

ELL2-01-06(p1) Annex B2

To: Minister for Education and
Lifelong Learning

From: C J Burdett
Director, Children and
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Ext 3936
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Date: 30 September 2005

cc: Permanent Secretary
Mr D W Jones
Mr R J Davies
Mr P Rogers
Mr R Kilpatrick
Mr J Hawkins
Ms S Richards
Mrs E Long
Professor D Egan
Professor I Butler
Mr P Griffiths
Mr M Bell
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IMPLEMENTATION OF FOUNDATION PHASE

Issue

1. The pace of the roll-out of the Foundation Phase.

Timing

2. Urgent. A decision by the time of the budget debate on Tuesday 4 October would give certainty to the budget lines in the ELL MEG.

Recommendation

3. You are invited to agree:
 - a.) An adjustment to the timetable of the roll-out of the Foundation Phase so that the all-Wales implementation for settings for 3-5 year olds takes place in September 2008;
 - b.) The statement of information at doc. 2;
 - c.) That the decision report is published at the same time as the announcement of the revised timetable.

Background

4. Exempt under Section 36

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6. The consultation document on the Foundation Phase indicated that the timetable for implementation would be subject to the degree to which resources could be made

available and evaluation of the pilot projects. The draft of the evaluation of the first year of pilots has just been received. Its findings include:

- The settings with a higher proportion of qualified teachers scored significantly higher on all of the quality scales. The level of qualification was far more important to quality than the staff/child ratio.
 - There is overwhelming support for the Foundation Phase curriculum.
 - Currently transition arrangements between maintained and non-maintained sectors are inconsistent and arbitrary. It may be advantageous to consider a national assessment profile to help address this.
 - Key Stage 2 staff will need training about the Foundation Phase.
 - There is a great range of qualifications held by staff working in the pilot settings and a need for training strategies.
 - Directors of Education felt that indoor accommodation was inadequate in the non-maintained sector and outdoor accommodation inadequate in both sectors.
7. These recommendations point to the need for significant further preparatory work before full implementation. The workforce planning implications of the extra 1800 staff that will be necessary in the first year of full roll-out are substantial. In addition, there is to be consultation on the underpinning legislative procedures, beginning in January 2007. A longer period for the roll-out of the Foundation Phase could give time to address the significant issues raised by the evaluation and the options for development. I could also give a less rushed timetable for the underpinning legislation.
8. A slower roll-out could involve the implementation of pilots in more schools. However, given the need to find additional resources in the ELL MEG for further pilots, this will form the subject of a separate submission and is not part of this advice.

Financial Implications

9. *Exempt under Section 36*

Compliance

9. Section 104 of the Education Act 2002 will be used to define the Foundation Phase.

Communication and Publicity Arrangements

10. There are no publicity requirements arising from this submission, although any announcement of a change of timetable will clearly require careful publicity handling.

C J BURDETT

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

The Foundation Phase for 3 to 7 year olds is key to the Assembly Government's drive to raise standards, equip children with the skills to learn and to encourage them to continue learning and developing throughout life. The draft of the evaluation of the first year of the pilots has just been received. . Its findings include:

- The settings with a higher proportion of qualified teachers scored significantly higher on all of the quality scales. The level of qualification was far more important to quality than the staff/child ratio.
- There is overwhelming support for the Foundation Phase curriculum.
- Currently transition arrangements between maintained and non-maintained sectors are inconsistent and arbitrary. It may be advantageous to consider a national assessment profile to help address this.
- Key Stage 2 staff will need training about the Foundation Phase.
- There is a great range of qualifications held by staff working in the pilot settings and a need for training strategies.
- Directors of Education felt that indoor accommodation was inadequate in the non-maintained sector and outdoor accommodation inadequate in both sectors.

These recommendations point to the need for further preparatory work before full implementation.