



*Rewarding Learning*

**ASPECTS Pre-school Trial**  
**Evaluation Report June 2006**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Professor Melhuish, one of the research team in the EPPNI Research Project, funded by the Department of Education Northern Ireland, identified a significant weakness in diagnosing children experiencing learning difficulties during their pre-school year. The evidence in the longitudinal study indicated that this can result in the children experiencing learning difficulties through to the end of Key Stage 1. It also indicated that parents have a vital role to play and they require information on how to help their children.

Currently most of pre-school assessments are carried out through observations. The aim of the CCEA project is to trial the ASPECTS programme devised by University of Durham as a pre-school diagnostic assessment and its use as an indicator of later achievement.

An induction day was provided by CCEA for the sample of teachers asked to participate in the ASPECTS Trial. Following training a questionnaire was distributed asking about the training provided by CCEA.

All teachers believed the training course objectives were clearly defined and the rationale and aims of the ASPECTS programme were clearly explained.

Following training all teachers felt confident about using the ASPECTS Programme and were enthusiastic and eager to start the trial.

*"[I am] looking forward to using the information and comparing it to my own observations. Also to assessing impact on planning for children's individual needs"*

At the training participants asked for a meeting mid trial to discuss the progress of the programme and its administration. This report contains Information collected from the mid trial evaluation and the final June evaluation.

Finally a questionnaire was disseminated to parents in June 2006 to find out their views on the appropriateness of the information they have received from schools.

## **TEACHER RESULTS**

### **Support for the ASPECTS Programme**

The ASPECTS programme provided information for a solid Baseline for pupils. Information gained from using ASPECTS provided pre-schools with an efficient method of identifying children with difficulties or children with above average abilities.

The information confirmed teacher judgement.

### **Concerns**

ASPECTS is not linked to the Northern Ireland Pre-school curriculum and therefore focuses on inappropriate assessments.

The assessment was only manageable because pre-schools were provided with sub-cover, without sub-cover the programme would be totally unmanageable.

A number of participants thought some of the questions contained in the assessment were too ambiguous.

## **PARENTS RESULTS**

### **Support**

The majority of parents who returned a questionnaire supported the ASPECTS Programme and felt it was suitable for children in Pre-School (28 out of 30 respondents).

28 of the 30 respondents rated the information given by the teacher as a result of the ASPECTS assessment as very useful or useful.