

## Different but Equal

The recent government policy statement '*More Great Childcare*' announced major changes to education and training at graduate professional level for those working with young children from birth to 5. While welcoming much of its content, the following statement expresses the outstanding concerns of some of the representative organisations of academics, researchers and teachers in Higher Education, major nursery chains and other representatives of wider stakeholders with an interest in higher level education and training leading to Qualified Teacher Status and Early Years Professional Status including those directly affected by the changes

### Statement:

- We welcome the government's recognition of the value of EYPS as a multi-disciplinary training programme specifically designed to produce graduate leaders capable of meeting the holistic needs of young children from birth to five and their families;
- We welcome the governments recognition of the impact that graduate leaders who are EYPS status holders have had/ are having on the quality of Early Years provision nationally;
- We welcome the expressed intention to build on the strengths of the EYPS standards and training programme in future and would question the need for any significant modification to the standards that have recently been revised to align with QTS standards;

**However, we have a number of concerns about the current proposal for a new profession of Early Years Teacher (0-5) without QTS.** Recent research has confirmed that the roles of Early Years Professionals and Early Years Teachers with QTS are fundamentally different in relation to:

- **the breadth and scope of knowledge and skills:-** EYPS deals broadly with the whole child from birth to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a family and community context and from a multi-disciplinary standpoint in which health, welfare, working with social disadvantage, parent support and safeguarding have equal importance with education; although considering these wider aspects, QTS focuses primarily on the educational dimensions, delivering curriculum content and partnership with parents in their role as the child's first educators from 3 onwards.
- **the expectation and assessment of leadership:-** EYPS prepares graduates to act as change agents responsible for raising standards across the whole setting and leading and supporting/mentoring teams of staff from day one; QTS prepares graduates initially for curriculum leadership of a single class, including any para-professionals, whereas wider responsibility for leadership and quality at school level develops after the initial supervised NQT year.
- **EY teachers with QTS** are recognised for their specialist, in-depth knowledge and skills in **teaching and enabling children aged 3-7 to access required learning across the curriculum.** Involving parents in their children's learning is seen as an important part of this, as is liaison with specialist professionals in order to support children's learning.
- **EY professionals with EYPS** are required to demonstrate **knowledge, skills and experience with 0-3 year olds**, to actively engage with and support parents of children of all ages regarding **parenting issues** and to liaise directly with social workers, health workers and others to **promote and safeguard children's health and well-being** as well as educational aims.

## Different and Unequal

The current proposal gives a situation which is confusing for parents and prospective students in which some graduates will be 3-7 trained with QTS whilst others will be 0-5 trained with the equivalent of a revised EYPS yet both will be called Early Years Teachers

- EY Teachers without QTS are likely to be regarded as second class citizens in maintained schools since they will not be employed on the same pay and conditions as those with QTS (though it is recognised that strict adherence to national pay scales is changing with the advent of academies, free schools etc)
- EY Teachers without QTS are also likely to be disadvantaged in competition for jobs because of restrictions on their flexibility to be deployed in all areas of the school. In contrast, those with QTS or QTLS can be deployed throughout a maintained school at the discretion of the head teacher.
- In the longer term, there is a danger that those who work in the Foundation Stage as Early Years Teachers, regardless of qualification type, become cut off from the core profession of teachers and the importance of their work downgraded.

## Different but Equal

We consider that Early Years Professionals/ new Early Years Teachers and Early Years Teachers with QTS should be equally valued, equally remunerated and equally able to be employed throughout the education and childcare sectors. It should be up to employers, Head Teachers and Local Authorities to deploy staff on an equal basis according to their expertise.

- Alternative models across Europe allow for a distinction between pedagogues and teachers with equivalent but different graduate training and status and equivalent recognition in terms of pay, terms and conditions of service and in terms of employment throughout the education sector.
- An alternative model already exists within England that expressly recognises two forms of teaching professions as different but equal:-

'Since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 further education teachers who have been awarded QTLS by the Institute for Learning (IfL) and are members of the IfL are recognised as qualified teachers in schools. This will allow them to be appointed to permanent posts in maintained schools in England and they will be paid on the qualified teachers' pay scale. ( DfE 08 May 2012)

While recognising that teachers pay and conditions have recently changed to increase the discretion of head teachers to employ, deploy and remunerate staff according to their expertise and performance, we endorse the government response to the recent review to retain a 'broad national pay structure' in particular that 'all entrants to the profession will know what they can earn as a minimum starting salary' (DfE response to School Teachers Review Board recommendations Nov 2012)

At the moment, the Teaching Agency's advice is that new Early Years Teachers without QTS may be employed in schools as 'instructors'. This reinforces the perception of **different and unequal** that we reject. Whilst recognising that legal change may be necessary, we strongly recommend that the government makes a statement of intent to the effect that either :

(a) the new status is QTS (0-5/Foundation) so that teachers are simply differentiated by phase and that standards reflect the essential differences in promoting children's learning, well-being and development under the EYFS and supporting parents; or,  
(b) The equivalence of Early Years Teachers with their distinct role and standards will be treated in the same way as that of QTLS holders.

Both the above options would serve to confirm the message of **different but equal**.

