

Questions and answers from the Ofsted South East early years webinar for childminders held on 10 October 2019

Q: Now a written SEF isn't mandatory, how is this approached during an inspection?

A: The SEF (self-evaluation form) has never been mandatory: the form used to be provided by Ofsted as a helpful tool, but it was not compulsory. It is the process of self-evaluation that inspectors want to explore. Inspectors will expect the setting to demonstrate how they reflect and evaluate, identify what is working well and what needs improvement, and how settings plan to make these improvements effectively.

Q: If a childminder is unable or not confident to speak about the curriculum in terms of an individual child because they are nervous, can they still refer and show paperwork to the inspector to explain what they do and how?

A: Absolutely! Ofsted have moved away from unnecessary paperwork about assessment of children's learning and development in the education inspection framework (EIF). However, if a provider is more comfortable making use of systems they use, then that is fine and up to them.

Q: How can we evidence partnership working if there is no emphasis on paperwork?

A: Paperwork about partnerships does not necessarily mean that partnerships are effective. The inspector will want to talk to staff and parents and make observations of the provision on offer to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.

Q: What is the intent of the curriculum?

A: The intent of the curriculum is your rationale for providing the curriculum you do. Why are you doing what you are doing and does it meet the needs of the children attending? Furthermore, you do not have to have written planning for your curriculum: it is about the rationale and purpose of the curriculum.

Q: DBS: do they run out? And if not signed up to the update service does it matter if they have a different address on?

A: The DBS only ever covers history up until the date it was issued, unless on the update service. It is a snapshot in time, any renewal of the DBS should be in line with the setting's standard policy.

Q: If you have a CRB not a DBS do you need to get a DBS?

A: If you have a CRB and your circumstances have not changed, you do not require a DBS.

Q: Is MASH the only one organization to report child abuse?

A: Each local area has its own organisation and set-up for safeguarding referrals. It is essential that you know what your local arrangements are and who you need to contact if you have concerns about a child in your care.

Q: Will inspectors expect to see bedrooms?

A: In a childminding provision, the whole home is registered. Therefore, it is likely the inspector will want to see all areas of the home.

Q: Paperwork and electronic systems for recording assessment of children's learning?

A: The EYFS does not require assessment information to be written and neither does Ofsted. It is about how effective assessment is in helping children to develop their knowledge and skills. Inspectors will evaluate this through observation and discussion. The only exception is the two-year-old progress check, which must be written and shared with parents to meet the requirements of the EYFS.

Q: Can we see a report on the Ofsted page?

A: There are now many EIF inspection reports published.

Q: If I have under-five, plus a Reception age child and an eight-year-old child present during an inspection, what expectations would the inspector have in terms of the learning & development requirements regarding the Reception-age child and for the eight-year-old child who is not in the EY age group? Would footnote 5 of the EYFS apply to the Reception age child?

A: Yes. The footnote would apply.

Q: I still feel unsure regarding the variation of numbers for childminders. I feel like there are so many inconsistencies. Can we still look after four children under-five under the continuity of care guidance?

A: The Department for Education guidance states that a childminder must care for no more than six children at any one time. Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, exceptions to the ratios may be made, such as in the case of sibling babies or when the childminder has a baby themselves. In all cases, the childminder must demonstrate they are meeting the needs of all children in their care and that the standard of care is not compromised by any additional child.

Q: In terms of notifying Ofsted of changes, I would like to apply for my son's DBS as he will be 16 soon (end November) can I apply for his DBS before he is 16? Or do I wait until he is 16?

A: You need to wait until your son is 16.

Q: Do we still need to write up a SEF to give to the inspector or can we just discuss it?

A: The written self-evaluation form (SEF) has never been mandatory. You need to be able to demonstrate how you effectively evaluate your provision and plan for improvement, but this does not have to be written down.

Q: Do inspectors speak to parents?

A: Yes. In almost all inspections, inspectors will speak with parents. On rare occasions when this is not possible, they will seek out parent views through comment books, cards, notes, etc.

Q: Is the written check between two and three effectively the two-year check?

A: Yes, this refers to the two-year-old progress check that should be carried out between the ages of two and three years.

Q: Would an inspector join you on a school run?

A: Quite possibly. There is lots to observe and evaluate during this part of the day, depending on the time of the inspection.

Q: How many activities would an inspector expect to see on an inspection?

A: There is no magic number. It wholly depends on the needs of the children attending and the intent of the curriculum being delivered.

Q: Do you have any good activity ideas to do with speech?

A: It is really dependent on the needs of the child or children. Please contact your local authority for advice about this.

Q: After school care only: what is expected?

A: Please refer to Annex A of the 'Early years inspection handbook' for details.

Q: Cultural capital: exactly what paperwork is needed/displayed as a legal requirement?

A: There are no items of paperwork or displays required for cultural capital. Cultural capital should be threaded through effective early years provision to ensure children are given the best possible start in life. Please see Ofsted's [short film](#) about this for further details.