

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOUNDATION PHASE

1. In the consultation paper “The Learning Country: Foundation Phase 3-7 years” the Minister proposed that from the start of the 2008/09 school year the new Foundation Phase curriculum should be statutory in all maintained schools and funded non-maintained settings providing education for 3 to 7-year-olds. Both in the consultation paper and the action plan prepared following completion of the consultation exercise the Minister made it clear that the timetable would be subject to a satisfactory evaluation of the Pilot settings. Implementation would be informed by the evaluation team’s findings and its statutory rollout being commensurate with the availability of sufficient resources and the outcome from successive BPR rounds. We did not commit to fund whatever the costs.
2. This paper looks at the feasibility of implementing the timetable as currently constructed. It is fair to say that it was acknowledged from the start that the timetable was an ambitious one, requiring careful monitoring and regular review as it rolled out. The timetable is also quite intricate and has many different but clearly related elements each of which has its own set of milestones and objectives. Each element is dealt with detail in the body of this paper, but key to the success of the implementation programme are:
  - Funding for the Foundation Phase;
  - Evaluation of the pilot settings/schools; and
  - The legislative process which will make the Foundation Phase a statutory component of the school curriculum.
3. If we are to get this right administratively, educationally, legally, financially (and publicly) then more time needs to be found to enable stakeholders (the Welsh Assembly Government, ACCAC, LEAs and schools/settings) to “sign-off” each step of the implementation programme. The attached sets out the issues surrounding each element and stage of the rollout and concludes that the pilot phase needs to be extended by two school years. Such an extension would provide for a full consultation which takes on board two years of pilots and evaluation and at the same time enables the Minister to sustain the line that the Foundation Phase would be statutory from September 2008. Albeit only for 3 to 6 year-olds with the complete implementation on stream from September 2009. The current timetable has implementation starting in September 2006, for the 3 to 5-year-olds, and fully implemented from September 2008. Effectively the revised timetable moves the end implementation date on by only one year.
4. The paper also recommends that from September 2007 all funded settings and maintained schools offer the Foundation Phase to 3 to 5-year-olds on a non-statutory basis. This has the benefit of maintaining momentum, not requiring existing legislation to be removed and allowing all (funded) settings to prepare for the statutory requirements which will come into effect from September 2008.

5. The following tables show the current timetable (fig 1) and proposed new timetable (fig 2).

Fig 1 – Current Implementation Timetable

Sept 2004	Sept 2005	Sept 2006	Sept 2007	Sept 2008
3-5 pilot settings/schools only	3-5 pilot settings/schools only	Statutory in all 3-5 funded and maintained settings	Statutory in all 3-5 funded and maintained settings	Statutory in all 3-5 funded and maintained settings
	Year 1 pilot classes only	Year 1 pilot classes only	Statutory in all year 1 classes	Statutory in all year 1 classes
		Year 2 pilot classes only	Year 2 pilot classes only	Statutory in all year 2 classes

Fig 2 – Proposed Implementation Timetable

Sept 2004	Sept 2005	Sept 2006	Sept 2007	Sept 2008	Sept 2009
3-5 pilot settings or schools only	3-5 pilot settings or schools only	3-5 pilot settings or schools only	Non-statutory in all 3-5 settings or schools*	Statutory in all 3-5 funded and maintained settings	Statutory in all 3-5 funded and maintained settings
	Year 1 pilot classes only	Year 1 pilot classes only	Year 1 pilot classes only	Statutory in all year 1 classes	Statutory in all year 1 classes
		Year 2 pilot classes only	Year 2 pilot classes only	Year 2 pilot classes only	Statutory in all year 2 classes

\* Effectively a non-statutory national pilot.

6. The key elements of the timetable are:

- ACCAC's timetable to develop and produce the documentation to support the pilot schools and settings;
- Evaluation of the impact of the Foundation Phase on the Pilot schools and settings;
- Evaluation and subsequent modification of the documentation/material;
- Consultation on the statutory framework/Regulations and making the appropriate regulations;
- Aligning the Foundation phase with the removal of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum and the introduction of the new Key Stage 2 National Curriculum;

## **PREPARATION AND AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTATION**

7. The documents required to support the Pilot and the subsequent implementation of the Foundation Phase can be broken down into two distinct types – statutory requirements and guidance materials to support teaching and learning. Both are at various stages of development but are not yet the final article.
8. The statutory documents, effectively the “Foundation Phase Orders”, will set down in legislation what governing bodies and headteachers, in the case of maintained schools, and any person providing funded nursery education are required to deliver. The guidance material will provide help and support on how teachers/assistants deliver the Foundation Phase.
9. To date there has been a good deal of confusion as to what will constitute the statutory documents and what will be consigned to guidance. A brief discussion on that issue is included in paragraphs 27-31 which deals with the legislative process/timetable. This section deals with the material currently in production and the impact its availability (or otherwise) has on the implementation timetable.

### **Draft Framework for Children’s Learning**

10. ACCAC was remitted to produce a draft Framework for use in the pilot settings/schools. This was achieved in August 2004 when the Minister approved the draft Framework – although this enabled schools and settings to start using the Framework from September 2004 preparation time was severely curtailed. This version of the Framework will remain in place for the first two years of the pilot i.e. until summer 2006, during which time ACCAC will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the document. That evaluation and the recommendations which flow from it will be reflected in a revised Framework (or parts of) which will form the basis of the consultation paper and subsequently the statutory requirements (the Foundation Phase curriculum Orders). The remaining elements of the current Framework will be subsumed within the supporting guidance material.

### **Guidance**

11. Other than the draft Framework, Pilot settings/schools have yet to receive any guidance material. ACCAC is currently working with its writers on: “overview” documents for each Area of Learning; Supplementary Assessment material which provides guidance on “observing” pupils; Outcome descriptions for each Area of Learning; Progress in Learning guides for each Area of Learning and their constituent parts (e.g. Reading, Oracy and Writing); and guidance on “how” to deliver the Foundation Phase (e.g. case studies/good practice).
12. A number of these documents, in the main those dealing with the “core” Areas of Learning, are nearing a stage (third draft) when they can be shared with the Pilot settings. Indeed, guidance on and Outcomes for “Personal and

Social Development and Well Being”, and the outcomes for “Language, Literacy and Communication Skills” and “Mathematical Development” went to schools on 24 June. The guidance on “Language, Literacy and Communication Skills” and “Mathematical Development” will follow shortly, but the remaining material will not be with the Pilots until September.

13. A number of factors have impacted on the development/writing timetable:

- A lack of writers showing an interest in preparing the material as a result ACCAC was unable to award contracts when originally planned;
- The quality of the first drafts not being close to what was required/expected, resulting in complete rewrites;
- A degree of confusion as to what was required - the Progress in Learning guides and Outcome Descriptions for each Area of Learning were late additions to the list of materials required.

14. The bottom line is that settings do not currently have access to key guidance/support material – some of which will form part of the statutory requirements - which in turn means that its effectiveness, coverage and completeness cannot be evaluated until the 2005/06 school year.

## **EVALUATION**

15. There are two strands to the monitoring and evaluation programme.

16. The first being undertaken by the University of London is currently focussing on the introduction of the Foundation Phase in the 3 – 5 pilot settings and in particular:

- the pupil/teacher ratios;
- its impact on classroom organisation; the use of physical space;
- the human and financial resources required;
- the level of support materials needed; and
- approaches to teaching and learning.

17. The initial contract for this work was awarded in November 2004 and is scheduled to complete towards the end of 2005 when a final report is due to be published. We have, however, recently extended this contract for a further year to:

- Enable an evaluation of the Year 1 pupils joining the Pilot from September 2005;
- Look at how lessons learnt during the first year (of the Pilot) in respect of the 3 to 5-year-olds are implemented during the second year of the pilot when the next group of 3 to 5-year-olds come on roll;

- Allow time for schools and settings to become more familiar with the Framework and the supporting guidance and materials provided by ACCAC.

As outlined in paragraphs 11-14 the bulk of these documents will not be in the Pilots until the latter part of the 2005 summer term or the start of the autumn term and their impact and usefulness will be difficult to evaluate before the current University of London contract expires. We, therefore, need to make more time during the 2005/06 school year for the guidance to bed down and be fully evaluated and amended/expanded before moving to a statutory rollout.

18. The present timetable would require a consultation exercise on the statutory requirements to start during the current school year in advance of any evaluation of the (first year) of the Pilots and before all but the initial draft Framework had been made available to schools and settings.
19. The second strand of the evaluation is being undertaken by ACCAC. This work concentrates on the quality and appropriateness of the Framework, its component parts and the supporting guidance. This work dovetails with elements of the University of London's but is more narrowly focussed and mirrors the work that ACCAC routinely undertakes when developing new and revised curriculum documents. To ensure that feedback and refinements are well founded, schools and settings need up to two school years of using the documents to judge their appropriateness. This is very important in respect of the year 1 classes in primary schools where the new approach to teaching which is fundamental to the Foundation Phase will have the greatest impact and present the biggest challenge to teachers.
20. It is crucial, therefore, that any evaluation programme provides ample opportunity for these teachers (in the pilots) to familiarise themselves with the documents and to feed their views and observations to ACCAC and U of L. This material is still in preparation and will not be in the Pilot schools until the summer term and Year 1 staff will use it for the first time from September 2005. If the Pilots are to inform the content of the curriculum documents then we must allow a full school year (2005/06) for teachers to use and become a familiar with it.
21. If both evaluation exercises are to be valid and used to inform the implementation of the Foundation Phase in terms of the statutory requirements, the guidance material needed to support its successful integration into the school curriculum and to optimise the staffing levels required then we need to create sufficient space in the timetable to allow careful consideration of the final reports and outcomes.
22. Therefore, the earliest start date for a consultation exercise which takes account of the experiences of teachers and an evaluation of the effectiveness and coverage of the materials is January 2007.

## Legislative Timetable

23. There are established timescales for consulting on and introducing statutory duties/requirements in respect of the National Curriculum. A general rule of thumb is that the statutory Orders and guidance material are published in the January prior to the start of the school year from which the new requirements come into force. These timescales developed by Standards and Performance Division in collaboration with ACCAC will be adopted when the current National Curriculum Orders are reviewed and revised. There is a logic, therefore, to similar timescales being adopted for the Foundation Phase particularly as the first two years of the current National Curriculum will be replaced by the new Foundation Phase requirements.
24. We should also look to designing a timetable which takes note of the pilots, their evaluation and changes to the draft documentation that will form the basis of the consultation paper i.e. the proposed statutory requirements. As described above, the current implementation timetables would require a consultation exercise to begin at the same time as the second year of the Pilots was about to start and to conclude before the final evaluation report of the first pilot year was available.
25. There would not, therefore, be an opportunity to take on board any lessons learnt from the pilots or to adjust/amend the documents before consulting on making them statutory. The following table is built around established good practice, the Assembly's legislative process and provides space (as best we can) for comments and evaluation results to be reflected in the final product – both the statutory and guidance elements.

**Fig 3 – Consultation /legislative timetable**

2006	2007			2008		2009
Sept-Oct	Jan-April	May- July	Sept-Dec	January	From Sept	From Sept
Finalise consultation paper.  <i>Informed by evaluation reports and by talking to pilot settings/schools. Pilot schools (year 2 pupils) will be able to work from consolidated document.</i>	Consultation period for Regulations and Curriculum documents	Analyse responses and revise Regulations and Documents	Make new Regulations.  Open pilot to all funded non-maintained settings and maintained schools with 3 to 5 provision.	Publish Regulations setting out statutory requirements plus supporting Guidance materials	Foundation Phase statutory for 3 to 6-year-olds in maintained schools and funded non-maintained settings.	Foundation Phase statutory for 3 to 7-year-olds

## National Curriculum Review

26. The timetable outlined above would also bring the Foundation Phase in line with the established timetable for reviewing the National Curriculum. Currently the intention is to implement a revised National Curriculum from September 2008 and to continue with the five-year cycle of reviews. There

is a logic, both practical and presentational, to the Foundation Phase following the same timetable. Introducing the statutory Foundation Phase in advance of the revised NC would put it out of step with the review process and with Key Stage 2. Junior schools could be faced with introducing a new Foundation Phase, a revised Key Stage 2 curriculum and completing the existing Key Stage 1 curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD BE STATUTORY?

27. The primary legislation (Section 104 of the 2002 Education Act) which will be used to define the Foundation Phase states that [Regulations]:
- **shall specify** Areas of Learning; and
  - **may specify** (in relation to them) the knowledge, skills and understanding (effectively the current “desirable outcomes” and “attainment targets”) pupils are expected to have by the end of the Foundation Phase;
  - The matters, skills and processes which pupils are required to be taught “the Educational Programmes” (the equivalent of the current Programmes of Study);
  - and the assessment arrangements to be applied at the end of the Foundation Phase.
28. Although specifying the desirable outcomes/attainment targets, the educational programmes and assessment arrangements is discretionary we would, to ensure consistency and conformity, want these elements to be set down in legislation. Taken as a whole these elements would produce the learning and assessment continuum proposed in the Foundation Phase consultation paper.
29. To date (and in line with the original timetable) the only elements in place in the pilot schools/settings are the Areas of Learning and parts of the educational programmes. As described earlier, work is still in progress on developing the attainment targets (to be known as “outcome descriptions”) in the Foundation Phase; a comprehensive set of educational programmes and the guidance and teacher support material.
30. Essentially the Pilot settings have yet to receive the documents which explain “how” Areas of Learning and Educational Programmes should be delivered and also how teachers should link what is being delivered to the outcomes expected at the end of the Phase. The latter will be achieved by designing a “progress in learning” section which refocuses a good deal of the text currently contained in the draft Framework. However, this section has yet to be designed and will not be ready, for all areas of Learning, until the 2005/06 school year. The “outcome descriptions” are also at a similar stage with only those for “Personal and Social Development and Well-being”, Language, Literacy and Communication Skills” and “Mathematical Development” i.e. those which will be the subject of statutory assessment, only now being shared with the Pilot settings. The remaining outcome descriptions will not be ready until September.

31. These elements - the Areas of Learning, Progress in Learning and Outcomes – will effectively constitute the Regulations/Orders on which the consultation exercise will be based.

## **FUNDING**

### ***32. Exempt under Section 36***

- the arrangements that operate in each school;
- the effect of changing school rolls on these arrangements;
- how schools will reorganise as a result of a change to the adult/pupil ratios (which are key to the success of the Foundation Phase); or, indeed,
- what the University of London's evaluation will recommend is the optimum ratio for each year group.

33. The very early indications (which in many senses are anecdotal) are that a ratio close to the non-maintained standard of 1:8 which operates in the early years (3-5) settings would provide the right amount of support needed for these children. However, given the maturities and the desire for more self-directed learning to develop, the ratio for 5 to 7-year-olds could and should be higher at 1:13 or 1:15. But the optimum ratio will only become clearer when the Pilot has been evaluated or, indeed, when the Foundation Phase has been up and running for a number of years.

### ***34. Exempt under Section 36***

35. Calculating the price tag has been approached in two ways:

- Basing our estimates on the current pilots by applying the rate per setting to the total number of settings and classes that will deliver the Foundation Phase; or
- Using elements of the Pilot costs – those covering management and resources – but using PLASC as a means of calculating the additional staff numbers and costs. Using PLASC enables us to base our calculations on the number of pupils, teachers and assistants currently in schools and classes.

36. The two methods produce quite similar results. The advantage of the second method is that it does provide an indication of the extra staff required and the likely numbers needed by each LEA. Although it must be borne in mind that falling rolls and any future class or school reorganisations can only be catered for in part. ***Exempt under Section 36***

### ***37. Exempt under Section 36***

### ***38. Exempt under Section 36***



