Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Update and Technical Report 2012/13

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Evaluating the Foundation Phase:

Update and Technical Report 2012/13

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary of Acronyms

BERA	British Educational Research Association
DECIPHer	Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
Estyn	Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
FP	Foundation Phase
HE	Higher Education
KS1	Key Stage 1 National Curriculum
KS2	Key Stage 2 National Curriculum
MCS	Millennium Cohort Study
NPD	National Pupil Database
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual Schools Census
SEN	Special Educational Needs
WISERD	Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Aims of Report

1. In this report we outline the progress of the evaluation during the past year (August 2012 to July 2013). We also provide details about Stage II of the evaluation design, which has largely involved the collection of detailed information about the implementation of the Foundation Phase in forty-one schools and ten funded non-maintained settings from across Wales.

2. The Foundation Phase is a Welsh Government flagship policy of early years education (for 3 to 7-year old children) in Wales. Marking a radical departure from the more formal, competency-based approach associated with the previous Key Stage 1 National Curriculum, it advocates a developmental, experiential, play-based approach to teaching and learning. The policy has been progressively 'rolled out' over the last seven years so that by 2011/12 it included all 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales.

3. In April 2011 the Welsh Government, on behalf of Welsh Ministers, invited tenders for a three-year independent evaluation of the Foundation Phase. Following a competitive tender process, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers, led by Professor Chris Taylor from Cardiff University and the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD), were appointed to undertake the evaluation in July 2011.

4. The three year evaluation (2011-2014) has four main aims, as outlined by the Welsh Government in its original research tender specification:
    *   to evaluate how well the Foundation Phase is being implemented and highlight ways in which improvement can be made (the process evaluation)
    *   to evaluate what impact the Foundation Phase has had to date (the outcome evaluation)
    *   to assess the value for money of the Foundation Phase (the economic evaluation)

- to put in place an evaluation framework for the future tracking of outputs and outcomes of the Foundation Phase (the evaluation framework).

5. The first annual report of the evaluation for 2011/12 (Taylor et al. 2013 set out the work of the evaluation during its first year and provided a summary of the research and findings from Stage I of the evaluation design. It also outlined the approach and methodology of the evaluation.

6. This report sets-out the programme of work for the final year of the evaluation, which includes Stage III of the evaluation design and an analytical framework that provides the basis for how the evaluation will organise its analysis and reporting.

Summary of Progress

7. The evaluation continues to progress well. 2012/13 was largely spent developing and undertaking Stage II of the evaluation design. This involved the selection of and visits to 41 case study schools and 10 case study funded non-maintained settings.

8. During 2012/13 three evaluation reports were published (Maynard *et al.* 2013, Taylor *et al.* 2013 and Davies *et al.* 2013).

9. The evaluation and its preliminary findings were regularly presented to the Welsh Government Advisory Group, the Evaluation Team Advisory Group, and the All Wales Foundation Phase Advisors (AWFPA) Group. During the year the evaluation team also presented at three academic seminars/ conferences and at the National Eisteddfod.

10. Finally, the evaluation team welcomed Alyson Lewis, an ESRC-funded PhD research student who began an associated exploratory study investigating and capturing children's social and emotional wellbeing in Foundation Phase classrooms (3-7 year olds).

Stage II of the Evaluation

11. Stage II of the evaluation largely involved the first sweep of case study visits. This included 41 case study schools and 10 funded non-

maintained settings. Schools were selected using stratified random sampling in order to ensure the following:

- Different regions of Wales
- Different stages when the Foundation Phase was introduced in to schools
- English- and Welsh-medium schools

12. Case study visits tool place between January and June 2013. A typical school visit took two days and involved the following elements:

- Observation of children and staff in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes
- Classroom teacher survey
- Interviews with Head Teachers and Foundation Phase lead practitioners
- Interviews or focus groups with Teaching and Learning Assistants
- Survey of Year 2 pupils

Programme of Work for 2013/14

13. The programme of work for the evaluation during 2013/14 will be divided into three parts: (I) Stage III of the evaluation design, (ii) an analytical framework, and (iii) reporting and communication.

14. The fieldwork involved in Stage III of the evaluation design has three main elements. These are:

- Parent/carer survey;
- Year 3 teacher interviews; and
- Activities with children

15. The aim of the parent/carer survey is to gather the perceptions of parents and carers towards the Foundation Phase, in principle and in practice. This will involve the circulation of a survey to all parents/carers of children in the Foundation Phase and Years 3 and 4 at case study schools.

16. The main aim of the Year 3 teacher interviews will be to gather the perceptions of Year 3 teachers towards the Foundation Phase, in

principle and in practice, with a focus on the transition for children from the Foundation Phase into Key Stage 2 (KS2).

17. Year 3 teachers who have been teaching for several years from all the case study schools will be invited to participate in a telephone interview.

18. The main aim of undertaking further activities with children will be to, firstly, conduct a series of Year 2 Focus Groups and Year 1 Classroom Tours so that children's views and experiences of the Foundation Phase can better inform our evaluation. And secondly, to assess whether Year 2 children from schools that appear to have implemented the Foundation Phase fully have better group problem solving/thinking skills than in schools that appear to have not implemented the Foundation Phase to a strong degree.

19. This will involve children from seven of the case study schools and will involve, with theirs and their parent's consent, video recording of their responses, discussions and activities.

20. Another major part of the 2013/14 programme of work will be in the analysis and reporting of findings. An analytical framework has been developed that identifies a number of key topics and themes that are expected to form the basis of the Final Evaluation Report.

21. The evaluation expects to produce a series of Working Papers on these topics.

22. The Welsh Government published Evaluation Reports will use this detailed analysis in order to outline the key findings from the evaluation.

23. Alongside this Final Evaluation Report the evaluation will also organise a conference in 2014 to share its main findings.

1 Introduction to the Evaluation

1.1 The Foundation Phase appears to mark a radical departure from the more formal, competency-based approach to early childhood education that has sometimes been associated with the National Curriculum. Drawing on evidence from good early years programmes in Scandinavia, Reggio Emilia and New Zealand (Te Whãriki) that indicate the adoption of an overly formal curriculum and extensive formal teaching before the age of six or seven can result in lower standards of attainment in the longer term, it promotes an experiential, play-based approach to learning for children aged 3 to 7-years-old. It emphasises the centrality of the child and the significance of children's wellbeing and advocates a balance of child-initiated and practitioner-directed (or practitioner-initiated) activities within stimulating indoor and outdoor environments.

1.2 In April 2011 the Welsh Government, on behalf of Welsh Ministers, invited tenders for a three-year independent evaluation of the Foundation Phase. Following a competitive tender process, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers led by Cardiff University and in conjunction with the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD) were appointed to undertake the evaluation in July 2011. The cost of the evaluation is £986,500.

1.3 The research team includes leading experts in their respective fields and from a number of different universities in Wales and England:
- Professor Chris Taylor (Director) (Cardiff University and WISERD)
- Professor Trisha Maynard (Co-director) (Canterbury Christ Church University)
- Professor Laurence Moore (Cardiff University and DECIPHer)
- Professor Sally Power (Cardiff University and WISERD)
- Professor David Blackaby (Swansea University and WISERD)
- Professor Ian Plewis (University of Manchester)

- Mr Rhys Davies (Cardiff University and WISERD)
- Dr Sam Waldron (Cardiff University and WISERD)
- Dr Mirain Rhys (Cardiff University and WISERD)

1.4   The evaluation began in August 2011 and is due to be completed by July 2014.

1.5   The evaluation employs a stepped wedge design to exploit the sequential roll-out of the Foundation Phase across a number of different schools and settings at different time periods. In particular, much of the evaluation focuses on comparing successive cohorts of children who have been through three sets of school settings at different stages of the implementation: Pilot Stage settings, Early Start Stage settings and Final Roll-out Stage settings. The evaluation also utilises a range of methods to ensure it captures as many aspects of the implementation, delivery and impacts of the Foundation Phase programme.

1.6   The first annual report (Taylor *et al.* 2013) outlined the evaluation design and methodology in detail and reported the work of the evaluation during its first year, for the period August 2011-July 2012. This coincided with Stage I of the evaluation design. The report summarised the work that had been completed in that time and highlighted the key findings during that period.

1.7   In this Chapter we introduce the evaluation and its overall design very briefly. Further details can be found in Taylor *et al.* (2013).

Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

1.8   The three-year evaluation (2011-2014) has four main aims, as outlined by the Welsh Government in its original research tender specification:

- to evaluate how well the Foundation Phase is being implemented and highlight ways in which improvement can be made (the process evaluation)
- to evaluate what impact the Foundation Phase has had to date (the outcome evaluation)
- to assess the value for money of the Foundation Phase (the economic evaluation)
- to put in place an evaluation framework for the future tracking of outputs and outcomes of the Foundation Phase (the evaluation framework).

1.9   The *Process Evaluation* is primarily concerned with evaluating the implementation of the Foundation Phase. The *Outcome Evaluation* is primarily concerned with the outcomes or impacts of the Foundation Phase on the capabilities of children in the Foundation Phase. The *Economic Evaluation* attempts to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the Foundation Phase. The final key output from the evaluation will be the development of an *Evaluation Framework* to support future evaluations of the Foundation Phase.

1.10   The evaluation is committed to producing a range of outputs, produced at regular intervals, to disseminate the research and findings to the Welsh Government, schools, practitioners and the wider public. These have been designed and written with different audiences in mind, and include:
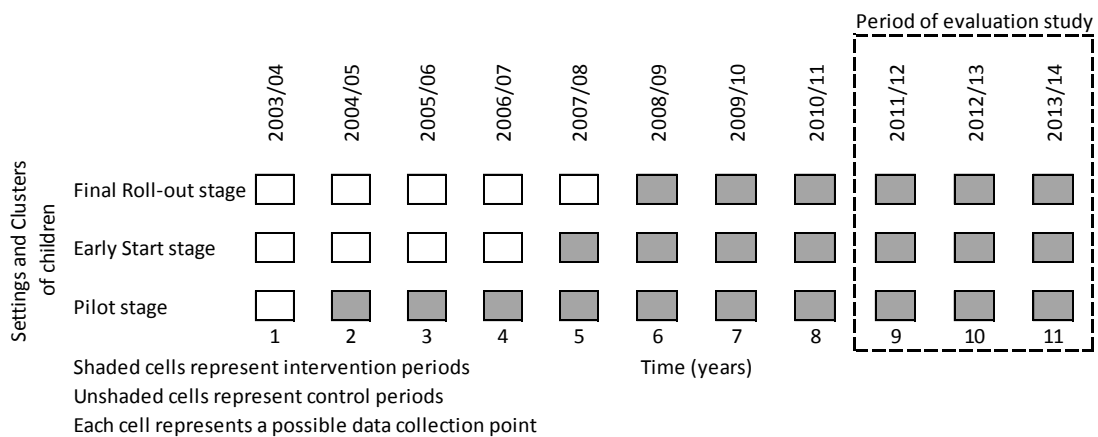- an evaluation website for the dissemination of findings and the engagement of interested individuals or stakeholders (www.wiserd.ac.uk/foundationphase)
- annual reports: including summaries and more detailed research reports
- reports on particular aspects of the Foundation Phase, including examples of good practice
- a typology of implementation based on case studies

- the development of a 'programme theory' underpinning the implementation of the Foundation Phase for the purpose of its evaluation and
- the production of an Evaluation Framework for the future monitoring and evaluation of the Foundation Phase in Wales.

Design and Methodology

1.11   In developing the methodology and research design for this evaluation, a number of considerations relating to the implementation of the Foundation Phase were influential. The principle characteristic from which the evaluation has been designed is the way in which the Foundation Phase was rolled-out sequentially over time. In this evaluation we therefore distinguish between schools/settings at three phases of implementation (Figure 1). Other key characteristics of the Foundation Phase are outlined in Taylor *et al.* (2013).

Figure 1: Overview of Stepped Wedge Design for Evaluating the Foundation Phase

Shaded cells represent intervention periods
Unshaded cells represent control periods
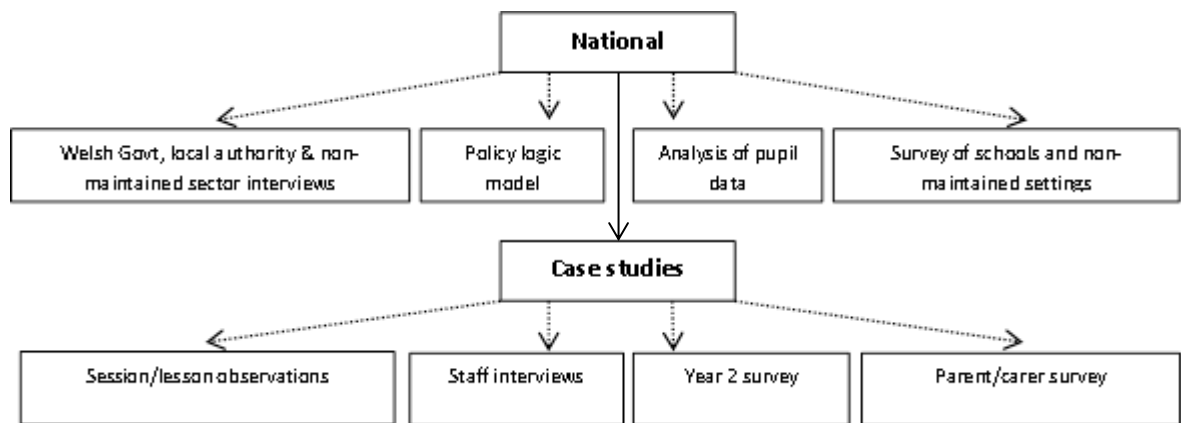Each cell represents a possible data collection point

1.12   The overarching structure of this evaluation follows a stepped wedge design (Brown and Lilford 2006; Hussey and Hughes 2007). This exploits the sequential roll-out of the Foundation Phase across a number of schools/settings at three different phases of implementation,

referred to as Pilot, Early Start, and Final Roll-out settings (see Figure 1). This allows us to compare clusters of children who received the early introduction of the Foundation Phase against control clusters of children who did not follow the Foundation Phase from within the same cohort. This contributes to the outcome evaluation.

1.13   The evaluation utilises a wide range of data and evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, and based on primary data collection and using existing data (administrative and other). This has been organised at two geographical scales: at a *national* level, and at the level of individual *case study* schools (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Design and Main Elements of Evaluation

1.14   Data collection has been organised in three stages during the course of the evaluation: Stage I (Jan 2012-Sept 2012); Stage II (Sept 2012-June 2013); and Stage III (Sept 2013-April 2014).

1.15   Stage I of the evaluation involved (a) documentary evidence relating to *the design, delivery and implementation of the Foundation Phase*: This encompassed a wide range of materials, such as policy documents, guidance documents, training materials and curriculum materials. A theoretical framework was developed to analyse the extant documentation. This analysis was primarily used to develop the initial Policy Logic Model and Programme Theory for the Foundation Phase evaluation (Maynard *et al.* 2013); (b) *a national survey of head*

teachers, centre managers and Foundation Phase lead practitioners covering all Foundation Phase settings: this collected information on, and responses to, staff qualifications, staff-pupil ratios, use of classroom assistants, use of outdoor environments, stumbling blocks to implementation, financial expenditure, obstacles to implementation, attitudes towards the Foundation Phase; (c) *interviews with key Welsh Government and local authority personnel*: this invited participants to discuss support for teachers, Welsh-medium provision in the Foundation Phase, monitoring and evaluation strategies, and data sharing; (d) *an initial analysis of administrative educational data (*Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) and the National Pupil Database (NPD)): this considered the apparent impact of the introduction of the Foundation Phase on attendance, teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Phase, and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2.

1.16   Further details relating to Stages II and III of the evaluation are discussed respectively in Chapters 3 and 4.

Organisation and Administration

1.17   The lead researcher and director of the evaluation is Professor Chris Taylor, based in the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD) in Cardiff University. Professor Taylor is supported by the co-director, Professor Trisha Maynard (Canterbury Christ Church University). Alongside the director and co-director are a group of senior academics based at various universities in England and Wales that provide necessary support in their respective disciplines and fields of expertise as required.

1.18   The director of the evaluation provides regular monthly updates to the contract manager for the evaluation at the Welsh Government, Launa Anderson in Knowledge and Analytical Services.

1.19   The Welsh Government convenes and coordinates a Foundation Phase Evaluation Advisory group for the evaluation, with members of the group from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), including colleagues responsible for the Foundation Phase, and colleagues from Knowledge and Analytical Services in the Welsh Government. The advisory group also includes representatives from Estyn and local authorities. The terms of reference for this group are outlined in Taylor et al. (2013).

1.20   During 2012/13 (Stage II of the evaluation) the Welsh Government Foundation Phase Evaluation Advisory Group met twice: 18 October 2012 and 17 May 2013.

1.21   In addition, the evaluation team has its own Evaluation Team Advisory Group independent of the Welsh Government. The membership of this Group includes head teachers, practitioners, parents/carers, key stakeholders from the HE sector (including leading academic researchers and Initial Teacher Education providers), and representatives from the non-maintained sector. The terms of reference for this group can also be found in Taylor *et al.* (2013).

1.22   During 2012/13 (Stage II of the evaluation) The Evaluation Team Advisory Group met once on 20 November 2012 to coincide with the development of the Stage II evaluation design and tools.

Ethics

1.23   The lead researcher is a member of the British Educational Research
        Association (BERA), and the evaluation adheres to the BERA 2004
        Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research and the BERA Charter for
        Good Practice in the Employment of Contract Researchers (2001).
        Prior ethical approval for all components of the evaluation is adheres to
        the Research Ethics Framework of Cardiff University and all
        researchers have been subject to an initial Criminal Record Bureau
        (CRB) check.

1.24   Throughout the evaluation detailed information sheets have been
        produced (in English and Welsh) for all potential participants inviting
        them to participate. For the case study observations (see Chapter 3)
        opt-out consent[1] was offered to all parents/carers.

1.25   Ethical approval for Stage III of the evaluation design will be sought
        during September 2013.

1.26   The team adheres to the ethical guidelines for research laid down by
        the Cardiff University Research Ethics Committee and BERA and all
        work is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Data
        Protection Act 1998. All participating schools and respondents are
        assured of confidentiality in the presentation of results. No staff will be
        named individually in reports, and where case study techniques are
        used particular care will be taken to avoid identification of the schools
        etc.

1.27   In accessing and analysing data from the National Pupil Database, the
        Welsh Government have provided anonymous individual pupil data
        with only variables that ensure identification of the individual pupil is not
        possible and cannot be linked to other data that might identify the

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[1] All parents/carers were sent a letter home to inform them of the nature of the research and asking them to let the school know if they did not wish their child to be included.

individual pupils. The analyses of pupil level data will be presented for cohorts and specific groups and anonymity and confidentiality of individual named data will be strictly observed.

Communication and Dissemination

1.28   The Foundation Phase Evaluation has its own webpages on the WISERD website. The URL link for these pages is: www.wiserd.ac.uk/foundationphase. The evaluation team can be contacted via email (fpevaluation@cardiff.ac.uk) or by telephone (029 2087 9338).

1.29   During the final year of the evaluation the research team expect to produce a series of Working Papers (see Chapter 5) which will form the basis of final evaluation reports that will be published by the Welsh Government.

1.30   All final reports published by the evaluation are available from the Welsh Government website: http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/evaluation-foundation-phase/?lang=en and further details about the evaluation can also be found on the Welsh Government website: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/earlyyearshome/foundation_phase/eval/?lang=en

Progress during 2012/13

1.31   Progress during the second year of the evaluation (2012/13) has been good. The evaluation continues to be on track to be completed by August 2014 when a final evaluation report is expected to be produced.

1.32   The second year of the evaluation has largely involved the collection of data for Stage II of the evaluation design (see Chapter 2). Alongside

this the evaluation team have been undertaking other activities relating to the evaluation, which are summarised here.

1.33   Three reports by the evaluation team were published by the Welsh Government during 2012/13 and subsequently made available from the Welsh Government website. These were:

Maynard, T., Taylor, C., Waldron, S., Rhys, M., Smith, R., Power, S. and Clement, J. (2013) *Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Policy Logic Model and Programme Theory, Social Research No. 37/2012*, Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Taylor, C., Maynard, T., Davies, R., Waldron, S. Rhys, M., Power, S., Moore, L., Blackaby, D. and Plewis, I. (2013) *Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Annual Report 2011/12, Social Research No. 43/2012*, Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Davies, R., Taylor, C., Maynard, T., Rhys, M., Waldron, S., and Blackaby, D. (2013) *Evaluating the Foundation Phase: The Outcomes of Foundation Phase Pupils (Report 1), Social Research No. 47/2012*, Cardiff: Welsh Government.

1.34   To ensure our analysis, interpretation and findings are robust and are warranted we believe it is important to seek formative feedback on our research from our academic peers. During 2012/13 we successfully applied to organise a session on the evaluation of the Foundation Phase for the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference at the University of Sussex, Brighton, September 3-5 2013. This proposed four presentations from the evaluation.

1.35   Further academic presentations have also been made at the following:
- Cardiff University School of Social Sciences Education Policy Analysis Research Group (9 January 2013)

- WISERD Annual Conference – University of South Wales (25 July 2013)

1.36　The evaluation team have also attended and presented the research to the All Wales Foundation Phase Advisors (AWFPA) Group twice during the year – 28 November 2012 (Cardiff) and 11 July 2013 (Cardiff).

1.37　An introduction to the aims and research design of the Foundation Phase was also presented at the National Eisteddfod (8 August 2013) – *Gwerthuso polisi Cyfnod Sylfaen ar gyfer addysg y blynyddoedd cynnar* (Evaluating a Foundation Phase policy for early years education).

1.38　A planned seminar on the use of the outdoor environment, special educational needs and the Welsh language in the Foundation Phase for practitioners, policy-makers and other key stakeholders did not go ahead. Instead, a future set of workshops are planned for 2013/14 and details are provided in Chapter 3.

1.39　Finally, during the first year of the evaluation the research team were successful in competing for an ESRC-funded PhD research studentship. The studentship covers tuition fees and provides a stipend to the successful student for three years. This is a highly prestigious studentship that is based in the all-Wales ESRC Doctoral Training Centre (the student is registered and supervised in Cardiff University). Following an open competition the successful candidate was Alyson Lewis.

1.40　This linked doctoral research project began in September 2012, and following discussion and approval with the Welsh Government will be an exploratory study investigating and capturing children's social and emotional well-being in Foundation Phase classrooms (3-7 year olds). Its principle aims and research questions are:

- To demonstrate and argue that the concept of children's social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) is complex in both theory and practice;

- To explore and develop tools that capture children's SEWB in Foundation Phase classrooms;

- How is wellbeing understood, documented and assessed by Foundation Phase staff in two different schools and how is it embedded in the classroom?

- What characteristics are present in new or existing tools that make them more reliable in capturing a specific domain of SEWB? and

- What barriers exist in developing new and existing tools that capture domains of SEWB?

Further details are provided in Appendix A.

2   Programme of Work for Stage II

2.1   All the activities indicatively listed for the first 12 months of the evaluation have largely been met. This included Stage I of the evaluation design.

2.2   In the first annual report (Taylor *et al.* 2013) we set-out detailed proposals for the design and content of Stage II of the research and the subsequent programme of work for the second year of the evaluation. This is summarised in Table 2 and includes our intended key milestones and outputs for that period.

2.3   A number of changes were made to this indicative programme of work. Due to the sizeable content and importance of three of the reports their eventual publication was delayed until later in the year. This had a number of implications. The main implication of this was we decided to delay the second analysis of NPD data until the final year of the evaluation. This would have included a further year of administrative data that complements the initial analysis (Davies *et al.* 2013). Instead a second and third iteration of this is intended to be published in 2014 (see Chapter 3).

2.4   We also decided not to prepare separate reports for analysis of the national survey of primary head teachers and funded non-maintained settings and the analysis of local authority interviews. Instead analysis and findings from these two elements (of Stage I of the evaluation) will be integrated with analysis and findings from Stage II of the evaluation and will feature in our reporting schedule for the final year of the evaluation (see Chapter 3).

Table 1: Indicative Timeline for Three-Year Evaluation

	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Key Milestones/Outputs
6 months	• Begin collating documentary evidence • National survey of head teachers and centre managers underway		• Evaluation website established
12 months	• Interviews with key Welsh Government and local authority personnel • Finalise sourcing of available existing data • Finalise sample of settings for case study data collection	• Baseline characteristics • Initial analysis of summary statistics	• Initial findings from national survey of head teachers and centre managers • **End of Year 1 Annual Report**
18 months	• Head teacher interviews in case study schools • Teacher interviews in case study schools • First sweep of classroom/school observations • Update existing data with additional data	• Primary and secondary analysis of outcome measures	• Initial findings from interviews with key Welsh Government and local authority personnel • Programme Theory for Foundation Phase finalised – to provide basis for analysis of outcomes and foundations of future Evaluation Framework
24 months	• Second sweep of classroom/school observations • Parental questionnaire underway • Pupil survey underway • Update existing data with additional data	• Tertiary analysis of outcome measures • Multilevel modelling	• Initial findings from interviews with head teachers and teachers in case study settings • **End of Year 2 Annual Report**

30 months	• Third sweep of classroom/school observations • Additional observations and interviews in pre-school settings • Update existing data with additional data	• Longitudinal analysis	• Initial findings from parental questionnaire and pupil survey
36 months		• Refresh analyses using additional existing data and combined primary data	• **End of Evaluation Final Report**

Table 2: Indicative Detailed Programme of Work for 2012/13

2012/13
September 2012
Pilot data collection instruments for case study visits
Finalise case study sample
Resend national survey of schools/settings
October 2012
Finalise 'Policy Logic Model Report' for publication
Draft '2011/12 Annual Report'
Draft 'First Data Analysis Report'
Draft 'Local Authority Advisors Report'
Begin contacting 20 case study schools
November 2012
Complete 5 case study school visits
Finalise 'First Data Analysis Report' for publication
Publish 'Policy Logic Model Report'
Complete data entry from national survey of schools/settings
New PLASC/NPD data requests for Stage II

December 2012

Complete 7 case study school visits

Finalise '2011/12 Annual Report' for publication

Finalise 'Local Authority Advisors Report' for publication

Publish 'First Data Analysis Report'

Initial analysis of national survey responses

Receive new PLASC/NPD data from Welsh Government

January 2013

Contact remaining 20 case study visits

Complete 7 case study school visits

Call for papers for Foundation Phase Research Conference

Publish '2011/12 Annual Report'

Publish 'Local Authority Advisors Report'

Present initial findings from national survey of schools/settings to Welsh Government

Complete remaining stakeholder interviews

Begin analysis using new PLASC/NPD data

February 2013

Complete 7 case study school visits

Draft 'National Survey Report'

March 2013

Complete 7 case study school visits

Finalise 'National Survey Report' for publication

Present findings from initial analysis of updated PLASC/NPD data

April 2013

Select and contact additional funded non-maintained settings

Finalise programme for Foundation Phase Research Conference

May 2013

Complete 7 case study school visits

Publish 'National Survey Report'

Draft 'Second Data Analysis Report'

June 2013

Complete additional funded non-maintained setting visits

July 2013

Complete additional funded non-maintained setting visits

Foundation Phase Research Conference (Cardiff)

Begin analysis from Stage II case study visits

Finalise 'Second Data Analysis Report' for publication

2.5 Despite these changes, the data collection involved for Stage II of the evaluation design proceeded as expected. This largely involved the first sweep of case study visits to schools and funded non-maintained settings. The first five months of the year involved the development and careful piloting of all the research instruments that were used in the case study visits. The final case study visits began in January 2013 and took six months to complete.

Case Study Sample

2.6 Stage II of the evaluation largely involved the first sweep of case study visits. We intended to visit 40 schools and 10 funded non-maintained settings. These were to be selected through stratified random sampling – stratified by educational consortia region of Wales and stage of implementation and then randomly selected. A minimum number of Welsh Medium schools were identified prior to selection with additional Welsh Medium schools to be randomly selected if this number was not met. We originally intended to select funded non-maintained settings on the basis of being 'feeder' settings in to the case study schools (see Taylor *et al.* 2013 for more details).

2.7   In total, 73 schools were asked to participate. Two agreed to participate but later had to withdraw from the evaluation due to pending Estyn inspections. One school was due to close during the year. A further 24 schools declined to participate. In most cases the next randomly selected school agreed to participate. In a very small number of cases the second randomly selected school also declined to participate, which meant that a third school had to be randomly selected. Obviously this has implications for how 'random' the case study schools were, but given the process of randomisation was at the regional level we are confident that there is minimal self-selecting bias in the final sample. Further descriptive analysis of the final sample will be presented in later evaluation reports (see Chapter 3).

2.8   In total 41 schools and 10 funded non-maintained settings agreed to be case studies. The final sample of case study schools and funded non-maintained settings is summarised in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Summary of Case Studies by Region

Sector and medium of instruction	Regional Consortia			
	North Wales[1]	South West and Mid Wales[2]	Central South Wales[3]	South East Wales[4]
Maintained schools	10	14	10	7
Welsh Medium	5	5	4	0
English Medium*	5	9	6	7
Funded Non-Maintained Settings	4	2	3	1
Welsh Medium	2	2	1	0
English Medium	2	0	2	1
TOTAL	*14*	*16*	*12*	*9*

1. Flintshire, Conwy, Wrexham, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Denbighshire Local Authorities
2. Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Ceredigion Local Authorities.
3. Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan Local Authorities.
4. Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen Local Authorities.
* Includes one dual-stream school

Table 4: Summary of Case Study Schools by Phase of Implementation

Stage of implementation	Regional Consortia				Total number
	North Wales[1]	South West and Mid Wales[2]	Central South Wales[3]	South East Wales[4]	
Pilot	1	2	1	1	5
Early Start	1	2	1	1	5
Final Roll-out	8	10	8	5	31
TOTAL	*10*	*14*	*10*	*7*	*41*

1. Flintshire, Conwy, Wrexham, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Denbighshire Local Authorities
2. Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Ceredigion Local Authorities.
3. Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan Local Authorities.
4. Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen Local Authorities.

2.9   Within the schools that declined or could not participate there were three Early Start schools and two Pilot schools.

2.10   The selection of funded non-maintained settings always intended to use purposive sampling – i.e. they were to be selected because they were deemed to be a 'feeder' in to one of the case study schools. However, the majority of case study schools had their own nursery classes or attached maintained units. This meant that only seven of the funded non-maintained settings could be selected on this basis. The remaining three funded non-maintained settings were selected on the basis of recommendations and to ensure there was a suitable geographical spread.

Case Study Visits

2.11   Visits to all the case study schools and funded non-maintained settings took place between January and July 2013. A typical school visit took two days, although for some smaller schools this only took one day. Each school visit included the following elements:[2]

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[2] All case study visit tools were piloted in a variety of additional primary schools during the Autumn Term of 2012 prior to the commencement of the case study visits.

- Observation of children and staff in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes
- Classroom teacher survey
- Interviews with Head Teachers and Foundation Phase lead practitioners
- Interviews or focus groups with Teaching and Learning Assistants
- Survey of Year 2 pupils

2.12 Funded non-maintained settings usually included observations and interview with the setting manager.

2.13 A typical schedule for a case study school visit is presented in Table 5. This shows that observations of most classes (for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) were undertaken in a morning and an afternoon.

Table 5: Example Case Study School Visit

Approximate Time	Day One	Day Two
9.00-10.00	Observation – Reception	Observation – Nursery
10.30-11.30	Observation – Year 1	Observation – Year 2
1.00-2.00	Observation – Reception	Observation – Year 2
2.30-3.30	Observation – Year 1	Pupil Survey – Year 2
3.30-4.00	Interview – Head Teacher	Interview/Focus Group – Teaching and Learning Assistants
4.00-4.30	Interview – FP Lead Practitioner	

2.14 Observations were designed to provide a snap-shot of how a Foundation Phase class/activity is being designed and delivered. Observations were largely of the children in order to gauge (a) the pedagogic and curricula activities they were engaged in, (b) to measure their engagement with that activity or activities, and (c) to provide an indication of their wellbeing during that activity or activities.

2.15   In addition to the pupil observations, the researchers made observations of the classroom layout and of the staff in each classroom to examine their role and relationship with the pupils. Pupil observations were undertaken systematically of a randomly different pupil every two minutes. For each pupil observed a measure of their involvement and wellbeing was taken using Leuven Scales (Laevers, 2005).

2.16   Two researchers were involved in collecting observational data systematically. To ensure inter-rater reliability both researchers were involved in the development of the tools and in piloting them. They then undertook simultaneous observations in the first five case study school visits of children and classrooms. Table 6 provides a summary of the inter-rater reliability for several components of these classroom observations. In all components the inter-rater reliability scores would suggest there was 'substantial agreement' between the two researchers (Landis and Coch 1977).

2.17   In addition to the classroom observations the researchers administered a short classroom teacher survey. This was complemented by interviews with the Head Teacher (or acting Head Teacher), the lead Foundation Phase practitioner (if different to the Head Teacher) and a number of Teaching and Learning Assistants.

2.18   Lastly, each case study school visit included a self-completion survey by Year 2 pupils (age 6/7 years). This survey was designed to be similar to the age seven child survey of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS). Usually children completed these surveys in groups of five with the support of the researcher. In some cases a Teaching and Learning Assistant was also present.

2.19   Table 7 provides a summary of the final sample size for each component of Stage I and Stage II of the evaluation design.

Table 6: Summary of Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) for Classroom Observations

Component of classroom observation	Type of rating	IRR measure	No. of observations	IRR result
Areas of Learning	Binary	Cohen Kappa	2,611	0.67
Child Involvement	Scale	Pearson Correlation	373	0.71
Child Wellbeing	Scale	Pearson Correlation	373	0.64
Foundation Phase Keywords	Binary	Cohen Kappa	14,810	0.70
Session Level	Scale	Pearson Correlation	426	0.81

Table 7: Final Sample Size in Stage I and Stage II

Respondents, Participants & Observations	Sample number*
Stage I	
National Survey of Head Teachers	361
National Survey of Funded Non-Maintained Providers	243
Local Authority Foundation Phase Advisor Interviews	19
Local Authority Training and Support Officer Interviews	18
Non-Maintained Umbrella Organisation Interviews	4
Stage II	
Child Observations	3,343
Classrooms Observed	131
Sessions Observed	239
Practitioners Observed	824
Year 2 Pupil Survey	671
Head Teacher Interviews	41
Teacher Interviews	118
Lead FP Practitioner Interviews	37
Non-Maintained Leader Interviews	10
Non-Maintained Teaching and Learning Assistant Interviews	14
School Teaching and Learning Assistant Interviews	121

* This does not include any observations and participants from the piloting of the data collection tools

3   Next Steps 2013/14

3.1   The programme of work for the evaluation during 2013/14 will be
       divided into three parts:
    i.   Stage III of the Evaluation Design
    ii.   Analytical Framework
    iii. Reporting and Communication

Stage III of the Evaluation Design

3.2   During 2013/14 the evaluation team will complete Stage III of the
       evaluation design. This involves the further collection of data from case
       study schools and funded non-maintained settings.

3.3   The main elements of Stage III fieldwork will be:
    * Parent/carer survey;
    * Year 3 teacher interviews; and
    * Activities with children.

3.4   Each of these three elements is discussed below. The research tools
       for each of these areas will be developed and piloted during the
       Autumn Term 2013. And all elements will be approved by the Cardiff
       University School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Stage III: Parent/Carer Survey

3.5   We feel that the best way to consult with parents/carers about their
       views on the Foundation Phase is via a self-completed bilingual postal
       survey that will be taken home by Foundation Phase, Year 3 and Year
       4 children (in each of our 41 case study schools). We decided to wait
       until the final year of the evaluation so that questions relating to the
       children's transition from the Foundation Phase into Years 3 and 4
       would apply to the national roll-out schools as well as Early Start and
       Pilot Stage schools.

3.6   The aim of the parent/carer survey is to gather the perceptions of parents and carers towards the Foundation Phase, in principle and in practice.

3.7   Each of the 41 case study schools (and the 10 case study non-maintained settings) will be invited to send surveys home to parents/carers via Foundation Phase, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. We will cover all costs by sending printed surveys (with pre-paid self-addressed return envelopes) to the schools for distribution to parents/carers. Parents/carers can then either return the completed survey to the school or directly to WISERD (using the pre-paid self-addressed envelope). There will also be a prize draw as an incentive to complete the survey.

3.8   In analysing the parent/carer survey, we will be looking to examine the following:

- How much do parents/carers know about the Foundation Phase (as an education policy), what were their information sources, and how does this vary across schools and settings?
- To what extent do parents/carers agree with the principles of the Foundation Phase, and does this vary according to the type of Foundation Phase implementation in the case study schools and settings?
- What do parents/carers think about the experiences of their own children who have been recipients of the Foundation Phase (including transition into KS2), does this vary across the year groups, and does it depend on the way the Foundation Phase is being implemented in the case study schools and settings?

3.9   We will be able to analyse the above questions in the context of whether their children are eligible for free school meals, their language use, and subjective reporting of any additional learning needs.

3.10 If a parent/carer returns a completed survey (either to the school or direct to the evaluation team) their consent to take part will be assumed, and all participants will be told they can withdraw their data at any time. When finalising the survey, we will ensure that the language used is as accessible as possible. However, we are aware that a small proportion of parents/carers (e.g. those with reading/writing difficulties in English/Welsh) will find this difficult. Therefore, we will include our contact details with a note in case parents/carers would prefer to share their views on the Foundation Phase over the telephone. We will also be asking all schools/settings to direct parent/carers to us in the event of this scenario. Participants will only be required to write their name on the survey if they wish to be entered into the prize draw as a survey completion incentive. This information will not be linked with the data they provide within the survey, and will not be included in any publications from this project.

3.11 This survey is due to be conducted during Autumn Term, 2013.

Stage III: Year 3 Teacher Interviews

3.12 As with the parent/carer survey, we decided to wait until the final year of the evaluation to gather the views and perceptions of Year 3 (KS2) teachers, because this will maximise the experience Year 3 teachers have had in receiving and working with children who have been through the Foundation Phase.

3.13 The main aim of the Year 3 teacher interviews will be to gather the perceptions of Year 3 teachers towards the Foundation Phase, in principle and in practice, with a focus on the transition for children from the Foundation Phase into Key Stage 2 (KS2).

3.14 The telephone interviews will be based around six main themes relating to Year 3 teacher's views about the Foundation Phase and how it links

with KS2. The questions have been generated from the themes that emerged from Stages I and II that require further focus.

3.15 We will be contacting all of our 41 case study schools to arrange to speak with the Year 3 teacher that has received the cohort of Year 2 children that were observed in Phase II. We will then conduct the full telephone interview with approximately 20 Year 3 teachers that have been teaching in Key Stage 2 for the longest (i.e. those most able to compare the new cohorts of Foundation Phase children with previous cohorts of Key Stage 1 children).

3.16 In analysing the Year 3 teacher interviews, we will be looking to examine the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of Foundation Phase policy and pedagogy - and how this varies from school to school.
- What sort of (if any) training the Year 3 teachers have received in relation to the roll-out of the Foundation Phase.
- Whether the Year 3 teachers feel the children who come up from the Foundation Phase have changed in any way (when compared to KS1 children), as well as looking at how they as teachers have changed their pedagogy in any way.
- How transition from Foundation Phase into KS2 has been implemented within particular schools and if this has had any effect on resources and classroom locations.
- What impact the Foundation Phase might be having on outcomes.

3.17 We will be able to look at these results in the context of Stage II observation data, as well as staff interviews conducted with Foundation Phase staff and head teachers in the case study schools.

3.18 Agreement to take part in the telephone interviews will be taken as consent. We will also seek consent to audio record the telephone

interviews, and standard participant rights will be explained (e.g. ability to withdraw data at any time etc.).

3.19 The telephone interviews are due to be organised and conducted during the Autumn Term, 2013.

Stage III: Activities with Children

3.20 Although we conducted a Year 2 Pupil Survey (and also a large number of observations of children in their Foundation Phase classrooms) in Stage II, we feel that the evaluation would benefit from more direct (and participative) work with children.

3.21 The main aim of this part of the evaluation is to, first, conduct a series of Year 2 Focus Groups and Year 1 Classroom Tours so that children's views and experiences of the Foundation Phase can better inform our evaluation. And secondly, to assess whether Year 2 children from schools that appear to have implemented the Foundation Phase fully have better group problem solving/thinking skills than in schools that appear to have not implemented the Foundation Phase to a strong degree.

3.22 The rationale for this is two-fold. First, the Year 2 Pupil Survey conducted in Stage II suggested that it would be worth talking to children in more detail about their experiences in school, and how this might be affected by the Foundation Phase. Secondly, the constraints of evaluating the effect of the Foundation Phase on educational outcomes led us to consider assessing the impact of different Foundation Phase pedagogies on group problem solving and thinking skills.

3.23   It is proposed to conduct this direct work with children in seven of the 41 case study schools: three 'high' Foundation Phase schools, three 'low' Foundation Phase schools and one Welsh Medium school[3].

3.24   This element of the evaluation will allow us to examine whether children's perceptions of the Foundation Phase, and their group problem solving skills, are affected by the type and degree of Foundation Phase pedagogy they are experiencing at school. In other words we intend to examine:

- whether children from 'high' and 'low' Foundation Phase classrooms experience and talk about their learning in different ways, and

- whether children from 'high' and 'low' Foundation Phase classrooms have developed different levels of group problem solving and/or thinking skills.

3.25   Preceding these activities the researchers will spend some time in the classroom before commencing the activities to allow the children to get used to who the researchers are and why they are there.

3.26   Each of the seven schools will need to have at least twenty children in Year 1 and at least twenty children in Year 2 to ensure that we can obtain consent from at least six Year 1 and six Year 2 children (and their parents/carers). We also intend to video the children's activities, and therefore we will require parents/carers to give signed informed consent for their child to take part (i.e. opt-in consent). Parents/carers will also be asked to give their consent for the research team to use the recorded videos for dissemination purposes.

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[3] 'High' and 'low' Foundation Phase schools will be based on analysis of the observational data from Stage II of the evaluation design. This will be used to identify schools that appear to have fully implemented the Foundation Phase (as it was originally designed) – the 'high' schools – and schools that appear to have not implemented the Foundation Phase to a particularly strong degree – the 'low' schools. The selection of the one Welsh Medium school will be based on having a high proportion of children from English-speaking homes with the particular remit of looking at the impact of the Foundation Phase in this particular context. In addition schools will be selected on the basis of their intake characteristics – e.g. with different proportions of children eligible for free school meals.

3.27   To help this process, we will be asking the seven schools participating in this part of our research to identify a member of staff (e.g. teacher or teaching assistant) to help ask for consent from at least eight Year 1 and eight Year 2 parents/carers at drop-off/pick-up time. School staff will be provided with all of the required information and consent sheets. They will then be able to approach parents/carers a week or two before our scheduled visit to ensure sufficient consent forms have been signed.

3.28   Of the children whose parents/carers have given signed consent, we intend to 'randomly' choose three boys and three girls willing to take part from Year 1 and three boys and three girls willing to take part from Year 2[4]. The researcher will clearly explain the activity and the reason for filming to these children and give all of them the opportunity to decline if they don't want to take part. Ideally, the same group of Year 2 children will take part in both the Focus Group Discussion and the Group Problem Solving Task.

3.29   We aim to conduct all of the direct work with children between January and February 2014. Therefore, we intend to finalise the group activities and procedures by November 2013 and begin recruiting our sub-sample of seven schools and arranging for parental consent in December 2013.

Stage III: Year 2 Focus Groups

3.30   The main aim of these focus groups will be to find out more about Year 2 children's perceptions of their learning and school, and how these are influenced by the type of Foundation Phase implementation they are experiencing in their classroom. We will also be able to follow up on key findings from the Year 2 Survey conducted in Stage II.

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[4] The reason for obtaining parental consent for eight rather than six Year 1 and Year 2 children is to allow for the scenario of a couple of children declining to take part.

3.31 Preliminary analysis of some of the Year 2 survey data from Stage II suggests that children's attitudes towards certain elements of learning may be influenced by the way in which the Foundation Phase is being implemented in their classroom (e.g. more or less adult/child initiated etc.). Year 2 focus groups will allow for a more in-depth qualitative discussion with the next cohort of Year 2 children about whether their classroom environment and pedagogy influences their experience of, and attitudes towards, school and learning. We will have observed these children in Phase II of the evaluation, whilst they were in Year 1. Therefore, we will know what kind of pedagogy they were experiencing then, and we will also talk with their Year 2 teacher to find out what kind of pedagogy they are experiencing now.

3.32 When analysing these qualitative focus group discussion data, we will be looking for common themes that tell us more about how Year 2 children perceive the following, and how these factors may be influenced by the type of Foundation Phase implementation they have been experiencing in their school:

- Enjoyment of school, reading, writing, number work and outdoor learning;
- Confidence, behaviour, peer relationships, wellbeing and independence; and
- The role of the teacher and additional classroom practitioners

Stage III: Year 1 Classroom Tours

3.33 The main aim of the classroom tours will be to explore how different Foundation Phase classroom layouts can affect how Year 1 children perceive and describe their learning environment.

3.34 Our Stage II fieldwork revealed considerable variation in how schools and teachers set up their Foundation Phase classrooms and learning

environments. Participatory classroom tours will allow us to learn more about how children perceive their learning environment, and how this might be affected by the way it is set out and used by the teacher and additional practitioners.

3.35 For this purpose one group of six Year 1 children will be chosen from each of the seven schools taking part. The researchers will explain to the selected children that they would like the children to take them on a tour of their classroom and outdoor learning environment, showing them what they do in their space and why they do it. The researchers will also explain that they would like to video the classroom tour and obtain their consent for this.

3.36 The researchers will let the children lead the classroom tour (with a time limit of 15 minutes), but a set of standard prompts (for consistency) will be used when needed:
- 'So, what's the first thing you'd like to show me in your classroom? What do you do here? What is it for? What do you learn about here?'
- 'And what's the next thing you'd like to show me in your classroom (repeated …)? What do you do here? What is it for?'
- 'What does your teacher normally do? And any other adults in the classroom?'

3.37 When analysing the qualitative classroom tour data (video and field notes), we will be looking to see if there are any differences between the 'high' and 'low' Foundation Phase school groups in terms of how the children conceptualise their learning environments (e.g. use of key words such as 'work' and 'play'), how the children describe the role of the teacher and additional practitioners, how enthusiastic the children are when showing the different areas of provision, and how well the group work together to share ideas and include each other in the tour. For example:

- How confident were the children in working with a stranger and initiating the tour (without teacher support)?
- How did each group work together? Did they listen to each other's point of views and work together as a group?
- What areas of the classroom/activities featured the most in each group's discussion?
- How did each group conceptualise and describe the various activities and areas of provision they chose to talk about?
- Were there differences in how the groups talked about their indoor and outdoor spaces?
- What areas of learning did the groups like/dislike the most?

Stage III: Year 2 Group Problem Solving and Thinking Skills Assessment

3.38   The main aim of this element of the evaluation is to observe children engaging with three tasks designed to reveal whether the type of Foundation Phase implementation in classrooms appears to have any effect on children's group problem solving, creativity and thinking skills.

3.39   It could be argued that the Foundation Phase was partly designed to help children develop generic problem solving and thinking skills (Maynard *et al.* 2013). However, these areas of cognitive development are not directly assessed in the End of Foundation Phase Outcomes. Therefore, the aim of these three tasks is to examine whether Year 2 children in high Foundation Phase schools display 'higher' group problem solving, creativity and thinking skills, when compared to Year 2 children from 'low' Foundation Phase schools.

3.40   Ideally, the same six children from each of the seven participating schools who take part in the Year 2 focus group discussions will also take part in these group problem solving activities. A comfortable and familiar place for the Year 2 children in the school will be chosen to conduct the group problem solving activities. After the researchers

have introduced themselves they will explain the purpose of these activities. The researchers will also explain that they would like to video the activities, and ask the children for their consent.

3.41   All these activities have been chosen to encourage the children to verbally discuss their ideas with each other, as well as record ideas for review at the end of the time limit. All tasks will be video recorded, and the qualitative data will be analysed for relevant themes relating to how the children discuss ideas, what sort of thinking language they use, and how they work together as a group. All tasks will be timed, and based on previous research using these assessments, quantitative data for the children's responses will be obtained and analysed using standardised measures in order to evaluate their desired outcomes. Overall, we will be looking to see if children in 'high' and 'low' Foundation Phase schools differ consistently in children's creativity, group problem solving and thinking skills.

Analytical Framework

3.42   Another major part of the evaluation's activities during 2013/14 will be to complete the analysis required for the final evaluation report. Given the complex nature of the Foundation Phase and the evaluation, a mixed methods approach has been adopted (Gorard and Taylor 2004). Therefore the evaluation design includes many features, and will have collected a range of quantitative and qualitative data. Therefore the analysis required will draw upon a range of data sources and types collected during Stages I, II and III of the evaluation.

3.43   To do this the evaluation team have identified a number of analytical themes and associated analytical working papers that will be developed. The resulting analytical framework and timeline (Table 8) will be used to guide the analysis and provide the basis for the final evaluation reports which will be published.

Table 8: Foundation Phase Evaluation Analytical Framework

Analytical Theme	Analytical Working Paper
A. Implementation	1. Management and leadership
	2. Training, support and guidance
	3. Staffing
	4. Children and families
B. Practice	5. Pedagogy and understanding
	6. Environment (indoor/outdoor)
	7. Welsh language
	8. Literacy and numeracy
	9. Exemplars of FP practice
C. Impact	10. Reported impacts
	11. Child involvement and wellbeing
	12. Transitions and assessment
	13. Future development of the FP
D. Outcomes	14. NPD Report 1 (Stage I)
	15. NPD Report 2 (Stage II)
	16. NPD Report 3 (Stage III)
E. Technical	17. Methodology

Working paper 1: Management and Leadership

3.44 This working paper will examine the role of management and leadership in the introduction and establishment of the Foundation Phase. This includes the role of the Welsh Government, local authorities, Foundation Phase Advisors, head teachers, centre managers and senior teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Foundation Phase in schools. In particular it will be interested in:

- How the introduction of the Foundation Phase was experienced by these various groups of practitioners;
- Their attitudes towards the implementation of the Foundation Phase;
- Their expectations for the Foundation Phase during the early stages of its implementation;

- What changes, if any, there have been in the schools' organisation and management;
- What relationships, if any, there are between initial attitudes and subsequent practice of the Foundation Phase; and
- Barriers to and challenges of implementation, including lessons learnt.

3.45 As well as mapping the roles and contributions of these different stakeholders in its implementation, it will also consider what patterns, if any, there are in the implementation of the Foundation Phase by:
- Geography (urban/rural, local authority/regional consortia)
- Type of school (WM/EM, size, intake composition)
- Stage of roll-out (Pilot, Early Start, Final Roll-out)
- Staff characteristics (experience of Head Teacher)

Working paper 2: Training, Support and Guidance

3.46 This working paper will focus on the training, support and guidance provided and made available to schools and practitioners. In particular, it will be interested in the way any materials for these purposes have been received, interpreted and used. There will also be a key focus on the role of local authorities and the Welsh Government in the implementation and practice of the Foundation Phase.

Working paper 3: Staffing

3.47 This working paper is primarily concerned with issues relating to staffing for the Foundation Phase. A key feature of the Foundation Phase is the additional resource to improve adult:pupil ratios in the Foundation Phase years. This working paper will attempt to map adult:pupil ratios from the national surveys and case study school visits. It will then consider what relationships this has, if any, on Foundation Phase practice in case study classrooms.

3.48   This working paper will also consider the impact of teaching experience and qualifications of all staff, where possible, on Foundation Phase practice in schools and classrooms. It will also examine the recruitment, role and attitudes of Teaching and Learning Assistants in the Foundation Phase. Key themes of this Working Paper will therefore be:

- Mapping adult:pupil ratios across the sector;
- Mapping qualifications and teaching experience of all staff;
- Use of staff in the delivery of the Foundation Phase (activities/responsibilities by staff);
- Use of sustained interaction, observation and reflection (as related to qualifications and experience);
- Recruitment of Additional Teachers;
- Role of Additional Teachers;
- Examine issues of funding relating to staffing for the Foundation Phase; and
- Professional values amongst practitioners.

3.49   From the mapping exercise of adult:pupil ratios and the qualifications and teaching experience of classroom staff it will also consider what patterns, if any, there are in the implementation of the Foundation Phase by:

- Geography (urban/rural, local authority/regional consortia);
- Category of school (WM/EM, size, intake composition)
- Stage of roll-out (Pilot, Early Start, Final Roll-out); and
- Typology of practice (see Pedagogy and Understanding Working Paper).

Working paper 4: Children and Families

3.50   In line with the children's rights approach underpinning the Foundation Phase this working paper is primarily concerned with the perceptions of

children and their parents/families to the Foundation Phase and the extent to which the 'voices' of children and parents are seen as important to the way the Foundation Phase is implemented by practitioners. It therefore incorporates, for example, children's views about the Foundation Phase and how far schools/teachers are taking into account children's interests and ideas when planning activities. It will also explore the relationships with parents, families and communities in the context of the Foundation Phase.

3.51 This is distinct from the working paper on child involvement and wellbeing which is more concerned with the impact of the Foundation Phase on children's involvement in learning activities and their wellbeing. However, we expect that these will be closely related and it will be important to see to what extent child-initiated approaches in Foundation Phase practice are associated with levels of involvement, objective and subjective wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

3.52 The issues highlighted in this working paper will be given particular attention during Stage III of the evaluation. Nevertheless, it is still possible to begin to identify how far children's and parents' views were taken into account in the implementation of the Foundation Phase in schools from the national survey and in the case study visits.

Working paper 5: Pedagogy and Understanding

3.53 This working paper is a core part of the analytical framework and evaluation. It attempts to establish how the Foundation Phase has been understood, interpreted and enacted by practitioners in schools and settings. This will be contrasted with the way the Foundation Phase is understood and presented in the official discourse (see an earlier evaluation report on the Policy Logic Model and Programme Theory – Maynard *et al.* 2013).

3.54   It will also provide a detailed descriptive account of Foundation Phase
        practice in classrooms and settings. In particular it will compare and
        contrast the pedagogy and practice of the Foundation Phase in the
        following key ways:

- Morning versus afternoon;
- By year group;
- By 'categories' of children (e.g. gender, SEN, ability matched);
- By 'categories' of school (e.g. stage of roll-out, school size,
  medium of instruction); and
- By 'categories' of classroom teachers (e.g. teaching experience,
  adult:pupil ratios).

3.55   In providing a descriptive account of how the Foundation Phase is
        being enacted it will also explore the relationships between different
        aspects of pedagogy. In particular it will explore how the twelve
        dimensions of the FP, which the evaluation has used in its classroom
        observations, relate to different types of implementation in order to
        develop an advanced typology of Foundation Phase practice that
        extends beyond the observed characteristics of the Foundation Phase
        found in schools. For example, this will consider whether a typology of
        practice can and should be developed for the classroom- or school-
        level.

3.56   The working paper will also explore possible explanations for any
        patterns or variations in the interpretation, understanding and
        enactment of the pedagogy and content (curriculum) of the Foundation
        Phase, drawing upon interviews with practitioners. Further analysis will
        involve comparing the results of this analysis with the results found in
        other working papers.

Working paper 6: Environment (indoor/outdoor)

3.57   This working paper is primarily concerned with the impact of the Foundation Phase on the teaching and learning environment. It will consider what physical changes, if any, have been made in schools and settings, both to their indoor and outdoor environments. This will also consider the costs and expenditure of these changes.

3.58   The working paper will also provide an account of how indoor and outdoor environments are being used in the Foundation Phase, and consider what relationships, if any, there are between the physical learning environment and other factors, including the following:

- The pedagogy and understanding of the Foundation Phase;
- The impact on children's involvement and wellbeing; and
- Categories of schools (e.g. size and location)

Working paper 7: Welsh Language

3.59   This working paper will consider the relationships between the Foundation Phase and the Welsh language. In particular, it will focus on issues surrounding the delivery of the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning in English medium schools and general Foundation Phase practice in Welsh medium schools.

3.60   The working paper will highlight any findings relating to differences in the implementation and delivery of the Foundation Phase between English and Welsh medium schools. It will also identify if there are have been any particular challenges for the implementation of the Foundation Phase in Welsh medium settings, and will attempt to distinguish the importance of this from other factors, such as immersion, small schools and mixed age classes.

3.61   It will also consider any findings relating to the Welsh language ability of practitioners (teachers and assistant teachers). The working paper

may also draw upon findings from the Parent/Carer Survey, due to be undertaken in Stage III of the evaluation.

Working paper 8: Literacy and Numeracy

3.62   Given the importance of literacy and numeracy to the Welsh Government and the more recent introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework across schools in Wales (Welsh Government 2013) this working paper will consider the specific relationships between the Foundation Phase and these two areas of learning.

3.63   In particular, it will look at the teaching and learning of the two relevant Foundation Phase Areas of Learning: Language Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development. It will also consider the possible impact of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and national tests in reading and numeracy for children in Year 2 (and up to Year 9).

3.64   This working paper may also attempt to incorporate data from the National Reading and Numeracy Tests alongside data already obtained from the National Pupil Database.

Working paper 9: Exemplars of Foundation Phase Practice

3.65   The aim of this working paper will be to provide brief exemplars of Foundation Phase practice that help illustrate how the Foundation Phase is being enacted in classrooms. Examples will be selected to reflect the range of classroom activities and practices observed throughout the evaluation. These will be presented alongside other key information relating to the pedagogy being employed (the twelve dimensions of the Foundation Phase), the implementation type and the official discourse of the Foundation Phase as outlined in the Programme Theory report (Maynard et al. 2013).

Working paper 10: Reported Impacts

3.66   This working paper is concerned with the impacts of the Foundation Phase as observed and reported by stakeholders and practitioners. It will explore the relative impacts of the Foundation Phase on different outcomes and on different groups of children.

3.67   The working paper will also contrast these reported impacts against what head teachers consider are the most pressing issues on early years education (as identified in the national survey).

3.68   Detailed analysis of these reported impacts will also be undertaken to ascertain differences between the following groups:
- Head teachers versus lead FP practitioners;
- Categories of schools (e.g. socio-economic intake, size of school); and
- Attitudes towards the introduction and implementation of the FP.

3.69   The working paper will also consider the relationship between reported outcomes and other known outcomes (such as measures of child involvement, wellbeing and attitudes towards learning).

Working paper 11: Child Involvement and Wellbeing

3.70   This working paper will examine the impact of the Foundation Phase on children's involvement in their learning, their attitudes to learning, objective measures of wellbeing and their subjective accounts of wellbeing. This will primarily draw upon classroom observations and the Pupil Survey, designed to identify levels of wellbeing and attitudes towards learning amongst Year 2 children in the case study schools. The survey was designed using questions from the UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) Child Survey at age 7 years.

3.71　Analysis of the data will involve the following elements:

- Observed child involvement in classrooms;

- Observed child wellbeing in classrooms;

- Self-reported levels of wellbeing and attitudes towards learning, and by background characteristics of Year 2 children;

- Patterns of involvement, wellbeing and attitudes towards learning by case study school;

- Patterns of involvement, wellbeing and attitudes towards learning by stage of roll-out (Pilot, Early Start, Final Roll-out); and

- Comparisons of involvement, wellbeing and attitudes towards learning with equivalent children in the MCS cohort prior to the introduction of the FP (based on country and key background variables).

3.72　This analysis will be later complemented by child focus groups and a number of questions in the Parent/Carer Survey, to be undertaken in Stage III of the evaluation.

Working paper 12: Transitions and Assessment

3.73　This working paper will focus on issues of 'transition' in the Foundation Phase and assessment. This includes the relationships between how the Foundation Phase is being practiced across year groups in schools, factors relating to the entry to the Foundation Phase (from pre-Nursery or Nursery settings), and the transition from the Foundation Phase in to Key Stage 2.

3.74　This working paper will also consider issues relating to Foundation Phase practice in mixed-age classes/settings.

3.75　Finally, the working paper will also consider issues relating to the assessment or tracking of children into and through the Foundation

Phase, including the use of on-entry assessments and attitudes towards the implementation of End of Foundation Phase Assessments.

3.76 The working paper may also draw upon findings relating to issues of transition from the child focus groups and parent survey, due to be undertaken in Stage III of the evaluation.

Working paper 13: Future Development of the Foundation Phase

3.77 This working paper will concentrate on the future development of the Foundation Phase and will outline any suggestions from practitioners and stakeholders for how it could and/or should be improved. It will also provide the opportunity to include the perspectives of children and parents as to its future development.

Working papers 14 to 16: Analyses of the National Pupil Database

3.78 There are three reports in this series that draw upon analysis of the National Pupil Database. The first one of these has already been produced and published, and contains the first set of analyses relating to the outcomes of the Foundation Phase using data from the National Pupil Database up to 2010/11 (Davies *et al.* 2013). It reports, in particular, on the following:

- Attendance and unauthorised absence;
- End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and Key Stage 1 teacher assessments;
- Key Stage 2 teacher assessments; and
- Inequalities in unauthorised absence, End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and KS1 assessments.

3.79 The second report in this series repeats the analysis of the first NPD report with two additional year's data – from 2011/12 and 2012/13. These are important years as they contain the End of Foundation Phase Outcomes for the first two complete cohorts of Year 2 children in

Wales. This second report in the series also provides an opportunity to further develop the strategy and approach to analysing the NPD data.

3.80 The third report in this series will combine the previous analyses with data and findings produced from Stages I, II and III of the evaluation. Most notably this will include:

- Relationships between responses to the national survey and school-level variations in attendance and End of Foundation Phase Outcomes;
- Relationship between Foundation Phase practice and outcomes;
- Child involvement, wellbeing and attitudes to learning; and
- Multi-level modelling of outcomes using NPD, national survey, case study visits and/or pupil survey.

Working paper 17: Methodology

3.81 This final working paper will provide a methodological account of the key tools used in the data collection for the evaluation. In particular, it will be concerned with providing details on the sampling design used for each tool, the design and development of each instrument/tool (including piloting), the response (rate) for each element, and the known limitations of the tools.

Reporting and Communication

3.82 Throughout 2013/14 the evaluation team will continue to report regularly to the Welsh Government.

3.83 The evaluation also expects to produce a number of reports during 2013/14. These include:

- Working Papers based on the Analytical Framework discussed above;
- A set of reports on key elements of the evaluation;

- End of Evaluation Final Report.

3.84 The evaluation also expects to organise three dissemination events during 2013/14. The first two will be relatively small-scale seminars with invited participants to discuss two key areas of the Foundation Phase that will have received relatively minor attention in Stages I, II and III of the evaluation design. These are:
- The Foundation Phase and Special Educational Needs
- The Foundation Phase and Children with English/Welsh as an Additional Language

3.85 The two seminars will bring together practitioners and key stakeholders to discuss and share their insights in to these respective topics. These discussions will then be used to inform the on-going analysis outlined above.

3.86 The evaluation team expect to organise these seminars during November 2013.

3.87 The final dissemination event will be an end of evaluation conference on the Foundation Phase. This will be a relatively large-scale event that will provide the opportunity to share the key findings from the evaluation with a wide audience of practitioners, stakeholders and policy-makers. The conference will be organised to also provide the opportunity for feedback and discussion ahead of the publication of the Final Evaluation Report.

3.88 The evaluation team expect to organise this conference in summer/autumn 2014.

3.89 Throughout 2013/14 the evaluation website will continue to be updated as and when Working Papers and Evaluation Reports are published and as events are organised. The evaluation will also continue to maintain and use a contact list for sharing news from the research.

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Glossary of Key Terms

Multilevel modelling | This is a form of statistical analysis that utilises data that is organised at more than one level (i.e. nested data). For example, the units of analysis in a multilevel model could include data for individual pupils, the schools they attend, and the local authorities their schools belong to. Critically, multilevel models consider the residual components at each level in the hierarchy allowing the analysis to estimate observed and unobserved group effects.

Stepped wedge design | This is used in evaluations where an intervention is rolled-out sequentially to participants (either as individuals or clusters of individuals) over a number of time periods. Data is collected for each new group of participants as they receive the intervention and for those not receiving the intervention (the control groups). To determine the effectiveness of the intervention comparisons are made of data from the control section of the wedge with those in the intervention section at different points in time.

Appendix A. Alyson Lewis, ESRC PhD Summary Research Proposal

Title

Towards a common understanding of a complex concept: an exploratory study investigating and capturing children's social and emotional wellbeing in Foundation Phase classrooms (3-7 year olds).

Summary of research project

This study is a 3 year PhD project funded by the ESRC (October 2012 to October 2015) and linked with a project entitled 'Evaluating the Foundation Phase' (a curriculum for 3-7 year olds in Wales) funded by the Welsh Government. The study design is primarily going to be an exploratory small scale qualitative comparative case study examining the concept of wellbeing within two schools of different socio-economic status (SES). The research will be designed in two stages.

Stage one of the study will consist of building a strong partnership with two schools and establishing a positive working relationship with all participants. This stage will involve gathering multiple perceptions of wellbeing from practitioners (primarily teachers and teaching assistants) to discover what they understand by wellbeing and ascertain how they document and assess it in the Foundation Phase (Nursery through to Year 2). Initially this will be conducted informally in focus group interviews where staff will be asked to write down (collaboratively on a large body template) what they think wellbeing is. One to one semi-structured interviews will also be conducted. Stage one will also involve observations in the different classes to understand how wellbeing is supported and promoted in the classroom.

Stage two of the study will consist of using the findings from stage one to a) identify what domains and perspectives of wellbeing exist in their responses and b) facilitate the development of new or existing tools in capturing wellbeing in the classroom. This stage will involve piloting two tools that have

different characteristics where children and parents will be invited to become participants.

Aims

- To demonstrate and argue that the concept of children's social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) is complex in both theory and practice.

- To explore and develop tools that capture children's SEWB in Foundation Phase classrooms.

Research questions

1) How is wellbeing understood, documented and assessed by Foundation Phase practitioners in two different schools and how is it embedded in the classroom?

2) What characteristics are present in new or existing tools that make them more reliable in capturing a specific domain of SEWB?

3) What barriers exist in developing new and existing tools that capture domains of SEWB?