiastic about courses.*
>
> *Staff member 1: Yeah, enthusiasm, which comes onto us really and it gets us wanting to do more and hence like the course with block play. We all want to go on the course with block play because you know it looks really good and we can source that. So I think through that I think she's bringing more enthusiasm"*
>
> (Members of staff working within Setting 6)

Good relationships with all staff in settings were important for EYPs to be able to lead improvements in practice. This included room staff, who were ultimately responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the curriculum, and managers who were also important in enabling EYPs to successfully implement change within settings. One EYP felt that they did not have the support of their room staff or team leader, which limited their ability to lead practice and also to improve provision within the setting. This was particularly evident when they tried to implement a new numeracy strategy in their room:

> *"Something I've started trying to develop, numeracy in the setting, but sometimes as I've said before, I feel a bit stifled, you know, a bit held back with my ideas. I'm sort of not allowed to flourish with them. Yeah, and the numeracy, it's not really happening as I'd like it… I'm the only one who does it, and I think it's, again it's the support from Team Leader, you know, to sort of keep us in place…"*
>
> (EYP working within Setting 10)

Managers were also able to offer support and reinforcement to EYPs when making improvements.

EYPs communicated and led improvement through staff meetings and working one-to-one or in small groups with staff. Modelling of best practice was also undertaken by EYPs, and seen by all groups in settings to be a skill that EYPs needed, alongside mentoring staff in their own interactions with children and their curriculum delivery.

Where an EYP did not have the relevant leadership ability and skills, or was perceived by their colleagues as lacking these, they felt 'unable' or restricted when making improvements within the setting. They also found other staff within the setting unreceptive to improvements which they were implementing in the setting.

7.2.2 Position within setting

The degree to which an EYP could lead within a setting was linked to their position within that setting. The position of an EYP within a setting had two components; position in **management** and **contact time with children**. The qualitative research suggests that combining **both these elements** increases the effectiveness of the EYP. Working with children meant that the EYP was in a good position to understand current practice, identify areas where improvement was needed and model good practice. Involvement in management allowed an EYP to effectively plan, strategise and embed change while also supporting staff in their own practice.

Management position

Being in a position of management, whether as an overall manager of a setting or deputy manager, brought strategic oversight of the whole setting, rather than just of a single room. EYPs with a managerial position had responsibility for the overall ethos of the setting, but also had the authority and remit for improving and developing practice in settings. EYPs who held management positions were able to make changes within settings without needing authorisation from a manager who may not have such a detailed understanding or knowledge of the EYFS and how to deliver it. The importance of managerial responsibility alongside the EYP role could be seen in staff's inability to distinguish which elements of an EYP-manager's role were which.

Both EYPs and other staff emphasised that EYPs who have managerial responsibility were more able to make improvements within settings.

> *"I think as a manager you have more oomph, you know, the staff listen to you more and, you know, you can't get away from that."*
>
> (EYP and deputy manager, Setting 11)

Contact with children/room time

The impact study showed that the more hours an EYP spent working in the room/s observed, the higher the quality of provision (Chapter 4). The qualitative work also illustrates how regular contact with children in the setting was a necessity in addition to a managerial element to the EYP role. This enabled EYPs to more easily identify where improvements needed to be made but also provided the opportunity for EYPs to model best practice to other members of staff. Staff in settings where EYPs did not spend any time in rooms felt that they did not fully understand how provision was delivered in practice.

Similar to having a managerial role within a setting, leading practice within a room or being a team leader, was felt to be a suitable position from which to make improvements, at least within the room in which they worked. However, being entirely room-based was

felt to limit the ability of an EYP to effect improvement throughout a whole setting. Being able to spend time in all rooms in a setting was seen as helpful in overcoming this potential barrier.

The ideal position for EYPs was, therefore, having both managerial responsibility and room time. This provided managerial authority from which to leverage change but also the necessary contact time with children to be able to model practice to other staff and identify where provision could be improved. Having a defined remit and role for the EYP which specified how much time they should spend in rooms with children was thought to assist EYPs in performing their role. Further elements of the EYP role and remit are discussed in the next section.

7.2.3 Defined remit of EYP role

A defined remit for the EYP role within a setting was key to the EYP being able to facilitate improvement within settings and also to lead practice within that setting. Specific tasks defined in the EYPs' role focussed on leading and developing practice within settings, along with supporting other staff in their own development and training. These tasks and responsibilities were different from those specific tasks undertaken by a manager within a setting, who is primarily responsible for the running of the setting and would undertake any administrative tasks associated with the setting such as invoicing and enrolment processes and procedures. Where the EYP was also the setting manager it was important that their job description included **both** managerial tasks and EYP specific tasks.

Within settings where the EYP did not have a managerial role it was important for the EYP to have a clearly defined role, which set out what their responsibilities were as the EYP and how they differed from that of a manager. This was important for EYPs to be able to implement improvement alongside a manager as it gave EYPs the suitable 'authority' to lead practice within the setting as defined within the remit of their EYP role. This was also important for EYPs who were room-based as it gave them the remit to make improvements across the setting and not only within their room. Where EYPs did have a clearly defined remit this was based upon the EYP Standards (see Appendix B) or elements of the EYFS.

Where EYPs had a specific remit for improving practice this could be welcomed by staff who had been keen to make changes but where a manager or owner had been previously resistant to making changes.

> *"The original staff that were here, one of the first things they said to me when I came in was, 'Thank God you're here, now we can make these changes.' Because they for a long time wanted it to be more free flowing and free for the children to lead."*
>
> (EYP and pre-school leader in Setting 1)

EYPs who struggled when performing the EYP role, specifically in relation to bringing about change and improvements and leading the curriculum, felt this was in part due to not having an agreed role and remit for actions within the setting. EYPs felt that staff working within settings were uncertain of what the role of an EYP was and what it should

involve. Where the role of the EYP was not fully understood, EYPs reported that staff still sought support and guidance from other members of staff. This meant that the EYP was less successful in bringing about their planned improvements.

Within the defined remit of the EYP role, a balance of responsibilities which were clearly defined was required, as well as ring-fenced time specifically for EYP activities such as curriculum leadership and staff mentoring. The capacity of an EYP to perform the EYP role in addition to any other responsibilities within the setting affects their ability to make improvements. EYPs in a number of settings reported that they did not have enough time to perform the EYP role alongside their managerial responsibilities, as they struggled to get themselves out of the office to do EYP tasks such as modelling practice. Similarly, EYPs who were room-based felt that they struggled to perform EYP roles when they were included in room ratios full-time.

7.2.4 Being an effective EYP

As shown in the Venn diagram at the beginning of this chapter, all of the factors described are closely related to one another. For example, having an agreed remit for the EYP role was linked to the position of an EYP within the setting as this could be a part of the EYP job description. Similarly the position of an EYP within the setting affected their ability to lead practice and make use of their additional skills. Where all three of these factors combined effectively within an EYP's role they were most likely to be able lead improvements in curriculum and practice across their setting.

7.3 Other staff

The engagement of other staff was key to successfully planning and bedding-in improvements to practice. Within each of the EYPS 39 standards, the EYP not only needs to reach these standards of practice themselves but also be able to support and lead other staff members to meet the standards (CWDC, 2008). Supporting staff in transitions in practice was achieved by consultation, informing staff of improvements to be made and also equipping them to understand why changes were being made, how to deliver them and how they would add to the quality of provision.

Staff engagement was a key part of effective planning, particularly in larger settings where EYPs used more formal communication strategies to communicate changes to staff. One approach taken was to inform all staff through whole staff meetings. Another approach was to hold senior staff meetings with room or team leaders, who were then responsible for cascading improvements to staff in their rooms. In smaller settings, EYPs relied more on informal one-to-one communication with each staff member. Staff in smaller settings reported that they felt involved in the planning of improvements, while in some larger settings staff felt that changes had been made without their involvement.

Where staff had been resistant to changes, EYPs described the usefulness of implementing pilot or trial periods as part of planned improvements. This allowed staff to see the benefits of improvement and to be engaged and involved in discussions afterwards about what happened after a pilot period.

Staff played an important role in the delivery and realisation of improvement within settings as they delivered the improved provision within rooms. Having supportive, engaged and enthusiastic staff enabled both managers and EYPs to implement improvement within settings with ease.

> *"I think all the members of staff are all very willing to further [themselves]...she [the EYP] does get support from the members of staff... they're willing to try... So, you know, all the staff do come on-board"*
>
> (Manager of Setting 8)

In contrast, staff who were unreceptive to new ideas and to making changes to their own provision could undermine the ease with which improvements were made. This finding is echoed by other research on EYP status (Hadfield & Waller, 2011). For example, improvements such as the completion of learning diaries and new planning systems were seen as additional work by staff.

Staff also needed to be equipped to understand **why** changes were expected to improve practice and **how** to deliver these changes. Where this was lacking, staff struggled to understand what they should be doing and why. For example, in one setting staff were informed about using new and regular observations but did not feel they were adequately equipped in what they should be recording and ultimately how their observations should influence and direct their planning. In another setting, new owners gave training to all staff on the EYFS and planning. Staff appreciated this approach and acknowledged the importance of this training in their ability to deliver both the EYFS and other practice improvements.

> *"When it [EYFS] came out it was alien to us, really, because we had no training on it, but then suddenly [Names of Manager and EYP] come in, and we had the training, and everything then was different… could understand, because where before we had no support, suddenly it was all gelling together."*
>
> (Member of staff working in Setting 9)

Staff could also lack knowledge and understanding about why changes were being made by EYPs and managers and how they would improve the provision on offer. EYPs and managers attributed reluctance to adopt the improvement as staff lacking both the confidence and theoretical knowledge to deliver improvements related to the EYFS.

> *"I think for a NVQ member of staff they haven't got a clue as to why we do anything. You know, I don't want to sit there and bombard them with theories, but they need to understand perhaps not who the theorist is, but why we do it, and about schemas, about scaffolding and all those very, very important theories that are around there, and why we're doing what we're doing."*
>
> (Manager EYP within Setting 3)

7.4 External support

External support from local authority early years advisors assisted EYPs in realising changes within settings, as well as acting as a driver for change. Being seen by managers as a reliable and expert specialist in EYFS delivery, their views and recommendations were respected where sometimes an EYP's views on their own may not be. This was particularly important for EYPs working in settings where they were not the manager or the setting was part of a local or national chain with an overall manager.

7.5 Parental willingness

Alongside having an enthusiastic and qualified staff, parental enthusiasm and involvement in their child's development was a key facilitator to improving provision within settings. Parents were seen as playing a key part in the development of child-centred planning and provision within settings as part of the EYFS.

Parent and carer involvement in their child's development also leads to improved outcomes for children, as recently highlighted in the Tickell Review of the EYFS (2011). Building partnerships with parents and the importance of parental involvement in children's development is also highlighted in the EYP standards, which emphasise 'communication and working in partnership with families and carers' (CWDC, 2008).

Parents were seen as a key partner for EYPs and managers when making improvements within settings. Parents' involvement in their child's development, as well as their buy-in for some of the other changes made was important for EYPs. A lack of engagement limited the ability of settings and EYPs to bring about the fullest improvement. EYPs needed to communicate the benefits of improvements which they were making to parents, particularly where individual parents objected to proposed improvements. For example in one setting a manager EYP needed to communicate the benefits of giving children choice in the activities which they accessed, and the role of staff in a child's learning and development.

> *"I had to really explain to her, I had to go through lots of theories as well. I had to email her and say… if your child needs more challenges, the staff will give challenges but, but then they can go and pick and choose what they want to play with, and if they're getting bored they can get challenges from staff. Staff know at what level children are, so in the end she was okay but she, she made a big fuss."*
>
> (Manager EYP within Setting 2)

Once parental concerns were allayed then improvements could be implemented. Parents could also be reluctant to become further involved with their child's learning and development, for example not contributing to their children's learning diary, liaising with their child's key worker or attending newly established parents' evenings. Staff felt this was because they did not have time to engage further, or that parents may feel they already receive enough information about their child on a daily basis without also seeing and contributing to their learning diary as well. It may also suggest a need to equip parents to better understand the EYFS and early years development.

"We have organised parents' evenings as well. The last couple we've had to cancel because we've not had – we've had one or two parents that have wanted to come and then the rest have said, 'Not really bothered, 'cos you tell us enough whilst the children are here anyway'. And if there was any concerns or anything, the parents know that they can come to the child's key worker or me or whoever, if they have a problem"

(Manager EYP in Setting 4)

7.6 Structural features of the setting

The ability of settings, and of EYPs in particular, to implement improvements depended in part on the particular features of a setting. Having good access to well equipped outdoor space made the implementation of full free flow easier. This meant that the other key changes made could be supported by the space in which the setting operated.

7.6.1 Setting size

The size of the setting was the key feature influencing how easy or difficult it could be to plan and implement improvements in practice. EYPs could successfully mediate against the impact of the size of their setting when implementing improvements to provision through strategising improvements. They were however unable to overcome the barriers associated with outdoor space access and so were limited in their abilities to improve elements of provision which relate to utilising outdoor space.

As discussed above, larger settings needed to take a more organised approach to informing staff about improvements and needed a larger degree of pre-planning. Improvements were also described as more cohesive within smaller settings. Although implementing improvement was seen as easier within smaller settings, it was by no means impossible in larger settings, but did require an increased level of staff engagement, support and training.

8 Parents' assessments of change

Chapter summary

- Parents' assessments of change in quality over the last 18 months do not match the changes in quality measured in the impact assessment. Parents in improving settings were not likely to have recognised this improvement.
- Parents listed 'reputation of nursery' and 'convenience of location' as their top factors driving the selection of their child's setting. Staff qualifications were not cited amongst the primary drivers.
- There was limited awareness of the presence of an EYP, and of qualifications more generally. Forty per cent of parents did not know what the highest qualification held by staff in their setting was. Parents saw staff experience as more important than qualifications.
- Parents reported increased involvement in their child's development in settings. In improving settings, parents were much more likely to attend parents' evenings than in stable settings.

This chapter presents the evidence from the self-completion questionnaire that parents were asked to complete within the 12 case study settings. These findings are drawn from a relatively small sample of parents whose children attended nurseries where an EYP was present, which had either improved in quality or had stayed stable between the baseline and final impact assessments.

Paper questionnaires were distributed to parents by all 12 of the settings involved in the case studies. A total of 157 completed questionnaires were returned to the research team. The number of completed questionnaires received from each setting range from 32 in one setting to just three in another. As a result it is not possible to provide findings at a setting level. Instead, broad illustrative comparisons are drawn between questionnaires from 'improved' settings, and those from 'stable' settings. The full questionnaire is shown in the Technical Report (Mathers et al., 2011b).

8.1 Change in quality

The overall quality of provision was reported by 28 per cent of parents to have improved over the last 18 months. Just over a third of parents (38 per cent) thought that quality had been stable in their setting over this period of time. A third of parents (33 per cent) either did not know of changes in quality or felt unable to answer this question.

Table 8.1 shows these findings, and also the variation between parents who had children in improved and stable settings. Parents' assessment of changes in quality of provision within their setting did not match the changes in quality measured by the impact study quality assessments which took place in their setting. Previous research has shown that

parents often score elements of provision higher than professionals and than assessments conducted using the ITERS and ECERS scales (Cryer & Burchinal, 1997; Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2002). It may be difficult for parents to accurately distinguish between changes in their child's experience of nursery due to the nursery making changes, and due to the child changing as they age. It is also possible that parents judge the quality of provision on a different basis to the elements measured by ECERS and ITERS. For example, it may be that parents base their judgements of quality on their perception of their child's happiness at the setting, or their relationships with key carers. Previous research (Cryer & Burchinal, 1997) has shown that parents most valued the health and safety criteria and personal characteristics of caregivers in their perceptions of childcare quality. The difference could also be because settings may not notify and inform parents of all changes or improvements in their provision. The remainder of this chapter explores how parents view the settings which their children attend.

Table 8.1 Parental assessment of change in quality of provision in last 18 months

Base: 151			
	Status of setting		
	Improved	Stable	Total
Change in quality of provision	%	%	%
Improved	27	29	28
Stayed the same	45	27	38
Decreased	2	4	3
Do not know	29	40	33
Bases	*96*	*55*	*151*

8.2 Choosing a nursery

When asked to select the three most important factors when choosing a setting for their child (from a list of 10 options) parents selected 'reputation of nursery' (66 per cent) and 'convenience of location' (59 per cent) as their top two drivers. 'Staff experience with babies' (39 per cent), the facilities of the setting (34 per cent), and opening hours of the nursery (29 per cent) were the next most commonly cited reasons for choosing a nursery.

Table 8.2 Choosing a setting			
Base: 134			
	Status of setting		
	Improved	Stable	Total
	%	%	%
Affordability	12	13	12
Staff experience with children with SEN	0	2	1
Qualifications of staff	21	35	26
Staff experience with babies/young children	47	25	39
Facilities of setting	35	33	34
Convenience of location	60	56	59
Staff to child ratio	20	29	23
Reputation of nursery	70	60	66
Opening hours	31	25	29
Other	5	0	3
Bases	*86*	*48*	*134*

An interesting finding in relation to the impact study findings on the relationship between qualifications and quality is that only 26 per cent of parents reported that 'qualifications of staff' was one of the three most important factors considered when they selected the setting. Staff qualifications are not currently a top priority for parents when selecting a setting for their child.

> "*The fact that all the staff here have qualifications makes me feel it is a better quality service but this wasn't a main priority in choosing this nursery."*
>
> (Parent, Setting 10)

In contrast nearly half of parents (47 per cent) listed 'staff experience with babies or young children' as one of the three most important factors considered when they selected the setting.

8.3 Views on qualifications

Parents were asked whether they knew what the top qualification level held by a staff member at the nursery was. Overall, 60 per cent of parents thought that they knew the answer: but only 25 per cent of parents knew their setting employed an EYP (despite all settings having an EYP for a minimum of nine months). When asked about the importance of qualifications in choice of setting, only 16 per cent saw this as very important, 36 per cent of parents saw this as of reasonable importance while the largest group of parents (40 per cent) saw this as only of average importance.

> *"Knowing the staff have professional qualifications does add peace of mind and value - the specifics of these are less important".*
>
> (Parent, Setting 3)

Forty per cent of parents did not know what the highest qualification held within their setting was. Table 8.3 provides the breakdown of qualifications which parents reported as the highest within the setting.

Table 8.3 Parental perceptions of highest qualification of staff members

Base: 153			
	Status of setting		
	Improved	Stable	Total
	%	%	%
EYPS	26	25	25
Degree	21	27	24
NVQ Level 4	7	7	7
NVQ Level 3	7	18	11
NVQ Level 2	0	0	0
Do not know	43	35	40
Bases	*98*	*55*	*153*

8.4 Views on experience

Parents were less sure of the experience of staff working within settings than they were of their qualifications, with 51 per cent of parents stating that they were aware of staff experience compared to 60 per cent of parents reporting that they were aware of staff qualifications. Perceived awareness of experience was higher among parents in the stable settings: 63 per cent of parents with children in stable settings knew of the staff's experience, compared to 44 per cent of parents with children in improving settings.

Of those parents who felt that they knew the level of experience which staff had within settings, 80 per cent felt that this was important or very important. This was in contrast to 53 per cent of parents who felt that they knew the level of qualifications of staff, feeling that this was important or very important. Parents were also more likely to say that experience was **very** important (45 per cent) than to say the same of qualifications (18 per cent). The impact assessment underlined the importance of experience alongside qualifications. Parents echoed this in valuing experience, but giving less credence to the importance of qualifications overall.

8.5 View of provision

Table 8.4 Parental satisfaction with the overall quality of a setting			
Base: 157			
	Status of setting		
	Improved	Stable	Total
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	63	62	62
Satisfied	32	31	32
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	5	7	6
Unsatisfied	0	0	0
Very unsatisfied	0	0	0
Bases	*99*	*58*	*157*

Parents were asked about their level of satisfaction with specific elements of provision within settings, and then about their satisfaction with the overall quality of provision at the settings. In all, 62 per cent of parents were very satisfied with overall quality of provision at their setting and 94 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied.

When asked about levels of satisfaction with specific elements of provision, over two thirds of parents (68 per cent) were very satisfied with how staff interact with children and 62 per cent were very satisfied with how staff listen and talk to children (Table 8.5). The element of provision which had the smallest group of parents reporting they were 'very satisfied' was 'space and furnishings' (39 per cent). Most parents were highly satisfied with the elements of provision which were positively related to having an EYP in post (as identified in the impact assessments), that is elements that relate to direct work with children rather than to setting management (i.e. 'staff listening and talking with children', 'range of activities on offer', 'staff interaction with children' and 'organisation of the day').

Table 8.5 Parental satisfaction with elements of provision					
Base: 157					
Area of provision	**Level of satisfaction**				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Space and furnishings	39	43	16	2	0
Keeping children clean and healthy	47	40	13	1	0
Staff listening and talking with children	62	31	7	0	0
Range of activities on offer	61	32	6	0	1
Staff interaction with children	68	26	6	0	1
Organisation of the day	55	37	6	1	1

8.6 Involvement in child development

Overall 83 per cent of parents felt that they were actively encouraged to input into their child's learning and development records. For example, 64 per cent of parents reported that they received written reports about their children. In total 82 per cent of parents from improved settings attended parents' evenings and meetings compared with only 55 per cent of parents from stable settings. This finding was backed up by the case study evidence which illustrated that parent interaction and involvement in learning was a key area in which settings described improvements being made.

Nearly all of the parents (98 per cent) reported that they were updated on a daily basis about their child's progress, either at drop off or pick up. The number of parents who were informed through daily diaries was slightly lower at 74 per cent. In terms of the frequency with which parents were updated on their child's learning and development, 39 per cent of parents were updated more than once a month, while 31 per cent were updated every two to four months, 23 per cent twice a year and six per cent around once a year or less.

8.7 Involvement in the setting

Other than being involved in their child's development parents were also involved in settings in a number of other ways. One of the most commonly reported methods was through the provision of written feedback on the setting, 59 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire had done this. This echoes the finding of the qualitative case studies (Chapters 6 and 7) where settings reported surveying parents to gain feedback on the changes needed in a setting. A minority of parents were involved in other ways: eight per cent of parents reported being involved in a parents' board or committee, five per cent of parents volunteered in the setting which their child attended, while four per cent of parents also worked in the setting.

9 Final conclusions and discussion

At the time of publication, there are more than 7,600 graduate level EYPs practising in England. According to data from the CWDC; 11 per cent of these EYPs had followed the full pathway, 24 per cent had followed the long pathway, 33 per cent had followed the short pathway, and a further 23 per cent had completed the validation pathway. A further 0.6 per cent had completed the new ECDS to EYPS pathway.[55].

9.1 The impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)

CWDC suggests EYPs are '*key to raising the quality of early years provision'* (CWDC 2010).

The impact study findings confirm that the EYPs in our sample were effective in leading quality improvement for pre-school children (aged 30 months to 5 years). Settings which gained a graduate leader with EYPS made significant improvements in quality as compared with settings which did not. Gains were made in overall quality, and in a number of specific dimensions of practice[56]:

- staff-child interactions (the 'emotional environment')
- communication, language and literacy
- reasoning/thinking skills and scientific understanding
- provision of a developmentally appropriate schedule
- providing for, planning for and celebrating individual needs/diversity

While some of these improvements may relate to gaining a graduate rather than specifically an EYP, findings suggest that EYPS provides **'**added value' over and above gaining a graduate in terms of overall quality and (to a lesser extent) provision to support literacy/language and planning for individual needs/diversity[57]. We conclude therefore that EYPs have a measurable impact on quality for pre-school children.

This provides positive evidence that the use of specialised early years graduate training pathways can lead to improvements in quality within the PVI sector. It supports previous research demonstrating the importance of high level qualifications and sector-specific training on overall 'process quality', as well as on individual dimensions of practice such as sensitivity, responsiveness and the quality of social interactions, support for language/ communication, and beliefs in the appropriateness of child-initiated learning (Fukkink & Lont, 2007; Sylva et al., 2003, 2010; Burchinal et al., 2002; CQCO Study Team, 1995;

[55] This pathway was introduced while the evaluation was underway, and so is not represented in the current research.

[56] The ECERS subscales in which measurable improvements were seen were: language/reasoning, interaction and programme structure (ECERS-R); literacy, science/environment and diversity (ECERS-E)

[57] Only one of the two analyses identified added value of EYPS in relation to literacy, language, individual needs and diversity (as measured by the ECERS-E literacy and diversity subscales). These effects were identified in the 'change in quality over time' analysis (Chapter 4) but not in the 'quality at follow-up' analysis (Chapter 5), indicating that the added value provided by EYPs in these areas is measurable but less significant than the gains seen in overall quality.

Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Howes et al., 2003; McMullen & Alat, 2002; Bowman et al., 2001; Howes, 1983; Howes, 1997; Ruopp et al., 1979)

Due to the nature of the evaluation design (i.e. with two years between baseline and follow-up assessments), this study primarily assessed the impact of EYPs within the first year of attaining their status. The majority of EYPs in our sample undertook short pathways, and so were already well qualified and had considerable experience prior to undertaking EYPS. This provides an interesting complement to other survey-based research (Hadfield & Waller, 2011) suggesting that impacts are most strongly felt by novice and early career professionals with fewer years of experience.

9.1.1 EYPs as leaders of practice and of the EYFS

EYP training is based around the EYFS[58] and leadership of the EYFS (Brooker et al., 2010), as well as on the 39 EYP Standards (see Appendix B for an overview). Our evidence suggests that EYPs in the sample settings were successful in leading implementation of the EYFS, with the positive benefits relating very strongly to direct 'hands-on' work with children. Measurable impacts were seen in particular in relation to support for language, communication and cognitive development, positive relationships and planning/providing for individual needs and diversity.

The majority of the Standards relate to effective practice and relationships with children, as well as leading and supporting others in these areas. The EYFS, and likewise, the Guidance to the EYPS Standards, emphasise the importance of acknowledging children's stages of development, interests and needs. It would appear that EYPs were successful in implementing many of the practice-based aspects of the EYFS and of the EYP Standards, although it is difficult to draw direct conclusions as to the extent to which the Standards have been met without more fine-grained research.

Confirmatory evidence was provided by the EYPs themselves; in interviews they described having made improvements in a number of the same areas identified by the impact study, largely in response to the implementation of the EYFS which was considered to be an important catalyst for change. Many of the reported improvements centred on child-led learning and meeting the needs of the individual child, for example: improved systems for planning, observation and assessment; the use of key worker systems where these were not already in place; a greater emphasis on child-initiated activities; and the use of free flow to support children's choice and active learning.

The dimensions of quality in which positive impacts were identified could also usefully be described as 'process quality'. Process quality has been defined as 'actual experiences that occur [in early years settings] including children's interaction with caregivers and peers and their participation in different activities' (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). In contrast, structural quality involves the more stable and 'regulatable' aspects of provision such as qualifications, ratios, group size, space and materials, which are thought to have their impact 'via' process quality. Process quality is an important concept because of the widely

[58] The Early Years Foundation Stage (English Early Years Curriculum Guidance)

held view that it is these experiences and interactions which are important for children's development, i.e. it is process quality which impacts most directly on children's outcomes (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Pianta, 1999). If EYPs contribute to an increase in 'process quality', this bodes well for children in their care.

9.1.2 Leaders of learning rather than leaders of settings

EYPs did not have a measureable impact on the quality of:

- the physical environment ('space and furnishings' and 'activities')[59]
- personal care routines (e.g. health, safety, mealtimes, toileting)
- provision for parents and for staff

This is somewhat surprising, since the EYP Standards place emphasis on these areas, particularly in relation to working with parents and to leadership/support for other staff, both of which are considered fundamental to the EYP role (CWDC, 2008). The EYPs themselves reported making improvements in these areas, particularly in relation to working in partnership with parents and in supporting other staff, and also reported an increase in the amount of time they spent supporting/mentoring colleagues (49 per cent of time after gaining EYPS as compared with 28 per cent prior to gaining the status). However these changes reported by EYPs did not translate into observable improvements on the ECERS and ITERS scales.

There are a number of possible explanations for this. Firstly, the changes reported by EYPs relate mainly to direct work with children, parents and staff, i.e. to 'process quality'. Similarly (and not surprisingly) the EYP Standards tend to emphasise practice dimensions such as establishing fair, respectful and trusting relationships with parents, and establishing and sustaining a culture of shared, collaborative working for staff. However, it has been noted that many aspects of the ECERS and ITERS scales actually consider structural quality (Cassidy et al., 2005) and this is particularly the case for the three subscales in which little impact of EYPS was seen ('space and furnishings', 'activities' and 'provision for parents and staff'). These subscales focus heavily on aspects of resourcing, the built environment and setting-level structures and systems (e.g. policies for health/safety, formal systems for supporting and appraising staff members). Many of these more 'structural' aspects would fall under the remit of the setting manager rather than the EYP. In fact the EYP Standards Guidance makes a clear distinction between leaders and managers and states that: "leadership and support are independent of a practitioner's position in a setting…..to meet the standards, candidates do not need to be proprietor, manager or deputy manager of a setting" (CWDC, 2008, p5). It could be that, while the EYPs had made changes to practice in their own rooms/groups, they were less influential on changes in the more structural aspects, especially at setting level. This is supported by the finding that our measure of '*EYP hours in the room'* was a stronger predictor of quality than the measure of '*EYP hours in the setting'*. Thus, our EYPs were leaders of practice in their own rooms rather than leaders of practice across the setting[60].

[59] With the exception of one finding on the 'space and furnishings' subscale in relation to the ITERS

[60] Many of the EYPs in the sample (66 per cent) were also setting managers This is not to suggest that EYPs were not effective setting managers where they held this position; our quality assessment tools are not designed to measure the effectiveness of setting leadership.

If this is the case, both effective managers and EYPs would be required to achieve change across the board (and in fact, EYPs did identify the role of managers in acting as a lever for change and in improving structures and processes within settings).

We might therefore conclude that it is a measurement issue, i.e. that changes made by EYPs in these areas were not picked up by the more 'structural' aspects of the ECERS and ITERS scales. However, the indications that EYPs are not yet having an influence at the setting level warrants further exploration. While many of these aspects do fall more naturally within a manager's remit, there is an expectation that EYPs will lead practice across the whole of their setting, especially in key areas such as support for parents and staff. For example, Standard 35 states that EYPs should "*influence the policies and practices of the setting and share in collective responsibility for their implementation" (*see Appendix B). Previous research (NFER/CWDC, 2009) and several of the EYPs interviewed as part of the case studies, reported the taking on of more setting-wide responsibilities for mentoring of staff and improving practice in other rooms. We therefore need to consider other possible reasons for the lack of measurable impact.

It is possible that the EYPs had not had enough time within their settings to influence practice in rooms/groups other than their own, or in the areas for which no change was identified *('space and furnishings'*, '*personal care routines'* and '*provision for parents and staff*'). Although the majority of EYPs had held their status for 12 months or more, none had done so for longer than two years. Hadfield et al. (in press) identifies three stages of EYPS: becoming (*undertaking the pathway*); being (*becoming established and recognised*) and developing (*established, and developing the role and setting as a practitioner with EYPS*). It is possible that our EYPs were at the stage of 'being' and that further change will be seen in future. It is also possible that some of the barriers identified by EYPs (see Chapter 7) meant that they could not reach their full potential in terms of leading change in certain areas. If this is the case, EYPs will need support in overcoming these barriers to help them achieve their full potential in effecting change across the whole setting.

In summary, EYPs were effective in raising quality for pre-school children in the rooms/group in which they worked, particularly in relation to direct work with the children (i.e. 'process quality'). Fewer improvements were seen in rooms where EYPs did not work hands-on with children, and in certain areas of quality relating to the physical environment, the 'welfare requirements' and provision for parents and staff. We are not able to provide firm conclusions as to the reasons for this. However we do recommend further research to capture the impact of EYPs at the broader setting level, and to assess the impact of EYPS over a longer period of time. It will also be important to identify potential barriers to change, and highlight key factors for facilitating the future impact and embedding of the EYPS role (see Section 9.3).

9.1.3 Impact of EYPS on quality for infants and toddlers

The guidance to the standards for the award of EYPS states that EYPs should 'lead practice across the full age range from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation

Stage' (CWDC, 2010). However, there was little evidence that EYPs improved the quality of provision for infants and toddlers, in contrast to the positive findings for older children. There are several possible reasons for this: for example, that EYPs are not being deployed to work with the youngest children; that staff in infant/toddler rooms are not receiving the same professional development opportunities as colleagues working with older children; or that the EYP training provides better preparation for working with older children than with infants and toddlers. Alternatively it is possible that graduate status/qualifications and quality are simply not so closely related for this age range.

While we are not able to investigate these different reasons fully within the context of this evaluation, staff deployment data provides some evidence in support of the first explanation. While the vast majority (91 per cent) of EYPs spent time working in pre-school rooms with the older children, less than half (44 per cent) spent time supporting practice in the infant/toddler rooms. On average, each EYP worked 18.4 hours a week in the pre-school room visited as part of the evaluation, but only 4.7 hours in the room providing for younger children. This mirrors findings from other countries (e.g. Norris et al., 2003) that provision for infants and toddlers is less likely to be led by degree-qualified staff, and is a noteworthy finding given the view that EYPS complements the role of qualified teachers by providing a specific focus on under fives, and particularly on under threes (Lumsden, 2010; Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, 2010). If (as with the pre-school findings) EYPs have a stronger influence in the rooms/groups in which they work, the low number of hours spent by EYPs in the infant/toddler rooms may have significantly limited their potential to impact on quality for this age group.

On the other hand, the broader analysis exploring relationships between quality and the qualifications of the whole staff team (Section 9.2.1) also failed to identify a relationship for infant/toddler rooms. So perhaps qualifications – or at least qualifications in their current form – are not impacting on quality for this age range. Whatever the reason, the low number of EYPs working in these rooms means that we cannot draw firm conclusions on the potential impact of EYPS on provision for infants and toddlers. Further research is needed to establish the most effective ways of raising quality for our youngest children through workforce development. This is discussed further in the following section on qualifications.

9.2 Key factors for facilitating the future impact of EYPS

9.2.1 The wider staff team

So far we have considered the role of the graduate leaders within the sample settings. Fukkink and Lont (2007) state that "the training of caregivers is a cornerstone for quality in early care". In line with much previous research (Fukkink & Lont, 2007; Cambell-Barr, 2009; Sylva et al., 2004; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Abbott & Rodger, 1994; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2006) the impact study findings highlight the importance of having a well qualified staff team overall, particularly in ensuring educational quality for pre-school children. Rooms with better qualified staff teams offered higher overall curricular quality for pre-school children, as well as higher quality support for developing children's language, literacy,

reasoning skills and mathematical understanding (ECERS subscales '*language/reasoning'*, '*literacy*' and '*mathematics*'). In support of the quantitative findings, EYPs interviewed as part of the research highlighted the role of the wider staff team, and particularly the importance of working with staff who are receptive to new ideas about practice; engagement of staff was seen as key to successfully planning and embedding improvements to practice. EYPs highlighted the importance of their own skills in leading staff successfully, but also attributed resistance to change to a lack of staff confidence and theoretical knowledge to deliver improvements related to the EYFS. Siraj-Blatchford and colleagues (2006) identify one of the key factors in ensuring quality is to have a "well trained and qualified staff with a good understanding of child development and pedagogy". We therefore recommend continued workforce development at all levels to support quality for pre-school children.

The average level of staff qualifications was not significantly related to quality for infants and toddlers, mirroring the findings for EYPs. Previous research in this area is mixed, with a number of studies demonstrating positive relationships between education/training and quality for infants and toddlers (Phillips et al., 2000; Goelman et al., 2006; Mathers & Sylva, 2007), while others have found no associations. In support of the current findings, Phillipsen et al. (1997) found practitioner education to be predictive of quality for pre-schoolers but not for infants. It is not possible to determine from this evaluation whether qualifications and quality are in fact less strongly related for this age group, whether training is preparing staff less effectively to work with infants and toddlers, or whether the average qualifications of staff working in infant/toddler rooms were too low to detect a measurable impact on quality. We therefore recommend further research in this area.

Moving onto another facet of staffing, experienced staff teams offered higher quality of provision across the birth to five age range, particularly for the more 'care-based elements' of provision and aspects of the physical environment. In fact for infants and toddlers, experience mattered more than qualifications. The relative importance of qualifications and experience is a well-rehearsed debate with proponents on each side. Some (including parents surveyed as part of the GLF case studies) consider experience with young children as more important than qualifications; others view qualifications as an essential underpinning for high quality care from babies and upwards.

This study indicates that both qualifications and experience bring benefits in terms of quality. Qualifications were more related to quality for the older children, while experience was a positive predictor of quality for both age ranges. In truth, qualifications and experience are complex and difficult to disentangle. Neither are identified with complete regularity in the literature as beneficial for quality[61]. Wilcox-Herzog (2004) suggests that expertise hinges on gathering 'purposeful' experience along with domain specific knowledge and that it is the *nature* of experience which matters; for example effective guided practice, as well as continuing professional development and mentoring for staff

[61] In fact, analysis of the baseline data (Karemaker et al., 2011) did not identify the same relationship between experience and quality. While this is likely to be due to improved data collection methods between baseline and follow-up, it does suggest that the relationship between experience and quality is not always straightforward and requires further research.

once qualified. Likewise, it is likely to be the nature of training and qualifications which influence whether they impact on quality. Both experience and qualifications are multi-faceted constructs, and we recommend further research to identify precisely which features of each are beneficial for quality, particularly for the under threes.

9.2.2 Links with parents and other professionals

The recent review of the EYFS (Tickell, 2011) recommends that 'greater emphasis is given in the EYFS to the role of parents and carers as partners in their children's learning', and work with parents is viewed as a particularly core area for EYPs in comparison to early years teachers. EYPs reported that parents were an important partner when making improvements within their settings, and relationships with parents were seen as very important in being able to lead change effectively, particularly around planning and individual child development. Although previous research (Hadfield and Waller, 2011) has found engaging parents to be one of the key challenges for EYPs, EYPs in our case studies identified this as an area in which they had made progress. Parents also reported feeling involved in settings in a number of different ways, through either providing feedback or attending parents boards, and also being actively involved in their child's development. As discussed in Section 9.1.2, this did not translate into measurable change in the impact study; however this aspect of practice is only measured very lightly by the ECERS and ITERS and firm conclusions should not be drawn from the absence of findings. The importance of the parent-partnership role suggests that EYPs need explicit support in developing the skills required to work in partnership with parents and engage them in the process of change, as well as in effectively modelling these skills to the wider staff team.

A number of EYPs also identified support from local authority early years advisors as helpful when planning for and implementing improvements. Advisors were seen as a reliable and informed group with specialist knowledge of EYFS delivery, whose views could usefully lend authority and 'validation' to the EYP's own. EYPs also acknowledged the role of inspection in the quality improvement process.

EYPs valued having access to continuing professional development opportunities through EYP networks established within LAs. These networks provided the opportunity for those practitioners who have obtained EYPS and who were working towards EYPS to share best practice. Networks also provided additional training, for example on specific elements of provision.

9.2.3 Planning for improvement

Evidence from the qualitative case studies suggests that planning for change is an important factor in quality improvement, enabling the EYP to act as an effective catalyst for change. As well as identifying an overall need for improvement (prompted by a range of external and internal issues) settings needed to assess which specific improvements should be made and carefully plan how to undertake them. Strong self-evaluation and change management were characterised by a strategic plan for implementation; making links between proposed changes; and engaging staff in the implementation process. EYPs recognised that a key part of planning and embedding change was thinking about

how to bring staff along with the changes made to practice. This involved discussing change, piloting new approaches, modelling practice, mentoring, and supporting staff in understanding the reasons for change and the potential benefits.

The impact study also highlighted the fact that change can be disruptive in the short term. Settings which had experienced a greater number of recent changes offered lower quality of provision. This reminds us that settings need to devote time and energy to settling in following a large change (even where this change is ultimately for the better) and that constant change might make it more difficult to provide a consistently high quality environment for children. It also highlights the importance of planning when bringing about change to ensure the least disruption for staff and children.

Those settings which described their improvements as a process of continuing and ongoing reflection described smaller scale changes. This happened in settings seen by managers and EYPs as already delivering quality provision. Small scale changes required less planning and were easier to implement. Small changes are also likely to create less overall 'upheaval', relevant in light of the impact study findings that settings reporting a greater number of recent changes offered lower quality of provision. Ongoing and incremental change may therefore be a more useful model than periodic large scale improvements to practice.

9.2.4 Knowledge and skills

Continuing opportunities for professional development and support were identified by EYPs as important in enabling them to consolidate and extend the knowledge gained during their training. EYPs also highlighted the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) in relation to planning for change and successful self-evaluation. Local networks were seen as a valuable resource for training and for keeping up to date with new developments.

9.2.5 Leadership

The EYPS guidance suggests that EYPs need to be able to "work skilfully with others" and that to do this they require a range of skills including 'emotional intelligence' and the ability to draw on a repertoire of strategies for inspiring, influencing and negotiating with others (CWDC, 2010 p7). This was supported by the EYPs interviewed for the case studies; effective leadership skills and abilities were seen as essential in enabling EYPs to implement their new knowledge and skills effectively, and to act as catalysts for change. Key aspects identified by EYPs included communication skills, supportive and informative leadership, and good relationships with both room staff and managers. Where EYPs felt they had not gained the support of staff, this limited their ability to successfully implement changes. EYPs need the skills to explain their new knowledge about child development and good practice in a way which is accessible to staff, and also to encourage others to improve their own knowledge. The modelling of good practice was also identified as a key skill required by effective EYPs.

9.2.6 Defined role and remit

EYPs identified the importance of having a clearly defined remit for the EYP role which sets out what they are responsible for within the setting, and is also communicated to other staff. A clear remit was viewed as particularly important in providing EYPs with the authority to lead practice and staff development. It is interesting to reflect on this in light of the impact study findings on provision for staff members. EYPs reported that they were spending more time on staff support since gaining their EYP status. However, this had not yet translated into measurable improvements in the more formal procedures for staff support assessed by the ECERS/ITERS. It is possible that a more clearly defined role would support EYPs in effecting greater change in this area (as well as others). EYPs also identified the need to have protected time within their role for curriculum leadership and staff mentoring, free from both managerial responsibilities and from being counted in adult-child ratios.

Linked with the need for a clear role and remit is the issue of emerging awareness of EYPs as a distinct role and profession, and the challenge of 'embedding a new professional that does not have a strong historical and evolutionary heritage' (Lumsden, 2010). The development of EYPS as a new profession as well as its relationship with, and equivalence to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), is the subject of a growing literature (e.g. Miller, 2008; Lloyd & Hallet, 2010). EYPs are beginning to develop their own professional identity in terms of leadership attributes, specialised knowledge, a shared vision for early years care/education within the EYFS, and a collective sense of agency (Lloyd & Hallet, 2010). However, recognition outside (and sometimes inside) the sector remains variable. Only 25 per cent of parents surveyed were aware that their setting had an EYP, and only 18 per cent saw qualifications as 'very important' in selecting a setting for their child. Experience was given a much higher value with 45 per cent of parents seeing it as 'very important' for their choice of setting. This echoes emerging research showing that general awareness of EYPS is not yet widespread; in a survey of EYPs carried out by the University of Wolverhampton (Hadfield & Waller, 2011) 86 per cent of respondents felt that those outside their settings had little understanding of EYPS and 77 per cent felt that even other professionals were uncertain of what EYPS meant.

9.2.7 Position within the setting

Being in a managerial position was identified as important in terms of being able to effect change, both in terms of having the necessary authority and the strategic overview needed to make setting-level change. However, EYPs also identified a clear need for regular contact with the children in order to model best practice and retain the day-to-day knowledge needed to guide and develop provision. On average, EYPs reported spending 35 per cent of their time working hands-on with the children (down from 48 per cent before gaining EYPS). There was very wide variation, with some EYPs being entirely room-based and others in a fully managerial role with no hands-on time. The most effective approach was felt to encompass a combination of these two aspects (i.e. clear managerial authority but also contact time with children).

9.2.8 Other structural features of the setting

Findings from the impact study highlight the importance of supportive adult-child ratios in ensuring high quality provision for children across the birth to five age range. Rooms with fewer children per staff member provided higher quality interactions for pre-school children, as well as higher quality care routines and a more appropriate and individualised schedule for younger children. This is supported by previous research showing that interactions are of higher quality in settings with low staff-child ratios in addition to more highly trained staff (Karemaker et al., 2011; Phillips et al., 1992; Howes et al., 1992; NICHD ERCCRN, 1996, 2000). Research also identifies a link between ratios and children's outcomes, for example language skills, social skills and secure attachments (Howes, 1997; Burchinal et al., 1996; Love et al., 2003; Sagi et al., 2002; Volling & Feagans, 1995).

The size of the settings and of the groups observed were associated with quality but findings were not conclusive. Larger groups provided higher quality physical environments and resourcing and higher quality practice in some areas, perhaps benefiting from greater diversity in resources and staff knowledge/experience as well as more general economies of scale. Larger settings offered higher quality provision for parents and for staff, possibly because they had larger staff teams with more formal and identifiable structures for staff support and development, and could sustain more extensive facilities for staff and parents (e.g. staff and/or meeting rooms). The Guidance to the EYP Standards notes that "…larger settings may offer more direct opportunities, both planned and reactive, to show leadership" (CWDC, 2008:12). However, EYPs interviewed for the case studies recognised that they had to work harder in a large setting to plan for improvement and communicate effectively with all staff. Therefore, EYPs responsible for large staff teams may require additional strategies to help them lead change effectively.

Previous research evidence on group and setting size is distinctly mixed, with some studies finding larger group or setting size beneficial for quality, but many others suggesting that 'smaller is better' (Mathers et al., 2007; Mathers & Sylva, 2007; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Helburn, 1995; Doherty, 1991; Kontos & Fiene, 1987; Howes & Rubenstein; 1985). Analysis of the baseline quality data (Karemaker et al., 2011) did not identify any associations between size and quality. This is an area which would benefit from further research in the UK context if policy conclusions are to be drawn.

Private settings offered lower quality for pre-school children than not-for-profit settings, a finding supported by a number of studies from the US where the majority of settings operate on a for-profit basis (Sosinky et al., 2007; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Friesen, 1995; Phillips, Howes & Whitebook, 1992). In the UK, while maintained providers have been shown consistently to offer higher quality, differences between the private and voluntary sectors have not been identified so consistently (Mathers et al., 2007; Mathers & Sylva, 2007; Sylva et al., 2004). It is likely that there are more factors involved than simply 'for profit' status. For example, previous research suggests that more fine-grained differences may exist between sub-sectors (e.g. not-for-profit settings led by religious organisations, for-profit chains) and that high quality can be found in all sectors (Helburn, 1995). In a

mixed economy of childcare the sector or 'aegis' of settings is clearly an issue of interest and relevance in the quality debate.

Finally, EYPs interviewed for the research identified a supportive physical environment as smoothing the path to improvement. For example, having access to the outdoor environment was seen as important in being able to offer high quality, as were features of the building that supported the provision of free flow and planning for children's choice.

The quality of a setting depends on many variables, the qualifications of staff being only one of them. Attention should be paid to ensuring that EYPs and other staff are supported by the structural characteristics of the setting which provide the bedrock for high quality, such as supportive physical environments and staff-child ratios. Research indicates that no one 'regulatable' characteristic – not even qualifications – guarantees high quality and that they are not good replacements for process measures (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Cryer et al., 1999). As Scarr et al. (1994, p149) note "what actually happens in classrooms…is not adequately captured by most variables one can legislate and regulate".

9.3 Quality for specific groups

Settings which catered for a greater proportion of children with SEN offered more developmentally appropriate schedules for children from birth to five, and higher quality interactions for the younger age range. These are positive findings, suggesting that settings which cater for these potentially vulnerable children are doing a good job at meeting their needs.

The findings of this evaluation identify a worrying link between disadvantage and the quality of provision offered to children, with settings catering for higher proportions of minority groups and children speaking EAL[62] rated as lower quality, in comparison to settings catering for lower proportions of these groups. Settings in more income deprived areas also offered lower quality than settings in more affluent areas. It is likely that these factors form a set of inter-related characteristics, also correlated with other 'risk' markers such as lone parent status, low maternal education and unemployment. The findings are supported by previous US research (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Pianta et al., 2002; Loeb et al., 2004; Phillips et al., 1994) showing that settings providing for disadvantaged groups offer lower quality provision. In the UK, while some research (Mathers & Sylva, 2007) has found few relationships between the characteristics of the populations served and quality, Ofsted[63] (2010) reported recently that settings in disadvantaged areas are less likely to be rated 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Since our study is correlational, it is not possible to identify the reasons behind these associations. It may be related to the nature of the children or families themselves, for

[62] It should be noted here that EAL is not necessarily a disadvantage, as second language learning can be of considerable benefit. However EAL is often considered alongside other markers of disadvantage and so is included here alongside income and ethnic group.

[63] The UK regulatory body, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

example settings find it more challenging to offer high quality provision to these groups due to the complexity of their needs. Previous research suggests that selection may play a role, with more affluent families selecting higher quality provision (e.g. Dearing et al., 2009). Alternatively the association may be related to demand or supply issues (e.g. settings in income deprived areas are providing lower quality due to difficulties with sustainability and cash-flow), or are due to other factors. Whatever the reasons, our findings highlight that settings in areas where the need is greatest and children are most 'at risk' may not have adequate resources to address the challenges of meeting their needs. More research is needed in this area, possibly using the IDACI index[64] rather than the income deprivation measure used here. Research on the provision experienced by individual children from disadvantaged families (e.g. Mathers et al., 2007; Dowsett et al., 2008) should also be drawn upon, since our findings relate to populations served (or area measures of disadvantage) rather than to the experience of individual children and families.

9.4 Sample and context

These findings are based on a sample of 238 settings which took part in the impact study. Of these, 32 settings gained an EYP during the course of the evaluation. Given the relatively small sample of EYP settings, a number of thorough extra checks and strategies were employed to ensure the robustness of the findings (see Section 3.3.2. for details).

Approximately two thirds of EYPs in the impact assessment had held their status for at least 12 months by the time of the follow-up assessment. However, it is important to remember that one year is not a long period in which to develop and embed a new role. We are therefore assessing the impact of EYPs within the first year of attaining their status rather than the long-term impact of employing an EYP.

In that they had gained their status relatively early, the EYPs in our sample could be viewed as the 'front-runners'. In fact our sample was specifically selected to represent settings most motivated to improve their qualification levels, and this should be remembered when interpreting the findings.

Most EYPs described themselves as either senior managers (e.g. setting manager) or line managers (e.g. deputy or room leader) and on average, they spent 35 per cent of their time working hands-on with the children. The majority (four fifths) of EYPs had achieved their status via the validation pathway or the short professional extended development pathway, and so were already qualified to degree level before beginning. Their choice of pathway suggests that they were also likely to be older and more experienced than EYPs undertaking longer pathways (Hadfield & Waller, 2011). The findings of the evaluation could therefore be viewed as positive evidence that even the shorter EYP pathways add value to the performance of early years practitioners. However, it is also possible that practitioners undertaking short pathways are systematically different in nature to those

[64] Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures in a local area the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in low income households. It is supplementary to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and is used for calculation of the contextual value added score, measuring children's educational progress.

likely to undertake longer pathways (e.g. more equipped to put their new knowledge into practice) and that therefore the findings cannot be generalised. This study was undertaken at an early stage in the development of EYPS and can be viewed as a positive starting point in an emerging field of research evaluating the impact of EYPS. Further research is needed to systematically evaluate the impact of the different pathways on quality and on children's outcomes.

Finally, the Graduate Leader Fund had the specific purpose of raising quality in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, based on research evidence that quality in this sector was not as high as that found in the government-maintained sector (Sylva et al., 2004; Mathers et al., 2007). Our analysis was therefore designed to answer the questions "does having an EYP improve quality in the PVI sector" and if so "which aspects of practice (and of quality) are most closely associated with EYP status"? Our study does not draw conclusions about the impact of EYPS working as childminders or in the maintained sector, nor does it provide comparisons with the impact of other high level qualifications such as qualified teacher status (QTS). Comparability with QTS has been a particularly debated aspect of EYPS. While analysis of the baseline data supports previous research (e.g. Sylva et al., 2004) in identifying the relationship between QTS and quality, the number of settings gaining a teacher during the course of the evaluation was not sufficient to draw conclusions on the relative impact of EYPS and QTS. The reader should therefore view these findings in the context of other research within this field.

9.5 Issues for consideration

The recent review of the EYFS suggests that 'without continued investment in the early years workforce, the Government will continue to struggle to raise attainment, and in particular to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers' (Tickell, 2011).

On the basis of this evaluation, we recommend that the following issues be considered:

- The further development of a long term workforce and qualifications strategy, with the ultimate aim of ensuring better early years provision for future generations requires:
    - continued support for the development of a high level graduate-led workforce, on the basis that effective leaders are central to implementing government policy in improving the quality of early years provision. This evaluation has demonstrated that the use of specialised early years graduate training pathways can lead to improvements in quality for pre-school children within the PVI sector, especially in relation to support for language, communication and cognitive development, positive interactions, provision of a developmentally appropriate schedule and providing for individual needs and diversity.
    - workforce development to be planned for at all levels, since the impact study findings identify an association between quality and the qualifications of the

whole staff team, particularly for the provision of a challenging and appropriate educational environment for pre-school children.

- Based on the evidence that EYPs are not being deployed to work with the youngest children, settings should be encouraged to consider whether their graduate leaders are leading practice across the birth to five age range. Coupled with this, research is required to identify which features of staff training and experience bring benefits for under threes (see research recommendations).
- Ensuring that training for EYPs contains effective and high quality support to help them achieve their full potential in leading quality across the EYFS and across settings, and to overcome barriers to improvement. Based on the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research we recommend that this should include:
    - training in effective leadership techniques, such as communication with staff, the effective modelling of good practice and the other skills required to be good leaders. Leadership training needs to be flexible to meet the needs of EYPs in many possible roles (e.g. EYPs joining a new setting as well as 'home-grown' EYPs, EYPs leading practice within rooms as well as those in senior manager roles, and EYPs in both large and small settings) and should support EYPs in effecting setting-wide change.
    - training in planning for improvement, change management and reflective self-evaluation. EYPs need to be supported in effecting change across their settings, both in terms of leadership and in terms of planning for quality improvement.
    - explicit support in effective strategies for working in partnership with parents.
- Based on evidence regarding the role of staff experience in ensuring quality, continued attention should be paid to providing opportunities for EYPs and other staff to develop 'purposeful' hands-on experience alongside their development of specialised knowledge, both via effective supervised practice as part of their training and via effective mentoring/supervision following qualification.
- Ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) for EYPs once they have achieved their status, to enable them to embed and further develop their skills as change agents and leaders of learning. EYPs identified both CPD and the role of EYP networks as key facilitators for ongoing development.
- Continued movement towards the recognition of EYPS as a specific leadership profession, with regard to the existing literature on professionalism.
- A defined role and remit for EYPs, as well as clear guidance for settings on how to develop these and communicate them to staff. An effective remit should provide EYPs with the authority needed to act as a catalyst for change, while also reflecting the importance of time spent working hands-on with children. It should also build on existing guidance on the complementary roles of EYPs and setting managers (CWDC, 2010) to support the joint working in raising quality at the setting level. This defined role and remit needs to be shared with other staff working in settings as well as with the parents of children within settings so that they have a shared understanding of the role and responsibilities of practitioners with EYPS.

- Ensuring that EYPs and other staff are supported by the structural characteristics of the setting which provide the bedrock for high quality, such as supportive staff-child ratios and physical environments. Staff qualifications, expertise and experience are important, but are only one aspect of quality. Since no one single aspect can guarantee high quality, settings and policy makers need to pay regard to the multi-faceted nature of provision and ensure active attention is paid to ensuring the highest quality for children.

We also propose a number of directions for future research, building on the findings of this evaluation:

- Further research to systematically evaluate the impact of the different pathways on quality and children's outcomes, and to explore exactly which aspects of training and staff experience lead to positive benefits. This evaluation has identified an impact of EYPS on quality, but we are not able to draw conclusions as to which aspects of their training led to this improvement or, without this knowledge, to provide detailed guidance on the development of future training content. As noted by Early et al. (2007, p.575) "teacher education and teacher quality are two separate albeit related constructs". Future research needs to gather detailed information on the content and delivery of training (e.g. rigour, quality, role of supervised practice), and later in-service training, continuing professional development and supervision – and to determine the impact of these on practitioner knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (i.e. the mechanisms by which training 'translates' into improved quality). This will be necessary to ensure that future training includes the aspects most likely to impact on quality and children's outcomes.
- Research to establish the most effective ways of raising quality for our youngest children (i.e. under threes) through workforce development.
- In-depth research to assess impact of EYPS on support for parents, and on leadership and support for staff teams, using tools specifically selected to be sensitive measures of these aspects of provision.
- Ongoing research to assess the longer-term impacts of EYPS in ensuring high quality provision for children, to establish whether early impacts are sustained, and to capture the impact of EYPS at setting-level.
- Further investigation to explore the relationship between quality, income deprivation and the provision experienced by populations of different groups (e.g. minority groups).
- Future research should also pay regard to the inter-relatedness of different high level qualifications/statuses, including EYPS and QTS, to further inform the cohesive development of a graduate led workforce and a clear career path for early years practitioners.

Appendix A Quality assessment measures

The **ECERS-R** is a quality assessment tool, originally developed in the US but now used in many countries around the world for research and developing practice. It has had input from many researchers and practitioners over the years and provides a measurable 'profile' of quality in early years settings across a number of different dimensions of quality. The scale has been shown in many different research studies (both in the UK and elsewhere) to be a reliable and valid measure of quality, and to be strongly related to children's developmental outcomes (Sylva et al., 2004; Burchinal et al., 2002; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997).

The ECERS-R considers the quality of the learning environment in its broadest sense, i.e. the context needed for learning to take place. It describes both the characteristics of the physical environment and the pedagogical, social and 'emotional' environment. It aligns closely with the UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and addresses many of the same broad aspects of practice. Like the EYFS, the ECERS considers the 'whole child' and several fundamental features of a quality environment are threaded throughout the scale. These include the basic welfare requirements such as health, safety and appropriate supervision; the extent to which children have independent access to stimulating resources and experiences (both indoors and out); the quality of social interactions and support for learning; and the extent to which adults provide an individual and nurturing environment to meet the needs of the 'unique child'.

The items of the ECERS-R are arranged under seven broad headings (known as **'subscales'**):

1. Space and furnishings (e.g. furniture for play and learning, display for children)
2. Personal care routines (e.g. health and safety practices, hygiene, mealtimes)
3. Language and reasoning (e.g. supporting children's developing communication)
4. Activities (e.g. fine motor activities, sand and water play)
5. Interactions (e.g. supervision, staff-child interactions and peer interactions)
6. Program structure (e.g. the balance between child-initiated and adult-directed play)
7. Parents and staff (e.g. provision for professional needs of staff, partnership with parents).

The first six subscales relate to **childcare quality**. The seventh subscale considers the extent to which settings work in partnership with **parents** as well as provision for **staff** members.

Each of the seven subscales of the ECERS-R is made up of a number of individual **items**. In total there are 43 items within the ECERS-R, each of which are rated on a seven point scale with explicit indicators for scores of 1 (inadequate), 3 (minimal), 5 (good) and 7

(excellent). There are clear rules for giving even numbered scores between the 'anchored' criteria for the odd numbers.

Observers complete items and assign scores by rating specific statements or 'indicators' of quality. To score a 3 (minimal) on the 'Interactions among children' item for example, observers must see evidence that staff '*stop negative and hurtful peer interactions'* and that *'some positive peer interaction occurs*'. To score a 5, a 'good' setting might display more active support for peer interactions, for example staff *'modelling good social skills'* and *'helping children to develop appropriate social behaviour with peers'*. At the highest level, 'excellent' settings (scoring 7) might extend support in more explicit ways, for example by providing *'opportunities for children to work together to complete a task'*.

The extension to the ECERS-R (**the ECERS-E**) supplements the broad and balanced focus of the ECERS-R by providing more curricular focus. Its subscales contain supplementary items covering four specific aspects of learning and development (literacy, mathematics, science/environment and diversity). The ECERS-E, developed in the 1990s as part of the EPPE project (Sylva et al., 2004), was based on the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. As with the ECERS-R, it aligns closely with the EYFS, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy (CLL), problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy (PSRN), knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW), inclusive practice and 'observation, assessment and planning'. The scale was explicitly designed to assess staff support for children's developing language and reasoning skills – an area in which the ECERS-R has been criticised as lacking rigour. The scoring system is identical to the ECERS-R, with scores ranging from 1 to 7.

The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (**ITERS-R**) is a partner scale to the ECERS-R, identical in structure but adapted to assess provision for very young children between birth and 30 months. It also comprises seven subscales, six of which relate to childcare quality and one which assess provision for parents and staff members. As with the ECERS scales, items are scored on a 1 to 7 scale.

The following pages show an overview of subscale and items of the ITERS-R, ECERS-R and ECERS-E.

Appendix Figure A.1 Overview of the Subscales and Items of the ITERS-R (Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2003)

Space and Furnishings

- Indoor space
- Furniture for routine care and play
- Provision for relaxation and comfort
- Room arrangement
- Display for children

Personal Care Routines

- Greeting/departing
- Meals/snacks
- Nap
- Diapering/toileting
- Health practices
- Safety practices

Listening and Talking

- Helping children understand language
- Helping children use language
- Using books

Activities

- Fine motor
- Active physical play
- Art
- Music and movement
- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Sand and water play
- Nature/science
- Use of TV, video and/or computer
- Promoting acceptance of diversity

Interaction

- Supervision of play and learning
- Peer interaction
- Staff-child interaction
- Discipline

Program Structure

- Schedule
- Free play
- Group play activities
- Provisions for children with disabilities

Parents and Staff

- Provisions for parents
- Provisions for personal needs of staff
- Provisions for professional needs of staff
- Staff interaction and cooperation
- Staff continuity
- Supervision and evaluation of staff
- Opportunities for professional growth

Appendix Figure A.2 Overview of the Subscales and Items of the ECERS-R (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005)

Space and Furnishings

- Indoor space
- Furniture for routine care, play and learning
- Furnishings for relaxation and comfort
- Room arrangement for play
- Space for privacy
- Child-related display
- Space for gross motor play
- Gross motor equipment

Personal Care Routines

- Greeting/departing
- Meals/snacks
- Nap/rest
- Toileting/diapering
- Health practices
- Safety practices

Language-Reasoning

- Books and pictures
- Encouraging children to communicate
- Using language to develop reasoning skills
- Informal use of language

Activities

- Fine motor
- Art
- Music/movement
- Blocks
- Sand/water
- Dramatic play
- Nature/science
- Math/number
- Use of TV, video, and/or computers
- Promoting acceptance of diversity

Interaction

- Supervision of gross motor activities
- General supervision of children (other than gross motor)
- Discipline
- Staff-child interactions
- Interactions among children

Program Structure

- Schedule
- Free play
- Group time
- Provisions for children with disabilities

Parents and Staff

- Provisions for parents
- Provisions for personal needs of staff
- Provisions for professional needs of staff
- Staff interaction and cooperation
- Supervision and evaluation of staff
- Opportunities for professional growth

Appendix Figure A.3 Overview of the Subscales and Items of the ECERS-E (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2003)

Literacy • Environmental print: letters and words • Book and literacy areas • Adult reading with the children • Sounds in words • Emergent writing/mark making • Talking and listening **Mathematics** • Counting and the application of counting • Reading and writing simple numbers • Mathematical activities: shape and space • Mathematical activities: sorting, matching and comparing	**Science and Environment** • Natural materials • Areas featuring science/science resources • Science activities: science processes: non-living • Science activities: science processes: living processes and the world around us. • Science activities: science processes: food preparation. **Diversity** • Planning for individual learning needs • Gender equality and awareness • Race equality and awareness

Appendix B EYP Standards

Appendix Figure B.1 Early Years Professional National Standards (CWDC, 2008)

Candidates for EYPS must demonstrate through their practice that a secure knowledge and understanding of the following underpins their own practice and informs their leadership of others:
Knowledge and understanding
S1 The principles and content of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to put them in to practice.
S2 The individual and diverse ways in which children develop and learn from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and thereafter.
S3 How children's wellbeing, development, learning and behaviour can be affected by a range of influences and transitions from inside and outside the setting.
S4 The main provisions of the national and local statutory and non-statutory frameworks within which children's services work and their implications for Early Years settings.
S5 The current legal requirements, national policies and guidance on health and safety, safeguarding and promoting the well being of children and their implications for Early Years settings.
S6 The contribution that other professionals within the setting and beyond can make to children's physical and emotional wellbeing, development and learning.
Candidates for EYPS must demonstrate through their practice that they meet all the following Standards and that they can lead and support others to:
Effective practice
S7 Have high expectations of all children and commitment to ensuring that they can achieve their full potential.
S8 Establish and sustain a safe, welcoming, purposeful, stimulating and encouraging environment where children feel confident and secure and are able to develop and learn.
S9 Provide balanced and flexible daily and weekly routines that meet children's needs and enable them to develop and learn.
S10 Use close, informed observation and other strategies to monitor children's activity, development and progress systematically and carefully, and use this information to inform, plan and improve practice and provision.
S11 Plan and provide safe and appropriate child-led and adult initiated experiences, activities and play opportunities in indoor, outdoor and in out-of-setting contexts, which enable children to develop and learn.
S12 Select, prepare and use a range of resources suitable for children's ages, interests and abilities, taking account of diversity and promoting equality and inclusion
S13 Make effective personalised provision for the children they work with.
S14 Respond appropriately to children, informed by how children develop and learn and a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning.
S15 Support the development of children's language and communication skills.
S16 Engage in sustained shared thinking with children.
S17 Promote positive behaviour, self-control and independence through using effective behaviour management strategies and developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills.

S18 Promote children's rights, equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of their practice.
S19 Establish a safe environment and employ practices that promote children's health, safety and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.
S20 Recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of harm and know how to act to protect them.
S21 Assess, record and report on progress in children's development and learning and use this as a basis for differentiating provision.
S22 Give constructive and sensitive feedback to help children understand what they have achieved and think about what they need to do next and, when appropriate, encourage children to think about, evaluate and improve on their own performance.
S23 Identify and support children whose progress, development or wellbeing is affected by changes or difficulties in their personal circumstances and know when to refer them to colleagues for specialist support.
S24 Be accountable for the delivery of high quality provision.
Relationships with children
S25 Establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children.
S26 Communicate sensitively and effectively with children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
S27 Listen to children, pay attention to what they say and value and respect their views.
S28 Demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from children.
Communicating and working in partnership with families and carers
S29 Recognise and respect the influential and enduring contribution that families and parents/carers can make to children's development, wellbeing and learning.
S30 Establish fair, respectful, trusting and constructive relationships with families and parents/carers, and communicate sensitively and effectively with them.
S31 Work in partnership with families and parents/carers, at home and in the setting, to nurture children, to help them develop and to improve outcomes for them.
S32 Provide formal and informal opportunities through which information about children's wellbeing, development and learning can be shared between the setting and families and parents/carers.
Teamwork and collaboration
S33 Establish and sustain a culture of collaborative and cooperative working between colleagues.
S34 Ensure that colleagues working with them understand their role and are involved appropriately in helping children to meet planned objectives.
S35 Influence and shape the policies and practices of the setting and share in collective responsibility for their implementation.
S36 Contribute to the work of a multi-professional team and, where appropriate, coordinate and implement agreed programmes and interventions on a day-to-day basis.
Professional development
S37 Develop and use skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support their work with children and wider professional activities.
S38 Reflect on and evaluate the impact of practice, modifying approaches where necessary, and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their professional development needs
S39 Take a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation, and adapt practice if benefits and improvements are identified.

References

Abbott, L., & Rodger, R. (1994). *Quality Education in the Early Years*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Allen, G. (2011) Early Intervention: The Next Steps. An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government. London: Cabinet Office. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/early-intervention-next-steps.pdf

Arnett, J. (1989). Caregivers in Day-Care Centers: Does Training Matter? *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 10*(54), 1-552.

Barnett, B.G., & O'Mahony, G.R. (2006). Developing a culture of reflection: implications for school improvement. Reflective Practice: *International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 7*(4), 499-523.

Blau, D. M. (2000). The Production of Quality in Child-Care Centers: Another Look. *Applied Developmental Science, 4*(3), 136-148.

Bowman, B., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Attachment* (Vol. 1). New York: Basic Books.

Bredekamp, V. S. (1985). The reliability of the instruments and procedures of a national accreditation system for early childhood programs. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland.

Brooker, L., Ellis, D. Rogers, S., Hallet, E., & Roberts-Holmes, G. (2010) *Practitioners Experiences of the Early Years Foundation Stage.* Department For Education. Research Brief DFE-RR029.

Burchinal, M.R., & Cryer, D. (2003). Diversity, childcare quality, and developmental outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 18*, 401-426.

Burchinal, M.R., Cryer, D., Clifford, R.M., & Howes, C. (2002). Caregiver training and classroom quality in child care centers. *Applied Developmental Science, 6*, 2-11.

Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., Nabors, L. A., & Bryant, D. M. (1996). Quality of Center Child Care and Infant Cognitive and Language Development. *Child Development*, 7(2), 606-620.

Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., Riggins Jr., R., Zeisel, S A., Neebe, E., & Bryant, D. (2000). Relating Quality of Center-Based Child Care to Early Cognitive and Language Development Longitudinally. *Child Development, 71*, 339-357.

Cameron, C., Candappa, M., McQuail. S., Mooney, A., Moss, P., & Petrie, P. (2003). *Early Years and Childcare International Evidence Project: The Workforce*. Thomas Coram Research Institute, Institute of Education: University of London.

Campbell-Barr, V. (2009). Contextual Issues in assessing value for money in early years education. *National Institute Economic Review, 207*(1), 90-101.

Cassidy, D. J., Hestenes, L. L., Hansen, J. K., Hedge, A., Shim. J., & Hestenes, S. (2005). Revisiting the two faces of child care quality: structure and process. *Early Education and Development, 16*, 505-520.

Ceglowski, D., & Bacigalupa, C. (2002). Four perspectives on child care quality. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 30*(2), *87-92.*

Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children's and Young People's Services (C4EO) (2010). *Grasping the nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities,* London: C4EO.

Children, Schools and Families Select Committee. (2010). *From Baker to Balls: the Foundations of the Education System.* Retrieved from http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsch/422/422.pdf

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). (2006a). *A Headstart for all: early years professional status candidate information.* Leeds: Children's Workforce Development Council.

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). (2006b). *Early Years Professional National Standards.* Leeds: Children's Workforce Development Council.

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). (2008). *Guidance to the standards for the award of early years professional status.* Leeds: Children's Workforce Development Council.

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). (2010). *The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge.* Leeds: Children's Workforce Development Council.

Cleveland, G. (2008). If it don't make dollars, does that mean that it don't make sense? Commercial, Nonprofit and Municipal Child Care in the City of Toronto. *Report for the Children's Services Division, City of Toronto.* Retrieved from http://206.130.170.35/children/pdf/cleveland_report_may08.pdf

Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes (CQCO) Study Team. (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centres*. Denver, Denver, CO: University of Colorado.

Cooke, G., & Lawton, K. (2008). *For love or money: pay, progression and professionalism in the early years workforce.* London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Cryer, D. & Burchinal, M. (1997) Parents as child care consumers, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12,* 35-58.

Cryer, D., Tietze, W., Burchinal, M., Leal, T., & Palacios, J. (1999). Predicting Process Quality from Structural Quality in Preschool Programs: A Cross-Country Comparison. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 14*, 399-361.

De Schipper, E. J., Risken-Walraven, M., & Geurts, S. A. E. (2006). Effects of Child-Caregiver Ratio on the Interactions Between Caregivers and Children in Child-Care Centers: An Experimental Study. *Child Development,* 77, 861-874.

De Vera Berrado, R. (2005). Reflection and Evidence-Based practice in Action: A Case Based Application. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice, 3* (3), 1-4.

Dearing, E., McCartney, K., & Taylor, B. A. (2009). Does Higher Quality Early Child care Promote Low-Income Children's Math and Reading Achievement in Middle Childhood? *Child Development, 80*, 1329-1349.

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2007) The Children's Plan. London, CM 7280

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008a). 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy. London, DCSF-01052-2008

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008b). *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.* Nottingham: DCSF publications.

Department for Education and Skills Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008c), The Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five. Nottingham: DCSF Publications

Department for Education (DfE). (2010). *Business Plan 2011-2015. Retrieved from* http://www.dfe.gov.uk accessed 05.05.11.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2001) *Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Statement of Requirement.* Nottingham: Department of Education and Skills Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2002) *SureStart Unit Recognised Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree, Senior Practitioner: new pathways for professionals.* Nottingham: DfES Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2003). *Full Day Care: National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.* Nottingham: DfES Publications Centre.

Doherty, G. (1991). Quality matters in child care. Ontario: Jesmond.

Donabedian, A. (1980). *Explorations in quality assessment and monitoring. Vol. 1. The definition of quality and approaches to its assessment.* Ann Arbor, Michigan, MI: Health Administration Pr.

Dowsett, C., Huston, A. C., Imes, A. E., & Gennetian, L. (2008). Structural and process features in three types of child care for children from high and low income families. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23,* 69-93.

Dunn, L. (1994). Quality of the literacy environment in day care and children's development. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 9*(1), 24-34.

Early, D., Maxwell, K., Burchinal, M., Alva, S., Bender, R., Bryant, D., Zill, N. (2007). Teachers' education, classroom quality, and young children's academic skills: Results from seven studies of preschool programs. *Child Development, 78*, 558-580.

Evangelou, M., Sylva, K., Kyriacou, M., Wild, M., & Glenny, G. (2009) Early Years Learning and Development: Literature Review, DCSF Research Report DCSF-RR176. Retrieved from: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-RR176.

Field, F. (2010) The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The Report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances. London: Cabinet Office. http://www.frankfield.co.uk/review-on-poverty-and-life-chances/

Friesen, B. K. (1995). *A Sociological Examination of the Child Care Auspice Debate (Occasional Paper No. 6)*. Canada: University of Toronto.

Fukkink, R., & Lont, A. (2007). 'Does training matter? A meta-analysis and review of caregiver training studies'. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 22, 294-311.

Goelman, H., Forer, B., Kershaw, P., Doherty, G., Lero, D., & LaGrange, A. (2006). Towards a predictive model of quality in Canadian child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21*, 280–295.

Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hadfield, M., & Waller, T. (2011, January). 'EYPS a force for good'. *Nursery World. Retrieved from http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/News/MostRead/1051102/Analysis-EYPs-force-good.*

Hallet, E. (2008). I seem to walk taller: the impact of work-based learning and reflective practice upon foundation degree graduates professional practice. In Garnett, J., & Young, D. (Eds.), *Work-based Learning Futures, 2* (pp. 53-60). Middlesex: University Vocational Awards Council.

Hallet, E. (2012). *The Reflective Early Years Practitioner.* Unpublished Manuscript. London: Sage.

Hallet, E., & Roberts-Holmes, G. (2010). *The contribution of the Early Years Professional Status role to quality improvement strategies in Gloucestershire; Final Report.* Unpublished Manuscript. Institute of Education, University of London.

Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. (2005). *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (2003). *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Helburn, S. W (Ed.). (1995). *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* (Technical Report). Denver, CO: University of Colorado, Department of Economics.

HM Government (2003) *Every Child Matters: Change for children*.

Holloway, S. D., & Reichhart-Erickson, M. (1988). The relationship of day care quality to children's free-play behaviour and social problem-solving skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 3, 39-53.

Honig, A. S., & Hirallal, A. (1998). Which counts more for excellence in childcare staff-years in service, educational level or ECE coursework? *Early Child Development and Care*, *145*(1), 31-46.

House of Commons, Children, School and Families Committee. (2010) *Sure Start Children's Centres: fifth report of session 2009 – 10 (Vol. 1, HC 130 – 1).* London: The Stationery Office.

Howes, C. (1983). Caregiver behavior in center and family care. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *4*, 99-107.

Howes, C. (1997). Children's experiences in center-based child care as a function of teacher background and adult: child ratio. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 43*(3), 404-425.
Howes, C., & Hamilton, C. (1993). Child care for young children. In Spodek, B. (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on the Education of Young Children.* New York: Macmillan.

Howes, C., James, J., & Ritchie, S. (2003). Pathways to effective teaching. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *18*, 103-120.

Howes, C., Phillips, C.A., & Whitebook, M. (1992). Thresholds of Quality: Implications for the Social Development of Children in Center-based Child Care. *Child Development, 63,* 449-460.

Howes, C., & Rubenstein, J. L. (1985). Determinants of toddlers' experience in day care: Age of entry and quality of setting. *Child and Youth Care Forum, 14*(2), 140-151.

Howes, C., & Smith, E.W. (1995). Relations among child care quality, teacher behavior, children's play activities, emotional security, and cognitive activity in child care. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 10(*4), 381-404.

Karemaker, A.M., Mathers, S., Hall, J., Sylva, K., & Clemens, S. (2011). *Evaluation of Graduate Leader Fund: Factors relating to Quality (findings from the baseline study)*. Department for Education.

Knowles, G. (2009) *Ensuring Every Child Matters.* London: Sage.

Kontos, S., & Fiene, R. (1987). Child care quality, compliance with regulations, and children's development: The Pennsylvania Study. In D. Phillips (Ed.), *Quality in child care: What does the research tell us?* (pp. 57-79). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Lloyd, E., & Hallet, E. (2010). Professionalising the early childhood workforce in England: work in progress or missed opportunity? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 11(1), 75-86.*

LoCasale-Crouch, J., Konold, T., Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Early, D., & Barbarin, O. (2007). Observed classroom quality profiles in state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, and classroom characteristics. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 22,* 3-17.

Loeb, S., Fuller, B., Kagan, S, L., & Carrol, B. (2004). Child Care in Poor Communities: Early Learning Effects of Type, Quality, and Stability. *Child Development, 75*, 47-65.

Love, J. M., Harrison, L., Sagi-Schwartz, A., Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., Ross, C., Ungerer, J. A., Chazan-Cohen, R. (2003). Child Care Quality Matters: How Conclusions May Vary with Context. *Child Development, 74,* 1021-1033.

Lumsden, E. (2007). Developing the early years workforce: student perceptions of the surestart endorsed early years foundation degree. In S. O'Brien, S., Cassidy, & H., Schonfeld. *Vision into practice: making quality a reality in the lives of young children, (pp. 115-122).* Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education: International Conference, Conference Proceedings.

Lumsden, E. (2010). The New Early Years Professional in England. *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education, 1*(3), 174-181.

Mahadevan, J. (2011, February 10). EYFS has improved childcare in England, Ofsted finds. *Children and Young People Now.* Retrieved from http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/1054139/EYFS-improved-childcare-England-Ofsted-finds.

Mathers, S., & Sylva, K. (2007). National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative: The Relationship Between Quality and Children's Behavioural Development (Research Report SSU/2007/FR/022). Retrieved from DfES website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/SSU2007FR022 per centREV.pdf

Mathers, S., Sylva, K., & Joshi. H. (2007). Quality of Childcare Settings in the Millennium Cohort Study (Research Report SSU/2007/FR/025. Retrieved from DfES website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/SSU2007FR025 per centREV.pdf

Mathers, S., Ranns, H., Karemaker, A.M., Moody, A., Sylva, K., Graham, J., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2011a). *Evaluation of Graduate Leader Fund: Final report.* Department for Education.

Mathers, S., Ranns, H., Karemaker, A.M., Moody, A., Sylva, K., Graham, J., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2011b). *Evaluation of Graduate Leader Fund: Technical Report.* Department for Education.

Maxwell, K. L., Field, C. C., & Clifford, R. M. (2005). Defining and Measuring Professional Development in Early Childhood Research. In M.J. Zaslow & I. Martinez-Beck. (Eds.), *Critical issues in Early Childhood Professional Development*. Paul H Brookes Publishing Company.

McMullen, M. B., & Alat, K. (2002). Education matters in the nurturing of the beliefs of preschool caregivers and teachers. *Early Childhood Research & Practice, 4*(1). Retrieved January 8, 2003, from http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n2/mcmullen.html

Melhuish, E. (2004). *Child Benefits: The importance of investing in quality childcare*. (Policy Paper No. 9) London: The Daycare Trust.

Miller, Linda (2008) *'Developing professionalism within a regulatory framework in England: challenges and possibilities'*, European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 16: 2, 255 — 268

Miller, L. & Cable, C. (2008). *Professionalism in the Early Years.* London, UK: Hodder Education.

Miller, L. and Cable, C. (2011) (Eds) *Professionalization, Leadership and Management in the Early Years.* London:Sage

Munton, A. G., Mooney, A., & Rowland, l. (1995). Deconstructing Quality: A conceptual framework for the new paradigm in day care provision for the under eights. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 114, 11-23.

Munton, T., Mooney, A., Moss, P., Petrie, P., Clark, A., & Woolner, J. (2002). Research on ratios, group size and staff qualifications and training in early years and childcare settings. *Thomas Coram Research Unit.* University of London: Institute of Education.

National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Research Team. (2010, December). *The quality of group childcare settings used by 3-4 year old children in Sure Start local programme areas and the relationship with child outcomes* (Issue Brief No. 978-1-847775-828-6). London: Melhuish, E., Beslky, J., MacPherson, K., & Cullis, A.

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and Childrens Workforse Development Council (CWDC) (2009) *Evaluation of the career developments of Early Years Professionals (EYPs): Key Findings*, Retrieved from

http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/5565/EYP_Evaluation_Summary_Report_June 09.pdf

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network (ERCCRN). (1996). Characteristics of infant child care: Factors contributing to positive caregiving. *Early Childhood research Quarterly, 11,* 269-306.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network (ERCCRN). (2000). Characteristics and Quality. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 20*(1), 25-51.

Norris, D. J., Dunn, L., & Eckert, L. (2003). *"Reaching for the Stars" Center Validation Study Final Report*. Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care.

Norris, D. J. (2010). Raising the Educational Requirements for Teachers in Infant Toddler Classrooms: Implications for Institutions of Higher Education. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 31, 146-158.

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) (2010) *Qualifications and Credit Framework.* Retrieved on 05.05.11 from: http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualification-and-assessment-framework/89-articles/145-explaining-the-qualifications-and-credit-framework

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). (2010). The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, Children's Services and Skills 2009/10: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

O'Keefe, J., & Tait, K. (2004). An Examination of the UK Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree and the Evolution of Senior Practitioners –Enhancing Work-based Practice by Engaging in reflective and Critical Thinking. *The International Journal of Early Years Education,* 12(1), 25-41.

Paige-Smith, A. & Craft, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Reflective Practice in the Early Years.* Berkshire: Open University Press.

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., & Burchinal, M. R. (1997). Relations between preschool children's child-care experiences and concurrent development: The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study. *Journal of Developmental Psychology, 43*, 451-477.

Pessanha, M., Aguiar, C., & Bairrão, J. (2007). Influence of structural features on Portuguese toddler child care quality. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 22,* 204-214.

Phillips, D.A., Howes, C., & Whitebook, M. (1992). The Social Policy Context of Childcare: Effects on Quality. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 20*(1), 25-51.

Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., McCartney, K., & Abbot-Shim, M. (2000). Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 15*(4), 475-496.

Phillips, R,. Norden, O., McGinigal, S., & Cooper, J. (2009) Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2008. DCSF Research Report DCSF-RR164

Phillips, D., Voran, M., Kisker, E., Howes, C., and Whitebook, M. (1994). Child care for children in poverty: Opportunity or inequity? *Child Development, 65*, 472–492.

Phillipsen, L.C., Burchinal, M.R., Howes, C., & Cryer, D. (1997). The prediction of process quality from structural features of child care. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12*(3), 281-303.

Pianta, R. C. (1999). *Enhancing relationships between children and teachers*. Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Pianta, R. C., Payne, C., Cox, M. J., & Bradley, R. (2002). The Relation of Kindergarten Classroom Environment to Teacher, Family, and School Characteristics and Child Outcomes. *The Elementary school Journal, 102*, 225-238.

Quality Assurance Agency. (2004). Foundation Degree Benchmark. Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency.

Ranns, H., Newmark, T., Rahim, N., & Penfold, C. (2011). *Evaluation of Graduate Leader Fund: GLF Implementation Case Studies.* Department for Education.

Ruopp, R., Travers, J., Glantz, F., & Coelen, C. (1979). *Children at the center: Summary findings and their implications. Final Report of the National Day Care Study*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.

Sagi, A., Koren-Karie, N., Gini, M., Ziv, Y & Joels, T. (2002). Shedding Further Light on the Effects of Various Types and Quality of Early Child Care on Infant-Mother Attachment Relationship: The Haifa Study of Early Child Care. *Child Development, 73,* 1166-1186.

Saracho, O. N., & Spodek, B. (2007). Early childhood teachers' preparation and the quality of program outcomes. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, *177*, 71–91.

Scarr, S., Eisenberg, M., & Deater-Deckard, K. (1994). Measurement of Quality in Child Care Centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 9*, 131-151.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). *Research evidence on teachers' role in the early years.* London: Early Education.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Manni, L., (2008) *Effective leadership in the Early Years Sector.* London: The Institute of Education: University of London

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Milton, E., Sylva, K., Laugharne, J., & Charles, F. (2006). Monitoring and Evaluation of the Effective Implementation of the Foundation Phase (MEEIFP) Project across Wales. *Cardiff, WAG.*

Skills for Care & Childrens Workforce Development Council (CWDC) (2006) *Continuing Professional Development strategy for the social care workforce.* Leeds, Skills for Care and CWDC. Retrieved from http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/1100/CPD_strategy_webedn_links.pdf

Sosinsky, L. S., Lord, H., & Zigler, E. (2007). For-profit/nonprofit differences in center-based child care quality: Results from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 28,* 390-410.

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart,B. and Elliot, K. (2003), The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project; Findings from the PreSchool Period. (DfES Research Brief No: RBX15-03). London: DfES.

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart. B. (2004). *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE Project: Effective Pre-School Education (Technical Paper 12*). DfE / Institute of Education, University of London.

Sylva, K., Meluish, E. Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (Eds.). (2010). *Early Childhood Matters: evidence from the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education project.,* London: Routledge.

Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2003). *Assessing Quality in the Early Years Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales Extension (ECERS-E) Four Curricular Subscales.* Stoke on Trent, UK and Stirling: USA Trentham Books.

Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Melhuish, E. C., Sammons, P. & Walker-Hall, J. (2003). *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Technical Paper 5 - Characteristics of the Centres in the EPPE Sample: Interviews.* London: DfEE / Institute of Education, University of London.

Tatton, A. (2005). *Early Years Research: Skills Gaps and Training Needs within the Early Years Sector*. Birmingham: Waterloo Design & Print plc.

Teather, S., (2011) *Upskilling the Workforce.* Nursery World, 27 January, p.12

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, London,* Department for Education (DfE).

Tout, K., Zaslow, M. & Berry, D. (2005). Quality and Qualifications: Links between Professional Development and Quality in Early Care and Education Settings. In M.J. Zaslow. & I. Martinez-Beck. (Eds), *Critical issues in Early Childhood Professional Development*'. Paul H Brookes Publishing Company.

Van Ijzendoorn, M., Tavecchio, L.W.C., Stams, G-J.J.J.M., Verhoven, M.J.E., & Reiling, E.J. (1998). Quality of Center Day Care and Attunement Between Parents and Caregivers: Center Day Care in Cross-National Perspective. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 159*(4), 437-454.

Vandell, D. L, & Wolfe, B. (2000). Childcare Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to Be Improved? *Institute for Research on Poverty Special Report, 78,* 1-110.

Volling, B. L., & Feagans, L. V. (1995). Infant day care and children's social competence. *Infant Behavior and Development, 18,* 177-188.

Whalley, M.E. (2008) *Leading Practice in Early Years Settings* Exeter: Learning Matters

Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1990). Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America. Final report: *National Child Care Staffing Study.* Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.

Wilcox-Herzog, A. (2003). Actions speak louder than words: How experience and education relate to teacher's behaviours. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, *25*, 11-18.

Wilcox-Herzog, A. (2004). Actions speak louder than words: How experience and education relate to teachers' behaviors. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, *25*, 11–18.

Ref: DFE-RR144

ISBN: 978-1-84775-962-7

July 2011