



Best Practice Network

Early Years Professional Status Audit by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

October 2012

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Key findings about Best Practice Network

As a result of its Early Years Professional Status Audit carried out in October 2012, the audit team (the team) considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the accreditation standards of awards and links to the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards **can be commended**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities and support available to EYPS candidates **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the assessment and moderation systems and processes for EYPS **can be commended**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of candidate data, financial data, internal staff and infrastructure **meets expectations**.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the highly effective infrastructure for managing assessment and moderation, which facilitates consistency and reliability of assessment outcomes (paragraphs 3-10)
- the highly effective use made of the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio in supporting candidate achievement (paragraphs 13,23,24, 28 and 45)
- the added value achieved through the inclusion of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Child Protection Awareness Programme as part of the safeguarding and welfare of children aspect of the EYPS programme (paragraph 17).

Strengths

The team has identified the following **strengths**:

- the highly collaborative partnership that has been facilitated across the EYPS network, which engenders a strong sense of ownership by all involved (paragraphs 12, 26, 28, 45 and 46)
- the timely and effective support provided by all involved in the delivery of the EYPS programme, which is highly valued by candidates (paragraphs 18,19, 26, 43 and 45).

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the Prime Organisation to:

- formalise the criteria that determine the requirement for prospective candidates to be interviewed (paragraph 39)

- continue to develop Local Authority engagement in recruiting candidates from disadvantaged settings as a contribution to the overall achievement of the recruitment target set by the Teaching Agency (paragraph 37).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to:

- consider how candidates can be encouraged to access further e-learning and localised library resources beyond the bespoke virtual learning environment in support of their learning (paragraph 25).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Audit¹ conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Best Practice Network (the Prime Organisation). The purpose of the audit is to provide accessible information which indicates whether Prime Organisations have in place:

- effective means of ensuring that the award of EYPS is robust, rigorous and consistent in quality and standards across all pathways
- effective means of enhancing the quality of EYPS provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external audits, and feedback from stakeholders.

The audit focuses on how the Prime Organisation discharges its stated responsibilities in seven key areas:

- the management of EYPS candidate outcomes
- approach to quality improvement
- approach to safeguarding and welfare of children
- approach to candidate support
- approach to data management
- approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates
- staff management and infrastructure.

The audit applies to those pathways leading to the award of Early Years Professional Status that the Teaching Agency has contracted with the Prime Organisations. The audit was carried out by Mrs Stephanie Evans (auditor), Mrs Sandra Middleton (auditor) and Mr Alan Weale (QAA officer).

The audit team conducted the audit in agreement with the Prime Organisation and in accordance with the *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners*.² Evidence in support of the audit included:

- meetings with internal moderators, assessors, tutors and internal verifiers
- meeting with Tier 1 staff
- meeting with Tier 2 staff
- meetings with candidates
- meeting with Setting Manager
- Best Practice Network policies, procedures and contracts relating to partnership
- Best Practice Network handbooks for external moderators, internal moderators, assessors, mentors, tutors and candidates
- access to virtual learning environment
- access to e-portfolio
- training materials for staff and candidates
- feedback forms from settings, training events and assessment
- updating emails and documents from partners
- minutes of consortium bimonthly meetings.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx

The audit team used as a key reference point the *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Prime Organisations and their delivery partners (April 2012)* provided by the Teaching Agency.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report, you can find them in the [glossary](#).

Best Practice Network (BPN) is a private provider that was established in its current form in 2003. It operates from its main office in Bristol. BPN offers a range of training and national qualifications for professionals and leaders who work with children and young people from birth to 19 years of age.

In 2006, BPN piloted the EYPS training and assessment methodology and subsequently delivered the substantive EYPS programme across three regions. From October 2011, BPN has been one of eight EYPS Prime Organisations contracted by the Teaching Agency to deliver EYPS programmes. It delivers across five regions of England, in partnership with higher education institutions in each region. The organisation has extended its existing delivery of EYPS across Yorkshire and Humber, the West Midlands, the South West (including Greater London, through a partnership with Middlesex University) and Kent and Medway (through collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University).

BPN designates partners to be either Tier 1 or Tier 2. Tier 1 partners prepare, train and provide placements for candidates for EYPS on their allocated pathways. Tier 2 partners provide candidates for the Undergraduate Practitioner and Undergraduate Entry Pathways and are referred to by BPN as 'university partners'. BPN senior managers are aware that college partners are delivering degrees on behalf of other higher education institutions and are not themselves higher education institutions.

Currently there are 385 candidates enrolled across the BPN EYPS partnership. The number of candidates enrolled with Tier 2 partners is as follows: West Midlands 154, South West 83, Yorkshire and Humberside 135. For Tier 1 partners, the enrolments are: South East 57, Greater London 85. See [Annex 1](#) for detailed candidate statistics.

At the time of the audit, the Prime Organisation provided the following pathways:

- Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP)
- Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP)
- Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP)
- Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP).

The Prime Organisation's stated responsibilities

Middlesex University and Canterbury Christ Church University are Tier 1 partners.

Tier 2 partners provide candidates for the Undergraduate Practitioner and Undergraduate Entry Pathways and are referred to as 'university partners'. BPN senior managers are aware that college partners are delivering degrees on behalf of other higher education institutions and are not themselves higher education institutions. These partners provide suitable candidates for the pathways, who are prepared, trained and found placements for entirely by BPN staff. BPN organises the assessment and moderation processes for all candidates within the Prime Organisation.

The Tier 2 partners are organised under regions and are:

- West Midlands:
 - University of Warwick
 - University of Wolverhampton
 - Birmingham City University
 - Staffordshire University
- Yorkshire and Humber:
 - Leeds Metropolitan University
 - University Centre Doncaster
 - Calderdale College
 - Harrogate College (part of the Hull College Group)
- South West:
 - Plymouth University
 - Swindon College.

BPN takes full responsibility for managing performance and the quality assurance of the EYPS pathways to meet the standards set by the Teaching Agency. Irrespective of the type of partnership, the Prime Organisation sets the assessment activities and requires all candidates to use its bespoke e-portfolio system to record their evidence. Tier 1 partners are also involved in the moderation process and in quality assurance through the sharing of ideas and the provision of support to BPN.

The Prime Organisation takes responsibility for the collection, checking and collation of all candidate and financial data pertaining to the EYPS provision across the BPN EYPS consortium.

The Tier 1 and Tier 2 partners have signed contracts that include confirmation of their responsibility in terms of collecting information and uploading it to the BPN network. The contracts make clear that BPN is solely responsible for the final collation and uploading of all required data to the Teaching Agency database. All partners in the consortium are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the security of the data and for adherence to the tenets of the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

Detailed findings about Best Practice Network

1 Management of EYPS candidate outcomes

1 The external moderation process for EYPS is robust and comprehensive. It is delivered by Formation, an organisation with a strong knowledge of EYPS. The process is articulated in two documents: the specification of the external requirements prepared by Formation following consultation with BPN, and the signed contract. The BPN EYPS Moderation Handbook also contains information for internal moderators on the role of the external moderator.

2 At the time of the audit, the external moderation process had been completed once for the Graduate Professional Pathway only. The process, when fully operational across all pathways, includes biannual visits to the organisation to observe the internal moderation process; review of data on assignments by pathway, consortium partner, outcome and assessor; and scrutiny of a representative sample of moderated files across the assessor team and the Tier 1 partners. The moderation sample includes files across all regions and pathways. It includes all 'not met' and shortfall recommendations, and a representative sample of assessments recommended by the assessor as 'met', as well as resubmissions.

3 The outcome of the external moderation of each assessment within the sample is recorded on the associated Internal Moderation Recommendation Form, and forms the basis of the content of the External Moderation Form. Feedback to BPN is provided verbally at the end of the visit to the lead moderator and through a completed and detailed external moderation report.

4 BPN disseminates the relevant areas of the report to members of the assessment team - including Tier 1 partners, as their assessments are submitted by BPN for external moderation. Recommendations are discussed by the lead moderator and other senior staff and adjustments made immediately, where possible. The outcomes of each moderation are recorded on the internal moderation form and then collated to provide detailed feedback on the external moderation report.

5 The internal moderation process is highly effective. The whole team meets together on one or more days to moderate a sample of all assessments across the partnership. The EYPS Internal Moderation Handbook is comprehensive and of high quality, and gives detailed explanations of the moderation rationale, moderation processes, the assessment requirements of the standards of EYPS, and moderation procedures. The senior team of internal moderators reviews a comprehensive sample of moderations to ensure consistency. Formative internal moderation is carried out on a representative sample of all assessments. Moderation feedback notes are completed for each file to give guidance on areas for improvement or good practice on individual assessments. Moderators also receive written feedback on their performance from the senior moderators. Moderators, assessors and partners are engaged with the process and speak highly of the value of the feedback they receive, which includes personal feedback as well as general outcomes from the process.

6 The administrative plan for BPN identifies the recruitment and training of new assessors, tutors, moderators and mentors, as well as further training for the existing team. The training is comprehensive and comprises face-to-face and online material, covering tutor, mentor and assessor updating. In addition, the assessor activities on the e-portfolio are reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the required standard. Periodic review of assessment and feedback is also undertaken by the lead and senior moderators to ensure that the required standards are being maintained. The training is underpinned by very

detailed and comprehensive assessment preparation, internal moderation and tutor/mentor handbooks.

7 Tier 1 partners carry out their own tutor and mentor training (which is quality assured by BPN). Those who wish to also undertake setting visit assessments, are required to engage in assessor training provided by BPN. Discussions with assessors, tutors, mentors and moderators confirm the effectiveness of the training provided.

8 Each candidate has an assessor for the setting visit and a tutor and mentor to support them on the programme. There is a detailed handbook for the assessor and one for the tutor/mentor role. The handbooks provide very detailed explanations of the roles and responsibilities, together with guidance on BPN practice and procedures and copies of the relevant forms for reference. Discussions with the assessors and mentors confirmed that the handbooks and the support of the BPN senior moderators were well regarded.

9 The team considers the highly effective infrastructure for managing assessment and moderation, which facilitates consistency and reliability of assessment outcomes, to be **good practice**.

10 Candidates confirmed, through meetings with the auditors and in written feedback following setting visits, that they believed that the programme has been of great benefit in providing professional development in the early years sector. One Undergraduate Entry Pathway candidate stated that the respect that they received on placement had increased significantly since they had embarked on the EYPS programme.

11 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for the Prime Organisation's management of EYPS outcomes.

2 Approach to quality improvement

12 The BPN EYPS partnership adopts a rigorous approach to quality improvement. Bi-monthly meetings of the consortium take place, where actions across all elements of the provision are identified and assigned, and completion dates agreed. These are reviewed at subsequent meetings and adjusted as required. BPN has an administrative action plan and an *Action Plan for Implementation of Revised EYPS Standards 2012*, which are revised and revisited as appropriate. All tutors and mentors are observed by the quality assurance team of programme leaders/deputies and individual written feedback is given, which includes good practice as well as areas for improvement.

13 The virtual learning environment has a forum area for candidates and delivery staff, and these discussions are monitored and, where appropriate, included in dialogues that lead to improvement. Staff are encouraged to participate in discussions and to raise issues directly with group leaders and the programme leader. This is viewed positively as a vehicle for improvement by the assessors, moderators and tutors.

14 BPN is holder of both International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 (the *Quality Management Standard*) and ISO 27001 (the *Information Security Standard*) certification, and the senior managers who are responsible for these standards audit each other's provision to ensure ongoing compliance on an annual basis.

15 Candidate feedback is also sought through a range of methods, including a web-based survey, interviews by senior BPN staff and continuous discussion between candidates and staff. Feedback on areas such as setting visits includes both quantitative and qualitative feedback from candidates and setting managers. The feedback is reviewed by the

programme director and lead assessor, and improvements made if it is considered appropriate.

16 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement

3 Approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children

17 BPN safeguarding policies are up to date, fit for purpose and fully implemented. The Child Protection Awareness Programme written by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) for Educare has been introduced for all candidates; the programme is funded by BPN. All entry pathway candidates must pass the course before continuing with their EYPS programme and have opportunities to re-sit if necessary. Candidates are not allowed to continue if they are unable to fulfil this criterion. Additionally, candidates have a learning journal and focused assignment on safeguarding. GEP and UEP candidates must engage with the safeguarding policies of the setting, and GPP and UPP candidates must apply the policies of their own organisation. All staff at BPN have update training on safeguarding. The team considers that the added value achieved through the inclusion of the NSPCC Child Protection Awareness Programme as part of the safeguarding and welfare of children aspect of the EYPS programme is **good practice**.

18 The training programmes and materials provided for candidates and assessors include specific safeguarding training and signposts for continued development in this area. Training materials are clear and accurate on the processes to be followed. This development starts from entry, through the needs analysis document, and continues through module materials and assessment criteria, the Child Protection Awareness Programme and the EYPS Preparation Handbook and Assessor Handbook. The team was provided with a recent example of intervention by BPN that concerned an instance where a candidate witnessed bad language being used by a practitioner in front of young children. The speed of response by the Programme Leader, which included immediate contact with the candidate to provide advice and support, together with communication with the setting manager, resulted in a resolution to the issue within twenty-four hours and illustrates the appropriateness of the mechanisms in place to support candidates. The team considers that this example demonstrates the timely and effective support provided by all involved in the delivery of the EYPS programme, which is highly valued by candidates and which shows the strength of the provision.

19 All assessors have yearly training on safeguarding, and candidates and assessors read and sign the BPN safeguarding policy; this is monitored through a web-based facility. Tutors talk to individual candidates where necessary for further clarification on their grasp of safeguarding procedures and the policy.

20 Clear tracking is in place for Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. BPN keeps a database for each provider that highlights when the CRB check is complete. The database clearly shows candidates who are waiting for CRB clearance, with dates identified for actions. The organisation does not allow candidates to go on placement without a full CRB check. At the application stage, all candidates have to produce relevant certificates and CRB checks, if already in place, for verification before entry onto the course.

21 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

4 Approach to candidate support

22 BPN has robust support processes that are well regarded by candidates, who speak very highly of the support they receive from their tutors and from BPN as a whole.

23 Online information systems, including the e-portfolio, are highly effective in supporting candidates. They include learning and assessment materials, opportunities to discuss issues and ideas through online discussion groups, and act as a repository for candidates' evidence. The systems are updated regularly by the Programme Leader and the IT support team. The IT support team has good knowledge of the programme and the ICT Manager is very well informed about the requirements for EYPS programmes. For example, the IT support team monitors the e-portfolio and encourages engagement by the more reluctant users. Staff meetings have an agenda item that enables discussion on IT provision. The audit team considers that this support contributes to the timely and effective support provided by all involved in the delivery of the EYPS programme, which is highly valued by candidates.

24 An effective and comprehensive virtual learning environment, developed by BPN, provides excellent support for staff and candidates, and the e-portfolio is used effectively by candidates and assessors for assessment purposes. Tier 1 and Tier 2 staff use the virtual learning environment to access information and resources provided by BPN. Tier 1 partners have links from their own virtual learning environments to the BPN virtual learning environment, and Tier 2 use the BPN virtual learning environment for all EYPS support. All candidates have to use the e-portfolio. The IT Helpdesk is very responsive to candidates and assessor/tutor needs, especially in the first weeks of setting up new accounts. Candidates remarked on the speed of response to any issues, and how feedback is acted upon to improve the system. The audit team considers the highly effective use made of the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio in supporting candidate achievement to be **good practice**.

25 Discussions with candidates identified that they would welcome further support with e-learning materials, for example eBooks on the virtual learning environment, and help with using local library services. The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to consider how candidates can be encouraged to access further e-learning and localised library resources beyond the bespoke virtual learning environment in support of their learning.

26 The mentor/tutor support systems, and process for their management, are in place and fit for purpose, and are as described in Section 1. Mentor/tutor availability and support is well regarded by candidates. Tutors and mentors are clear on the processes of support and collaborate with one another to best support candidates.

27 Settings are selected and sourced by BPN and Tier 1 providers, drawing on candidate knowledge, Local Authority and higher education institution partner suggestions. Feedback from candidates and setting managers on placement provision is good.

28 Candidates judge that their programme helps them to clarify understanding of the EYPS standards and how to meet them. The candidate handbooks contain materials that support evidence gathering for meeting the standards, as well as information on the virtual learning environment that candidates consider to be very supportive. Candidate evaluations and analysis verifies the success of the process. The audit team considers that this contributes to the good practice of the highly effective use made of the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio in supporting candidate achievement.

29 Feedback and follow-up from the candidates' development reviews are effective and well regarded by the candidates. The parity of support across the delivery partners is monitored carefully by the Prime Organisation.

30 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement.

5 Approach to data management

31 BPN meets the performance areas and indicators required for the management of data relating to EYPS, taking overall responsibility for the accuracy, timeliness and safety of data. The contracts between BPN and its Tier 1 and Tier 2 partners make clear the responsibilities of both BPN and the consortium partners in the management of financial and personal data held in relation to the EYPS pathways in operation. The Programme Director confirmed that, although small adjustments are made to individual contracts, these are not permitted to compromise the security or management of relevant EYPS data-gathering requirements, including personal or financial data. Discussions with the Project Leader, ICT Manager and Finance Manager confirmed that only BPN staff are permitted to upload data to the Teaching Agency. The uploading of data by partners to the BPN network meets the standards of security required by the Teaching Agency and ISO27001.

32 All partners and candidates who contributed to the audit visit were very positive about the speed of response by BPN to their enquiries, requests and issues. In particular, the quality of the information available on the virtual learning environment and the support of the ICT Helpdesk were invariably referred to as being excellent.

33 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to data management.

6 Approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates

34 BPN recognises that it has under-recruited in all areas for the January and September 2012 cohort, and the figures are being closely monitored. BPN keeps up to date information on recruitment on a database, with partners feeding into this process.

35 Strategies are in place to target under-recruitment. For example, a case study of work carried out in a London Local Authority to maximise engagement with areas of disadvantaged and under-represented groups is being undertaken. This, together with evidence of working with Birmingham City University to recruit from similar groups, demonstrates an ongoing commitment to attracting candidates from these priority areas.

36 There is a clear marketing and recruitment strategy plan, with evidence of close work with local authorities and higher education institutions. In September 2012, a document entitled 'Priority Recruitment Areas' outlined actions on the best approaches to encouraging recruitment related to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) scores. BPN is working closely with stakeholders to attract applications from a wide range of prospective Early Years Professionals. Some progress has been made in this area, and it is continuing to be developed.

37 The audit team considers it **advisable** that BPN continue to develop Local Authority engagement in recruiting candidates from disadvantaged settings as a contribution to the overall achievement of the recruitment target set by the Teaching Agency.

38 There is a selection process in place that enables candidates in priority groups to be prioritised for entry, but they must meet EYPS entry requirements (such as a minimum GCSE grade C in English and Mathematics) to secure a place.

39 Arrangements for interviewing candidates have not been completely transparent in all cases. BPN has sets of contextualised interview questions for use with telephone interviews, but some candidates had not realised that such telephone calls were in fact interviews. In response to this, BPN now requires interviewers to inform prospective candidates that they are being interviewed. In addition, some candidates with Tier 2 partners did not have an interview with BPN staff because tutors already knew the candidates through their first degree programme. The circumstances in which this could occur were not explicitly set out and the team formed the view that the absence of a clearly articulated approach to interview can be confusing to candidates. The audit team considers it **advisable** that BPN formalise the criteria that determine the requirement for prospective candidates to be interviewed.

40 Pre-course materials and frequently asked questions (FAQs) support the process of preparing candidates for working within the early years sector. Candidates are clear about the correct pathway for them, which is often identified by experience and qualification status through a self-audit that informs them of the right pathway to suit their needs.

41 The induction process is rigorous and materials provided for candidates clearly outline the process. Candidates feel that they are supported well at induction. The self-audit has been moved so that it takes place before the first induction meeting, and this has ensured that action planning arising from the needs analysis can be put in place from the start of the programme.

42 Tutors and mentors guide candidates in their career choices. Candidates are encouraged to join the network and subsequently become mentors and tutors on the programme, progressing to assessor and internal moderator roles. Many of the current tutors and assessors have themselves achieved EYPS.

43 Good support mechanisms are in place to monitor and review individual candidate journeys. Much of this is through the virtual learning environment and tutor/assessor feedback, which is generally prompt and developmental. Candidates and tutors/assessors develop good supportive relationships across the BPN provision. Retention and completion rates are good: BPN has above 85 per cent retention and 100 per cent of those assessed to date have successfully completed.

44 The team considers that BPN meets the majority of Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates.

7 Staff management and infrastructure

45 The highly effective internal communications within the BPN EYPS consortium are discussed in detail in paragraphs 3-8, 13, 15 and 18. The dissemination of information is delivered through emails and updates at bi-monthly meetings of the consortium, face-to-face meetings between partners and regional coordinators, and quality assurance visits to Tier 1 partners, as well as through a range of detailed handbooks. In addition, there are continuous informal discussions between BPN staff and partners and, in the case of Tier 1 staff, between the two institutions. Discussions with the Project Leader and ICT Manager confirmed that they are fully engaged in the delivery of EYPS, with each contributing to discussions on progress, innovations and changes to Teaching Agency requirements along with assessors, tutors, mentors and internal moderators. It was clear to the audit team that

all participants consider themselves to be a single team collaborating to produce a good learning and development environment for candidates. Engagement with candidates is described in paragraphs 15, 22-24, 28 and 32: it is clear that they receive all information in a timely manner. Setting managers invariably commented on the timely information that they receive from BPN.

46 The audit team considers that the highly collaborative partnership that has been facilitated across the BPN EYPS network engenders a strong sense of ownership by all involved.

47 The consortium has forged a strong collaborative ethos, which supports all aspects of the provision through bi-monthly consortium meetings, consortium updates provided via email between meetings and quality assurance visits to partners.

48 The high-quality training materials are described in paragraphs 7, 8, 17-19 and are fit for purpose. Training is carried out across the country in various locations, and BPN gathers feedback on the quality of the locations to ensure that they are appropriate.

49 BPN has a quality assurance plan which identifies the date of quality assurance visits to all tutors, including those located within Tier 1 partners. The outcomes of the biannual visits are recorded by the quality assurer and include good practice and areas for improvement, together with an action plan. BPN has a set of performance expectations covering all aspects of the provision, which are presented to all partners.

50 The team considers that BPN meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its staff management and infrastructure.

Action plan³

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
GOOD PRACTICE						
The audit team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within and beyond the Prime Organisation:						
The highly effective infrastructure for managing assessment and moderation, which facilitates consistency and reliability of assessment outcomes (paragraphs 3-10)	Continue to evaluate and develop infrastructure and processes in the light of moderation feedback and assessments outcomes. Continue to audit all procedures for managing assessment and moderation Provide systematic and differentiated support for new and experienced assessors	After each moderation round	Lead Assessor	All assessors receive feedback at least twice a year on preparation for assessments that improve the quality of evaluative comments	Programme Leader	Cycle of evaluation followed for each assessment window and moderation round. Feedback from assessors is sought after each moderation round. RAG ratings reviewed by lead moderator at each moderation round. Using actions and success criteria as starting points
		31 December 2012		Timely support is provided for assessors where assessment proves difficult to resolve or a likely 'not met' in order to ensure accurate and fair judgements and outcomes. All assessors rate feedback and support as at least good		
		28 February 2013		Assessors' work is reviewed at each moderation round. In the light of the quality		
		30 June 2013				
		31 August 2013				
		31 December 2013				

³ The Prime Organisation has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the Teaching Agency.

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
				<p>and timeliness of their assessments, are assigned, high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) levels of monitoring</p> <p>Under 5 per cent of assessors with high level monitoring at any one assessment period</p> <p>Assessors move from high to low level monitoring at next moderation round with individual intervention/guidance. In the event of no improvement, assessors are made inactive and removed from our approved assessor list</p>		for the evaluation framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<p>Scrutinise assessor/moderator practice for first round of 2012 standards assessments. Personalised feedback provided on level 6</p>	March 2012	Lead Assessor	<p>All interview records, observation records and assessor summary judgements/level 6 feedback meet requirements</p> <p>All assessors complete revised standards</p>	Programme Leader	As above for evaluation cycle

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
	judgements and accuracy and consistency of use of 2012 standards. Lead moderator provides formative and summative feedback to individual moderators, in order to refine and improve moderator practice			training accurately At least good feedback from clients candidates and setting managers on the quality of assessor's communication and professionalism All moderators work within requirements and make accurate moderation judgements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highly effective use made of the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio in supporting candidate achievement (paragraphs 13, 23, 24, 28 and 46) 	Continue to quality assure systematic and comprehensive sample of feedback provided by eportfolio assessors (across consortium) to ensure consistency	Monthly - covering all those who give feedback so that over 3 months all those giving feedback have been quality assured	Eportfolio lead tutor and QA team	All assessor feedback given within 21 days of candidate upload of their eportfolio entries Consistently supportive tone used in feedback. Accurate evaluation of eportfolio evidence, moderated and quality assured for consistency and judgements	Programme Leader	Sampling by assessor, standard and group. Red, amber, green (high, medium, low monitoring levels) rating of assessors in terms of response rates and consistency of feedback Candidate questionnaire
As above	Standardisation training in relation	January 2013	Lead Eportfolio	All assessors complete training satisfactorily	Programme Leader	

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
	to the 2012 standards - online compulsory training		tutor			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the added value achieved through the inclusion of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Child Protection Awareness Programme as part of the safeguarding and welfare of children aspect of the EYPS programme (paragraph 17) 	Continue online training provided for all future entry pathways, requiring that they pass and if necessary resit the test before going on placement	Jan 13 Sept 13 Jan 14 Sept 14	Lead tutors - BPN CCCU and MXU	<p>All entry pathway candidates are inducted into nationally required safeguarding procedures and are aware of requirements</p> <p>At least good feedback from all candidates about the online training</p> <p>Positive feedback from mentor on candidates' knowledge of safeguarding</p>	Programme Leader	<p>Review completion rates prior to commencement of placement 1</p> <p>Mentor questionnaire</p>
As above	Offer to present and share areas of good practice identified by QAA	March 2013	Programme Leader	<p>Take up of offer by TA/POs</p> <p>Positive feedback from</p>	consortium management group	Informal feedback from peer Prime Organisations

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
	at upcoming Prime Organisation workshops Coordinate sharing of information across Prime Organisations			Prime Organisations		
The audit team identified the following areas of strength within the Prime Organisation:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highly collaborative partnership that has been facilitated across the EYPS network, which engenders a strong sense of ownership by all involved (paragraphs 12, 26, 28, 45 and 46) 	<p>Bi-monthly sharing best practice meetings with content and process issues on agenda. Outcomes of meetings posted on VLE</p> <p>Followed up by BPN through twice-yearly QA observation of practice visits to Middlesex and Canterbury. Feedback</p>	<p>From Jan 13</p> <p>January March May July September November</p>	Programme Director	Effective practice shared between consortium partners to inform practice; leading to continuous refinement in practice, provision and impact for candidates across the consortium	Programme Leader, reports monthly to BPN Senior Leadership Group	Reporting to next sharing best practice meeting of actions taken; identifying specific impact of improvements on quality of provision for candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of more setting visit assessors 	Disseminate information to tier 1 and 2 partners re: assessor	January 2013 and March 2013	Lead assessor	20% increase in partner involvement and assessors in all regions	Programme Leader	Mentor feedback assigned to new assessors

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
from Tier 1 and 2 partners	<p>requirements</p> <p>Complete training ahead of new assessment window</p> <p>Assign experienced assessors as mentors</p>			<p>Greater knowledge and understanding of personnel from tier 1 and 2 partners of EYPS requirements</p> <p>Effective assessor practice established from new assessors</p>		<p>Analysis of feedback to assessors after moderation on assessor tracking spread sheet. - high, medium, low monitoring. Feedback from candidates/ setting managers</p>
As above	Appoint moderators from assessor team to represent Tier 1 partners	Jan 13 and June 13	Lead assessor	One new and effective moderator from each Tier 1 partner	Programme Leader	Review of moderator effectiveness at each round of moderation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the timely and effective support provided by all involved in the delivery of the EYPS programme, which is highly valued by candidates (paragraphs 	<p>Share best practice identified from candidate feedback/ surveys</p> <p>Extend repertoire of support strategies, based on feedback from candidates on what has been most helpful</p>	<p>Reviewed after each face-to-face session and discussed at monthly programme meetings - first Tuesday of each month</p> <p>Shared at bi-monthly</p>	Lead tutor	Evaluation grades at least good from candidates for support from programme personnel - administrators, mentors, tutor,	Programme Leader	<p>Evaluation after each day's training, reviewed monthly through programme meetings</p> <p>Recruitment and induction questionnaire</p>

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
18-20, 26 and 45).		consortium best practice meetings At the end of the programme, e.g. after 6 months (June 13 for Jan 13 GPPs) and 12 months (Dec 13 for UPP, GPP and UEP)				End of programme evaluation Destination and impact survey
The team considers that it is advisable for the Prime Organisation to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise the criteria that determine the requirement for prospective candidates to be interviewed (paragraph 39) 	All candidates who meet entry requirement are interviewed. Make it clear to all candidates that they are required to participate in an interview with differentiated questions according to role/pathway	In place since recruitment window for Sept 12 intake	Programme Coordinators	All candidates understand they are being interviewed as a planned and anticipated activity	Programme Leader	Recruitment and induction questionnaire issued to candidates one month after beginning pathway. Specific questions included on experience of interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop Local Authority 	Prioritise IDACI low scoring LAs for support/	Dec 12 and throughout 2013	Regionally based relationship	30% of GPP and UPP candidates are from settings in	Empowerment Lead	Review of candidates registered by

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
	engagement visits and information Attend careers and information events in areas of disadvantage (e.g. Hull, Leeds, Birmingham)	Review points: February 2013 May 2013 July 2013 September 2013 November 2013	managers	disadvantaged communities		region and locality Analyse areas for priority focus
• As above	Lead on joint Prime Organisation communication to London LAs and settings	Dec 12	Programme Leader	Improved profile of EYPS in London London LAs and settings receive coordinated information from EYPS training providers and understand choices available	Consortium partners/SLG	Feedback from LAs/applicants from within London
• As above	Extend case study approach (as used in Hackney) across all regions - key areas to be identified by Consortium/LA contacts	March 2013	Regional Coordinator	Increase by 10% BMI participation outside targeting SW and WM.	Empowerment Lead	Review of BMI candidates registered by region and location

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
The audit team considers that it is desirable for the Prime Organisation to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how candidates can be encouraged to access further e-learning and localised. Provide library resources beyond the bespoke virtual learning environment in support of their learning (paragraph 25) 	<p><i>NOTE: Candidates on UPP and UEP programmes have right of access to their university VLEs and libraries. This issue refers to GEP and GPP pathways only</i></p> <p>Circulate helpful Teaching Agency links in each newsletter to candidates and tutors</p> <p>Continue to provide up-to-date links to Government resources, recent research</p> <p>Continue to provide link to very useful iTunes U (Open University)</p> <p>Publicise links to</p>	Feb 2013	ICT Manager	Candidates report their widening use of e-learning opportunities beyond those provided by the bespoke VLE	Programme Leader	<p>Review resources accessed on VLE</p> <p>Survey candidates about most useful resources</p>

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
	<p>National College training and resources</p> <p>Continue to promote BBC Education, Nursery World and other sector specific journals</p> <p>Expand links to sector specific websites e.g. C4eo and 4 children</p> <p>'lookinside' links or Google Scholar</p> <p>Develop existing link with SAGE publications</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<p>Make efforts to source access to HEI level online library through partners</p>	<p>Jan 13</p> <p>Ask all HEI partners if there are options for GPP and GEP candidates to access online library resources</p>	<p>BPN Learning Resources Lead</p>	<p>Increase by 50 per cent online resources available to GEP and GPP candidates</p>	<p>Programe Leader</p>	<p>Track engagement by users logging on and using online resources. This will be reviewed on a monthly basis and guidance/</p>

	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TARGET DATE	ACTION BY	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REPORTED TO	EVALUATION
		even if they are registered students Survey GEP and GPP candidates on views on sufficiency of BPN resources				support will be reviewed to ensure increased engagement where it is below expected levels
As above	Investigate whether HEIs will provide access for external individuals to physical libraries	Feb 2013	BPN Learning Resources Lead	1 university in each region agrees to work towards providing access	Programme Leader	Review at monthly programme/ Consortium meeting

Annex 1: Candidate statistics

January 2012 intake

	Best Practice Network	Middlesex University	Canterbury College Christchurch University	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	114	10	5	139	129	93%
UPP	55	14	8	127	77	61%
GEP	12	21	0	47	33	70%
UEP	40	0	17	63	57	90%
Total	221	45	30	376	296	78.7%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - January 2012 intake

	Candidates from deprived areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates*	% of cohort	Men into Childcare	% of cohort
GPP	25	22%	14	11%	4	3%
UPP	11	20%	10	13%	0	0%
GEP	N/A	N/A	19	58%	2	6%
UEP	N/A	N/A	9	16%	4	7%
Total	36	21.3%	52	18%	10	3.4%

*Not all candidates state their ethnicity - some 'prefer not to say'.

Retention and success - January 2012 intake

	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Deferred	Completed or due to complete	% retained	Assessed	Successful completion	% success
GPP	129	9	2	118*	90%	116	116	100%
UPP	77	4	0	73	95%	N/A	N/A	N/A
GEP	33	2	2	31	94%	N/A	N/A	N/A
UEP	57	6	0	51	89%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	296	21	4	271	91.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Two deferrals have become withdrawals due to exceeding maximum duration.

September 2012 intake

	Best Practice Network	Middlesex University	Canterbury College Christchurch University	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	116	14	8	162	138	85%
UPP	77	12	13	144	102	71%
GEP	34	18	0	77	52	68%
UEP	33	14	6	61	53	87%
Total	260	58	27	444	345	77.7%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - September 2012 intake

	Candidates from deprived areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates*	% of cohort	Men into Childcare	% of cohort
GPP	15	13%	21	15%	5	4%
UPP	11	14%	9	9%	3	3%
GEP	N/A	N/A	24	46%	2	4%
UEP	N/A	N/A	14	26%	4	8%
Total	26	13.5%	68	19.7%	14	4%

*Not all candidates state their ethnicity - some 'prefer not to say'.

Annex 2: About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Early Years Professional Status Audit can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx.

Annex 3: Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners*: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx.

academic quality: A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards: The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

assessor: Person employed by the Prime Organisation or its partners to assess a candidate's competency against the EYPS standards.

Code of practice: The *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA - a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

delivery partners: Any parties (as notified to and agreed by the Teaching Agency) that are required by the contractor to delivery any part of an EYPS contract.

Early Years Professional: A person who has achieved Early Years Professional Status. Early Years Professionals work across the diverse range of settings that make up the early years sector. They demonstrate excellent practice and leadership.

Early Years Professional Status (EYPS): A graduate-level professional accreditation for the early years workforce.

EYPS pathway: One of four packages of training, assessment and accreditation available for candidates to gain EYPS (as defined within the EYPS contract).

EYPS standards: The skills, knowledge and experience required to receive EYPS, as defined by the Secretary of State.

external moderator: The purpose of external moderation is to provide independent assurance that the quality and reliability of internal moderation and assessment is appropriate. The role of external moderator for EYPS is similar in nature, though not directly comparable, to that of external examiners used widely across higher education institutions.

feature of good practice: A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

framework: A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

framework for higher education qualifications: A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP): For people with a degree and limited experience of working with children from birth to five years of age, but who are looking to pursue a career working in early years. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP): For graduates currently working in the sector who require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

internal moderator: The Prime Organisation is responsible for carrying out internal moderation of all assessment outcomes. An internal moderator will:

- check that all judgements made during assessment are sound
- monitor the quality of assessment to ensure consistency and standards
- provide assurance that the standard and reliability of assessment is appropriate.

learning opportunities: The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

learning outcome: What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

mentor: A person employed by the contactor to provide a development expert/novice relationship which supports a candidate to become autonomous through dialogue and skilled questioning.

moderation: The process by which the contractor will review assessment outcomes and ensure the consistent application of processes defined by the Teaching Agency.

operational definition: A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

Prime Organisation: The training provider with a direct contract with the Teaching Agency to deliver EYPS from January 2012.

programme (of study): An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

quality: See **academic quality**.

reference points: Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by higher education providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

setting: A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, daycare centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny.

threshold academic standard: The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications **frameworks**. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code): Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for **academic standards** and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (**academic quality**).

Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP): For undergraduates completing a degree, for example in Early Childhood Studies. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP): For undergraduates currently working in the sector who require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

work placement: A sustained period of learning for candidates on EYPS pathways which takes place in a setting registered to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and enable opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and experience defined by the EYPS standards. A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, daycare centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny

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