

## CHAPTER 1

# The Every Child Matters Standards

This chapter introduces the Every Child Matters Standards. It explains:

- the concept and principles of the Every Child Matters Standards;
- where and when to utilise the Every Child Matters Standards;
- the advantages of engaging in the Every Child Matters Standards Award process;
- the role of the Every Child Matters external assessors.

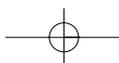
## The concept of the Every Child Matters Standards

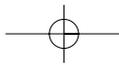
The ECM Standards originated from the need for educational settings to gain external recognition for their ECM policy and practice beyond the Ofsted inspection process, and to be able to demonstrate to a range of stakeholders that they are responding appropriately to the government's Every Child Matters Change for Children strategy.

When the government published the Green Paper entitled *Every Child Matters* in 2003, and their *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* a year later, they made explicit in these documents their vision and expectation that educational settings have an important role to play, as a universal service provider themselves, to improve the educational achievement, quality of life and well-being outcomes for children and young people.

The ECM Standards align closely with the Ofsted inspection framework self-evaluation process. They are consistent with central and local government legislation related to Every Child Matters. They enable educational settings to gather harder quantitative ECM outcomes data and telling qualitative evidence in order to demonstrate the impact of actions and extended service provision on improving the learning and ECM well-being outcomes for children and young people.

Every Child Matters acknowledges that children and young people cannot learn effectively if they do not feel safe, healthy or happy, and that learning and well-being go hand in hand. Clearly, educational settings are not solely responsible for improving Every Child Matters outcomes. Together, in collaboration with service users (children, young people and their families) and other statutory agencies, including voluntary and community sector partners, they develop





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and deliver accessible personalised services and wraparound care on, or near the site of the educational setting, to improve personalised learning and the ECM outcomes for children and young people.

The *2020 Vision Report on Teaching and Learning* indicated that:

*Society's aspirations for learners are expressed in the outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework . . . Increased collaboration, as part of the Every Child Matters agenda, creates a climate in which personalisation can take place.*

(DfES, 2007: 5 and 10)

## Guiding principles

The following guiding principles provide a baseline of entry criteria for commencing on the Every Child Matters Standards self-evaluation process.

- The educational setting's leader has shared their passion, enthusiasm and vision for Every Child Matters with key stakeholders.
- An Every Child Matters visioning and awareness raising event has already taken place within the educational setting, which has informed stakeholders of the bigger picture.
- There is an ethos of openness, consultation, participation and shared ownership for Every Child Matters in existence among stakeholders.
- The well-being of children/young people and staff within the educational setting is important and valued.
- A collaborative culture exists within a secure learning community, which promotes research, reflection, creativity and innovation for Every Child Matters.
- The educational setting takes the wider community view for Every Child Matters and networks with other settings, services and organisations.
- There is a designated senior staff member responsible for leading and overseeing the ECM Standards process within the educational setting.
- A core team of staff has been established within the educational setting, with clear roles and responsibilities for intelligent accountability in gathering evidence for the twelve ECM standards.
- A contract, outlining the terms of reference for the ECM Standards Award scheme has been explained, agreed and signed by the leader of the educational setting and a representative/assessor from the ECM Standards Team.

## Where the Every Child Matters Standards can be utilised

The ECM Standards self-evaluation process will enable any educational setting, whether it be an early years setting, a children's centre, a special school, a mainstream school in the primary and



secondary phase with or without a resourced provision, a pupil referral unit (PRU), or a sixth-form/FE college, in partnership with other service providers, to successfully meet the demands and expectations of the Every Child Matters agenda, as part of their everyday practice.

## When to work towards achieving the Every Child Matters Standards

When it is most appropriate for an educational setting to begin to engage with the ECM Standards process is very much dependent on their current context and the starting point from which the setting is approaching the Every Child Matters change for children programme. Chapter 2 provides more detail about the stages an educational setting needs to go through in order to achieve the ECM Standards.

Table 1.1 indicates when it is, and is not, appropriate to proceed along the journey towards achieving the ECM Standards.

**Table 1.1 Appropriateness as to when to engage in the ECM Standards Award**

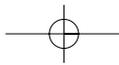
<i>When it is NOT appropriate to participate in the ECM Standards Award</i>	<i>When it IS appropriate to participate in the ECM Standards Award</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A setting is facing closure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stakeholders within an educational setting have the 'will' to meet the ECM change for children agenda</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A setting is going through an amalgamation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staff in the setting have the capacity to deliver and respond to the ECM strategy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A setting is currently involved in a new building project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The setting is already successfully delivering wraparound care and extended services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A school or PRU is in Special Measures, as categorised following an Ofsted inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The setting's policy and practice in ECM outcomes was judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding</li> </ul>

Although the ECM Standards, as a self-evaluation process, requires commitment, it is a process that is manageable, rewarding and owned by all participants within the educational setting.

## The advantages of undertaking the ECM Standards Award process

The advantages of participating in the ECM Standards self-assessment process are as follows:

- The structure of the ECM Standards framework meets the expectations of a twenty-first century education system and Children's Workforce.
- The ECM Standards framework aligns with Ofsted inspection requirements and other national quality standards.



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- The process towards achieving the ECM Standards Award engages a range of stakeholders as active participants.
- The ECM Standards support capacity building for Every Child Matters within and across a range of educational settings.
- The dissemination and sharing of best ECM practice is promoted.
- There is the potential for educational settings to be offered external recognition for their good quality Every Child Matters policy and practice, through the award of the ECM Standards Certificate.

## Every Child Matters Standards assessors

The assessors who make up the ECM Standards quality assurance team can be any of the following:

- local authority and independent school improvement advisers and inspectors;
- educational psychologists;
- advisory or consultant teachers;
- advanced skills teachers or excellent teachers;
- principals/deputy principals from FE/sixth-form colleges, headteachers/deputy headteachers from schools, and heads from pru's, children's centres and early years settings;
- senior lecturers from higher education institutions;
- independent educational consultants;
- senior practitioners from health and social services with an education background.

Assessors require substantial experience and knowledge which covers:

- the phase of educational setting they are assessing;
- Every Child Matters policy and practice;
- using the ECM Standards Framework;
- improvement planning;
- self-evaluation;
- data analysis, leadership and management;
- personalised learning;
- assessment for learning; and
- inclusion.

Assessors need to allocate themselves at least five days as a minimum per educational setting over the agreed period of time for achieving the ECM Standards Award. This will cover:



- scrutiny of ECM documentary evidence;
- on-site visits to observe and research ECM practice and provision first-hand;
- report writing;
- telephone and/or e-mail advice, support and guidance;
- and INSET delivery.

Moderation between assessors of the ECM Standards evidence gathered from educational settings ensures a fair, consistent and valid approach to assessment and quality assurance is adopted.

The role of the ECM Standards assessor should be included in job descriptions. The income generated from undertaking the assessor role is ploughed back into the local authority, HE institution or educational settings budget, or to the commissioned independent company or organisation. ECM Standards assessors must ensure that their own continuing professional development relates to Every Child Matters and to their assessment role, and that it is kept up to date.

The members of an ECM Standards assessment team must be CRB-enhanced checked, as they will be gaining first-hand evidence from children and young people, during the final on-site assessment visit to educational settings.

### **Case study: ECM Standards Assessor final school assessment visit**

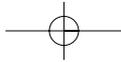
Jane Wall is a full-time ECM Change and School Improvement Adviser working within a unitary local authority. She has agreed in advance with the headteacher of Investa Community Primary School the planned programme for the final assessment day visit to the school.

Investa Community Primary School is not one of her link schools, but she has obtained an initial view of the school's context and their work to date on Every Child Matters from an analysis of data and the school's ECM Standards portfolio of evidence which was submitted in advance of the planned visit.

Tuesday morning, Jane arrives at the school for 8.30 a.m. where she is welcomed by the school receptionist and the headteacher. There are no changes to the agreed programme for the day's visit.

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| 8.40 – 9.30   | Focused discussion with the headteacher and deputy headteacher leading and overseeing the ECM Standards process throughout the school, and the Chair of Governors responsible for Every Child Matters. During discussions, Jane clarifies their views about the school's ECM strengths, the progress made in addressing the ECM priorities identified by initial audit and on the action plan, and the progress they consider to have been made in improving the ECM outcomes for pupils. |
| 9.30 – 10.00  | Learning walk around the school, escorted by two pupil representatives from the School Council, with an opportunity to ask the pupils questions about anything observed during the tour related to ECM outcomes.  |
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Focused discussion with a small group of four parents, two of whom are parent governors and two who assist in the running of an after-school club.  |

- Their views are sought about the impact of undertaking the ECM Standards Award process on pupil outcomes, which provides a useful cross-check with the earlier discussion with the leadership team and the chair of governors.
- 10.30 – 11.00 Meeting with pupil ECM class representatives, accompanied by a teaching assistant. Focused discussion seeks the children's views about their awareness of the ECM outcomes, which activities or aspects of school life have helped them to achieve better ECM outcomes and what else the school needs to do in order to make ECM outcomes even better for pupils.
- 11.00 – 11.20 Coffee break and time for Jane to reflect on the morning's discussions.
- 11.20 – 12.00 Jane observes snapshots of four lessons across the school: Nursery, Reception, Year 2 and Year 5, accompanied by the deputy headteacher.
- 12.00 – 12.30 Lunch with pupils in the dining hall.
- 12.30 – 13.00 Jane observes snapshots of lunchtime clubs and outdoor playground activities.
- 13.10 – 13.40 Focused discussion with a small group of representative class teachers and teaching assistants who have responsibility for overseeing, monitoring and reviewing an ECM outcome, whole-school, to seek their views on the operational management of the ECM Standards process and the impact on pupil outcomes.
- 13.40 – 14.10 Meeting with a small group of non-teaching school support staff: site manager, mid-day supervisor, school cook and the school nurse. Jane seeks their views about the ECM outcomes, their role and contributions to improving the ECM outcomes for pupils within the school, and the impact of undertaking the ECM Standards Award on pupils, well-being.
- 14.10 – 14.30 Coffee break for Jane, giving her time to reflect on lunchtime observations and afternoon discussions with the staff and to form an overall view about the school's quality of ECM provision and the impact of this provision on pupils' outcomes.
- 14.30 – 15.00 Verbal feedback to the headteacher on findings from the day visit and from the ECM Standards portfolio of evidence documentation. Verbal confirmation is given to the headteacher as to whether the school has met the ECM Standards and achieved the Award, and if not, what the school needs to do to secure the Award at embedded level. Thanks are given to the headteacher for accommodating the visit, and to confirm that the headteacher will receive a full written assessment report in four weeks' time, confirming that the school has achieved the ECM Standards Award.
- 15.00 The ECM Standards Assessor Jane departs from the school.



### Points to remember

When making a decision about when to commence the ECM Standards award process consider:

- designating a member of the senior leadership team to take leadresponsibility for overseeing the entire ECM Standards process;
- establishing a core team of staff with sufficient time to gather the evidence required for each of the twelve ECM Standards;
- securing the services of a credible external assessor.

