

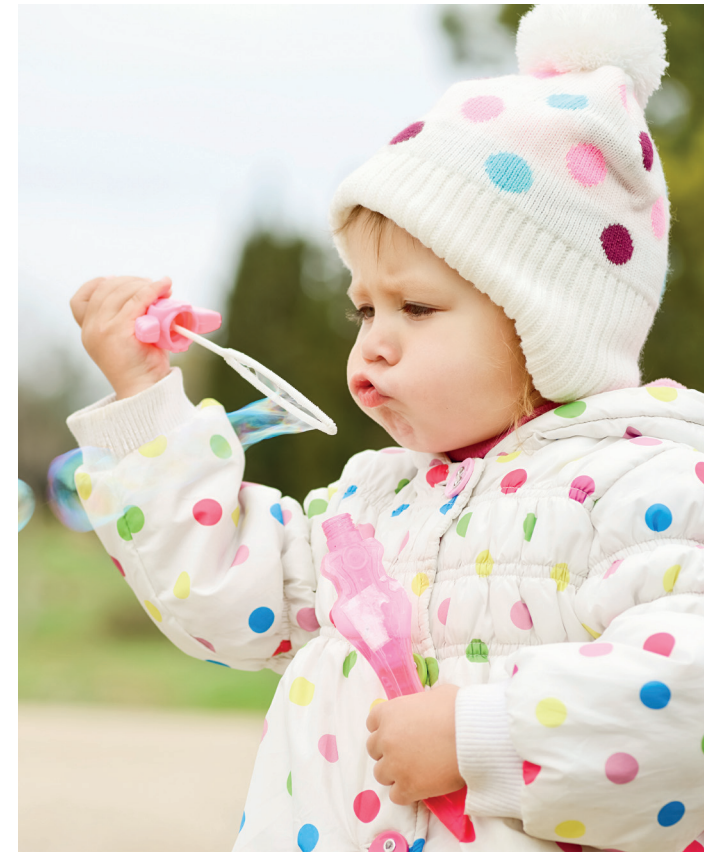
# Strategic Framework

## FOR EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

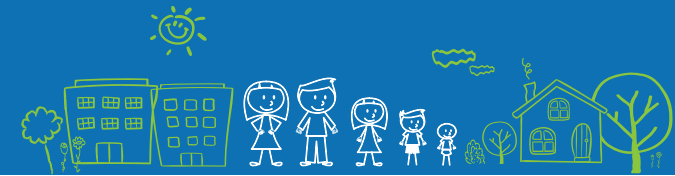
# Introduction

This document demonstrates how the Early Years Strategy Plan for services for children 0-5, through a clear vision, will ensure improvements in the way we deliver services for young children and their families in Middlesbrough leading to better, more positive outcomes at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage. A positive start in early years leads to improved outcomes throughout Key Stage One and beyond. The plan highlights the key issues for young children in Middlesbrough and how, by working together, we can impact positively on their future. Through a commitment to continuous improvement for children aged 0-5, by key partners and stakeholders working cooperatively and collaboratively, we can make a difference and improve the lives and prospects of young children in Middlesbrough.

Research has never been clearer – a child's early education lasts a lifetime. Securing a successful start for our youngest children, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is crucial. It leads to more positive outcomes at Key Stage 4 and has a significant impact on life chances. (Teaching and play in the Early Years a Balancing Act – (Ofsted 2015), EPPE).



# Vision for all young children



Middlesbrough Council and its partners recognise that children are our future and are the next generation who will ensure the success and prosperity of the town. It is therefore imperative that we invest in their development and create an environment in which they can grow and prosper. Our vision is to support families to keep children safe, improve their well-being and help them achieve their full potential.

**Underpinning our vision is a set of principles that we will uphold when developing and delivering services for children and young people, which are:**

- Working and committing resources together to effectively deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families and produce a service of Early Years Excellence.
- Together we will work with integrity, trusting each other in an open and honest manner, exercising moral courage in all that we do.
- Working proactively as equal partners, respecting and valuing each other's contributions in mitigating the impact of disadvantage for all children.
- We will be creative and develop new ideas to deliver a better future for children, young people and their families.
- We will make services and learning opportunities available for all children in the community that responds to their different needs whilst focusing relentlessly on children's communication and language skills, personal, social and emotional development and physical development.
- Through continuous improvement, we will develop the best and most effective services for children.



# Context

Situated on the North-East coast of England, with a population of 137,900, Middlesbrough is at the heart of the Tees Valley. The ethnic minority population of the town is one of the highest in the region at 6.3%. It is very diverse with 55 different languages being spoken from 49 different countries, a factor that must be reflected and considered when designing and planning services for children and young people.

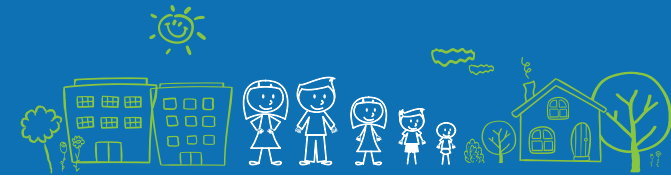
As regeneration of Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley takes place and employment opportunities are created, early years services will be very important to support families; to ensure childcare that encourages returning to work; and to begin the process of learning through play in order to start laying foundations that will stand children in good stead throughout their school days in order for them to gain qualifications and a pathway to employment.

We continue to show yearly improvement in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data although we are still below national average. Our EYFSP Good level of development has risen by 10% over the last 3 years but we are all working together to close the gap on national.

We have 8 Children's Centres providing a wide range of services for families and young children. There are 35 private, voluntary and independent nurseries and all of our primary schools have nursery provision. 4 of our PVI nurseries are newly registered but of the 31 who have received an Ofsted judgement 29 of them are good or better. EYFS provision in our schools is strong and children make good progress from their starting points.







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# Values and Principles

In Middlesbrough, all services for children and young people are built on a set of firm values that respect the individual, their circumstances and their needs, and which support the child in making progress towards the vision expressed earlier.

In the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the government has set out some key principles that are fully endorsed.

**All providers with services for children and families in Middlesbrough will support these values.**



## Equality of Opportunity

All providers will ensure positive attitudes towards diversity and difference. All children will be engaged in a way that promotes inclusion and removes disadvantage. All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.



## Partnership Working

All providers will work together in the best interests of the children. Where they attend more than one setting the providers will ensure good communication and sharing of information between providers and with parents and carers. Providers will also work with practitioners from other agencies and organisations to support the child and the family. Providers will work closely with parents and carers to support them in their role as first educators.



## Improving Quality

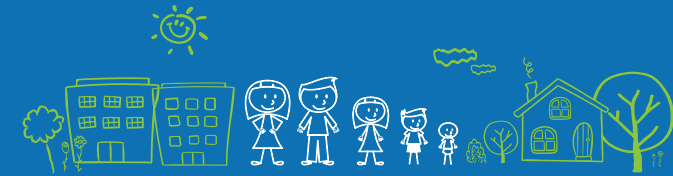
However good a provider is in giving a service, all providers will continue to strive for improvement and will look for best practice, both locally and nationally, in order to further improve the service for children in Middlesbrough. Where necessary intervention should begin early as early intervention often reduces the need for a greater level of intervention at a later stage.



## Firm Foundations

In order to give children the best chance of success later in their learning, children need a firm foundation upon which the future steps can be built. All providers will ensure that each child has a personalised learning programme that recognises the different rates and styles of learning. Children will be challenged to maximise their opportunities, but always with a focus on enjoyment and fulfilment. Providers will follow the seven areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design



In the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the government has set out some key principles.

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**





# Priorities

Whilst the priorities given here are those that are particularly relevant to Middlesbrough, they sit within the national requirements and where appropriate will incorporate national targets. They are not given in order of importance and are interdependent in improving the life chances of the youngest children in Middlesbrough.

**All sectors, services and partners will work collaboratively in order to:**

- improve outcomes for disadvantaged children
- accelerate progress of disadvantaged two year olds
- improve children's communication and language skills to impact on the wider curriculum

## **1. Leadership**

The Local Authority will exercise leadership and ensure that appropriate partnerships are in place to deliver the integrated services necessary. Appropriate resources will be secured and services commissioned to meet the priorities in Middlesbrough. Wherever possible services will be multi-agency and integrated. The developments will build on the current high levels of provision and good practice.

## **2. Parents as Partners – Parenting Strategy**

Empowering parents and promoting positive views of parenting. Parents will be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services. Parents will be supported, when appropriate, in developing their skills. Services will be flexible and accessible to maximise ease of use. Parents as partners and first educators will help improve outcomes. The term 'parent' includes all those with formal and informal responsibility for the care of a child.

Easily accessible information will be available for parents, families and settings. Services will cooperate to ensure simplicity for children and families. Protocols will be put in place to ensure appropriate sharing of data across agencies.

## **3. Vulnerable Children**

Whilst many services for children are available on a universal basis, there must be a priority given to children who are vulnerable or likely to be vulnerable. This may be due to a range of factors including learning difficulty and disability, looked after children, children from a ethnic minority community, children with additional language needs, and others. Early identification of risk factors with the child or the family will ensure priority is given when necessary.

## **4. Early Identification – Nursery and School Readiness.**

Services will be effectively integrated so that additional needs are identified as early as possible. This will be particularly important in vulnerable groups or families. Support will be in inclusive settings wherever possible. Although particular focus will be given to communication and language, and also to personal, social and emotional development, other needs must be addressed at point of identification.

## **5. Quality of Provision**

Increase the number of settings judged good or better by Ofsted. Settings will take responsibility for continuous self-evaluation around qualitative improvement principles. Regular self-evaluation combined with support and challenge from others will take place. This should lead to a continual cycle of improvement in the quality of provision in all services and sectors. All settings will ensure that safeguarding is secure in all circumstances.

## **6. Workforce Development**

In order to promote high standards and consistent practice, training opportunities will be developed on a multi-agency basis whenever possible. Partnerships with the teaching schools and training providers will ensure high quality bespoke training for the needs of Middlesbrough. Common induction procedures will be promoted. Opportunities will be developed that will allow progress for all staff working with young children. Leadership development across all settings will always focus on achieving the priorities and we will extend peer support opportunities to encourage sector led improvement.



# Monitoring and Evaluation

There will be a multi-layered system of ensuring children and their families get the best possible service contributing to the EYFS outcomes.

All settings will be expected to review their own practice, tracking children's progress towards the outcomes, ensuring staff development in order to improve the service offered, and schools and settings will have improvement plans to further promote, disseminate and ensure good practice.

The staff from the Achievement Service and Stronger Families will monitor the quality of provision and support and challenge settings, based on self-review and Ofsted outcomes with involvement from School Improvement Partners where appropriate.



# Appendix 1



## Legislation

### Children Act 1989

This Act gave Local Authorities, and others, the duty to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. Section 17 places a duty of every LA to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area. Section 47 requires LAs to make enquiries to enable it to decide whether a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and assess whether action is required to safeguard and promote a child's welfare.

### Education and Inspection Act 1996

This Act places duties on LAs to ensure that all children in schools get the education they need to enable them to fulfil their potential. Specific duties include promoting choice, diversity, high standards and, for the first time, the fulfilment of every child's educational potential.

### The Childcare Act 2006

This Act places a duty on LA's to improve outcomes for all young children and reduce inequalities between them. It also sets out what early years providers must do to:

- Safeguard children
- Ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour
- Maintain records, policies and procedures

### The Childcare Act 2016

This Act takes forward government commitments to secure an additional entitlement of childcare support for working parents. The Act extends the entitlement to 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for three and four year olds in families where all parents are working.

### Equalities Act 2010

The legislation sets out the legal obligations that early years providers, schools and post 16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

### Children and Families Act 2014

This legislation enabled the registration of childminder agencies on the early years and childcare registers and allowed individual childminders to register with agencies rather than with Ofsted, as well as allowing Ofsted to charge a fee for an inspection that is carried out at the request of the provider.

The Act removed the duty for Local Authorities to prepare and publish an assessment of the sufficiency of the provision of childcare in their area.

It also removed the requirement for maintained schools to complete a formal consultation with the LA, their staff and the parents of pupils registered at the school when considering offering community facilities, including childcare provision. A significant part of this Act focussed on changes to the LA statutory duties in relation to the Local Offer for children with

SEND. It replaced the statement of Special Educational needs with integrated Education, Health and Care Plans as well as bringing together the separate arrangements for children with SEND in schools and those in post 16 institutions up to their 25th birthday.

## National Guidance

### Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

This statutory guidance sets out the local authorities duties to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, to secure free early years provision and sets out the type and amount of free provision and the age of children to benefit. This guidance refers to 'early years' provision' as 'early education' or the 'free entitlement to early education'.

### Working Together to Safeguard Children

This statutory guidance came in to effect on 26th March 2015. It sets out everyone's responsibilities, including early years and childcare providers, in respect to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare

# Appendix 2



## National Picture

The Department for Education (DfE) intends to 'free up LA's so that they are able to concentrate on a similar role in the early years' to that within schools. The White Paper 2010 clarifies the role of LAs in championing the needs of children and families and to provide necessary challenge and support, whilst emphasising the LA's strong strategic role.

DfE proposed that Ofsted became the sole arbiter of quality and be responsible for identifying under performance in the early years. DfE deemed that LAs do not need to conduct their own quality assessments of providers. Following the publication of the Government's document 'More Affordable Childcare', July 2013 the LA role has moved from quality improvement towards acting as Champions for Children, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The role of the LA is to focus on challenging and securing improvement for early years and childcare providers that are judged by Ofsted as 'requiring improvement' or inadequate to become good or outstanding. Providers judged good or outstanding can seek support from where they find it most helpful.

## Duties remaining with the LA:

- support providers to meet requirements of EYFS
- support safeguarding and welfare requirements including compliance
- support providers to include children with SEN, disability and Looked After Children
- ensure all providers who provide/offer funded education places in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector are aware of the requirement on them to have regard for the SEN Code of Practice and to meet the needs of children with SEN
- support children who are at risk of social exclusion.

## Other national changes include:

- The removal of the requirement for schools to register early years provision separately
- The removal of the statutory process required for schools to change their registered age range
- The introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium from April 2015 building on the school model of Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged three and four year olds and their peers.

The LA needs to give consideration to the provision of sufficient high quality places for funded two, three and four year olds and the impact of the introduction of 30 funded hours for three and four year olds from September 2017.

National changes have implications for the way the LA works with early years providers and are considered within the aims and priorities of this strategy.

