



‘Sustaining the Ambition’

The contribution of GTCS-registered teachers
as part of the early learning and childcare
workforce in Scotland

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An independent study undertaken by the Child’s
Curriculum Group and funded by the Educational
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The 1,440 teachers who responded to our survey, including the 150 who volunteered for the Focus Groups.

The team responsible for this Audit of the Contribution of GTCS-registered teachers as part of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce, drawn from the Child's Curriculum Group, which is an independent forum that meets on a regular basis in Edinburgh.

The Child's Curriculum Group believes in the importance of the early years of life as a foundation for all that follows and aims to:

- uphold the tradition of excellent nursery provision in Scotland;
- advance principles of child development for excellent education and care; and to
- promote the understanding that children's nature and children's rights are inseparable.

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is about young children and the hopes and ambitions Scotland has for them. Scottish Government policy aspires to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Part of this ambition is to tackle child poverty in Scotland and narrow the gap that disadvantage brings to educational outcomes. At the same time as increasing the free entitlement to early learning and childcare (ELC) with the aim of this rising to 1,140 hours per year by 2020, there has been, over the last 10 years in Scotland, a 29% reduction in the numbers of GTCS-registered teachers employed in such services, but only a 4% drop in child numbers, which gives a ratio of 1 teacher to 84 children at this important stage. The numbers of GTCS-registered teachers in pre-school services face further reductions: if Scotland is to achieve its aspiration of changing child outcomes, no further attrition in teacher employment can be tolerated and serious consideration needs to be given to the future composition of the ELC workforce: a task that is underway following the Scottish Government's Response to the Independent Review of the Workforce (Siraj & Kingston, 2015).

The study and this report seek to provide an evidence base on the role of GTCS-registered teachers as part of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce in Scotland. While the evidence places a premium upon maintaining a GTCS-registered teaching workforce and the part they will play in sustaining policy ambitions for early childhood, the Child's Curriculum Group respects and values the essential contributions of all practitioners in the ELC workforce.

Main Findings

1. Dedicated and specialist early childhood teachers provide added value when they are understood, respected and supported
2. The diversity of roles undertaken by the GTCS-registered nursery teacher includes, but goes well beyond traditional teaching roles
3. GTCS-registered teachers play a unique role as pedagogical leaders and 'bridging professionals' across the Early Level Curriculum for Excellence.
4. The commitment of the teaching profession to social justice, ethical encounters and combatting under-achievement brought about by social disadvantage, provide fundamental values for teaching graduates in Scotland.
5. Teachers themselves know they are a vital but undervalued resource, many such teachers experience a perceived lack of support in the roles they undertake
6. Robust evidence of the effectiveness of pre-school education and the actual impact of the highly qualified teacher within the sector has been hard to find in a Scottish context
7. In Scotland our aspiration is to have a workforce that is 'fit for purpose'. The agreed purpose must influence the composition of the early learning and childcare workforce.
8. Notions of teacher presence and teacher access are ill defined and inconsistent
9. Local authorities vary in their commitment to, and ways of, employing teachers
10. A growing demand is being placed on Primary Head Teachers and promoted Primary staff to meet 3-5 year old children's entitlement to teacher presence
11. Not all 3 and 4 year old children in funded Early Learning and Childcare settings currently have access to a teacher

12. A corollary of this is that not all Initial Teacher Education students do either: teacher training provides for the future - currently many students lack adequate placement ELC experience with specialist GTCS-teachers in the course of their training
13. The main route to specialism is through study for an early childhood specialist award at postgraduate level

The Big Issues

The big issues driving this enquiry all relate to the sustained gap in educational outcomes for and between children, which is often linked to child poverty and unequal circumstances, and include:

- The rescinding of Schools Scotland Code 56 (2002) and the resulting changes in the employment and deployment of teachers in the early learning and childcare workforce;
- A strong policy narrative in relation to early childhood, using terms such as ‘getting it right’, ‘best possible start in life’, ‘best place to grow up’ to promote the importance of these earliest years for long-term success;
- The planned expansion of ELC to 1,140 hours by 2020;
- The ambiguous interpretations of ‘teacher presence’ and ‘teacher access’;
- The continuing evidence of an ongoing inequality of outcome for many children;
- The opportunity that the curriculum Early Level 3-6 provides to support children’s wellbeing and learning in a continuous way;
- Building on the investment already made in early years and improving partnership working between sectors to ensure continuity of care and learning for children;
- Scotland’s investment in raising the qualifications of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce;
- The lack of evidence in Scotland about the difference qualifications make to the long term educational and social outcomes for children and families and in what ways;

Aims, Objectives and Approach

The study aimed to investigate the strengths and contributions that GTCS-registered teachers make in local authority settings and services (including peripatetic staff, nursery schools, classes, partnership settings) by gathering key data about their current role, situation and activities, identifying the unique or added value they may provide and disseminating the findings within the sector and to policy makers. Evidence was gathered by:

1. Accessing publicly held current data on early years provision and staffing in Scotland
2. Mapping the perceptions held by early years GTCS-registered teachers of the roles they play and contributions they make in ELC through an audit questionnaire;
3. Focusing a literature review on key concepts such as relational agency, professional beliefs and practices; children’s experiences and the wider role of teachers with families, community and fellow professionals;
4. Holding a series of regional focus groups with GTCS-registered teachers to understand the part they play in early learning and childcare prior to school and into primary 1, and to identify the support and barriers they encounter in fulfilling their role.

From the data gathered, we aimed to provide evidence to inform the policy of local authorities and national government, to suggest new strategies and approaches, and to consider regional and/or national networks to support head teachers, specialist nursery teachers, ELC and schools across Scotland.

Summary of Findings

The full Audit Report brings together data from each of the four sources shown. The literature in the main report illustrates the importance of a highly qualified workforce for early childhood in pre-school and the early stages of schooling. Statistics show that a single annual entry to school means some children by virtue of their date of birth benefit from the higher staffing ratios of pre-school for some months following their fifth birthday but during this time may not necessarily have access to a teacher, while others who enter school at a considerably younger age leave the adult:child ratios of pre-school behind but have full access to a teacher. Focus groups debated these issues and highlighted teacher contributions through seven themes of importance and significance to them:

- Knowledge and delivery of the curriculum and understanding its intentions and pedagogy.
- Leadership and vision.
- Specialist training and qualifications and whose benefit these are for.
- Working with parents and in the community with a particular emphasis on deprivation.
- Progressing learning through skills in the cycle of Observation, Assessment, Planning, Recording and Reporting.
- Supporting transitions, into nursery and out of it in to primary school.
- The nursery teacher as a mentor and trainer of others.

The audit survey findings report the role, responsibilities and contributions of GTCS-registered teachers working in early years settings. These teachers were found to make many valuable contributions to young children's learning, including support for early literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, in line with the experiences and outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence. They also make many non-teaching contributions: working closely with parents and families, identifying and supporting children with additional support needs, co-ordinating with other agencies as part of GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child, 2013), and taking on training, mentoring, leadership and management responsibilities for the nursery team.

In some local authorities, the nursery teacher's role is being reduced and in some cases, despite the Scottish Government requirement for nursery children to have 'access' to a GTCS-registered teacher, such teachers are no longer employed. Many respondents believe that recent and planned funding and staffing changes will be detrimental to the early years workforce and to the quality of education that children receive, now and in the future.

Summary Statistics for Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland show that currently there are 1,212 (FTE) GTCS-registered teachers across 2,449 pre-school centres in Scotland, providing early education and childcare to 101,463 (FTE) children (Sep 2014). In September 2005 figures showed there were 1,702 (FTE) GTCS-registered teachers across 2,761 pre-school centres providing early education and childcare to 105,810 (FTE) children. This equates to a 29% reduction in the number of GTCS-registered teachers employed in Early Learning and Childcare Centres over the last 10 years (from 2005), with the Pupil Teacher Ratio in Local Authority and Partner Provider pre-school centres increasing year on year from 62.2 (Sep 2005) to 83.7 (Sep 2014). 13.6% of Early Learning and Childcare Centres

currently have no access to a teacher (Sep 2014) and 25.7% of 3, 4 & 5 year old pre-school children currently have no access to a teacher (Sep 2014). Of those children who do have access to a teacher, such access is under a non-regular or ad-hoc arrangement for 14.1% and a regular arrangement for 60.3%. Almost half of local authorities do not provide equal access to a teacher for all 3, 4 & 5 year old pre-school children in their authority. A similar number have no minimum standard for teacher time in pre-school centres and/or contact time with children in their authorities.

In view of the policy ambitions to increase the hours of entitlement for children while ensuring both quality and equity of provision, within the context of variable contractual arrangements among the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce, there are staffing challenges to be faced.

In December 2015 the most recent school and ELC Census figures were published (Summary statistics for schools in Scotland No. 6: 2015 Edition 9 December 2015).¹ These latest figures show that 1,038 teachers (FTE) were employed in the early education and childcare system of 2,492 settings which currently cater for 97,262 children. This represents a further reduction of teachers and an increase in the number of settings, which overall are catering for fewer children.

The Scottish Government have no minimum threshold setting for teacher input in pre-school centres in Scotland. This means that decisions about the amount of time teachers provide input and about teachers' role and responsibilities within pre-school centres is devolved to local authorities. Each individual authority has their own interpretation of what "access to a teacher" means and how this works in practice. They operate different guidelines and charging structures for the deployment of teachers to private partner providers, resulting in some partner providers choosing to have no teacher support. However, none of the 32 local authorities in Scotland have to date carried out an evaluation of the impact of teacher access or lack of teacher access on child outcomes.

The Contribution to Research, Policy and Practice

This study into the contribution of GTCS-registered teachers as part of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce in Scotland provides a new evidence base about numbers of teachers, what they do, how they are employed, what they understand their contributions to be, how this benefits children, families and colleagues and how they are positioned to help close the gap in outcomes that exists for children in Scotland.

Conclusions

This study began with a concern about how we may do the best for all children in Scotland. We find that the skills, knowledge, values and attributes of GTCS-registered teachers provide an essential tool to achieve policy aspirations by making a difference for young children and their families. We conclude that:

- At a time when learning in the early years is recognised to be so critical, the numbers of GTCS-registered teachers in Early Learning and Childcare services is diminishing.

¹ Available from <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00490590.pdf>

- Although their roles are fluctuating, changing and sometimes not well understood by others, specialist GTCS-registered nursery teachers are an essential part of leadership in the ELC workforce and bridge the early level of curriculum.

These are important messages for policy makers and for the enactment of policy in Local Authorities.

It has been argued that increased specialism or indeed a dedicated early years pathway in teacher education at undergraduate level would limit the career paths of teachers. We would suggest that one of the strengths of Scottish Initial Teacher Education is that it embraces both pre-school and primary education, so allowing teachers to move between both sectors: this is particularly important in relation to the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence. Our evidence suggests that the discussion of increased specialism should be revisited, and at the very least...

- The models of teacher role should be expanded to reflect the new contributions some teachers are already making;
- Local Authorities and other employers should develop robust support systems in the light of the reported evidence that too solitary a role leads to a dip in commitment and confidence;
- GTCS should collaborate with Schools of Education to strengthen the early years component of teacher education, recruit positively for new postgraduate routes and address issues of teacher placement and the probationary year;
- Changes in the hours of entitlement for children bring staffing challenges and have highlighted the possible need to revisit the conditions of service of all ELC staff;
- With the small numbers of teachers employed in early years pre-school settings further attrition is not an option if policy objectives are to be achieved.

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1. Introduction

This report is about young children and the hopes and ambitions Scotland has for them. Scottish Government policy aspires to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Part of this ambition is to tackle child poverty in Scotland and narrow the gap that disadvantage brings to educational outcomes. At the same time as increasing the free entitlement to early learning and childcare (ELC) with the aim of this rising to 1,140 hours per year by 2020, there has been, over the last 10 years in Scotland, a 29% reduction in the numbers of GTCS-registered teachers employed in such services, but only a 4% drop in child numbers, which gives a ratio of 1 teacher to 84 children at this important stage. The numbers of GTCS-registered teachers in prior-to-school services face further reductions.

At a time when early experiences and learning are recognised to be critical to children’s later outcomes, this report presents the findings of a study that set out to explore the contribution to children, families and fellow practitioners, now and in the future, of GTCS-registered teachers as part of the early learning and child care workforce in Scotland. The core message from the audit is that although their roles are fluctuating, changing and sometimes not well understood by others, specialist GTCS-registered nursery teachers are an essential part of the ELC workforce, bridge the early level of curriculum and make a strong contribution to leadership in the sector: these are important messages for policy makers.

The evidence gathered from 1,440 survey respondents across all local authorities in Scotland, 47 focus group contributors and the desk-based work, argues that if Scotland is to achieve its aspiration of changing child outcomes, no further attrition in teacher employment can be tolerated and serious consideration needs to be given to the future composition of the ELC workforce: a task that is underway following the Scottish Government’s Response to the Independent Review of the Workforce. This independent study was funded, but not steered, by the Educational Institute of Scotland.

1.1 Main Findings

Findings focus on the contribution GTCS-registered teachers make in early childhood settings. The diversity of roles undertaken by the GTCS-registered nursery teacher includes, but goes well beyond traditional teaching roles; dedicated and specialist early childhood teachers provide added value when they are understood, respected and supported; teachers themselves know they are a vital but undervalued resource; notions of teacher presence and teacher access are ill-defined and inconsistent; local authorities vary in their commitment to, and ways of, employing teachers. The findings also show that not all 3 and

4 year old children in funded places in Scotland currently have access to a teacher, which is stated to be their entitlement in policy terms.

The audit survey findings focus on the role, responsibilities and contributions of GTCS-registered teachers working in a mix of early years settings. These teachers were found to make many valuable contributions to young children's learning, including support for early literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing in line with the experiences and outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence. They also made many non-teaching contributions: working closely with parents and families, identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs, co-ordinating with other agencies as part of GIRFEC (Getting it right for every child, 2013), and taking on informal training, mentoring, leadership and management responsibilities for the nursery team. In some local authorities, the nursery teacher's role is being reduced and in some cases, despite the Scottish Government requirement for nursery children to have 'access' to a GTCS-registered teacher, such teachers are no longer employed. Many respondents believed that recent and planned funding and staffing changes will be detrimental to the early years workforce and to the quality of education that children receive, now and in the future. Findings are discussed and linked to the Literature Review contained in the Desk-based Work supplement (Supplement 1).

1.2 The Child's Curriculum Group

The Child's Curriculum Group is an independent forum that meets on a regular basis in Edinburgh to discuss issues relating to early childhood. A sub-group drawn from the Child's Curriculum Group saw the potential of an audit of nursery teachers and the ELC settings and services in Scotland in which they work, in order to develop an evidence base on the contribution of nursery teachers to the early years workforce in Scotland. Such an evidence base has been lacking until now. Increased understanding of the range of provision offered and, in particular, the value provided by GTCS-registered teachers, is timely in the context of the current Workforce Review.

The volunteer expert group has provided advice and guidance throughout the study and has led focus groups with the support of one of our researchers. Our researchers have supported questionnaire and focus group design and have contributed to the analysis and write up of data. The work is being led by Chris Miles, retired head teacher, local authority pre-school education coordinator and Chair of the Childhood Curriculum Nursery Teacher Audit Sub-Group, and Emeritus Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop.

1.3 Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland

In twenty years the landscape of early learning and childcare in Scotland has changed significantly. In 1995 there was no Scottish wide curriculum for children under statutory school age, although curricula were being developed in the Regional Councils of the time. In 1996 with the move from 12 regions to 32 unitary authorities, the landscape of Scottish education changed, the first draft *Curriculum Framework for the Pre-School Year* was introduced and every 4 year old in Scotland was guaranteed a year of free pre-school education for 12.5 hours a week. By 2002 the offer had been extended to 3 year olds and more recently was increased to 15 hours a week and then 600 hours per year, with added provision for identified 2 year olds. Many aspects of early learning and childcare were summarised in Naumann et al.'s 2013 report which placed Scottish provision in an international context. It highlighted the range of providers, the gap between the early education entitlement for 3-4 year olds and services for under-threes, the high costs of

child care mostly offered in the private sector and issues relating to the welfare system and social support for families with children.

The entitlement of universal preschool education brought renewed attention to the need for specialist post-graduate early years courses. Scottish Executive invested in a range of specialist-teacher programmes from 2006, such investment was continued with the change in Government in 2007. A number of Local Authorities recognised the need for continuing professional development for their early years staff. This coincided with the removal of the duty to provide a fully qualified teacher in every preschool class through the rescinding of the Schools Scotland Code 56. At the same time new programmes of study were being developed at degree level to provide an opportunity for SNNEB and HNC qualified staff to build upon their existing qualifications.

The mood of change and revitalised commitment to early childhood was supported by the introduction of an early level of the 3-18 curriculum in 2007 and the publication of the Early Years Framework in 2008. The Early Years Framework emphasised transformational change and the need for a workforce 'fit for purpose'. New training initiatives were developed: for example the change from the BA Early Years to the BA Childhood Practice; the Early Years Teacher Looping Project; the Early Years Teacher Specialism and the Early Years Pedagogue Programme. Development and change has continued apace to the present time.

1.4 The importance of the early years

In a climate of ongoing inequality, there is a strong consensus about the importance of the early years as an opportunity to address social inequalities and improve the health, wellbeing, educational and social outcomes of children. Building the Ambition (Scottish Government, 2014a, p. 7) highlights child development, communication, wellbeing, curiosity and creativity as means for children to flourish.

The appointment of GTCS-registered nursery teachers in Local Authority and partnership provision is currently changing significantly in Scotland. Free-standing nursery schools staffed by specialist nursery teachers and a range of qualified early childhood professionals are also becoming a rare resource. The number of registered nursery teachers/teachers employed in nursery education in Scotland is diminishing year on year. At the same time, the rest of the early childhood workforce is gradually improving qualifications and many now hold the BA(Ord) in Childhood Practice and registration with SSSC.

Despite the investment in qualifications for the ELC sector, in Scotland we lack evidence of the impact of improved qualifications upon outcomes for children and families. There is, however, ample evidence available that high quality pre-school experiences make a difference to outcomes beyond 16+ (Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons & Siraj, 2015). Taggart *et al.* report that one feature of these highly successful settings is the composition of the staff with highly trained teachers as pedagogical leaders, modeling interactions and sustaining shared thinking. Where such teachers complement, and are complemented by, differently qualified graduate-level staff, and where children benefit from a positive home learning environment, there is a long-term impact on educational outcomes and the skills to access work and to sustain employment. In terms of home learning environment, Taggart *et al.* stress that for parents it is not who they are, but what they do, that matters. However as the EIS (2015) *Face Up to Child Poverty* report makes very clear, in Scotland 1 in 5 children experience poverty, and this statistic is rising (Scottish Government, 2015a). Poverty has an impact on hunger, clothing, equipment and resources, out of school (and ELC) learning, joining in trips, and the time and capacity for families and settings to work

productively together.

Anne Edwards (2005) generated the idea of relational agency to describe the relationship between professionals who work together to build on the expertise of both parties involved. In the mixed economy of ELC provision in Scotland, relational agency is the foundation of positive working relationships. It means differently qualified and experienced practitioners working with each other toward negotiated outcomes, which involves being able to adjust one's thoughts and practices alongside those of others in order to interpret and address problems of practice and do the best for children. It means recognising that another person may be a valuable resource, and that work needs to be done to elicit, recognise, and negotiate the use of that resource in order to align oneself in joint action (2005, pp. 169-170). Such a concept fits well with practitioner-parent relationships too.

It is with this concept of relational agency that we approached the task of auditing the contribution of GTCS-registered teachers to the early years workforce in Scotland. We aimed to develop an evidence base, so far absent in Scotland, about the contribution of teachers in this sector as one element of the early learning and childcare workforce, who at the same time are the only professionals who are currently qualified to teach and lead learning in both sectors - preschool and primary education. The bridging role is important, especially with Curriculum 3-18. Scottish Government aims to give every child the best start in life: the early years are a critical time for the development of learning dispositions, working theories, search for meaning, engagement in and self-regulation of feelings, self-realisation and autonomous learning. Each will affect the child's sense of themselves as happy, competent and creative individuals as they begin their journey through the education system.

In 2002, the obligation to employ teachers in what was then termed 'pre-school' in Scotland changed: the guidance on the roles of teachers in pre-school education contained in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 came into force in 2002. The guidance, along with other regulatory measures, replaced the pre-school education provisions in the Schools (Scotland) Code 1956. The new provisions removed the statutory requirement to have a set ratio of one teacher to 20 children in nursery schools and classes. The stated aim of the repeal was to give local authorities greater flexibility in deploying teachers in pre-school centres.

Local authority nursery schools (state-funded schools providing nursery education for 3-4 year olds) are the highest quality early years settings, according to sources such as the EPPE study². In 2007 HMIE published *Teaching Scotland's Children* (HMIE, 2007a) which considered progress in implementing *A Teaching profession for the 21st century*, and their report on the key role of staff in providing quality in preschool education.³ In his introduction, Graham Donaldson said:

'The connection is clear between well-qualified, reflective professionals and the high quality experiences for children. This report highlights the positive impacts of this connection. It also recommends areas for further improvement to support everyone involved in the work of educating pre-school children. The recommendations are in line with the national strategic direction of increasing teacher involvement and implementing professional graduate leadership for early years managers.'⁴

² Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study: www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html

³ The Key Role of Staff in Providing Quality Pre-School Education:
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/KeyRoleofStaff_tcm4-712840.pdf

⁴ HM Inspectorate of Education, *The Key Role of Staff in Providing Quality Pre-School Education*

More recently trends in inspection findings (HMIE, 2012a) found that leadership of learning, increasing staff skills in working responsively with young children, challenging thinking and learning, and sustaining high quality interaction are essential ingredients of high quality early years provision.⁵ These are all aspects in which teachers are well trained. The importance of these elements in early childhood preschool and early primary education is reflected in the postgraduate specialist programmes offered to GTCS-registered teachers in Scottish Universities. In the same report it is stated that:

‘Nevertheless, there is still a lack of confidence and skill in pre-school unpromoted staff in their assessments of children and how to plan for support to individuals.’

‘Staff need to build their skills and confidence further in consulting with children about their interests and how to use information more productively to promote learning.’

Local authority nursery schools under the leadership of specialist nursery head teachers are important not only because of the service they provide for local children and families, but also because they are a beacon of excellence and could be heavily involved in the training and development of the rest of the early years workforce. Teachers have particular specialist expertise (Dunlop, 2008; Nutbrown, 2012) in areas such as leading children’s learning, early literacy and numeracy, supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities, supporting transitions, modeling good practice and supporting vulnerable families (Menter & Hulme, 2012).

While most nursery teachers in all settings in which they are employed, as well as the free-standing nursery schools, are heavily involved in activities to support quality improvement in the sector, they are not systematically being used as a national resource. This project aimed to identify their distinctive strengths and expertise and develop a model to ensure that their expertise can be used to provide regional and national networks for quality improvement through workforce development, capitalising on the qualified nursery teacher, local authority free-standing nursery schools, integrated settings and other outstanding providers, in a relational approach.

In a period when Scottish Government was advocating an increase in the numbers of teachers, when policy and inspection reports were highlighting what teachers uniquely offer in early education, the numbers of GTCS-registered teachers, with and without a specialist PG qualification, were falling year on year. In 2005 in Scotland there were 1,702 teachers in pre-school education for 2,761 settings and 105,810 pupils; in 2007 - 1,689 teachers in preschool education for 2,702 settings and 106,060 pupils; in 2011- 1,461 teachers in preschool education for 2,553 settings and 94,840 pupils. As this study began, 1,212 teachers were employed in the early education and childcare system of 2,449 settings which currently cater for 101,463 pupils.⁶ Overall, this represents a 29% reduction in the number of GTCS-registered teachers employed in ELC centres over last 10 years (4% reduction in pupil numbers) and gives a ratio of 1 teacher to 84 children.

We clearly need to know what it is that ELC establishments, and the nursery teachers working in them, contribute to the education and care of children when the ratio of

(2007b, p. 1)

⁵ Quality and Improvement in Scottish education: trends in inspection findings 2008-2011: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/QISE_tcm4-722667.pdf

⁶ Figures drawn from the Scottish Government Statistical Bulletins for the Education System.

teachers to children is so low. 'Teacher access' and 'teacher presence' (Scottish Government, 2009a) are concepts that remain largely undefined - it is important to understand how they are being interpreted across Scotland and to understand the contribution of teachers to the overall quality of provision for children and their impact on children's experiences.

Scottish Government (2015b) refers to children's funded early learning and childcare entitlement in its response to the Independent Workforce Review undertaken by Professor Siraj and published in April 2015. In this considered response, four statements are made:

'The Scottish Government agrees that children must have access to highly qualified staff with expertise in early childhood learning and development - and that this is particularly vital for those facing particular disadvantages. That is why the First Minister recently announced in October 2015 that we will ensure that all nurseries in the most deprived areas in Scotland will have an additional graduate working with children by 2018, whether this is a teacher with early childhood expertise or a graduate holding the BA Childhood Practice degree.' (p. 3)

'Scottish Government values the role of teachers working within early learning and childcare settings and remains committed to ensuring all those children benefitting from the funded entitlement have access to a teacher.' (p. 16)

'The First Minister announced in October 2015 that from 2018, all nurseries in deprived areas should have an additional graduate with early learning and childcare expertise working with young children. The expectation is that this will be either a teacher or a holder of the BA Childhood Practice degree, in recognition that both of these professionals can effectively support young children's learning and development.' (p. 16)

'Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring all children receiving the funded early learning and childcare entitlement have access to a teacher. We have also committed to ensuring that all nurseries in the most deprived areas will have an additional graduate with expertise in early learning and childcare working face to face with children by 2018, that is a teacher or a Childhood Practitioner.' (p. 21)

In December 2015 the most recent school and ELC Census figures were published (Summary statistics for schools in Scotland No. 6: 2015 Edition 9 December 2015).⁷ These latest figures show that 1,038 teachers (FTE) were employed in the early education and childcare system of 2,492 settings which currently cater for 97,262 children. This represents a further reduction of teachers and an increase in the number of settings, which overall are catering for fewer children.

⁷ Available from <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00490590.pdf>

1.5 Why is it important to understand the contribution of teachers as part of the early learning and childcare workforce?

The big issues driving this enquiry all relate to the sustained gap in educational outcomes for and between children in Scotland, which is often linked to child poverty and unequal circumstances, and include:

- The effects of the rescinding of Schools Scotland Code 56 (2002);
- A strong policy narrative in relation to early childhood, using terms such as ‘getting it right’, ‘best possible start in life’, ‘best place to grow up’ to promote the importance of these earliest years for long-term success;
- ‘Scotland has invested heavily in (workforce) qualifications but we do not yet have evidence in Scotland of the difference qualifications make to outcomes for children and families and in what ways, whereas we do have evidence of an ongoing inequality of outcome for too many of our children’ (Dunlop, 2015, p. 13);
- Changes in the employment of teachers from ‘good proportions of teachers’ (Siraj & Kingston, 2015) to ambiguous interpretations of ‘teacher presence’ and ‘teacher access’;
- The planned expansion of ELC to 1,140 hours by 2020;
- Building on the investment already made in early years and improving partnership working between sectors to ensure continuity for children.

In Scotland, we aspire to change that landscape of inequality for the better; the changing composition, qualifications and roles of the early learning and childcare workforce, and the reduction of qualified teacher numbers, are all implicated.

There is some evidence about how ‘children’s experiences and outcomes’ as defined in Curriculum for Excellence Early Level 3-6 and associated publications are shifting in the immediate provision of day-to-day experiences. We would also like to know about the contribution of ELC practitioners’ and teachers’ qualifications to children’s longer term learning outcomes, but this was not within the scope of the present study.

2. Approach to the Audit

2.1 Aim

In this project, we aimed to investigate the strengths and contributions that GTCS-registered teachers bring in local authority services, including peripatetic staff, nursery schools, classes and partnership settings, by gathering key data about teachers' current role, situation and activities, identifying the unique or added value they may provide, and disseminating the findings within the ELC sector and to policy makers.

Evidence was gathered by:

1. Accessing publicly held current data on early years provision in Scotland, identifying trends in the development of provision and in current approaches to staffing
2. Mapping the perceptions held by early years GTCS-registered teachers of the roles they play and contributions they make in ELC, including the ways in which they, and the settings in which they work, contribute to successful partnerships and workforce development in the rest of the early years sector
3. Focusing a literature review on key concepts such as relational agency, professional beliefs and practices; children's experiences and the wider role of teachers with families, community and fellow professionals;
4. Holding a series of regional focus groups with GTCS-registered teachers to understand the part they play in early learning and childcare prior to school and into primary 1, and to identify the support and barriers they encounter in fulfilling their role.

From the data gathered, we aimed to provide evidence to inform the policy of local authorities and national government, to suggest new strategies and approaches, and to consider regional and/or national networks to support head teachers, specialist nursery teachers, ELC settings and schools across Scotland.

2.2 Methods

Four main strands of data were gathered, analysed and synthesised in order to develop an evidence base and provide insight into the contribution of GTCS-registered teachers to the early childhood workforce. The four strands were: desk-based research into existing publicly held data sets with relevant information about the early learning and childcare context in Scotland; a survey of the role and contribution of GTCS-registered teachers in Scotland working in the early years; a literature search of existing published evidence about the contribution of the qualified teacher, and focus groups. This mixed-method approach was expected to generate an informative and complementary range of data. Each strand of the work is presented in full in the associated supplements: the Desk-Based Work Supplement (1); the Audit Survey Supplement (2) and the Focus Group Supplement (3).

2.2.1 The Literature

A purposive literature review was undertaken to identify key sources with a number of key words. Key terms included early years, teacher, contribution, role, relationships. It is included in the Desk-Based Work Supplement.

2.2.2 The Survey

The Child's Curriculum Audit Group (Appendix 1) brought considerable experience of the role of early years teachers to a review and discussion of the main elements of early years practice. From this experience, key questions were generated and a questionnaire was developed. The UK charity, Early Education (the British Association for Early Childhood Education), was simultaneously undertaking an enquiry into the status of maintained nursery schools across England. Some matched questions were included in the Scottish survey as it was expected that matching some of the data and comparing approaches would add value to both studies. The survey was developed using the online Qualtrics Survey Tool and was made available to respondents through internet access or on request for a Word version or hard copy of the questionnaire. The survey was advertised to GTCS-registered teachers in Scotland via the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), Education Scotland and Early Education.

2.2.3 The Desk-Based Work

There were five strands to the desk-based work.

The first strand of desk-based work explored the literature on the role of qualified teachers in the early childhood workforce locally, nationally and internationally.

The second strand aimed to access publicly available data relating to the early years sector generally and to qualified teachers in particular. We set out to report a clear picture of preschool provision in Scotland, the numbers of children involved, the types of settings attended, the take-up of the free entitlement and the ratios of teachers to children. We planned to reflect trends in the 10 years from 2005-2015.

The third strand of desk-based work focused on the qualifications and employment of the early years workforce generally, to establish where GTCS-registered teachers are employed in terms of Local Authority area and roles undertaken.

The fourth strand of desk-based work interrogated policy documents, reports, legislation and guidelines for any focus on teachers in early years settings.

These enquires led to a fifth strand of desk-based work in which a Freedom of Information Request was sent to all Scottish Local Authorities to seek clear answers to a number of emerging questions that had not been answered through the other four strands of desk-based work.

2.2.4 The Focus Groups - Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

The eleven Focus Groups aimed to draw on a range of respondent views and to establish the strength of each view on that range. This led to a consensus, which is understood as 'informed agreement' as focus groups participants organise, categorise and prioritise responses after independent generation of ideas by participants in response to a stimulus question: 'What is the role of the specialist early childhood teacher?' This approach is called Nominal Group Technique (McPhail, 2001; Kennedy & Clinton, 2009).

2.3 Questions used to provide a frame for interpretation

We asked a series of questions that focused on the profiles that respondents hold in relation to early years - their training and qualifications, what staffing of early years services looks like in their setting, their views of what constitutes quality and what, for them, are the minimum qualifications needed to be effective in ELC. We asked them to

reflect on the sources of their expertise and how this relates to the contributions they make within their context. We also asked them about the future: of their chosen pathway of ELC and of ELC as a whole.

By asking about the roles respondents take on, the provision they make for children and the level of child contact within their role, we were able to gain an understanding of what teachers working across early childhood, preschool and early primary, value and offer. The range of what they do is vast and the depth of contribution emerges as they share their experiences, think and reflect on their roles. They have much to say about their contributions, the relational approaches they take and the bridging role they play in the transition into ELC and on to school. Their knowledge of working with families, literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, children's thinking, the fostering of relationships and social development, learning dispositions and children's working theories combine to illustrate powerful pedagogies for early childhood.

More complex and challenging is the question of the team - for teachers this is a changing menu. The traditional role of the GTCs-registered teacher leading school or class/playroom practice is not the common model it once was. New roles and new modes of employment have emerged, and in many cases management has insisted that teachers should hide their talents and not make themselves or their contribution obviously different from colleagues. This failure to fully use the teacher's skills undermines their confidence, especially when these messages come from management who often share the same initial qualifications, but not the same knowledge base about the culture of early childhood and the holistic nature of the work: for all of this is 'emotional labour'.

The following questions have been generated to provide a means of integrating the data gathered about the contribution of teachers to the early learning and childcare workforce:

- Who are they?
- Where do GTCs-registered teachers fit in the overall staffing profile?
- Where are they employed?
- What roles are they currently fulfilling?
- What do these teachers do?
- How are they positioned to meet children's entitlement to teacher access?
- In what ways is their contribution unique?
- How might this benefit children?
- How might the absence of teachers compromise children?

3. The Audit Survey

3.1 Overview of Data Gathered

The audit survey report presents the findings of a largely descriptive analysis of the survey data. The findings focus on the role, responsibilities and contributions of GTCS-registered teachers working in a mix of early years settings. These teachers were found to make many valuable contributions to young children's learning, including support for early literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, in line with the experiences and outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence. They also made many non-teaching contributions: working closely with parents and families, identifying and supporting children with additional support needs, co-ordinating with other agencies as part of GIRFEC, and taking on informal training, mentoring, leadership and management responsibilities for the nursery team. In some local authorities, the nursery teacher's role is being reduced and in some cases despite the Scottish Government requirement for nursery children to have 'access' to a GTCS-registered teacher, such teachers are no longer employed. Many respondents believe that recent and planned funding and staffing changes will be detrimental to the early years workforce and to the quality of education that children receive, now and in future.

The online survey questions were created by the Child's Curriculum Audit Team. There were 46 questions in total, which included a combination of multiple-choice questions (where respondents chose one or more of the options listed, but could often write in additional answers) and open-ended questions (where respondents were asked to write a short response using their own words). Respondents were able to finish the survey without answering every question.

The data for the Audit Survey was collected from 27 March to 31 May 2015. A total of 2,375 people entered the online survey site, numbers of whom may have found on first attempt that responses were limited to GTCS-registered teachers; 1,440 respondents filled at least the demographics questions; and 1,110 completed the survey (a 22.9% drop-out rate). The findings are reported for the 1,440 respondents, but due to the nature of completion there is an uneven number of respondents per question.

Data was analysed using a combination of quantitative analysis and thematic analysis. For the forced-choice questions, the total number of responses for each option were converted into percentages. For the open-ended questions, responses were categorised into a list of themes using thematic analysis and these themes were then converted into percentages; representative quotes are included in the main report to illustrate each theme.

There are three main clusters of information asked for in the survey. Here we index these to the survey questions, which can be found in Appendix 2 of Supplement 2.

The first cluster concerns structural issues such as who the GTCS-teacher workforce working in ELC is, their qualifications and ongoing professional development, their views on quality, the nature and sources of their ELC knowledge, skills, values and any specialism:

- Demographics - Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q44, Q45, Q46
- Staffing and Qualifications - Q28,
- View of quality/specialism - Q9, Q10, Q11
- Training/CPD - Q13, Q14
- Sources of expertise- Q12

- The future - Q40, Q41

The second cluster includes the main *raison d'être* of the ELC-based GTCS-registered teacher role: their contribution to children's early learning and development, emotional wellbeing, creativity, cultural meaning making and provision:

- Provision - Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32
- Child contact - Q4, Q5
- Contributions - Q10
- Closing the Gap - Q35
- Transitions - Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21

The third cluster includes the relational aspects of the teacher's work as part of a variety of teams. These aspects of role stretch beyond the traditional concepts of teacher role and are tightly linked to the cultural context of early childhood work. In a way that is quite different from teamwork in schools, teachers who work in ELC stretch those boundaries in the best interests of the children in their care and the practitioners with whom they work.

- Understanding status and role - Q22, Q23, Q24
- Leadership & Management - Q25, Q26, Q27
- Mentoring - Q34
- Role - Q32, Q33
- Policy - Q36
- Wider collaborations - Q37

In anticipation of delving further into their experience and knowledge, survey respondents were invited to provide their contact details if they wished to be involved in a follow-up focus group session. The full audit survey data is presented in the Audit Data Supplement.

3.2 Demographics

A total of 1,440 people started to complete the survey. A total of 1,110 respondents completed the entire survey, while 330 respondents did not finish the entire questionnaire, representing a 22.9% dropout rate for the total 1,440 individuals. Nevertheless, these 330 individuals' responses are included in the data analysis presented in this report because many of them answered a large proportion of the questions before they stopped filling in the survey, and because some respondents who completed the entire survey did not answer every question.

3.3 Geographical Distribution

Survey respondents worked in all local authorities in Scotland, with no individual local authority area constituting 10% or more of the total responses (n=1,110. Table 3, Supplement 2). This geographical distribution can be seen as positive because it indicates that the survey results are representative of early years GTCS-registered teacher opinions in Scotland as a whole, rather than reflecting the views of respondents from a particular local authority.

3.4 Age and Gender Profile

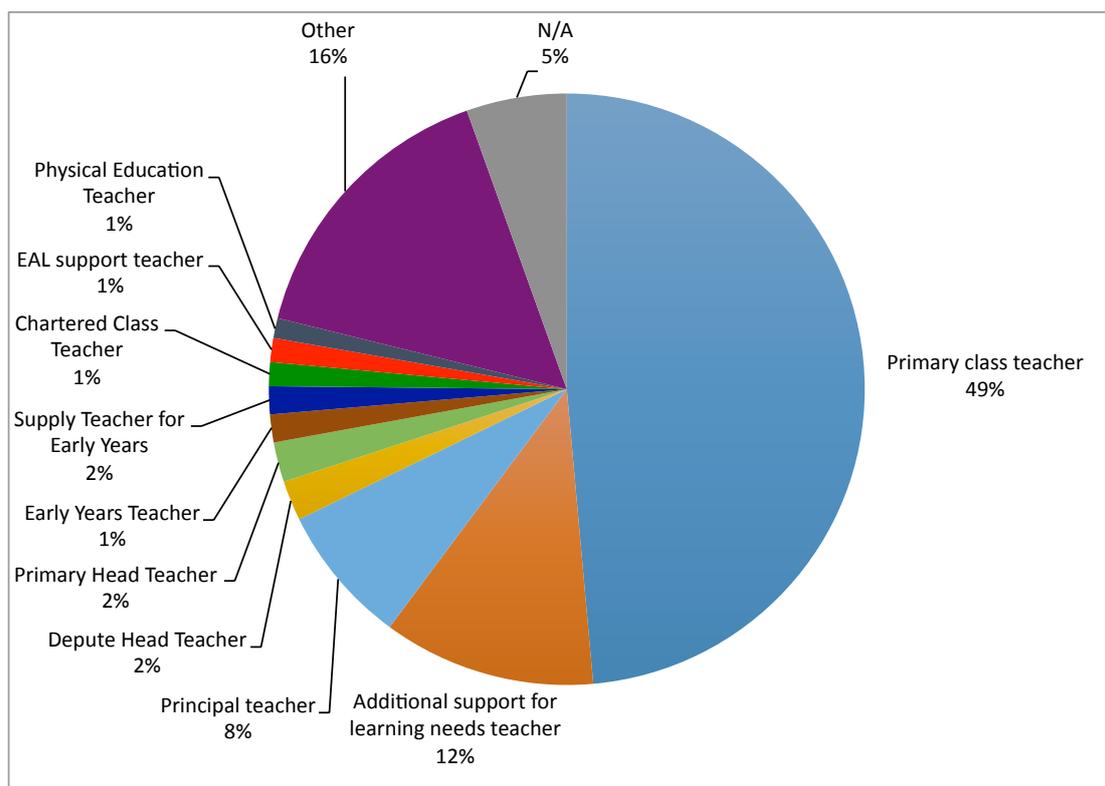
The age distribution of respondents (n=1,430, Table 1, Supplement 2) is fairly well balanced, apart from a somewhat smaller proportion of individuals in the youngest (18-24 years old) and the oldest (65+ years old) age ranges. The largest single group was between 45-54 years of age (30.9%). The vast majority of survey respondents were female (95.6% of

n=1,417), with 4.1% (58 respondents) male (Table 2, Supplement 2). This is a well-informed and experienced set of respondents.

3.5 Job Roles

Of the 1,438 GTCS-registered teacher respondents, approximately an equal proportion came from early learning and childcare settings and from early primary education. Teachers in nursery class (17%) and early childhood teachers in primary school (21%) comprised the two largest groups overall. There was also a group of respondents that took responsibility for nursery provision, including: Nursery Head Teachers (2%), Head Teachers in Primary Schools (7%) with a responsibility for nursery class provision, Depute Head Teachers (5%) and Principal teachers (4%). In addition, respondents included a group of primary teachers (4%) that provided teaching hours in nursery class, nursery teachers (3%) in free-standing nurseries, and peripatetic early childhood teachers (3%). A small number of Early Years Lecturers (1%) from Initial Teacher Education and Further Education Colleges and a small group of students on initial teacher education programmes (1%) also responded (as shown in Figure 1, Supplement 2). Nearly one third of all respondents (n=459) checked 'other' for the question on job roles: over half of these were primary class teachers, while the rest illustrate the diversity of early childhood provision as Additional Support for Learning, Physical Education, English as an Additional Language and Supply teachers (Figure 2, Supplement 2).

Figure: Respondents' current or most recent job role for the Other category (459 total)

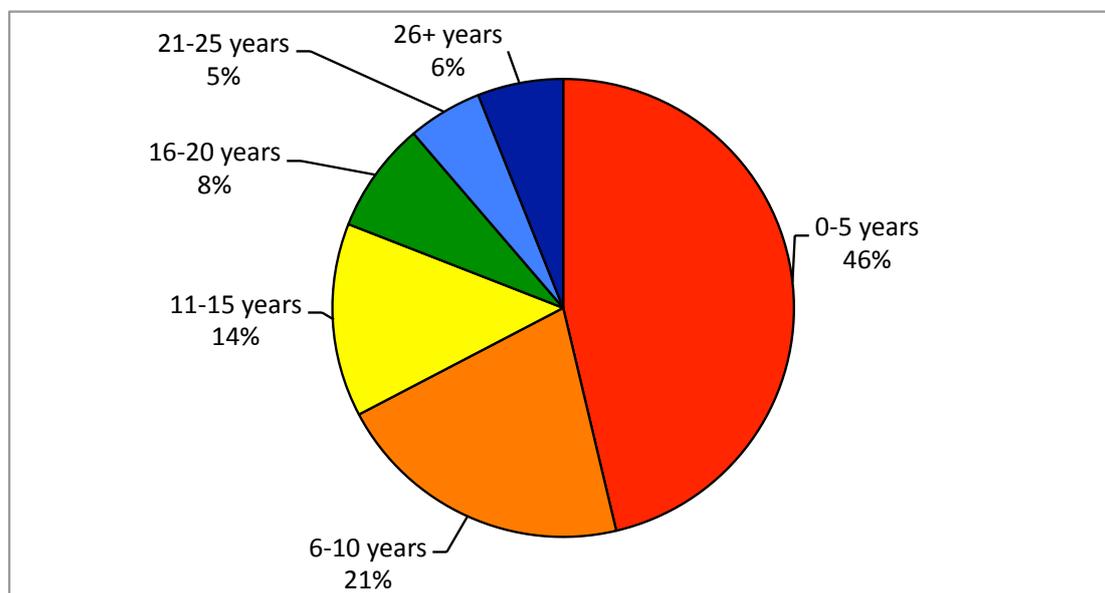


3.6 Time in Current Role

Respondents were asked to briefly describe the amount of time they have served in their current role (Q3). Most of the respondents worked between 0-5 years (46%) and 6-10 years (21%) in their current role. The high percentage of respondents who have been in post for a

relatively short period of time may reflect a recent change in job role, although some respondents answered this question as if it had asked how long they have been working in the early years sector (Figure 3, Supplement 2).

Figure: Number of years respondents have worked in their current or most recent role (1,434 total)



The proportion of respondents who have worked both in nursery and primary is high - of 598 respondents to this question, 81% had worked in both settings, 3% in nursery only and 13% in primary only. This important finding highlights the range of expertise respondents hold and the way in which their experience uniquely allows them a bridging role in pedagogy, curriculum, planning for learning, child development, literacy, numeracy, wellbeing in transitions and the application of experiences and outcomes to provide continuity.

3.7 Proportion of Teacher-time Spent Working Directly with Children

Respondents were asked to select the proportion of time they spend working directly with children (Q4). Responses (n=1,434) to this question showed that the majority (62%) spend nearly all of their time (76-100%) working directly with children (Figure 4, Supplement 2).

3.8 Regular Input from a Teacher

In Q5, 1,404 respondents selected the amount of contact that children in their setting/service receive from a GTCS-registered teacher. Most of the respondents (82%) responded that children receive regular input from a GTCS-registered teacher. However, the children in 3% of nursery settings (representing 51 responses) currently receive no GTCS teacher input, while 9% receive peripatetic GTCS-teacher input and 6% receive occasional input from a GTCS-registered teacher.

An important point to note is that the respondents' definitions of 'Regular input' differed across Scotland. In some councils, two half-day sessions with GTCS teacher contact per week is considered 'Regular input'.

One nursery head teacher defined 'Regular input' in that nursery setting as follows: 'All children have a minimum 0.2 FTE sessions with a teacher. Some children have 0.4.'

By contrast, in one nursery, it is expected that two qualified GTCS-registered teachers and two nursery practitioners will be in every session with the children, although they are lacking one teacher at present, which is being covered by a third practitioner.

According to a primary teacher, the definition of 'Regular input' in one local council has changed: 'Staff were recently informed that due to changes in budget, from next year there would be no permanent member of teaching staff in the nursery. Nursery teachers will move between a linked cluster of nurseries every six weeks. They will be responsible for planning but not delivery of preschool education.'

3.9 Education, Training & CPD

We asked about the highest level of early years-related qualification held by respondents. There was a wide range of responses to this question (Figure 6, Supplement 2), with some respondents noting more than one qualification, giving 1,651 responses. The range of qualifications included BEd, BA (Early Years); PGDE; Froebel Certificate; Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma in Early Childhood Studies, Early Education, Infant and/or Nursery Teaching Specialisms, Early Years Pedagogue and Associateship in ECE and Masters Degrees in Early Education or Early Years. A small number of respondents (44) reported they did not have a specific early years qualification, relying on their BEd degree; half of these did not feel that having specialist training now for working in nursery would be helpful, whereas another third felt that it would be useful.

Themes that were addressed in terms of qualifications and role included:

- *Information about additional support for learning needs*
- *Delivering CPD and in-service training*
- *Managing and leading staff and Mentoring staff and modelling good practice*
- *Parent meetings and workshops*
- *Administrative tasks and accountancy*
- *The importance of the early years means BEd is essential*
- *Specialist PG training is helpful for supplementing BEd knowledge*
- *More training/CPD for all nursery staff*
- *On the job experience/mentoring is essential*
- *Qualified GTCS teachers who wish to work in the early years*
- *Transition is better for P1 children who had a qualified nursery teacher*
- *Strong interpersonal skills for dealing with staff, parents, and other agencies*
- *Anyone with desire and enthusiasm for working in early education*
- *GTCS-registered teachers can identify and support children who have additional or special learning needs*
- *Whether GTCS-registered teachers are needed when early years workers are highly trained.*

Asked their opinions of the minimum qualifications desirable for teaching in ELC, respondents (1,182) felt the 4 year BEd or BA teaching degrees were the most appropriate, with a special focus being placed on early years. 301 respondents chose to comment further, mentioning the value of specialist PG training for supplementing BEd knowledge; that more early years and nursery training/placement time during BEd and initial teacher training courses would be helpful, as would more training/CPD for all nursery staff; that job experience and mentoring was essential; that management training would better enable nursery class teachers to lead the nursery team; that strong interpersonal skills were needed for dealing with staff, parents, and other agencies; and that teachers also helped

identify and support children who have additional or special learning needs. A desire and enthusiasm to work in the early years was also seen as important.

A GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, 'I draw on my knowledge and understanding of how children develop and learn; how to provide challenging learning opportunities; how to monitor and assess the children's learning, and my teaching; a willingness to research and seek out further understanding and knowledge in order to continue to provide the best education possible for all the children; a willingness to seek support/give support to colleagues and other professionals. As I originally trained as a nursery nurse I feel I am well placed to comment on the difference between the two training opportunities and it is without doubt the greater depth of learning that teachers gain through their degree course specifically focusing on teaching and learning that benefit the children the most.'

For the question regarding whether they would have benefitted from having specialist training for working in nursery earlier in their career, 52% felt that it would have been helpful. This need for supplementing initial training with additional specialism raised some controversies, too.

One GTCS-registered teacher commented in relation to the theme *Specialist PG training is helpful for supplementing BEd knowledge*:

'I think the BEd training is really important to ensure understanding of children's learning from 3-12. I do think an extra postgraduate qualification is helpful. Having taught Nursery, I found the PGCert Early Years Pedagogue helpful in supplementing my skills/knowledge from the BEd. I think having the BEd, I have a wider knowledge of children's learning and development at and beyond Nursery stages.'

Another GTCS-registered head teacher wrote that a BEd 'should be compulsory for the lead professional in the playroom. Currently, our nurseries are staffed by untrained practitioners who until recently ran voluntary groups under a parent committee. Recent HMIE Inspections locally indicate that nurseries are not performing well against HGIOS QIs despite perhaps receiving good/very good gradings from Care Commission. Hours and pay mean staff are unable to attend whole school staff meetings. Also difficult as a teaching HT to spend quality time in the nursery to provide support etc. I have experience of meeting resistance re: changing methodology, policy, curriculum innovation, etc. I feel this could be achieved more easily if staff were more appreciative of the role of nursery practitioners.'

Issues were raised in relation to leadership and management skills, inadequacies in initial teacher education for early stages, challenges in mentoring students, and the amount of time promoted primary staff must devote to the nursery when no teacher is appointed. There was recognition that an 'underskilled nursery teacher can be an issue for skilled early years staff with an HNC or degree who feel better equipped to teach at this level than the teacher on some occasions. This is an issue which must be rectified through ensuring enhanced training for those of us who wish to teach in nursery.'

A GTCS-registered head teacher based in a primary school with responsibility for nursery wrote, 'It is a travesty that we have no teacher [only occasional teacher input] when early years has been proven so important in development and raising attainment.'

3.10 Staffing & Qualifications

886 respondents reported on the range of qualifications held by colleagues in their setting or service (Figure 8, Supplement 2). This range included diplomas, teaching degrees, post graduate degrees, SVQs, PDAs and BA degrees. All qualifications reported were at SCQF Level 6 or above. Staff working in a dedicated role in a setting were likely to know each other's qualifications, whereas peripatetic staff could be working across 3-14 different settings and were much less likely to know different colleagues' background. Primary based respondents were less familiar with the range of early years qualifications. Responses

illustrate the continuing diversity of qualifications held and being worked towards in the ELC sector.

3.11 Child Age and Attendance

Although respondents were asked about the ages of children they were working with, the data generated by Q28 & Q29 simply confirmed current trends of the majority of children attending the ELC settings in which teachers worked, being 3 and 4 years old. As half the survey respondents currently worked in the primary sector, they were working with children of 4½ and upwards. By contrast, fewer nursery settings supported by teachers included younger age groups, although some mention was made of settings currently offering or considering funded places for 2 year olds.

There were some particular issues raised about some settings being full to capacity with waiting lists, so that children were not receiving their entitlement; about how present buildings are unsuitable for 2 year olds the lack of teachers in post, and places for children in crisis situations. Some respondents expressed concern about not knowing how services would change:

‘I move between 6 settings some council, some private, some standalone, some within schools so really a bit of everything!’

‘Nursery not physically able to accommodate 2 year olds without upgrading (it has remote toilets, etc.).’

‘We do not know what our future is...’

‘I’m not a nursery teacher, but provide occasional support as there is currently no teacher in post and hasn’t been since September 2014.’

‘One of the nurseries is over subscribed so we can only offer a part time place to some 3 year olds. They have no alternative setting so are not getting their 3hrs 10 minutes a day.’

‘We also offer 6 Extended Provision places. These are full time places which are offered to families in a time of crisis. These are offered for a maximum period of 12 weeks.’

3.12 Views of Contributions Made

For Q10, respondents (n=1,141) selected the different contributions that they make in their teaching practice (see the figure below). A selection of possible contributions were listed, followed by an invitation to write about other contributions made. All options offered on this menu of possible contributions received at least 50% of responses from the GTCS-registered teachers who replied to this question.

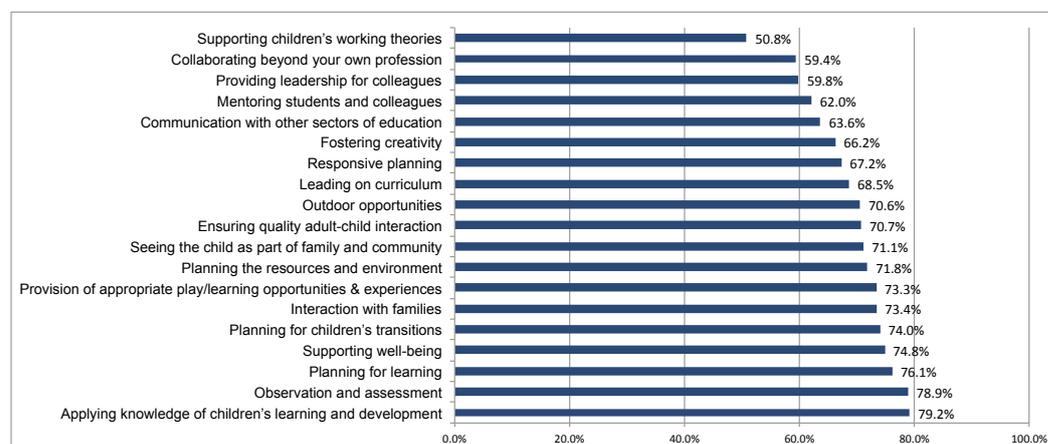


Figure: Contributions that respondents make in their teaching practice (1,141 total) (Figure 9 Survey Supplement 2)

The top three contributions were: Applying knowledge of children's learning and development (79.2%); Observation and assessment (78.9%); and Planning for learning (76.1%). The lowest three contributions of the GTCS-registered teachers who responded were: Supporting children's working theories (50.8%); Collaborating beyond your own profession (59.4%); and Providing leadership for colleagues (59.8%), indicating more than half recognised these contributions too.

Respondents also drew attention to their very varied additional contributions, with the top three contributions coded as: *Delivering CPD and in-service training* (representing 9.8% of 316 total responses); *Managing and leading staff* (7.3%); and *Offering parent meetings and workshops* (7.3%). The further contributions respondents drew attention to included *Reporting; Administrative tasks and accountancy; innovative teaching and learning; ASN, ESL and language support; transition from Nursery to P1, supporting staff wellbeing; multi-agency working and team work.*

Many examples of role variety and associated demands and expectations were described by teachers, for example:

'Observations of EYOs; write reports on students; lead team meetings and keep minutes of these; meet with senior management team to discuss the nursery; interview prospective EYOs alongside HT/DHT; lead parent/child PEEP group; plan and organise visits out of nursery for the children; arrange CPD activities/visits to other nurseries for the staff team; liaise with other nursery teachers in my area.'

Another respondent added roles that included:

'High quality CPD delivery, sharing research, role modelling, practical support, lead in literacy and numeracy developments, creating programmes and policy development, pace and challenge for staff, quality assurance, monitoring and advice, evaluation of the service and action planning, focus on learning experience.'

A GTCS-registered teacher in a free-standing nursery school wrote about responsibilities such as 'Implementing effective enrolment procedures, ensuring a smooth transition from home to nursery, monitoring and developing effective assessment procedures, advising staff with primary transition reporting, ensuring consistency and quality, delivering presentations and meetings to parents, compiling purposeful and on-going evidence to exemplify children's participation and achievements, contributing to & completing GIRFEC forms from requests for assistance and Single Agency Assessments, assisting in the compiling of the nursery's improvement plan and its implementation, keeping abreast of ideas, initiatives, policies and developments in Early Years and pursuing personal CPD.'

On the theme of *Managing and leading staff* and *Mentoring staff and modelling good practice*, one GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote that her work involves 'Leading the nursery team, developing the team's understanding of the above, holding training sessions for nursery staff (recently on what are we assessing and why?).' She also writes of the importance of ensuring coverage of the curriculum, such as guiding staff on teaching areas of numeracy, 'i.e., counting up and down is great. However what is 3? What is 5? And developing the awareness of the importance of rhyme. My role is to develop the team's understanding of making any opportunity to develop children's learning of key areas.'

3.13 Sources of Expertise

Respondents were asked to describe how they draw on their initial or continuing teacher education to provide well for children (Q12). There was a total of 981 coded responses to this item from 555 GTCS-registered teachers, because many respondents wrote more than one answer for this question. One GTCS-registered early childhood teacher in a primary school in Glasgow wrote, 'I endeavour to maintain high levels of knowledge in education

and in new ways of inspiring and developing children. My initial teacher education gave me the grounding on which to build this knowledge.'

Additional themes suggested the importance of:

- *Ongoing teacher development because knowledge and methods change over time*
- *Observation, peer discussion, reading and self-reflection about teaching practice*
- *Knowledge of relevant learning and teaching theories and research*
- *Understanding whole child development to provide appropriate individual support and educational challenges*
- *How to plan flexible, challenging teaching and assessment activities*
- *GTCS teacher training provided in-depth knowledge of curriculum*
- *All aspects of prior training have informed my teaching practice*
- *Did not learn much about nursery or early years in initial teacher education course*
- *Placements/mentoring provided practical ideas and resources that led to better teaching*
- *Information about additional support for learning needs*

A GTCS-registered Montessori teacher wrote, 'The cycle of observation, implementation, evaluation, documentation, and planning is embedded and used constantly.'

A GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, 'My time working with different primary stages has allowed me to see where the children will be going. Having been a P1 teacher for a few years I know what is expected or what would be great for children coming from nursery into P1 to be able to do. Teaching and learning and planning wise I feel that a lot can be learned from nursery practice and applied across the primary.'

A few respondents also commented that simply taking on another qualification is not always sufficient, as one GTCS-registered nursery teacher wrote: 'As a PGDE holder I often feel under-qualified and underprepared for this role. A better knowledge of psychology would be so helpful particularly with behaviour management difficulties and is something I am addressing with CPD courses and professional literature.'

Another GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, 'Nursery teaching requires a highly skilled professional. It requires someone who is able and willing to undertake additional leadership responsibilities not usually required to be undertaken by a class teacher. Working in a 60/60 nursery with a team of 9 staff my role is very different from my previous role as a P1 teacher. I have a key role to play in the learning and teaching of the children, far more communication with other professionals working with children and families. I believe that nursery teachers are vital to the learning and development of our children. I believe that withdrawing teachers from nurseries would have negative consequences for the future of our children. If anything teachers in nurseries should hold promoted posts with specialist early years qualifications.'

One GTCS-registered nursery teacher in a free-standing nursery school added, 'In contrast to class teaching it involves a great deal of working with other stakeholders as well as taking direct responsibility for the nursery when the Head is out. The job demands a high degree of interpersonal skills in order to build up relationships with all involved in the holistic development of the child.'

Opportunities available to teachers to continue their professional development included:

- *CPD offered through local authority*
- *Variety of relevant CPD courses*
- *School-based, online or independent CPD*
- *Cluster working or practitioner visits to other settings*

- *CPD courses and conferences through nearby university or training organisations*
- *Few CPD courses specific to early years education*
- *Sustained or University level qualifications*
- *Limited access to CPD due to time, budget, supply cover*
- *CPD on CfE, Early Literacy and Numeracy*

3.14 Understanding of Status and Role

A clear message that role clarity, understanding of the complexity of early years and the importance of working towards a truly integrated 3-18 process, with a focus on the Early Level, meant that a GTCS-registered nursery teacher wrote:

‘Having worked in P1 for many years, I had a good understanding of early years development which was useful when starting in the nursery. I find my role is very diverse and almost a management one. We have been cut down to 2 days nursery teacher contact which means I only have 2 days a week to complete my role. I also believe some sort of management training would be good as I am leading a very complex team and they come to me with issues as the head of the school is busy with school issues and often unavailable. I feel nursery teachers need their role to be given more importance and also to be clarified. I very often have to cover for early years officers due to absence and am often pulled out of nursery to cover classes in the school. I hadn’t realised how complex the job is and how pressured due to the 2 day limit. I enjoy the role but it is very challenging.’

Not all respondents shared such understandings of the ambitions for ELC. For example, two teachers responded from a parental perspective, with one who is currently working in early primary school saying ‘As a parent, I’m only interested to know how well my child behaves. I don’t need to know if they don’t like to draw but they do like to paint - I already know that from their personal choices at home. There are ways to save money, time and paper, this constant observation and reporting on every single child is getting out of hand!’

However, many children do not have such options at home, nor a GTCS teacher as a parent: it is important to illustrate that a very small number of respondents (n=4) did not hold ELC in high regard and indicated that proper learning does not and need not start until primary school.

A nursery teacher wrote about their perception of the differences in their role compared to that of other teachers:

‘Being a nursery teacher also requires a good deal of management skills, even though we are not considered part of the management team. It is most definitely a specialist role, with quite a unique job description and set of responsibilities. The current GTC role of a teacher does not adequately describe the nursery teacher’s role.’

Respondents were asked to consider the ways in which their status as GTCS-registered nursery teachers is understood by primary colleagues (520 total responses), parents (512 total) and nursery colleagues (482 total). The overall indication is that 35% of primary colleagues, 31% of parents and 42% of immediate colleagues understand the teacher’s contribution well or very well. An additional 12% of primary and ELC colleagues appreciated and respected what teachers offer, but 18.5% of primary colleagues, 19% of parents and 6% of ELC colleagues understood the teacher’s contribution poorly or not at all well, although 21% of ELC colleagues were thought to be developing an improved understanding of the teacher’s role. This means that there is work to do to profile the work of GTCS teachers in ELC carefully and with clarity. In a number of instances, teachers reported being marginalised by primary management and being expected to fit in and not draw attention to any differences in role. In many ways teachers are valued within the ELC teams and they

are not seeking a hierarchical structure, rather they seek the scope to apply the skills they have in positive ways for children.

There were many written comments about the perceptions and understanding of the teacher contribution in ELC and the responses expressed a variety of views. For example, related to primary colleagues' understanding of the GTCS-registered nursery class teacher's role, one respondent wrote: 'Very well, colleagues have respect as they think it is a very specific skill and ability to have being the nursery teacher. They admire me as they feel they couldn't work with such young children.' Another wrote: 'Primary colleagues respect my experience and understanding of early years issues. They often seek advice.' A peripatetic ELC teacher added:

'Primary teachers respect my role in nursery but they find it hard to see how moving from setting to setting every 6 weeks is possible. Mostly [they] are unaware of the legacy I leave with practitioners and the fact that each visit I work on specific aspects of a nursery action plan. A money saving suggestion by [my] Council is that primary teachers provide the teacher support in nursery classes from August 2016. I would imag[in]e that most primary colleagues would feel daunted by the prospect of having 2 or 3 year olds in their settings and that this would be a detrimental step for children and staff teams. The latter would resent having to show the teacher what nursery is about, knowing that they are paid significantly less despite having a relevant qualification. As teachers move throughout primary schools yearly, nursery settings would constantly having a new member of the team to work with.'

Again considering parental views, there were many examples. Here we include a few examples from the 512 responses (Q22). A GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote: 'Very well received through a lot of hard work, communication and mutual respect. Holding curriculum nights, etc. for parents. Nursery clubs.'

Another respondent wrote, 'I quite deliberately did not promote a hierarchical view of the nursery team, particularly as the nursery nurse I was working with was highly qualified and very experienced. However, I think that parents did understand that decisions rested with me and that although we operated a key worker system, it would be me that would meet with them at parent consultations, and who would write their child's report. I think there was a level of confidence that they could see in me as the lead practitioner.'

One respondent wrote: 'Parents undervalue the impact and importance of play. They are wanting to see traditional reading, writing and maths lessons in nursery but don't understand the idea of continuous provision and free flow to create a learning environment.' Another nursery class teacher agreed: 'It is so frustrating [because] they just want to talk to you about reading books, writing, and how high their child can count to. It is hard to make them understand that you are supporting children's learning in the same way as other staff by responding and developing what the children want to learn. Parents still see teachers in a very traditional role.'

Another GTCS-registered teacher wrote, 'I do a huge amount of work and information sharing with parents on the importance of teaching and learning. Ours is a 52-week extended day establishment. This came from my identifying the need to support parents into work training and education. I preface the Induction meeting with all potential new parents by stating clearly that all children attend for their education and that staff deliver care as part of this. All children who receive extended hours/weeks will receive two or three times more education from us. I have delayed my retirement because of my concern for the dismantling of the Teaching Expertise being made available to children now through the withdrawal of EAL Teachers, Teachers in Nursery and after my retirement my post will be changed.'

There were 482 responses to the question about how their status as a GTCS-registered teacher is understood by colleagues. Those who tended to say that their role was well understood by colleagues also believed that their team worked well together and that everyone's strengths were appreciated. One GTCS-registered nursery teacher wrote: 'My colleagues and I work very closely as a team and they are seen to be doing the same job as I with the children, but I as the teacher, make the final decisions, lead the planning and discussions, take responsibility for the decisions made, and I think give confidence to the team that we are doing good things for the children in our care.' Another GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, 'Valued, nursery staff work as large team, supporting each other. Without teachers the lion's share of the nursery paperwork and planning would not be complete. Nursery practitioners are not paid enough to commit to the same hours that teachers do.'

On a negative theme related to the challenge of supporting the 600 hours entitlement, one GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, 'I feel there is a slight divide in our team with the new 600 hours and teacher's time with children being restricted by our teacher contract. Nursery nurses are often having to work without teacher in the classroom and as a result feel this is unfair.' Another GTCS-registered nursery class teacher agreed: 'With the introduction of 600 hours within the nursery I feel the role of the nursery teacher has been lost within many establishments. Some teachers feel they are just there as a support to the early years workers to allow them to work with the children or they are experiencing animosity from other staff because their working times differ from the rest of the staff team. Within my own establishment I have been lucky in that most of the staff recognise my status as being different and fully support me within my role.'

'Nursery can be a tricky team, and I am aware that although I lead the nursery team (and would be responsible for the nursery class under an inspection) I am not the line manager for the staff.'

For the category of positive perception by partnership nursery colleagues (Q24), one GTCS-registered teacher wrote: 'Partnership nurseries have worked with a peripatetic model for a long time and I feel understand the role better than some standalone nursery schools or nursery classes.'

A GTCS-registered nursery teacher in a free-standing nursery school wrote, 'Many will seek advice on curriculum or other nursery developments. Some seek support with children with additional needs or behaviour difficulties.' A GTCS-registered teacher in a free-standing nursery wrote, 'Although not currently working as a peripatetic teacher I have done this job. I found that because I visited partnership nurseries as a Council employed teacher I was recognised as a specialist in this area.'

'The staff I work with on a daily basis appreciate my role as class teacher but I am aware that there are staff who, although not trained to my level, believe they can do my job.'

In summary, there is a huge range of experience in relation to the understanding others hold of the role and qualifications of the ELC teacher. There is a sense in which it is difficult for others to understand the roles taken on and the background knowledge and experience that informs the interpretation of role. Disparities in pay and hours can aggravate what is, in many circumstances, reported as a complementary, extending and dedicated role that contributes positively to the composition of the ELC workforce.

3.15 Leadership and Management

60% of respondents (n=1,141) identified that they provide leadership for colleagues for the question (Q10) related to the different contributions they make. With half of all respondents working in the primary sector, but having a role to play in ELC, the demands of leading and managing their associated early years setting is high. Great respect for all

those who work in early learning and childcare is evident, yet at the same time the majority nevertheless think that a teacher is an essential member of the ELC team.

As one Depute Head teacher with responsibility for nursery wrote: 'We have a very committed and enthusiastic staff who are well motivated and willing to develop their skills. Each year our peripatetic teachers start with good intentions, but after 3 months, leave to go to better jobs. Then they are not replaced. I think the peripatetic nature of the job makes them feel less valued in the small teams that exist in staffs in nursery. It is a pity, because they are so necessary, especially when you only have their input one or two days per week. There should be a full time teacher in every centre.'

Another respondent agreed, stating: 'The removal of teachers from nursery establishments as a cost-saving exercise is detrimental to child development. The quality of education... varies greatly from establishment to establishment.'

A pre-school educational home visitor focuses on 'the additional enhancement, the depth, breadth and richness of learning environments and the process of learning itself, diagnostic skills to unpick mis-learning and enabling all learners - which a teacher does daily.'

Another respondent wrote: 'Parents and children are increasingly receiving preschool care rather than education. Teachers' roles have more elements of conflict resolution within the setting due to information, advice & observations not being understood or responded to appropriately. But more importantly, apart from the handful of provisions with shining beacons of practice, the welcome to, trust in and value of preschool education is variously being diluted.'

Another wrote: 'Nursery teaching requires a highly skilled professional. It requires someone who is able and willing to undertake additional leadership responsibilities not usually required to be undertaken by a class teacher.'

Q25 specifically asked respondents whether leadership and management responsibilities were part of their current role. In total, 615 individuals answered this question, with 56.4% responding 'Yes' and 43.6% reporting that they do not have leadership or management responsibilities.

3.16 Mentoring

Teachers in ELC frequently take on a mentoring role with colleagues. They also mentor students. As one teacher wrote: 'Good nursery teachers with additional early years specialisms are key to providing quality early education. There are huge discrepancies in the expectations of early years students, I have had students in the past where there have been no tutor visits to placement.'

A GTCS-registered early childhood teacher working in a primary school wrote that it would be helpful if new nursery class teachers received a 'Combination of training in an educational establishment and training on the job, prior to full responsibility.'

3.17 Provision

One GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote about how she keeps her primary knowledge up to date: 'I worked in P1 in my first job, I work closely with cluster colleagues to develop shared practice and understanding across early level.' Another nursery class teacher wrote, 'Often primary schools look very different in terms of their EY ethos etc. Quite a lot of terms like soft start and I know about token play experiences.'

One GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote about the current tension between working practices in nursery compared to early primary: 'I work very closely with my Primary 1/2 colleagues, and use joint planning especially at transition. I still feel there is too much pressure for formal education in primary 1 and I know many of my colleagues

struggle to find the balance. Several colleagues have expressed concern that how we work in nursery is too different from Primary and feel that nursery needs to be more formal. There is quite a bit of pressure from heads for this as they see it as a way to raise attainment, without fully understanding child development and the importance of play in wellbeing.’ Another GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote, ‘I have taught P1 & 2 and although it is still best practice to have play opportunities and active learning, this can stop due to schemes of work that SMTP expect you to follow.’ A third GTCS-registered nursery class teacher agreed that ‘P1 should be more like early year[s] settings.’

3.18 Closing the Gap

One of the major challenges facing economic and social policy in Scotland is the continuing gap in attainment and education outcomes between children from different socio-economic backgrounds. There is a high expectation on ELC to make a difference for children, to provide equitably for all and to nurture small children so they are able to gain from their years of schooling. We have asserted through the review of the literature the strong, indeed inseparable connection between socio-emotional and cognitive gains. We asked respondents to indicate the areas of expertise they bring to the task of closing the gap (Q35). The trigger areas of expertise were: expertise in assessment and monitoring data; improving staff knowledge and expertise and supporting parents and families. There were 946 responses to this question (Table 22, Supplement 2). Many of the respondents considered these areas to be part of their practice, but did not claim to be expert (approximately one third of respondents); 18% of respondents reported that they had expertise in *Improving staff knowledge and expertise* that could be shared with others.

Expanding on their answers as to how they could use their expertise in closing the attainment gap to develop these skills in other settings (n= 101), 34 respondents reported that they share good practice and CPD training that they have found beneficial, both within their setting and at seminars and workshops related to the early years. Solihull training, Froebel and Montessori training, Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP groups), Positive Language and the Flying Start programme were specifically mentioned as helping better relate to both parents and children.

In addition, 22 respondents reported that they regularly share their knowledge about working with and supporting parents and families, with seven offering parenting classes or workshops, six being involved in movement/physical education, outdoor learning or forest schools, two offering expertise in language and communication difficulties, five having expertise in ASN, and one contributing to Save the Children’s families and schools together (FAST) programme. Sixteen GTCS-registered teachers highlighted the importance of working closely with other agencies and directing parents to appropriate support services where necessary.

Sixteen respondents also mentioned the importance of observation, monitoring and assessment, and analysis of children’s progress to set individualised next steps and challenges (particularly in preparation for primary school). Six GTCS-registered teachers were leading an early literacy development project in their school and four were working on numeracy development. One respondent wrote that they were trained in supporting children through grief and loss, another was trained in Makaton communication, and a third mentioned that they share their ICT skills with other members of staff. Another respondent described a transition project designed to help close the attainment gap as ‘a collaborative project between schools, nurseries and Family learning (CLD) and parents.’

One GTCS-registered teacher wrote: ‘We have recently had an HMI inspection which led to the complete turn around of one of the nurseries. A complete and full shift to child-led learning. I have begun to implement these in the other nursery too as well as leading an in-service for all early years staff in my area after Easter.’ Another respondent wrote: ‘The

Readiness for School and LfS work and resources which I have developed is on disc and has been shared/is available for sharing.'

Another GTCS-registered teacher wrote, 'I use quite sophisticated systems to gather and analyse children's assessment data to enable us to target support to those children who need it most. My studies have enabled me to develop my knowledge of early years pedagogy and I have a wealth of knowledge I can share with other practitioners. My centre is a pioneer site for the early years collaborative working on family engagement in early learning so we have a lot of experience and expertise in engaging parents in the life and work of the nursery and working with parents to plan the sort of events and programmes that they would like to be involved in.'

One teaching head of a family learning centre wrote, 'I have a personal interest in gathering data on children's progress in ways that do not influence curriculum delivery or reduce time for play. I am very interested in empowering staff to continue to learn, gain expertise in their profession and develop as reflective practitioners. I am committed to doing the very best that we can to support families particularly when they face difficulties. When we became a family learning centre we were allocated a part time family support worker who does great work with parents and families. We are currently extending this to offer community services in partnership with third sector e.g. school gates initiative, Barnardo's.'

A GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote: 'This year we have introduced iPad profiling and are trying to develop our use of these, both to improve parent involvement and to improve our planning/delivery of the curriculum for each individual child.' Another GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote: 'I work in an area of multiple deprivations - a key target is to look at ways in which children's nursery experiences can be enriched through formative assessment, sharing current research with staff, including parents and families.'

3.19 Transitions

Respondents were asked (Q15) to what extent they think that highly trained nursery and infant teachers are able to support children in making the transition from early childhood education and care to primary school. In total, there were 551 responses to this question. 74.6% of respondents answered they thought the transition could be supported to a very large extent, and a further 12% thought to a good extent.

Evidence supports the view that teachers have a strong repertoire of approaches to transitions in the early years. Approaches (n=1.059) included the following themes:

- Nursery children visit primary school during transition
- Close nursery/P1 communication and collaboration
- Meetings and discussions with parents
- Phased transition over several weeks or months
- Shared nursery/P1 activities and playtimes
- Reports and transitions meetings to share next steps for each child
- P1 teachers visit nurseries
- Personalising transitions

One respondent explained the contributions of a GTCS-registered nursery teacher as follows: 'Highly trained teachers can ensure that basic early level concepts are introduced appropriately into the nursery environment and the children that require enhanced transition plans are catered for properly.' Another respondent highlighted additional contributions that a trained nursery teacher can make in support of transition: 'Knowledge of curriculum, planning skills, leadership qualities, ability to work with primary 1 teachers, knowledge of p1 curriculum and standards.'

A teacher who was relating qualifications to transitions wrote: 'It needs to be Early years so as the connection beyond nursery is made and the whole picture is given so that any teacher/student is able to see where the child starts and where they should progress to.'

Another respondent writing about staffing and transitions wrote, 'It is vital that there is a teacher in nursery. As a primary 1 teacher who works closely with the nursery, a teacher's input in learning at pre 5 is a necessity. The children need to be taught as well as nurtured in order to come into school and be ready to start more structured learning.'

One GTCS-registered Depute Head Teacher in a primary school wrote, 'In [my local authority], we had excellent provision for 'Early Intervention' with a dedicated team who worked with nursery children and Primary 1 and 2, overseeing transition. Unfortunately, this was al[l] withdrawn along with fully qualified teachers in the Nursery due to funding problems. This was a great shame as it worked well. Nursery staff do a great job but it was a backwards step in my view to remove teaching staff with their expertise.'

A GTCS-registered P1 teacher wrote: 'My degree is in Childhood Studies and I also have a PGDE. As a current P1 class teacher I work very closely with the nursery children, teacher and staff. From my perspective, the majority of children who come into P1 from an establishment which is led by a qualified teacher, these are the children who are 'ready to learn'.'

Another GTCS-registered primary 1 teacher observed, 'We are always under pressure to raise attainment in primary schools so the highest quality of nursery provision is the obvious foundation for such achievement. The importance of this cannot be left to those who would use the watering down of nursery provision as a money saving exercise. Our children's futures are too important!'

Related to the Curriculum for Excellence, one GTCS-registered teacher commented, 'Transition is vital between the early years classes into P1 to ensure learning across early level CfE is a continuum.' Another GTCS-registered teacher wrote: 'There needs to be better curricular transition.'

In a further response a nursery class teacher wrote, 'I think this is a critical part of the role of nursery teacher. As nursery teachers we have a 'foot in both camps'. We know the capabilities and personalities of our nursery children and we know what is expected of them in Primary One. Thus we are the best placed to bridge that gap and to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. I think it would be invaluable to have a nursery teacher take her class of children from preschool to primary one across that two years. This would provide an excellent transition and would allow both the care and education to be seamless. What happy children this would make! And happy parents too!'

Themes that were important to transitions included:

- *Specific transitions activities*
- *Bridging pre-school and school*
- *Focusing on the four capacities of CfE*
- *The responsibility to have a depth of knowledge of the early level: knowledge, understanding of practice, provision, methods, research, of early childhood education*
- *88% said the transition is very important, 3% said the importance depends on how much support the child needs*
- *Teachers understand how a P1 differs from nursery*
- *Supporting parents*

This evidence makes an important contribution to understanding the teacher as a bridging professional: the sole practitioner from ELC with registration to lead learning and teaching in both prior-to-school and school settings in Scotland.

3.20 Policy and Guidance

The three driving documents identified by respondents were the Early Years Framework, GIRFEC and the Early Level Curriculum for Excellence. Additionally respondents referred to Building the Ambition, the National Parenting Strategy and the Early Years Collaborative Stretch Aims. Teachers drew on many materials and gave a wide range of examples.

3.21 Links with Other Providers

We asked respondents (Q37) to indicate what links they have with other providers or services, such as health or social care. In total, there were 1,146 coded responses for this question because many of the 453 respondents listed several providers or services. A typical response highlighted a number of services the individual works with, as one respondent wrote: 'Speech and language. High Five for Fruit. Local area cluster schools, nurseries and family centres. Health visitors. School psychologist. Child smile. Ophthalmic team.' Another respondent wrote, 'Work with occupational health, speech and language therapy, health visitors, educational officers, hearing impaired, social work, NHS health teams.'

The early years are a time of observation, identification, prevention and intervention. It is also a time of hope for families whose child has an identified need. Among GTCS-registered teachers there is a prevailing optimism and commitment to the difference they and the early years teams can make for children if they have the opportunity. The providers they identified as part of the wider team included:

Speech and language therapy, Social work and social care, Occupational therapy and physiotherapy, Educational psychology, the Pre-5 learning support/Early Years Outreach service, Psychologist/CAMHS, Family support and parent groups, Cluster nursery/school settings, partner providers and playgroups, Vision or hearing specialist, charitable organisations and community police.

For the theme *Health visitor/service and School nurse/doctor*, one respondent wrote: 'Very close links with Health visitor and local authority partner agencies including health, [Speech and language therapist], Educational psychologist etc.' Another respondent wrote, 'We have termly interagency meetings [with] health visitors, speech therapist, school doctor, school nurse. Social work and educational psychologist attends and we often phone or meet with them when matters arise outwith these meetings.' Another respondent wrote, 'I have close links with Health Visitors and invite them to attend all team Around the Child meetings. Likewise, Social Workers, as appropriate. Any IEPs that are created for children are very much multi-disciplinary and designed in line with GIRFEC. We have close links with the local high school and often take on 5th and 6th year students who are keen to have a career in early learning and childcare.'

Related to the theme *Speech and language therapy*, one respondent wrote: 'Speech and Language therapy work in our setting one day a week, regular visits from Educational psychologist, family support workers, PALS workers, Hearing specialists, sight specialists.' Another respondent wrote, 'I personally do not have links but the nursery works closely with speech and language, health visitors and social work as well as the early years outreach team for children on the Autistic Spectrum or with Down's Syndrome.'

For the theme *Social work and social care*, one respondent wrote, 'I have a number of children who are involved with different services and we work together as the team around the child to support the family; this involves social work, health visitors, specialist health services, family first workers and often the children's panel. We have a joint support team who meet monthly to plan involvement of other agencies once a single agency assessment has shown that further support is required; this team includes health visitor, educational psychologist and family learning development worker as well as key nursery staff.' Another respondent wrote: 'We have a social work centre in a separate part of the nursery/school

building. We liaise with Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, School Community and Family Support officer, where necessary. We often take on students and pupils who are carrying out work-experience from the local colleges and universities.'

GTCS-registered teachers and the teams they work with access a wide variety of services, support families in their access to services and develop an evidence base of children's strengths and challenges. Responses indicate a strengths-based approach. For teachers operating on a class teacher or peripatetic basis, this liaison with an extended network of services goes far beyond typical classroom-based practices. The culture of ELC brings an expansion and diversity of role that rarely matches with the standard teaching contract.

The shared collaborative agenda focuses on being sensitive to the need for families to have flexibility and the effects this could have on provision and is important to both a closing the gap agenda and to day-to-day transitions in early childhood. A wider community of practice is able to work together to find solutions to extended hours, year round provision and mismatches between daily finishing times for different members of a family. Survey findings highlight these daily issues and the need for continuity of care whilst balancing different work-time models. Teachers place a premium on knowing families well and being in tune with a family's circumstances as they negotiate change.

4. Overview of Results from the Desk-Based Research, Focus Groups and FOI Request to Local Authorities

These elements of the study generated information about teacher employment, teacher role, children's 'access to a teacher' and 'teacher presence' in local authority and partnership centres, drawn from publicly available data on Early Learning and Childcare provision in Scotland. Sources of publicly available data relating to the early years sector generally and to qualified teachers in particular included:

- Early Learning and Childcare data accessed from Scottish Government statistical publications.
- Childcare Workforce data accessed from Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) reports.
- Childminder and Daycare Services data accessed from Care Inspectorate childcare statistics.
- Education Policy information accessed from Scottish Government, Early Education and Education Scotland publications.
- Freedom of Information requests to all 32 Local Authorities.

From this data we sought to establish a clear picture of pre-school provision in Scotland. We planned to reflect trends in the last 10 years.

Early Learning and Childcare statistics for local authority and partner provider pre-school centres, obtained from Scottish Government published data, are presented in detail in the Desk-Based Research Supplement. This information highlights a number of issues surrounding the reporting of information, leading to discussion of the process employed and the need for a Freedom of Information request.

To understand the employment of GTCS-registered teachers and their role, we took account of the qualifications and employment of the early years workforce generally, to establish where GTCS-registered teachers are employed in terms of LA area and roles undertaken, and in relation to the whole workforce. We also sought to access policy on GTCS-registered teacher employment in early years. The desk-based work interrogated policy documents, reports, legislation and guidelines for any focus on teachers in early years settings.

4.1 Publicly Held Statistics

This strand aimed to access publicly available data relating to the early years sector generally and to qualified teachers in particular. We set out to access and report a clear picture of preschool provision in Scotland, the numbers of children involved, the types of settings attended, the uptake of the free entitlement and the ratios of teachers to children. We planned to reflect trends in the last 10 years and to include information from 2000 where relevant. Reference to 'regular access' to a teacher proved problematic as no criteria were given to explain what 'regular' means.

As of September 2014, there were 1,212 (FTE) GTCS teachers across 2,449 pre-school centres providing early education and childcare to 101,463 (FTE) children. In September 2005, figures showed there were 1,702 (FTE) GTCS teachers across 2,761 pre-school centres providing early education and childcare to 105,810 (FTE) children.

- There was a 29% reduction in number of GTCS Registered Teachers employed in Early Learning and Childcare centres over last 10 years (from 2005).
- Pupil Teacher Ratio in Local Authority and Partner Provider pre-school centres has increased year on year from 1:62.2 (Sep 2005) to 1:83.7 (Sep 2014).
- 13.6% of Early Learning and Childcare centres currently have no access to a teacher (Sep 2014).
- 25.7% of 3, 4 & 5 year old pre-school children currently have no access to a teacher (Sep 2014).
- 14.1% of 3, 4 & 5 year old pre-school children currently have access to a teacher under a non-regular/ad-hoc arrangement and 60.3% have access under a regular arrangement (Sep 2014).
- 50% of local authorities stated that 3, 4 & 5 year old pre-school children in their authority do not have equal access to a teacher.
- 50% of local authorities stated that there is no minimum standard for teacher time in pre-school centres and/or contact time with children in their authorities.

(Following the completion of this study, the 2015 Schools and ELC Census data was published. Key points are mentioned on page 6, and full statistics may be accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00490590.pdf>)

4.2 Patterns of Teacher Employment

There is no minimum threshold setting for teacher input in pre-school centres by the Scottish Government.

- Decisions regarding teacher input time and their role within pre-school centres are devolved to local authorities.
- To date, none of the 32 local authorities in Scotland have carried out an evaluation of the impact of teacher access or lack of teacher access on child outcomes.
- Each individual authority has their own interpretation of what ‘access to a teacher’ means and what this looks like in practice.
- Local authorities operate different guidelines and charging structure for the deployment of teachers to private partner providers, resulting in some partner providers choosing to have no teacher support.
- Teacher employment across sectors is governed by teacher pay and conditions. Those working in early learning and childcare settings have the same contractual arrangements as the rest of their profession. Differing contracts are assigned to distinctly different roles: clarity of role is essential.

4.3 Focus Groups

The Focus Groups aimed to obtain representation from a geographical spread of GTCS-registered teachers across Scotland. In total, 11 Focus Groups met in Highland, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders, Ayrshire and Falkirk Councils. 47 participants were identified from survey responses. The purpose was to explore firsthand the contribution of GTCS-registered teachers working at the Early Level.

Nominal Group Technique is a highly structured approach affording the maximum input from participants and a minimum influence from researchers. The approach seeks to draw

on a range of views and establish strength of view on that range, thus achieving consensus, i.e. ‘informed agreement.’

Participants organise, categorise and prioritise responses through the independent generation of ideas in response to a stimulus question. This approach allows individual participants to generate their own ideas in response to the question posed, to present statements of their ideas in turn round the group without any discussion save for clarification, and then to discuss their statements interactively.

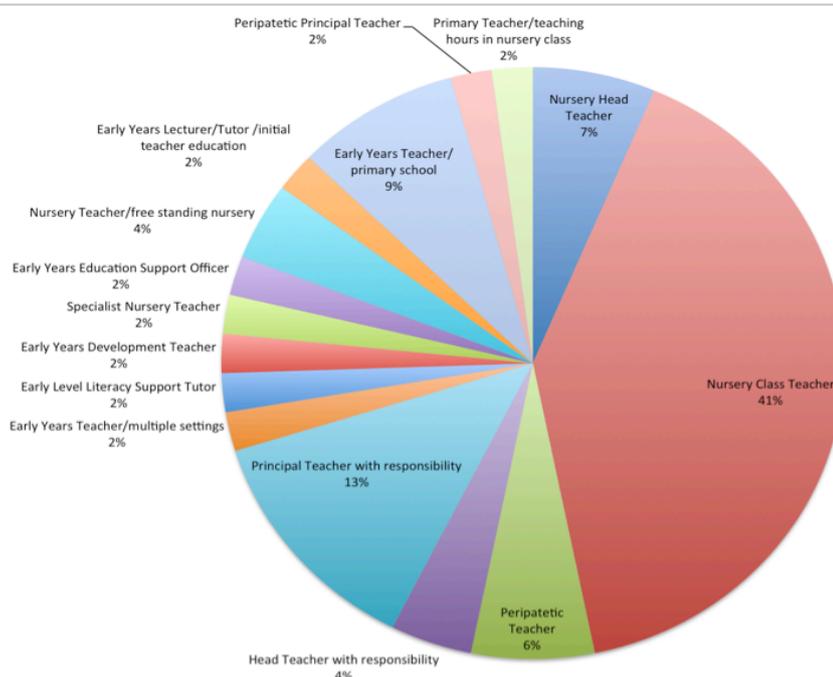
The question agreed by the Audit Team aimed to expand on emerging questionnaire data. We asked ‘*What is the role of the specialist early childhood teacher?*’

This holistic question generated thinking about the specific and wider impact of the teacher’s role and contribution to children, colleagues and family experience. A full list of individual statements was generated, and organised collectively into a master list by group participants before individual scoring for each statement. Each participant had 15 points they could allocate to these master statements, meaning they each prioritised the five statements that held the most significance for them, with the statement they most valued being given 5 points, then 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point. This proved a difficult task, as all master statements had resonance for the group. Scores were tallied to give a rating from each group as a whole on the statements they themselves had generated. In each case this process was followed up with an open discussion on ‘*What support or barriers do you experience in relation to the priorities you have identified as a group?*’

The rich data elicited revealed that GTCS-registered teachers in pre-schools across Scotland are confident that their unique contribution includes: ‘highly efficient leadership skills and vision’, ‘knowledge of early level learning and effective management of transitions’, ‘scaffolding of children’s learning through knowledge of different sectors’ and the ‘ability to work across multiple disciplines, engaging with parents, children, staff and other professionals at different levels’.

4.4 Focus Group Participants

Over 170 survey respondents volunteered to join a focus group. Of these self-selecting Focus Group participants, 47 were able to meet on the evenings offered in their locality.



The participants included nursery class teachers, nursery head teachers, peripatetic teachers, primary-appointed early years teachers offering hours in nursery class, early years lecturers, primary head teachers and principal teachers with responsibility for nursery, teachers working across multiple pre-school settings and teachers offering literacy support, working with Additional Support for Learning Needs (ASLN) and working as Education Support Officers, thus reflecting the diverse roles GTCS-registered teachers occupy in relation to early learning and childcare.

4.5 Teacher Input

In the following table, an example from one of the Focus Groups illustrates the wide-ranging contribution that participants believed GTCS-registered nursery teachers make.

Statement	Total Score
Depth of the teachers curriculum knowledge – a curriculum and pedagogy specialist (in the delivery).	22
Being able to scaffold children’s learning and step each child through it – knowledge of different sectors. 3-18.	18
Professional understanding of how children learn and planning for it.	14
Leader of learning (children, parents, staff) (really challenging).	10
Transitions in learning experiences, expectations.	9
A professional status and identity which adds value and gives parity to children’s experience across sectors.	8
Advocates for high quality early years provision.	8
Being able to connect with, and professional respect across disciplines (multi agency, ASN).	1
Enhancing family engagement with learning and supporting team to do so.	0
Providing quality evidence.	0

The Master Statements from all 11 Focus Group discussions are included in the Focus Group Supplement linked to this report.

Where a zero score is included, this indicates that of all the masters statements generated, focus group members did not include the item(s) in their final set of priorities related to the contribution of the GTCS-registered teacher. This is not to say that these concepts were unimportant, as they had been included in the final theming of the particular group’s statements, but rather that out of those master statements, these concepts were less important than some of the others.

Thematic analysis of the Focus Group data revealed that GTCS-registered teachers were confident that teachers make the following contributions to early learning and childcare in Scotland:

- Highly efficient leadership skills and vision.
- Ability to work across multiple disciplines with the ability to engage with parents, children, staff and other professionals at different levels.
- An understanding of child development from birth and the ability to relate theory and policy to practice.
- Understanding of the interplay between the child, family, setting and community.
- Knowledge of early level learning and effective management of transitions.
- A vision, and shared values, that enhance and inform pedagogy.

- An environment for children to learn.
- Scaffolding children's learning through knowledge of different sectors.
- An ability to connect with and professional respect across disciplines.

This resonates with survey comments:

'Nursery teachers should be interacting with children in their learning, challenging their learning and enjoying being part of this inspiring moment in children's lives. They should also be guiding the nursery team in taking learning forward, but due to the cuts in time we have together as a team this can be as brief as 15 minutes in a day.'

'An excellent nursery teacher can hugely enhance the quality of experience for children, parents and staff. An underskilled nursery teacher can be an issue for skilled early years staff with an HNC or degree who feel better equipped to teach at this level than the teacher on some occasions. This is an issue which must be rectified through ensuring enhanced training for those of us who wish to teach in nursery.'

(Nursery Class Teacher)

5. Main Findings

Over the last 10 years, the number of Local Authority pre-school centres has remained relatively static, with a decrease shown in the number of Partner Provider centres. During this time we have seen the number of GTCS-registered teachers employed in pre-school settings fall by 29%, while pupil numbers have decreased by only 4%. While the ratio of teachers to pupils is not reported by the Scottish Government for this sector, we have calculated these figures using the best data available, showing an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio from 1 teacher for every 62 pupils (pre-school children) in 2005 to 1 teacher for every 83 pupils (pre-school children) in 2014. Although it is recognised that some double-counting of both teachers and pupils is present in these figures, it nevertheless raises concern about the dilution, both of presence and input, of the GTCS-registered teacher for children in our pre-school settings (Publicly held data, Supplement 1).

Evidence from the published literature (Supplement 1) tells us that:

- In Scotland we aspire for our country to be the best place for children to grow up: figures show that 1 in 5 children, and rising, experience poverty (Scottish Government, 2015a).
- The commitment of the teaching profession to social justice, ethical encounters and combatting under-achievement brought about by social disadvantage, provide fundamental values for teaching graduates in Scotland.
- GTCS-teachers play a unique role as ‘bridging professionals’ across the Early Level CfE.
- In Scotland our aspiration is to have a workforce that is ‘fit for purpose’. The agreed purpose must influence the composition of the early learning and childcare workforce.
- Robust evidence of the effectiveness of pre-school education and the actual impact of the highly qualified teacher within the sector has been hard to find in a Scottish context.
- All ELC experience benefits children, but high quality ELC combined with a positive home learning environment combine to make the most difference for children in the longer term.
- There are differences in cultural, economic and educational terms as to the expectations and preparation of teachers for early childhood across nations.
- A clear, rigorous system of early years qualifications is needed, which shows relationships between them, and recognises their strengths.
- The appointment of GTCS-registered nursery teachers in Local Authority and partnership provision is currently changing significantly in Scotland.
- Reviews of the workforce have neglected GTCS-registered teachers working in ELC, apart from two exceptions: Deployment of Teachers (2009) and the current 2015 Review (Siraj & Kingston, 2015).
- Different levels of Governance at play influence the employment of GTCS-registered teachers and Lead Practitioners: a devolved Scottish Parliament, considerable autonomy in Local Authorities, and strong professional governance through GTCS and SSSC.
- The quality of both teacher and non-teacher education for working in the ELC sector is understood to be core to providing a quality early educational experience for young children.

- Having qualified teachers leading early years practice will raise the status of the sector, increase professionalism and improve quality.
- The quality of provision and young children's learning, development and outcomes depend on the experience and educational qualifications of the adults who work with them.
- Attention to children's socio-emotional and cognitive development go hand-in-hand.
- It is important that all members of the ELC workforce are able to recognise and respect one another's strengths.
- Any generic term for staff hides the range of co-existing professional profiles, rooted in different disciplines, that each make an essential contribution to quality.
- Provision in nursery schools (state funded schools providing nursery education for 3-4 year olds), nursery classes attached to primary schools, and integrated care and education settings continue to provide the highest overall quality of early years settings.
- Leadership of learning, increasing staff skills in working responsively with young children, challenging thinking and learning and sustaining high quality interaction are essential ingredients of high quality early years provision.
- Policy indicates the kinds of competences staff may need in order to make a difference for children in the Common Core.
- Assumptions are made by policy makers, service planners and providers that their aspirations for early childhood are shared by professionals, parents and children.
- There are gaps as well as mismatches between policy and the lived experiences of children, families and communities.
- In Scotland we have evidence of the difference that qualifications make to children's experiences, but we do not yet hold evidence of how educational qualifications affect children's outcomes in the longer term. We can, however, draw parallels from the EPPSE study on outcomes at 16+.
- For a successful Scotland, it does not make sense that significant numbers of young children in this country currently do not have access to a teacher at all stages of their learning and development journey.

Teachers continue to play a role in ELC in modeling effective practices; curriculum development and implementation; using assessment information to plan learning; identifying children with additional support for learning needs and planning learning; provide input on management and leadership; take responsibility for staff development, training and mentoring; and support children and families during transitions.

There is a shortage of robust, centrally held information on the deployment of teachers in ELC (Section 3.6, Supplement 1).

The total number of GTCS-registered teachers in pre-school settings has decreased year on year from 2005. This decrease is shown across both Local Authority and Partner Provider centres. Teacher gender remains static across the years, with female teachers working in ELC outnumbering male teachers in a ratio of 24:1. Data collection on teacher age has not been consistent across the years, however from 2010 the vast majority of teachers fall within the 25+ years age range, with a marked increase in numbers in the 45-54 years age range. This contrasts with data from 2007, which reports a younger age profile of teachers in pre-school settings (Section 3.6, Supplement 1).

On centre-based statistics, just over 74% of children aged 3-5 years have some access to a teacher, which means that almost 26% do not. While more than half of children still have access to a teacher on a regular arrangement and there has been a reduction in the number of centres with no teacher access, there is also an increase in the number of centres with non-regular access. There is no clear definition of 'access' or 'regular access' to a teacher and we know that this varies widely across Local Authorities and individual pre-school centres (Section 4.6, Supplement 1).

The Freedom of Information Request informs us on a range of key findings that follow here and are reported in Strand 5 of Supplement 1.

Twelve Local Authorities in Scotland continue to employ full-time GTCS-registered teachers in each of their nursery schools and classes and ELC centres. In six Local Authorities, GTCS-teachers are entirely peripatetic; 4 Local Authorities employ GTCS-registered teachers on a part-time basis: this may be 0.5 per day or on a part-week basis; a further 4 Local Authorities state that children aged 3-5 years have regular access to a teacher. Three Local Authorities were not explicit about the nature, hours or regularity of teachers in their settings; one of these stated they had no policy about the employment of GTCS-registered teachers. Four Local Authorities said all children have regular access to a GTCS-registered teacher, but the access was undefined. Three Local Authorities were explicit about the provision of teachers in partner provider settings, but the time varied from one day a week, to weekly access to a teacher, to unspecified access. Two Local Authorities did not respond at all about employment of teachers, and three Local Authorities used a mixed model that was responsive to the numbers of children in a setting in any given year. One Local Authority provided a full-time GTCS-registered teacher in all of its nursery classes, but none in its family learning centres, which nevertheless benefited from SCQF Level 9 leadership. Finally one Local Authority has developed a model where access to a teacher is provided through promoted Primary School staff and a small peripatetic team, currently of four teachers. The numbers of teachers employed in Local Authorities across Scotland, as reported in the FOI request, matches the most recent figures reported in the Statistical Bulletin 2014.

There is no single policy on the employment of GTCS-registered teachers in Scotland and large numbers of children aged 3-5 currently have no access to a teacher. The picture continues to be a changing one - for example, one Local Authority has kept many of its nursery teachers, but has reduced their nursery class time to 4 days a week, with an expectation that the remaining day of their contract will be spent in Primary classes. Four Local Authorities have made some very modest increases to the number of teachers, having at a previous time reduced this complement dramatically. In many cases, promoted Primary School Heads are having to take on shared headship of a number of ELC settings.

Currently 17 of the 32 Local Authorities have maintained the status quo of recent years in employment of teachers, though only 12 of these have sustained regular employment of full-time teachers in every Local Authority setting. Some Local Authorities are retaining teachers by tweaking or radically changing ratio requirements; six are currently in a process of reviewing deployment of GTCS-registered teachers, as they anticipate reductions but state they are working out how to use reduced teams in the most effective ways possible. Some Local Authorities claim it is now difficult to recruit and retain teachers in ELC.

Asked about 'access to a teacher', 12 of the 32 Local Authorities did not provide an answer, though some mentioned this when asked about teacher employment. Some Local Authorities provide teachers to partner nurseries on a regular basis, but usually with a very low allocation of time. Some Local Authorities charge partner providers for peripatetic teacher time.

Only half of the Local Authorities in Scotland currently ensure equal access to a teacher for all 3-5 year olds in ELC settings. Therefore it is important to know how such access is distributed. Of the 32 Local Authorities, one provides access at establishment rather than at child level; 15 do not prioritise children for teacher access, 11 provide teacher access universally and in a targeted way; 3 assess and target children; 1 reports that all children benefit from a teacher but that pre-school year children are ‘the focus of the teacher’s planning and intervention’, and one Local Authority did not respond.

Sixteen of the Local Authorities gave some sort of role description for GTCS-registered teachers, but where full-time ELC based teachers hours were set at 35 hours per week, with 22.5 per week as child contact time. No Local Authority could provide precise details about peripatetic teacher time in any of its centres; although records are kept in some cases it was reported to be an unreasonable amount of extra work to collate this. In some cases, this data depended on individual teachers’ diaries and in others, services were flexible according to children’s attendance and need.

Role descriptions, where given, went into some detail, for example:

‘The teacher’s role is to support and advise on early learning and childcare in partnership with private providers, to raise attainment and quality of provision across Aberdeenshire. Participate and contribute to the collegiate work of the early years setting, focusing on the development of the CfE and continuous improvement.’

‘Their role in each setting is to work with children and this will depend on the needs of the children and nursery.’

‘The overall purpose of the peripatetic teaching support is to model high quality teaching input, observe and evaluate practice and improve curricular approaches. The peripatetic teacher has specific duties as follows:

- Facilitate focused learning experiences and opportunities for children
- Extend the skills of staff, eg planning
- Model new approaches to adult:child interaction
- Ensure consistency in the assessment of children’s progress
- Ensure the robustness and relevance of evidence used to underpin assessments
- Support the transition to primary school.’

‘Teachers lead learning and teaching across the playroom and work directly with all children.’

‘The teacher within each nursery works with the children showing best practice, supporting staff in planning and advising staff regarding the specific needs of children.’

‘The role of the teacher is to interact with children with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The role will also include engagement with planning for literacy and numeracy.’

‘The main role is to support the development of quality learning experiences - role model effective practice - support staff to deal effectively with children with additional needs - promote quality experiences for literacy, numeracy, health and well being. Provide specific support when requested with curriculum development/planning/assessment.’

‘The role of the teacher is to support with the implementation of the curriculum (early level) - with a focus on the core areas of learning, joint planning to meet the individual and collective needs of the children, role modeling for staff and to support transitions and in ensuring a continuum in learning.’

‘There is also an allocation given to primary 1 to support with the transition process and continuum across the early level.’

‘The teacher’s role is to work in direct contact with the children and to support and work with Early Years staff in planning and delivery of sessions.’

‘Teachers have a main job responsibility (role) as leaders of learning.’

Six out of 32 Local Authorities in Scotland had undertaken or were planning to undertake some evaluation of teacher access, but none said this would be linked to child outcomes. Two said that HMIE and Care Inspectorate results were helpful on evaluating the quality of services provided. Local Authorities seemed to focus on patterns of teacher input rather than on what teacher input achieved.

In the case of ‘teacher presence’ in partnership centres, this was mainly provided by Local authority peripatetic teacher teams, teachers in stand-alone nurseries or Quality Improvement staff. In a few cases, the contract between the Local Authority and partner providers determined that partner providers should ensure access to a teacher on a regular basis.

Finally, 18 Local Authorities employed home visiting teachers, not all of whom were early years specific. Many had a role in supporting families with a child with Additional Support for Learning Needs. In 14 Local Authorities there is no such service.

In conclusion, the employment of teachers in the early learning and childcare sector is changing. Not all Local Authorities employ GTCS-registered teachers in ELC.

- The concepts and practice of teacher access and teacher presence remain inconclusive.
- Children with Additional Support Needs are provided for in nearly half of the Local Authorities by Home Visiting Teachers.
- As Local Authorities continue to review the employment and deployment of GTCS-registered teachers, there is a need to know about the impact of teachers on child outcomes in the immediate and longer term.
- A growing demand is being placed on Primary Head Teachers and promoted Primary staff to meet 3-5 year old children’s entitlement to teacher presence.
- The amount of time peripatetic teachers spend in individual partner provider centres was not available.

Each of these points raises questions about equity for children. Drawing together the evidence from the Literature Review, the Desk-based work, the Survey of Teachers, the Focus Groups and the Freedom of Information request we summarise the Main Findings as follows:

1. Dedicated and specialist early childhood teachers provide added value when they are understood, respected and supported
2. The diversity of roles undertaken by the GTCS-registered nursery teacher includes, but goes well beyond traditional teaching roles
3. GTCS-registered teachers play a unique role as pedagogical leaders and ‘bridging professionals’ across the Early Level Curriculum for Excellence.

4. The commitment of the teaching profession to social justice, ethical encounters and combatting under-achievement brought about by social disadvantage, provide fundamental values for teaching graduates in Scotland.
5. Teachers themselves know they are a vital but undervalued resource, many such teachers experience a perceived lack of support in the roles they undertake
6. Robust evidence of the effectiveness of pre-school education and the actual impact of the highly qualified teacher within the sector has been hard to find in a Scottish context
7. In Scotland our aspiration is to have a workforce that is 'fit for purpose'. The agreed purpose must influence the composition of the early learning and childcare workforce.
8. Notions of teacher presence and teacher access are ill defined and inconsistent
9. Local authorities vary in their commitment to, and ways of, employing teachers
10. A growing demand is being placed on Primary Head Teachers and promoted Primary staff to meet 3-5 year old children's entitlement to teacher presence
11. Not all 3 and 4 year old children in funded Early Learning and Childcare settings currently have access to a teacher
12. A corollary of this is that not all Initial Teacher Education students do either: teacher training provides for the future - currently many students lack adequate placement ELC experience with specialist GTCS-teachers in the course of their training
13. The main route to specialism is through study for an early childhood specialist award at postgraduate level

6. Discussion of Key Questions

Questions were generated to provide a framework to interpret the data gathered about the contribution of teachers to the early learning and childcare workforce. Here we draw together our different sources of data to answer these key questions about GTCS-registered teachers working in and across early learning and childcare settings and early primary education in Scotland:

- Who are they?
- Where do GTCS-registered teachers fit in the overall staffing profile?
- Where are they employed?
- What roles are they currently fulfilling?
- What do these teachers do?
- How are they positioned to meet children’s entitlement to teacher access?
- In what ways are their contributions unique?
- How might this benefit children?
- How might their absence compromise children?

6.1 Who are they?

Data from the desk-based work, survey, focus groups and FOI combine to give a full picture of the nursery teaching workforce, despite gaps and anomalies in some forms of evidence. A consistent figure of 1,212 FTE equivalent GTCS teachers are currently employed in Scotland. The School and Childcare Census details are sometimes contradictory but the latest census figures from 2014 match exactly with the FOI returns.

6.2 Where do GTCS-registered teachers fit in the overall staffing profile?

Newly qualified GTCS-registered teachers are honours graduates at SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) Level 10. Lead practitioners registered with SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council) are qualified to, or working towards qualifications at SCQF level 9. Practitioners registered with SSSC are or are working towards qualifications at SCQF level 7 and above. Teachers and BACP (BA Childhood Practice) and BA Childhood Studies graduates are complemented by contributions from other relevant disciplines such as social work, the allied health professions and educational psychology.

Table showing where teachers fit in the ELC Workforce

Job Title	Level of full and relevant early years qualification	Current Registration	Role includes
Early Years Support Worker	Any qualification in the practitioner in day care of children services category, e.g. NC in Early Education and Childcare at SCQF Level 6 SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF Level 6	SSSC registration	Delegated responsibility for providing care and support to children.
Early Years	HNC Early	SSSC	Identify and meeting the care, support and

Job Title	Level of full and relevant early years qualification	Current Registration	Role includes
Practitioner	Education and Childcare (at SCQF level 7) SVQ Social Services Children and Young People (SCQF Level 7)	registration	learning needs of children and contribute to the development and quality assurance of informal learning activities and/or curriculum. They may also be responsible for the supervision of other workers.
Early Years Lead Practitioner	Graduate SCQF Level 9	SSSC registration	Leading practice across a setting, working directly with children and families, hold responsibilities for the overall development, management and quality assurance of service provision including the supervision of staff and the management of resources.
Early Years Teacher	Graduate SCQF Level 10 (BA Primary (hons); BEd Primary (hons); PGDE	GTCS registration	Providing overall pedagogical leadership for a setting, working directly with children and families, and supporting staff with different qualifications, sometimes in a peripatetic role or with responsibility for more than one setting.
Postgraduate Early Years Specialist	Graduate, Postgraduate SCQF Level 11	SSSC registration GTCS Registration both sustained, academic PG Award	There are 5 characteristics in SCQF descriptors, here we include the detail from the 'Autonomy, accountability & working with others strand': Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities. Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others. Take responsibility for a significant range of resources. Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development. Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities. Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

We asked Local Authorities about their policy and practice regarding the employment of GTCS-registered teachers in pre-school centres. What the Local Authorities told us via FOI request in a range of responses shows a lack of uniformity of experience for children. Children's access to a teacher varies by both the type of centre they attend and where they live, resulting in a postcode lottery.

The change in teacher employment in a 10-year period has resulted in these specialists becoming a rare resource, with deployment also changing as Local Authorities seek to maximise the skills of teachers in an increasingly 'spread' way.

6.3 Where are they employed?

The obligation to employ teachers in pre-school education in Scotland changed in 2002. Pre-school education provision in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 replaced the Schools (Scotland) Code 1956. This resulted in the shift in role and deployment over time, as highlighted in the previous section. It also means that:

- There is no common understanding of what 'access to a teacher' means or looks like in practice.

- Workforce strategy includes the introduction of higher-level qualifications for Managers and Lead Practitioners, plus additional training and qualifications for Play Workers and/or equivalent staff.
- 81% of early years teachers have worked in both nursery and primary.
- Survey respondents were highly trained:
 - 42% had an undergraduate education qualification
 - 38% had a postgraduate-level qualification
- For other staff within the nursery settings:
 - SVQ Level 3 was the highest known qualification of the largest proportion of FTE staff (34.4% of 886 responses)
 - 30% did not know staff members' training levels.

The training levels of nursery staff are often an unknown for primary school based staff, for example an experienced early childhood teacher working in primary school wrote: 'I am unsure of the training specifics for staffing within my school. Half the staff are new within [the] last two years.'

6.4 What roles are they currently fulfilling?

A number of different roles has been identified through the desk-based research, survey, focus groups and FOI request. Every child of 3 and 4 years old in Scotland is entitled to access to a teacher. Teachers are working right across the sector as full-time Head Teachers of nursery establishments, full-time nursery class teachers, part-time nursery class teachers, learning support teachers, nursery class teachers with a commitment to one or more days a week to work in early primary classes, home visiting teachers supporting children with an ASN, peripatetic teachers providing 'access to a teacher' or 'teacher presence' and supporting early years practitioners in a range of settings, advisory teachers, and transitions teachers.

Focus group participants expressed real joy in many of these roles when they had the chance to fulfill the role to their satisfaction. Time constraints, a commitment to 'too many' settings, divided responsibilities, and the often solitary nature of the role all took their toll.

The access to the particular talents and skills of the teacher may be compromised by lack of role clarity, teacher compliance with inappropriate demands on their time, budgetary issues, isolation, lack of support, lack of understanding of what an experienced trained teacher may offer, lack of investment in teacher skills, lack of understanding about the importance of relational agency, challenging relationships and status confusions

6.5 What do they do?

Evidence of the contribution of nursery teachers to early learning and childcare was gathered from the survey, the focus groups, a Freedom of Information request to all Local Authorities, and Scottish Government statistical Bulletins.

6.5.1 The Survey

The survey data, organised under four headings of: leadership of learning, modelling responsive teaching for other staff, challenging thinking and learning and sustaining high quality interaction draws from respondents listings of the characteristics of high quality

early learning experiences/settings and gives us evidence of the different contributions that teachers say they make in their teaching practice:

1) Leadership of learning:

- Applying knowledge of children's learning and development (79%)
- Observation and assessment (78%)
- Planning for learning (76%)
- Planning the resources and environment (72%)
- Responsive planning (67%)
- Communication with other sectors of education (64%)
- Collaborating beyond own profession (59%)

'Support and guidance in planning especially using CfE, guidance in personal learning planning, guidance in assessment for learning strategies, advice and guidance in additional support for learning.'

[Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for nursery, in that role for 0-5 years spends 0-25% of time working with children, where children receive 'Occasional input' from a GTCS teacher]

2) Modelling responsive teaching for other staff:

- Leading on curriculum (69%)
- Mentoring students and colleagues (62%)
- Providing leadership for colleagues (60%)

'Leading the nursery team. Devel[o]ping the team's understanding of the above. Holding train[i]ng sessions for nursery staff. More recently on what are we assessing and why? The importance of en[s]uring coverage of the curriculum rather than just what they prefer.'

[Nursery class teacher, in that role for 0-5 years, who spends 51-75% of time working with children, in a setting where children receive Regular GTCS teacher input.]

'I provide leadership in teaching and learning for a large staff team. I provide guidance which ensures that the quality of our practice is always being examined and evaluated.'

[Nursery teacher in a free-standing nursery school, spending 51-75% of time working with children, working in that role for 6-10 years, in a setting where children receive Peripatetic teacher input, Location unknown].

3) Challenging thinking and learning:

- Provision of appropriate play/learning opportunities & experiences (73%)
- Outdoor opportunities (71%)
- Fostering creativity (66%)
- Supporting children's working theories (51%)

'Nursery Education is a unique specialism which can only be learned and understood by practitioners who have a depth of understanding and experience of child centred learning and play. Observing children and skilfully challenging and extending their learning is something that cannot be taught but has to be learned through experience, knowledge and passion.'

(Nursery Teacher with 17 years experience as a Nursery Nurse before qualifying as a teacher)

4) Sustaining high quality interaction and supporting transitions:

- Supporting wellbeing (75%)
- Planning for children's transitions (74%)
- Interaction with families (73%)
- Seeing the child as part of family and community (71%)
- Ensuring quality adult-child interaction (71%)

'Parent workshops and information sessions to support parents and carers in all aspects of their child's learning and development. (...) Skills to support children with specific needs and abilities. Support children to form positive relationships and respect one another.'

[Nursery class teacher, aged 35-44 years old, spending 76-100% of time working with children, working in that role for 0-5 years, in a setting where children receive Regular teacher input across the Local Authority].

6.5.2 Focus Groups

Teachers in focus groups described the specialist contribution of the nursery teacher to early learning and childcare under the following themes:

- Knowledge and delivery of the curriculum and understanding its intentions and pedagogy
- Leadership and vision
- Specialist training and qualifications (and whose benefit these are for)
- Working with parents and in the community with a particular emphasis on deprivation
- Progressing learning through skills in the cycle of Observation, Assessment, Planning, Recording and Reporting
- Supporting transitions, into nursery and out of nursery in to primary school
- The nursery teacher as a mentor and trainer of others

One nursery teacher described the role and its limitations as follows: *"Nursery teachers should be interacting with children in their learning, challenging their learning and enjoying being part of this inspiring moment in children's lives. They should also be guiding the nursery team in taking learning forward, but due to the cuts in time we have together as a team this can be as brief as 15 minutes in a day."*

6.5.3 Local Authorities

We asked Local Authorities what GTCS-registered teachers are doing in their pre-school centres. 16 out of 32 Local Authorities could not tell us what teachers are doing. No Local Authority could provide precise details about peripatetic teacher time in any of its centres. Though records are kept in some cases it was reported to be an unreasonable amount of extra work to collate this. The 16 Local authorities that could provide a description of the role of the teacher within pre-school centres, identified the teacher as:

- showing best practice.
- supporting staff planning.
- advising staff regarding the specific needs of children.
- facilitating focused learning experiences and opportunities for children.

- modeling new approaches to adult-child interaction.
- ensuring consistency in the assessment of children’s progress.
- ensuring the robustness and relevance of evidence used to underpin assessments.
- supporting transition to primary school.
- interacting with children with a focus on literacy and numeracy.
- supporting the development of quality learning experiences.
- supporting staff to deal effectively with children with additional needs.
- promoting quality experiences for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing.

6.5.4 Scottish Government Statistical Data

Scottish Government annual census data on what teachers do uses a number of criteria (see table below) to describe the tasks teachers undertake in ELCC. The table is drawn from the Statistical Bulletin (2014) and is detailed in the Desk Based Report Supplement for this audit, but no explanation as to the source of these criteria is available. There is no understanding of how the Scottish Government data is collected and how representative it is of the teachers’ actual role.

	2008 ⁽²⁾	2009 ⁽²⁾	2010 ⁽²⁾	2011 ⁽³⁾	2012 ⁽³⁾	2013 ⁽³⁾	2014 ⁽³⁾
Model effective practice ⁽⁴⁾	63	54	89	92	87	92	83
Curriculum development and implementation ⁽⁴⁾	63	55	91	94	90	94	85
Use assessment information to plan learning ⁽⁴⁾	62	53	81	86	80	82	77
Identify children with ASNs and plan learning ⁽⁴⁾	58	51	78	82	77	80	75
Work directly with children with ASNs ⁽⁴⁾	53	48	74	75	72	74	67
Input on management and leadership ⁽⁴⁾	54	48	73	77	71	79	71
Staff development and training ⁽⁴⁾	53	47	76	80	77	82	75
Support children’s transitions ⁽⁴⁾	62	54	83	86	82	85	78

6.5.5 Discussion

The results from our data sources were collated to understand further the contribution of the GTCS-registered teacher in ELCC.

What nursery teachers say they contribute in their teaching practice (survey data)	Examples (% of survey respondents who say that nursery teachers make this contribution in their practice)	What nursery teachers say is their unique specialist contribution (focus group data) (main themes priority ranking, 1=most important contribution, 7=least important contribution)	What Local Authorities say is the role of the GTCS-registered nursery teacher (from FOI data)	What Scottish Government census statistics say that nursery teachers do (from census data) (% of pre-school providers with teachers whose teachers perform certain tasks, 2014)
Leadership of learning	<p>Applying knowledge of children's learning and development (79%)</p> <p>Observation and assessment (78%)</p> <p>Planning for learning (76%)</p> <p>Planning the resources and environment (72%)</p> <p>Responsive planning (67%)</p> <p>Communication with other sectors of education (64%)</p> <p>Collaborating beyond your own profession (59%)</p>	<p>Knowledge and delivery of the curriculum and understanding its intentions and pedagogy (1)</p> <p>Leadership and vision (2)</p> <p>Progressing learning through skills in the cycle of Observation, Assessment, Planning, Recording and Reporting (5)</p>	<p>Teachers have a main job responsibility (role) as leaders of learning</p> <p>Facilitating focused learning experiences and opportunities for children</p> <p>Ensuring consistency in the assessment of children's progress</p> <p>Ensuring the robustness and relevance of evidence used to underpin assessments</p> <p>Supporting the development of quality learning experiences</p> <p>Supporting staff to deal effectively with children with addition needs</p>	<p>Curriculum development and implementation (85%)</p> <p>Use assessment information to plan learning for individual children (77%)</p> <p>Identify children with ASNs and plan their learning (75%)</p> <p>Input on management and leadership (71%)</p>
Modelling responsive teaching for other staff	<p>Leading on curriculum (69%)</p> <p>Mentoring students and colleagues (62%)</p> <p>Providing leadership for colleagues (60%)</p>	<p>Leadership and vision (2)</p> <p>Specialist training and qualifications and whose benefit these are for (3)</p> <p>The nursery teacher as a mentor and trainer of others (7)</p>	<p>Showing best practice</p> <p>Supporting staff planning</p> <p>Advising staff regarding the specific needs of children</p> <p>Extend the skills of staff, eg. Planning</p> <p>Model new approaches to adult-child interaction</p>	<p>Curriculum development and implementation (85%)</p> <p>Staff development and training (75%)</p>
Challenging thinking and learning	<p>Provision of appropriate play/learning opportunities and experiences (73%)</p> <p>Outdoor opportunities (71%)</p> <p>Fostering creativity (66%)</p> <p>Supporting children's</p>		<p>Promoting quality experiences for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Model effective practice when working with children to support their learning (83%)</p> <p>Work directly with children with ASNs (67%)</p>

What nursery teachers say they contribute in their teaching practice (survey data)	Examples (% of survey respondents who say that nursery teachers make this contribution in their practice)	What nursery teachers say is their unique specialist contribution (focus group data) (main themes priority ranking, 1=most important contribution, 7=least important contribution)	What Local Authorities say is the role of the GTCS-registered nursery teacher (from FOI data)	What Scottish Government census statistics say that nursery teachers do (from census data) (% of pre-school providers with teachers whose teachers perform certain tasks, 2014)
	working theories (51%)			
Sustaining high quality interaction and supporting transitions for child, family and community well being	<p>Interaction with families (71%)</p> <p>Seeing the child as part of family and community (71%)</p> <p>Ensuring quality adult-child interaction (71%)</p> <p>Planning for children's transitions (74%)</p> <p>Supporting wellbeing (75%)</p>	<p>Working with parents and in the community with a particular emphasis on deprivation (4)</p> <p>Supporting transitions into nursery and out of it in to primary school (6)</p>	<p>Modelling new approaches to adult-child interaction</p> <p>Supporting transition to primary school</p>	Supporting children's transitions (78%)

Nursery teachers are found to make a contribution to ELCC across four categories: Leadership of learning; Modelling responsive teaching for other staff; Challenging thinking and learning; and Sustaining high quality interaction and supporting transitions for child, family and community wellbeing. Within this contribution there are many aspects that are unique to the role of the GTCS-registered teacher. The specialist training and qualifications undertaken by GTCS-registered teachers places them in a unique position to support children within the school, their families and the community as they transition from home to nursery and from nursery to school. These transitions are made at a crucial stage of development and a seamless, supportive environment facilitated by specially trained staff can provide a solid foundation for the child's continued learning journey. The GTCS-registered teacher is trained across the 3-18 curriculum and this knowledge and experience of primary school, added to their understanding of child development in the earliest years of life prior to nursery school, allows them to guide and support children across the Early Level.

Nursery teachers are responsible for development and implementation of the curriculum, promoting quality experiences for children and mentoring and training other staff. They are respected and understood by parents, members of the community and other professionals because of the status afforded by their training. This allows them to lead learning, model effective practice and new approaches, and extend the skills of other staff. These responsibilities extend to the mentoring of students on placement who will provide the next generation of nursery teachers.

6.6 How are they positioned to meet children's entitlement to access?

The Local Authorities provided a range of responses to how they provide access to a teacher, showing lack of uniformity of experience for children. Children's access to a teacher varies by both the type of centre they attend and where they live. The following

responses were given by Local Authorities when asked how they provide “access to a teacher”:

- Teacher in every nursery class
- Teachers employed in every LA setting and access to a teacher in Partner Provider settings
- Peripatetic teacher support to LA and Partner centres
- LA settings have access to a teacher
- All children aged 3-5 have access to a teacher
- Principal Teachers Pre-School Education work across a cluster of settings
- Teacher in classes above a certain role (no. of children)
- No specific policy on the employment of GTCS-registered teachers in pre-school

The big message that stands out from the desk-based work, survey and focus groups is the ambiguity surrounding the notion of ‘Access to a teacher’. What does this mean? And how does it look in practice? This tension means that many teachers feel vulnerable about their current employment, particularly since they are aware that in Council budget cuts their role may not be seen as a high priority compared to obligations for teacher employment in Primary and Secondary sectors, and consequently are not strongly positioned to meet children’s entitlement to access to a teacher. This is what we know:

- There is currently no minimum threshold setting for teacher input in pre-school centres by the Scottish Government
- Decisions about teacher input time and their role within pre-school centres is devolved to Local Authorities
- Each individual Local Authority has their own interpretation of what ‘access to a teacher’ means and what this looks like in practice
- Local Authorities operate different guidelines and charging structure for the deployment of teachers to partner provider centres, resulting in some partner providers choosing to have no teacher support
- None of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland have to date carried out an evaluation of the impact of teacher access/lack of teacher access on child outcomes.

(FOI data)

Survey respondents reported on ‘regular input’ saying:

- 82% (of 1,404) respondents reported that children receive Regular input from a GTCS-registered teacher
- 9% of children receive Peripatetic GTCS teacher input
- 6% receive Occasional input from a GTCS-registered teacher
- 3% (51 respondents) wrote that nursery children currently receive No GTCS teacher input in their setting/area

However, respondents’ definitions of ‘Regular teacher input’ differed across Scotland. In some councils, two half-day sessions with GTCS teacher contact per week is considered ‘Regular input.’ In another nursery, it is expected that two qualified GTCS-registered teachers and two early years officers be present in every session with the children, although they are currently lacking one teacher. Some local authorities are moving to a

model wherein peripatetic nursery teachers will no longer teach, but instead provide guidance on planning to other early years professionals.

‘Staff were recently informed that due to changes in budget, from next year there would be no permanent member of teaching staff in the nursery. Nursery teachers will move between a linked cluster of nurseries every six weeks. They will be responsible for planning but not delivery of preschool education.’

‘[From 2016-17] Pupils will only have access to a teacher 0.5 days a week.’

Government statistics also show that:

- 13.6% of ELC centres currently have no access to a teacher
- 14.1% of pre-school children currently have access to a teacher under a non-regular/ad-hoc arrangement and 60.3% have access under a regular arrangement
- 25.7% of pre-school children currently have no access to a teacher
- 50% of local authorities stated that pre-school children in their authority do not have equal access to a teacher
- 50% of local authorities stated that there is no minimum standard for teacher time in pre-school centres and/or contact time with children in their authorities

(Scottish Government Statistical Bulletins and FOI data)

6.7 In what ways is their contribution unique?

Theming of focus group data resulted in seven areas of work teachers recognise in their role and together make for a different contribution, related to their initial and specialist education as teachers: knowledge and delivery of the curriculum; understanding its intentions and pedagogy, leadership and vision, specialist training and qualifications, working with parents and in the community with a particular emphasis on deprivation, progressing learning through skills in the cycle of observation, assessment, planning, recording and reporting, supporting transitions into nursery and primary school and mentoring and training of others. This work may also be undertaken by other early years practitioners, but the evidence shows that the extended professional who builds on their initial teacher education background provides each of these contributions at a high level: this is part of the different profile of the teacher.

‘Knowledge and skills make the teacher a hub of learning for children, parents, colleagues, staff working with older children, students and the community.’

‘The nursery teacher leads all aspects of the nursery provision; encompassing staff, the environment and pedagogy. Without specialist nursery teachers succession planning and managing the quality of early level provision is compromised.’

‘High level qualification [of nursery teacher] plus theory-based specialist knowledge results in high level outcomes for children. [The nursery teacher] is able to develop and deliver effective transition programmes because of her knowledge of primary education.’

(Focus Group data)

'The skilled specialist [nursery teacher] works in partnership with parents, valuing their role as the child's first educators and as those who know them best, and builds on prior learning at home.'

'[The nursery teacher] has a sound knowledge of child development and play-based pedagogy and understands and implements the connectedness between theory, policy and practice.'

'[The nursery teacher] is able to scaffold children's learning and is aided by their knowledge of the learning journey from 3-18.'

(Focus Group data)

Leading on a Curriculum for Excellence:

'Using my knowledge of where children need to be for primary 1, I can plan, support and implement learning experiences which enable children to further their learning and support their transition to p1 and get them ready for some activities they might be expected to do. I support literacy and numeracy which with my primary training, allows me to look at the [experiences] and [outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence] and not just take them at face value. I understand the need for quality literacy and numeracy experiences and it is not just about tokenism. This allows me to support and guide early years officers with their planning, looking closely at progression and also challenging children whilst supporting others.'

(Survey data)

Leading/mentoring the nursery team:

'Planning and preparation key to nursery and classroom management and delivery of experiences, often this must be modelled to other staff members. Resourcing your activities to maximise learning and teaching. (...) Well presented learning environment showcasing...examples of learning. (...) Ensure ch[ildre]n are aware of and follow rules and boundaries to ensure a positive and safe environment in which to learn.'

(Survey data)

Working with families and the community:

'Parents and families...are greatly affected by our services and the nursery has a very high rating within the community and is well known to provide an outstanding service. This helps support the parents and families through challenging times in their lives and contributes to the support network for them.'

(Survey data)

Identifying and providing for children with additional support for learning needs:

'We have a large number of children with additional support needs, some of whom we have been the first to identify. If this is the case I am always involved in the initial assessment.'

'Requesting assistance and liaison with support agencies, having the confidence to contribute to multi-agency meetings.'

(Survey data)

Supporting the transition to primary:

'Staff who are fully aware of children as individuals and families as having unique skills, needs and anxieties can make the transition smooth. Being willing to be flexible and see the situation f[ro]m the children['s] and families['] point of view can make all the difference.'

(Survey data)

One GTCS-registered nursery class teacher wrote:

'There is no doubt in my mind that teachers are essential in nursery. Not only teachers but management must have a large input in nursery. It is about teaching and learning but also leading a team. The responsibility staff have in nursery is huge; a class teacher ha[s] much less day to day responsibility. Parents are involved on a daily basis, there are many rules and regulations that do not even apply to schools. A course in leading a team would also be of benefit.'

(Survey data)

Another GTCS-registered teacher commented on the complexity of the nursery teacher's job role:

'The current degree level of teacher training does not provide adequate training for a teacher to provide quality leadership and knowledge in the nursery setting. Being a nursery teacher also requires a good deal of management skills, even though we are not considered part of the management team. It is most definitely a specialist role, with quite a unique job description and set of responsibilities.'

(Survey data)

This lack of understanding of the role of a nursery teacher is a theme that may relate in part to the lower levels of respect from primary teachers and management that is perceived by some practitioners working in nursery.

6.8 How might this benefit children?

The desk-based research, FOI and focus group data brings together a huge body of evidence about the quality and value GTCS-registered teachers provide for the early education experiences of Scotland's children. However, we conclude that they form part of a diminishing workforce and Scottish education policy has led to a postcode lottery for quality of experience for Scotland's youngest children that must be addressed.

Focus group participants told us about the ways in which teachers are able to meet the individual needs of every child:

'Teachers have a good knowledge of child development and how to meet the needs of individual children.'

'Teachers recognise the unique value of early years in a child's learning journey.'

'Personal and professional beliefs and values underpin practice and provide confidence to stand up for the best quality of experience for all children.'

'The specialist teacher recognises the importance of early intervention and can recognise individual needs, and support and challenge each child, including and

especially ASN's, complex needs, special care, looked-after children, cases of child protection.'

(Focus Group data)

They also told us about how specialist teachers support children as they transition from home to nursery and nursery to school:

'A teacher can understand and provide for the importance of uninterrupted progression of the learning journey, including transitions into primary school.'

'The specialist teacher has a depth of curriculum knowledge...a curriculum and pedagogy specialist who can scaffold children's learning and who has a knowledge of different sectors from 3-18.'

'[The nursery teacher] fosters strong transition programmes between home and nursery, and nursery and school.'

(Focus Group data)

The benefits of the nursery teacher contribution may be summarised as follows:

- GTCS-registered teachers are highly trained and well qualified to support children in nursery settings and primary school, and during the transition between the two
- They make unique contributions to high quality early education and care and report taking on many additional responsibilities
- GTCS-registered teachers provide a unique bridging role between home, nursery and school
- GTCS-registered teachers provide leadership and vision
- GTCS-registered teachers work with parents and the community and address deprivation issues
- GTCS-registered teachers provide a hub of learning for children, parents, staff, students and the wider community
- GTCS-registered teachers are uniquely placed to develop the Early Level Curriculum to properly span pre-school and early schooling to children's advantage

6.9 How might the absence of teachers compromise children?

Despite Scottish Government policy regarding access to a teacher, due to budgetary constraints in many LAs the nursery teacher role is currently changing or under threat of removal. The development of new roles for teachers in ELC has supported expansion of services and in a number of Local Authorities has played an important part in the initial education, continuing professional development, leadership and mentoring of colleagues.

The absence of teachers would mean that the many qualities of teachers that are evidenced in this report, the roles they take on, their professionalism and capacity to relate to the school years, their understanding of the interplay of learning and development and their expertise in leading learning and curriculum would be lost to children and families at a critical stage of life. Teachers are essential to the shared enterprise to give every child in Scotland the best start in life.

6.10 Summary

The analysis of the data gathered draws together a unique evidence base on the current contributions of the GTCS-registered teacher in early learning and childcare services in Scotland. Just one professional group in the variety of the Children's Workforce in Scotland, they have the education, knowledge, understanding, values and skills to make a difference for children, families, colleagues and services. In identifying what it is teachers in particular bring to national priorities, we hope to open up a new discussion on how the early learning and childcare workforce might best be composed.

At no point did this study set out to undermine the contributions of other practitioners in this diverse workforce. Rather, we intended to show that without teachers, the workforce as a whole is less able to fulfill its essential functions. Arguments have been made elsewhere that teachers can only make a good contribution if they are the best of teachers. This raises two important and related points.

Firstly, Scotland's Early Years Framework (2008) explicitly stated that we needed a workforce 'fit for purpose': in the discussion that follows we will explore this concept and assert that it is the entire early childhood workforce that should be not only 'fit for purpose' but of the highest possible quality. Secondly, by 'best' it is implied that teachers employed in early childhood should be specialist. By the very nature of initial teacher education, the GTCS-registered nursery and primary teacher in Scotland is a generalist. It can be argued that additional study is needed to become an acknowledged specialist. It can also be argued that the elements of Scottish initial teacher education that relate to younger children could be strengthened. It is increasingly difficult to find a sufficient number of settings where the staffing includes a qualified teacher: this makes for a real difficulty in training the teaching student appropriately for a future role as a nursery teacher. This in turn means newly qualified teachers cannot undertake their probationary year in preschool settings. Further, in some university Schools of Education, student choices of placement for their final years, and particularly for the extended placement in Year 4, often have to be made before that student has experienced preschool education in the first place. Such circumstances reduce the likelihood of students being nurtured or encouraged to make a positive choice to work in early learning and childcare.

The expansion of the Early Learning and Childcare hours to 1140 per annum by 2020 will see the demand for staff grow significantly. Many of the staff recruited will be early childhood practitioners. The contributions of teachers identified in this report will be needed to assure high quality provision and to meet children's entitlement to appropriate early learning opportunities in tandem with differently qualified staff. Models of staffing across the Early Level curriculum will need to take full account of these extended hours and what they mean for children's experiences.

We would suggest that the discussion of teacher specialism in the early years should be revisited, and that GTCS should collaborate with Schools of Education to strengthen the early years component of teacher education, recruit positively for new postgraduate routes and address issues of teacher placement and the probationary year. The models of teacher role should be expanded to reflect the new contributions some teachers are already making and Local Authorities and other employers should develop robust support systems in the light of the reported evidence that too solitary a role leads to a dip in commitment and confidence, which was anticipated in the 2009 Scottish Government Guidance on teacher deployment. Further the evidence of using pre-school teachers to cover for staff absence or temporary shortage in primary school, indicates misunderstandings about the importance of the early years specialist in relation to outcomes for children and creates inequalities.

In this section we have discussed the nature of the teaching workforce in early childhood, their fit within the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce, their employment and deployment and the many and varied roles they are currently fulfilling. There is a bank of evidence of what teachers working in the ELC sector actually do, how their activities add value and how the reduction in their numbers means too many children do not have access to their skills and knowledge. We have illustrated from the full data set contained in our Supplementary Reports the unique contributions teacher believe they make.

The evidence shows the commitment that teachers working in Early Learning and Childcare make to children, to families and to colleagues. They are key agents in ensuring quality and development in this sector.

7. Conclusions: Towards sustaining the ambition

Research shows that high quality pre-school education is directly linked to substantial long-term social, educational and economic benefits. The greatest benefits only occur when teachers are professionally prepared, respected and supported in their work

There are cultural, economic and educational differences as to the expectations and preparation of teachers for early childhood across nations. In the 1990s when Scotland was embarking on definition of 5-14 curriculum, Local Authorities in Scotland began to produce curriculum guidelines variously for children 0-5, 3-5 and 3-8, and for the first time a nursery place was to be offered to every pre-school child. Pascal and Bertram (1993, p.27) identified trends across Europe that showed a clear commitment to ‘enhance, lengthen and upgrade the training of teachers of young children.’ At that time the quality of teacher education was understood to be core to providing a quality early educational experience for young children, which in itself was increasingly a priority for governments. Then, they connected the quality of provision with the training and support of their teachers who should be highly skilled, articulate and properly paid. This link is mirrored in America:

‘New research indicates that young children’s learning and development depend on the educational qualifications of their teachers. The most effective preschool teachers have at least a four-year college degree and specialized training in early childhood. Despite a substantial body of evidence, public policy has yet to fully recognize the value of well-educated, professional, early education teachers.’
(Barnett, 2004, p. 1)

Barnett writes here, not only of teachers as understood here in Scotland, but of the early childhood workforce generally, advocating the highest qualifications possible - he advocates a full time 4 year honours degree and specialised early childhood training as a minimum requirement. In Scotland we need to reflect on the level of degree and the added specialism, so we ensure that teachers and non-teachers alike are properly prepared to be educationally effective for the youngest learners. Barnett reports that in 2004 nearly 90% of staff in publicly funded preschool settings had 4-year degrees and added specialisms, in Scotland we would have to return to 2002 and the period before the rescinding of the School Scotland Code 56, to find equivalent figures. At that time Scottish Local Authorities were investing in specialist postgraduate qualifications in infant and nursery teaching for GTCS-registered teachers with 4-year honours degrees. What was lacking here in Scotland then, and is still lacking now, is research-based enquiry into the added benefits of such specialisms.

These basic requirements of high quality experience apply equally to care and education and much of the literature asserts that neither should be reduced in favour of the other. Economic, psychological and health evidence tells us that cognitive and emotional growth go hand in hand (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; Shonkoff & Philips, 2010; Heckman, 2011 & 2012). It is therefore essential that professionals in early learning and childcare bring their different strengths together to work effectively in positive communities of practice that benefit children and families.

In Scotland at school entry and thereafter children will be taught by a 100% qualified teaching workforce, but children in pre-school education, or as it is now called, ‘early learning and childcare’ provision, will not. We have children up to 5 years and 5 months without access to a teacher and children who enter school at 4 years 7 months (because of when their birthday falls), who have such a highly qualified person full-time. Our FOI request shows that these inequities pertain across Scotland and clash with the policy

rhetoric of the 'best place to grow up'. Early entry to school can therefore be argued to bring benefit to children in terms of the level of qualification, in that the Early Level curriculum 3-6 promotes active learning and developmentally appropriate practices, but teachers are often generalists and lack a fully appropriate early childhood specialism 3-8 or 0-8, which it could be argued would ensure the highest quality of school start. These facts do not stack up to arguments for earlier school entry, rather for a proper approach to the concepts of teacher presence and access to a teacher that are so loosely applied. Why, if such qualifications are needed to teach four and a half year olds to five and a half year olds in primary school, are they considered dispensable in early learning and childcare settings?

As we consider the role of GTCS-registered teachers in the Scottish Early Learning and Child Care Workforce we need to weigh issues such as recruitment, retention, turnover and educational and care effectiveness, for all practitioners: the balance between educational and care effectiveness and the effects of under-valuing and under-paying staff is a delicate one that the current Workforce Review is considering.

Until contribution, role and status is defined for the different contributors to the Scottish early learning and childcare workforce, Scotland is unlikely to see the large educational gains desired for the children and families we know to be living in what is defined as 'absolute poverty' (Scottish Government, 2014b): the disadvantage brought about by poverty is exactly what the Scottish Government wishes to combat. Evidence tells us that disadvantaged children are likely to benefit most from highly qualified staff, but still we do not know whether they have access to such teachers for the amount of time to make a difference, as 'teacher presence' and 'teacher access' remain ill-defined. Teaching quality alone cannot make the difference; home learning environment and the quality of activities and interactions with adults (Dunlop et al., 2008) are also powerful pedagogies.

As studies to date are considered, 'Some limitations could lead to overestimates of the importance of teacher qualifications, others to underestimates. Examining the strongest studies and comparing their results to those of randomized trials of high-quality preschool education, this reviewer (Barnett, 2004) concludes that underestimation is the most common result.'

'The best place in the world to grow up' means investing in children. One pathway for such investment is by supporting children and families appropriately and well in the earliest years of every child's life. Dunlop has written that 'In Scotland we now need a new quality debate to 'shift the curve' in children's outcomes to more lasting change' (Dunlop, 2015, p. 270).

Scottish policy and support documents for practitioners at least imply the kinds of staff competences that appear to make a difference for children. What is lacking in Scotland is robust evidence from practice-based research that seeks to find out what difference improved qualifications have, not only on the experiences provided for children, but on the outcomes of that experience for children. The desired benefits of childhood experience include increased wellbeing, a strong sense of one's own identity, self-regulation and the capacity for intersubjective relationships with others, a strong sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and knowledge.

'Three reports have attempted to consider this relationship (HMle 2007b; Education Scotland 2012; Davis, Bell, and Pearce 2014) and each makes clear the ways in which staff practices have benefited, environments for learning have changed, and "qualifications have enabled a new professional grouping to emerge in early years, childcare and related services that work to improve outcomes for children between birth and 16 years of age" (Davis, Bell, and Pearce 2014, 6) - but child data itself is absent.'

(Dunlop, 2015, p. 270)

Limitations in the evidence that could make a link between workforce qualifications and children's outcomes lead to limitations in decision making: the connection between staff qualifications and children's outcomes deserves robust investigation and must now be established through a strong research and evidence base looking at the contributions of differently qualified staff, so that children in Scotland are the long-term beneficiaries of the enterprise of early learning, childcare and the early years of school education.

The reduction of GTCS-registered teachers in early childhood settings will gradually erode the contributions they have highlighted, in particular the significant contribution they make to:

- Leadership, mentoring, modelling & support
- Fostering children's experience and development through engaged and knowledgeable learning and teaching approaches
- Innovation
- A unique bridging role (in the Focus Groups a strong emphasis was placed on transitions & in survey 88% believed transitions are very important (n=568))
- The nature and quality of learning and teaching interactions
- Depth of interpretation and implementation of CfE
- Confident advocacy for nursery education as part of the CfE 3-18 curriculum
- Formal and informal contributions as leaders and managers
- Supporting the development of differently qualified colleagues
- Playing a lead role in many of the courses for HNC, BACP, EYP, BEd & BA programmes for ITE and PGDE

A body of evidence is growing internationally: Oberhuemer (2015a & b) considers professional profiles in early childhood education and care, and the continuity and change that is happening across Europe. She considers two studies undertaken across Europe to look at the core practitioners - teachers, practitioners (educators) and pedagogues - and their qualification requirements and professional profiles. In the first study these three were defined as follows (p. 196):

- *teachers* with a primary school education focus combined with some pre-primary preparation,
- *early childhood practitioners (educators)* qualified for work in pre-primary education during the two or three years preceding compulsory schooling, and
- *social network experts (pedagogues)* who work outside the education system and with a broader and more inter-professional approach to education, care, family, social and community work.

In a later study encompassing central and Eastern European countries, she expands these three categories to six: early childhood professionals, pre-primary professionals, pre-primary and primary school professionals, social pedagogy professionals, infant-toddler professionals and health/care professionals. Across Europe, as in Scotland, any generic term hides the range of co-existing professional profiles rooted in different disciplines. In Germany, for example, the new bachelor degree courses started out focusing on early childhood but have been largely replaced by newer courses focusing on the years of childhood 0-12 or 0-14: a model that can be recognised in Scotland too.

In Scotland, statistics show an SSSC registered workforce of 30,841, of which fewer than 1% are registered currently as lead practitioners (a category that requires a degree or Level 9 and a leadership qualification). In its 2014 report (SSSC, 2014) it is stated that 1200 people have the BACP award. At the same time GTCS pre-primary and primary teachers recorded in Scottish Government's 2014 Statistical Bulletin as working in early learning and childcare also number about 1200. Both these groups form a vital resource for Scotland's children.

'Both general education and specific preparation in early childhood education have been found to predict teaching quality. Better-educated teachers have more positive, sensitive and responsive interactions with children, provide richer language and cognitive experiences, and are less authoritarian, punitive and detached. The result is better social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development for the child' (based on numerous pre-2002 studies cited in Barnett, 2004, p. 4).

The quality of provision for young children

The number of settings providing early learning and childcare in Scotland is reported in annual Statistical Bulletins and formed part of the desk-based research. Recent years have brought major changes in early childhood provision. Every child in Scotland is entitled to two years of funded part-time pre-school experience. There is an ambitious agenda to increase those hours and to extend the offer to eligible two year olds. Services are led by local authorities but in partnership with a range of other providers including private, voluntary, community and childminding services. The Care Inspectorate currently places a particular emphasis on the 'care and support' standard, while HMle inspection findings continue to find the highest quality of educational provision most often within local authorities' own services, with standards improving across many settings.

Within the introduction of the Early Level Curriculum 3-6, pre-school and early primary education has become a stage in its own right. Research had shown that Local Authority provision in nursery schools (state funded schools providing nursery education for 3-4 year olds), nursery classes attached to primary schools, and integrated care and education settings provided the highest overall quality of early years settings, according to sources such as the EPPE study (Sylva et al., 2004). This was supported by inspection findings when HMle (2007b) published their report on the key role of staff in providing quality in preschool education, making it clear that there is a connection between well-qualified, reflective professionals and the high quality experiences for children.

It was noted in HMle (2012b)'s *Making the Difference* report that 'This effective practice was due in some cases to the ability to access a pre-school teacher particularly with a background in early years methodology and in others due to the increasing impact of higher qualifications for staff who achieved additional qualifications such as the BA in Childhood Practice' (p. 1).

Trends in inspection findings (HMle, 2012b) found that leadership of learning, increasing staff skills in working responsively with young children, challenging thinking and learning and sustaining high quality interaction are essential ingredients of high quality early years provision. These elements of early childhood preschool and early primary education form part of the specialist programmes offered to GTCS-registered teachers at postgraduate level cited in Siraj & Kingston's Independent Review of the Workforce (2015).

Aspects for improvement which illustrate the need for pedagogical leadership were highlighted in HMle (2012a)'s trends in inspection findings:

- More effective use of observation and assessment information is needed to plan for children's progress in learning experiences. Staff also need to develop children's individual profiles to show more depth and personalisation for children.

- Staff need training and support in order to improve their understanding of and engagement with self-evaluation. This will ensure a higher emphasis is placed on evaluating the quality of learning, teaching and children's progress.
- Continued development of the curriculum is needed, especially to improve the balance between planned learning and responding to children's interests.
- Improved staff qualifications now need to show impact through improvements on experiences for children.

The impact of staff training is also covered in HMle/Education Scotland's publication *Making the Difference* (2012b).

Policy indicates the kinds of competences staff may need in order to make a difference for children in the Common Core (Scottish Government, 2012), the National Care Standards (Scottish Government, 2009), SSSC's standards for registration (Revised, 2015), and the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (2012 & 2013) standards for registration define their standards for practice and cover some common ground. The cited evidence of how these standards and competencies, and associated improved qualifications, skills and competences of staff translate into having an impact on children's outcomes is practice-based, but refers to inspection criteria.

In discussing the aspirations of Scottish policy for the early years, we find that for a successful Scotland it simply does not make sense that numbers of children in Scotland currently do not have access to a teacher at all stages of their learning and development journey. EPPSE found that high quality and effective pre-schools 'viewed academic and social development as equally important but maintained a strong educational focus, especially where a higher proportion of trained teachers working alongside less well qualified staff. There was no tendency for centres that were more effective in promoting children's intellectual development to be less effective at promoting social-behavioural development (or vice versa). In other words the most effective centres promoted both.' (EPPSE: Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons & Siraj, 2015, p. 20).

Writing about 'relational agency', Edwards (2007, 2011) provides a key to effecting knowledge in practice: she writes of practitioners sharing their knowledge with others and through effective interaction people with different expertise distributing their knowledge, sharing and trusting the expertise of others, and valuing the emerging 'common knowledge' that helps in turn to solve problems of practice. The ensuing collaboration comes about by each practitioner adjusting their practice to reflect others' strengths and needs, as well as their own. In this way networks of expertise are built up. In pre-school settings there is a long history of people holding different qualifications and of bringing together two disciplines - care and education to provide children and families within a network of expertise.

This report, *'Sustaining the Ambition': The contribution of GTCS-registered teachers as part of the early learning and childcare workforce in Scotland*, brings together evidence from the literature, the desk-based research, the audit questionnaire, the focus groups and the FOI requests that each contribute to this study, to tell us that in Scotland we need to keep our valuable mix of expertise, we need to remunerate all staff appropriately and we need to ensure that all Scotland's children have a clearly defined, and at the very least sufficient, access to the expertise of the highly qualified GTCS-registered teacher.

The core message from this audit is that although their roles are fluctuating, changing and sometimes not well understood by others, specialist GTCS-registered nursery teachers are an essential part of leadership in the ELC workforce. Their message is that they are a core

part of giving children the best possible start as well as providing well for vulnerable children and families in poverty. Specialist nursery teachers are at the heart of quality.

- At a time when learning in the early years is recognised to be so critical, the numbers of GTCS-registered teachers in prior-to-school services is diminishing.
- The core message from the audit is that although their roles are fluctuating, changing and sometimes not well understood by others, specialist GTCS-registered nursery teachers are an essential part of leadership in the ELC workforce and bridge the early level of curriculum: these are important messages for policy makers.
- Neither children nor schools can afford further attrition in nursery teacher numbers.
- Previous arguments have suggested that increased specialism or indeed dedicated early years pathway in teacher education at undergraduate level would limit the career paths of teachers. We suggest that this discussion should be re-visited.
- That GTCS should collaborate with Schools of Education to strengthen the early years component of teacher education, recruit positively for new postgraduate routes and address issues of teacher placement and the probationary year.
- The models of teacher role should be expanded to reflect the new contributions some teachers are already making and Local Authorities and other employers should develop robust support systems in the light of the reported evidence that too solitary a role leads to a dip in commitment and confidence.
- With the small numbers of teachers employed in early years pre-school settings, further attrition is not an option if policy objectives are to be achieved.

Attention to each of these matters will bring us nearer to equity for all children.

8. Expert Group Membership

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