

# Early Years Foundation Stage Results in England: 2011/12

## Methodology Document

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## **1. Data Summary**

The source of data for this publication is the Early Years Foundation Stage profile (EYFS Profile) collection, an annual statutory child-level collection from all Local Authorities in England, which runs from June to the end of August.

All English providers of state-funded Early Years education (including Academies and Free Schools), private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors are within the scope of the EYFSP data collection.

Local Authorities are required to collect and report to the Department for Education (DfE), the summary results for:

- all children at the end of the EYFS in their state-funded schools and nurseries.
- children in PVIs where the child is still in receipt of government funding at the end of the EYFS (the funding for a child in a PVI ceases in the term following the child's 5th birthday).

Data for any children in the PVI sector no longer in receipt of funding who were included in the return submitted by the LA to DfE will not be included in the figures. For the purpose of the 2012 exercise, the children still eligible for funding in the PVI sector will have been born between 1st April 2007 and 31st August 2007.

This SFR therefore covers all types of schools or early education providers that deliver the EYFS to children in receipt of a government funded place.

## **2. Background**

The EYFS profile sums up and describes each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the EYFS.

Practitioners can make professional judgements about children's achievements and decide on the next steps in learning through observing children in self-initiated and adult directed activities and by recording when necessary what has been achieved. They can also provide information for parents and carers about how children are developing.

The assessments are made on the basis of practitioners' accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child. By the end of the EYFS, the profile provides a way of summing up that knowledge. Assessments against the scales should be completed in the summer term, summarising each child's achievement against all thirteen scales at that point.

This is the sixth year that schools and early years' settings have been under a statutory obligation to send full data for every individual child in respect of the 13 summary scales to their Local Authorities. DfE data needs are met by asking Local Authorities to provide this full complement of data relating to those children in receipt of funding at the end of the EYFS only. In previous years, Local Authorities have submitted a random 10 per cent sample of their individual child level records and an aggregate level dataset covering all children.

Individual scale point data, showing the actual scale point that a child has received is only submitted by schools and early years settings on a voluntary basis.

Further information on the EYFS Profile assessment and reporting arrangements, alongside other EYFS resources, can be found at the National Archives web archive at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110223175304/http://www.qcda.gov.uk/assessment/87.aspx>

## 2.1 The Areas of Learning

The EYFS framework contains six areas of learning covering children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development;

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (3 assessment scales),

Communication, Language and Literacy (4 assessment scales),

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (3 assessment scales)

Knowledge and Understanding of the World (1 assessment scale),

Physical Development (1 assessment scale), and

Creative Development (1 assessment scale)

## 2.2 The Assessment scales

The EYFS Profile captures the Early Learning Goals as a set of 13 assessment scales, each of which has nine points:

*Outcomes for individual scales*

a. The **first three points (1-3)**, are hierarchical. Children should achieve all of these three points before they achieve any of points 4-8. A child who does not achieve Scale Point 1 is likely to have significant developmental delay.

b. The **next five points (4-8)** describe the achievement of a child in the context of the Early Learning Goals themselves. These are not hierarchical and can be achieved in any order. A child may attain a later point without having attained some or all of the earlier points.

c. The **final point (9)** in each scale describes a child who has achieved all the points from 1-8 on that scale, and has developed further both in breadth and depth.

d. The **point (0)** within an EYFS profile indicates a child with significant and complex special educational needs for whom it has not been possible to record an assessment. Whilst the EYFS profile has been developed to be inclusive, for a small number of children it may not be appropriate to make an assessment against some of the EYFS profile scales. In these instances each child may be assessed against other systems according to their specific need. Such alternative assessments carry a data code and numerical value of zero when EYFS profile scores are calculated. A total score of zero in EYFS profile indicates a child with complex needs, for whom a comprehensive alternative assessment system is in place across all the scales of EYFS profile. Exploration of zero scores should include consideration of these children as individuals rather than a group, as it is not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions about their attainment without such information.

e. The **point (N)** describes a child for whom there is insufficient evidence to make an assessment, for example where a child has recently arrived from abroad.

For more detailed information on the assessment scales and the individual scale points, please see the EYFS Profile Handbook, which can be found at the National Archives web archive at:

<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/publication.aspx?id=b5f9cfbe-57ed-4a6a-aa74-c7ee2600032a>

### **3. Data Collection Methodology**

Schools and Early Years providers submit data to their Local Authority. Local Authorities then load the data into the DfE bespoke data collection system, COLLECT (Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children and Teachers).

The system is stored securely on DfE servers and is accessed by Local Authorities via the internet, with each LA given secure log in details.

#### **3.1 Data cleaning**

COLLECT has built-in validation rules which flag up data which is invalid or the quality is questionable. This allows LAs to identify errors and clean the data before they submit it to DfE. Validation rules can either be errors (data is invalid) or queries (data quality is questionable but could be accurate in certain circumstances).

LAs are encouraged to clean all errors and double-check data where queries are flagged. LAs can add notes to their return if there is a genuine reason for “unusual” data.

Guidance notes and specifications (including validation rules) for this collection can be accessed at the following site:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections>

## 4. Production of Statistical First Release

*Note: Further clarification on the definitions used in the tables is given in section 5.*

### 4.1 Interpretation of results (Tables 1-3 summary scales)

These tables are based on the total number of points achieved in each scale. The tables include results for those children who were in receipt of a government funded early education place at the end of the EYFS **only**. Children who are not in receipt of a funded place at the end of the EYFS are not in the scope of the Department's EYFS Profile data collection and therefore not included in the results.

The results are for funded children who were assessed at the end of the 2011/2012 academic year. Any children who have been held back will be included in the results cohort for the year in which they are assessed and so these tables may include results from some children outside of the usual EYFS age range.

Ordinarily the EYFS Profile must be completed in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches the age of five, the only exceptions being:

- Where an exemption from all or part of the EYFS assessment arrangements has been granted for the setting by the Secretary of State for Education
- Where a child is continuing in EYFS provision beyond the year in which they turn five.

Children with any N or missing scores in their EYFS Profile are excluded from all summary scale tables. Children who are recorded with '0' scores (see section 2.2: The Assessment Scales) in their Profile are included in the published figures unless they have a missing or N score elsewhere in their Profile. Children with '0' scores have been included in the published figures for previous years.

### 4.2 Interpretation of results (table 4 - Individual scale points)

This data is based on the actual scale point achieved within each scale. Individual scale point data are currently submitted on a voluntary basis by LAs.

In order to ensure consistency across all the tables, children with any N or missing scores in their EYFS Profile have also been **excluded** from the individual scale point analysis. Similarly, children who are recorded with '0' scores in their Profile **are included** in the published figures unless they have a missing or N score elsewhere in their Profile. Children with '0' scores have been included in the published figures for previous years.

As the individual scale point data is currently submitted on a voluntary basis, the data is not subject to any electronic validation during the collection. There are therefore no checks to ensure that this data is consistent with the summary score data that is submitted on a mandatory basis. There are also no checks that the individual scale points achieved conform to the requirements of the EYFSP i.e. that scale points 1-3 are achieved before the others, and that scale point 9 can only be achieved after all the others. Post-collection analysis of the individual scale point data has identified some issues with the individual scale point data:

- a) Occasionally the individual scale point data are missing for a particular scale or scales. This only happens in 0.6% of children.
- b) In previous years, very rarely point 9 in a scale was recorded as attained before all points 1-8. This is an invalid profile, as all points from 1-8 need to be attained before point 9 can be. There were no instances of this in 2012.
- c) We have found instances where not all of the stepping stones, points 1-3 in a scale, have been achieved before points 4-8. This is allowed to happen only in exceptional cases, after discussion between the school and LA. In 2010, this occurred in at least one scale for 0.4% of children. In 2012 and 2011 however, there were no cases.

### **4.3 Interpretation of National level tables**

#### **Table 1 - Percentage of children by total number of points achieved in each of the 13 assessment scales**

##### Calculating percentages

This table shows, for each of the assessment scales, the percentage of all eligible children achieving a total of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9 points. The output is then split by gender.

#### **Table 2 - Percentage of children grouped by total number of points achieved in each of the 13 assessment scales**

##### Calculating percentages

As Table 1 above, but the total number of points achieved are grouped. This table also includes a time series element.

#### **Table 3 - Percentage of children working securely in each area of learning**

##### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage of children scoring 6 points or more in each area of learning.

#### **Measures of deprivation**

This table includes figures for children who reside in the 30 per cent most deprived Super Output areas in England. These figures no longer measure progress against any Government PSA targets (as 2008 was the last year of the former 2004 PSA target to improve children's development in the 30% most disadvantaged areas) but have been included for information and to allow comparison over time. The number of children who reside in these deprived Super Output areas will vary considerably between Local Authorities; the Isles of Scilly do not have any children resident in these areas.

The measure of deprivation used is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010 constructed by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre at the University of Oxford. This is the second year in which the IMD 2010 has been used instead of the previous IMD 2007. The Index is constructed using measurements of the Income, Employment, Health, Education and Skills, Housing, Crime and Living Environment characteristics of a given area. Super Output Areas are small areas with mean populations of 1500 and are designed to be more or less equal in size. Children resident in the 30 per cent most disadvantaged areas for the 2012 exercise are identified by their postcodes collected via the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

#### **Table 4 - Percentage of children achieving each individual scale point for each scale of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**

##### Calculating percentages

This is the number of children achieving each individual scale point for each of the 13 assessment scales expressed as a percentage of the total eligible children. The output is then split by gender.

#### **4.4 Interpretation of Local Authority level tables**

##### **Table A - Percentage of children achieving by points band for each assessment scale by Local Authority area**

##### Calculating percentages

This table shows, for each of the assessment scales, the percentage of all eligible children achieving a total of 1-3, 4-8, 9, or 6 plus points. The output is broken down by Local Authority area.

##### **Table B - Percentage of children achieving by gender who are working securely in each assessment scale by Local Authority Area**

##### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage of children scoring a total of 6 points or more in each assessment scale, by gender and Local Authority Area.

##### **Table C - Percentage of children working securely in each area of learning by Local Authority Area**

##### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage of children scoring a total of 6 points or more in each area of learning, by Local Authority Area.

##### **Table D - Percentage of children achieving a “good level of development” by national deprivation status of child residency for each Local Authority area**

##### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage of children achieving a total score of 6 or more across the seven PSE and CLL scales and 78 points or more in total for each Local Authority Area by national deprivation status of child residency (see Table 3 above for Measure of deprivation explanation).

## **Table E - The standard score and percentage inequality gap in achievement across all 13 assessment scales by Local Authority**

### Achievement gap calculation

The calculation of the Local Authority Indicator, the achievement gap (formerly National Indicator 92) is carried out as follows:

$$\text{Percentage inequality gap in achievement} = \frac{(\text{Median score} - \text{Mean score for lowest 20 per cent of performers})}{\text{Median score}} * 100$$

For example, in England, the median score is 91 and the mean score for the lowest 20 per cent of performers is 63.6. The absolute gap in achievement is 27.4 points which expressed as a percentage of the median score (91 points) is 30.1 per cent.

The lowest 20% of performers are selected by sorting all eligible child records in ascending order by total EYFS Profile score and then selecting children up to the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile i.e. the first fifth of children. The number of children in the first fifth should be calculated by taking the total number of children, dividing by five and then rounding down if the number returned is not a whole number. For example: (a) if a local authority had 500 children then the lowest 20% would be the first 100 children listed (b) if a local authority had 259 children, then the lowest 20% would be the first 51 children listed.

This approach should be taken even if the child ranked next in the list after the 20% cut off point has the same score as a child included in the lowest 20%. For example, if it was calculated that the first 100 children in an LA would be included in the lowest 20% but both the 100<sup>th</sup> and the 101<sup>st</sup> child in the list had a total EYFS Profile score of 45, this **would not change the cut-off point**. The 101<sup>st</sup> child would not be included in the lowest 20%.

## **Table F - Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy for each Local Authority Area**

### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage of children for each Local Authority area who are classified as achieving a “good level of development” (formerly National Indicator 72).

In April 2008 a set of Local Authority Indicators was introduced. These indicators formed part of the previous Government’s set of National Indicators. Further information on these is available on the Communications and Local Government website via the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator>

References to the former Government’s Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and National Indicators have been removed from this SFR. However, figures relevant to these Local Authority Indicators continue to be reported in tables D - G due to interest from users of these statistics and to allow comparison over time. Tables E and G are displayed to one decimal point, this is due to the precise definitions of the former indicators which these represent.



## **Table G - Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest for each Local Authority Area**

### Calculating percentages

This is the percentage inequality gap for each Local Authority Area, between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest. See **table E** above for how this is calculated.

## **5. Definitions**

The full Guidance Notes relating to the EYFS Profile can be viewed on the DfE website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/earlyyearsensus/a00192274/early-years-census-2012>

**a. Children working towards the Early Learning Goals** – scale points 1 to 3 describe the achievement of a child who is still progressing towards the early learning goals in that scale.

**b. Children working securely within the Early Learning Goals** – children achieving a total of 6 points or more are classified as working securely within the early learning goals.

**c. Children working beyond the Early Learning Goals** – scale point 9 describe the attainment of a child who has achieved scale points 1 to 8 and developed further, working consistently beyond early learning goals.

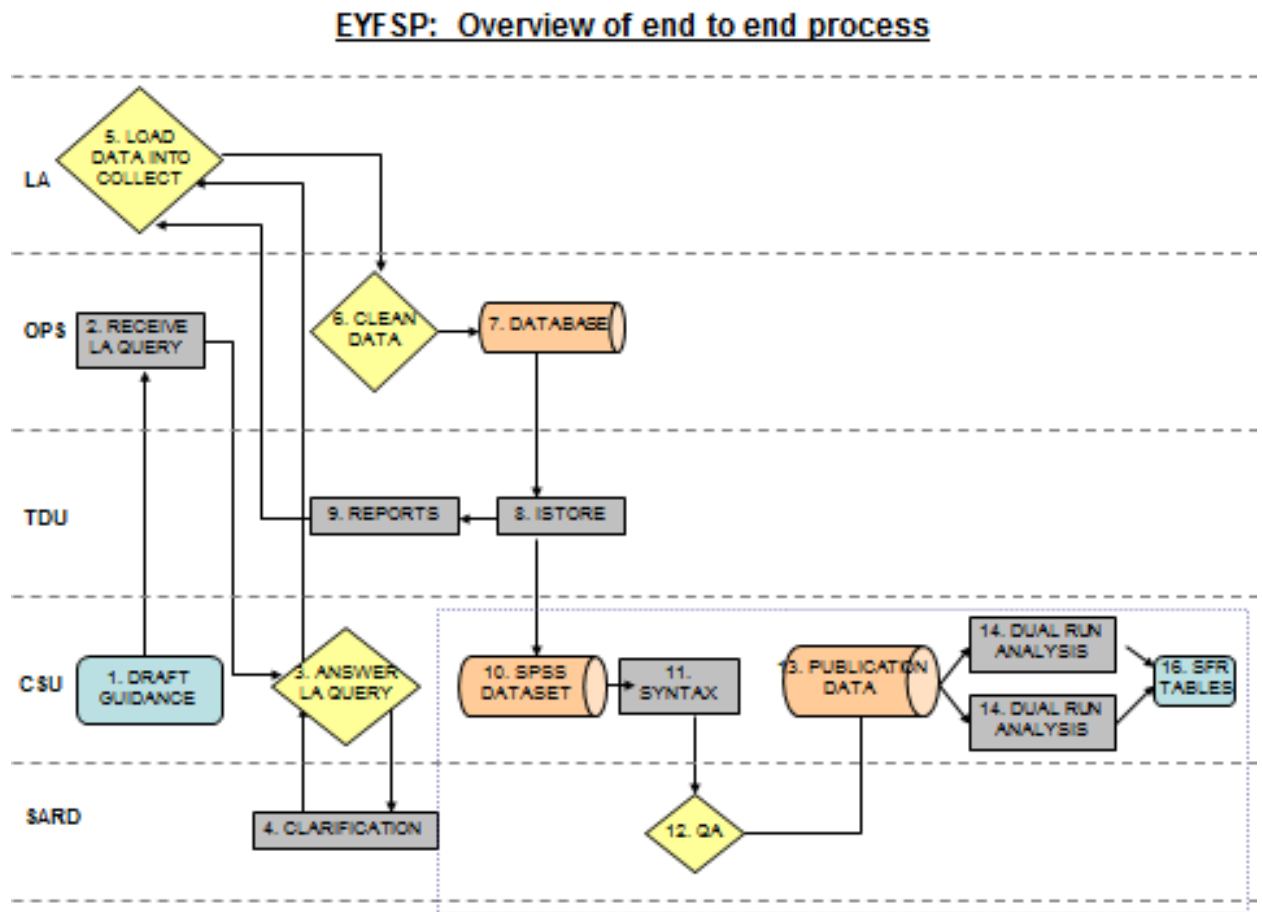
**d. Good level of development** – children achieving a total score of 6 or more across the seven PSE and CLL scales and 78 points or more in total are classified as achieving a good level of development

**e. Developing well** – children achieving a total score of 78 points across all scales.

## 6. Process map

The process map shown in Figure 1 covers the end to end process of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile return, from data collection through to publication of the SFR.

**Figure 1: Overview of end to end process of Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data collection and publication**



### Definitions:

LA: Local Authority

OPS: Data Services Division, Operations

TDU: Data Services Division, Technical Development Unit

CSU: Data Services Division, Customer Services Unit

SARD: Schools Analysis and Research Division

QA: Quality Assurance

SFR: Statistical First Release