

A black and white photograph of a young child with dark hair, wearing a light-colored dress, focused on playing with LEGO bricks. The child is holding a black brick in their hands, and a large pile of various LEGO bricks is visible in the foreground. The background is a bright blue, textured surface that looks like sand or a fine spray of paint.

TRIBAL



**Quality Mark**

**Supporting and recognising high quality early years provision**

# An introduction to Quality Mark Early Years



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**Welcome to the Quality Mark Early Years. The 2018 award builds on the existing Tribal Quality Mark for Early Years to take account of recent studies of early childhood educational issues and quality standards at an international level.**

The Quality Mark Early Years is supported by an accompanying audit tool designed to enable your setting to progress towards accreditation. The audit tool sets out the early education standards you must meet in addition to remaining compliant with all statutory regulations for children's learning and welfare.

The Quality Mark framework supports effective self-evaluation and continuous improvement within the context of internationally shared views. These views are based on evidence that high quality early years programmes have a positive and lasting impact on children's well-being, learning and development.



“It has quality assured our judgements, both strengths and areas for development, in order to move forwards.”

CAROLINE JONES, ASSISTANT HEAD,  
LYNG PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Benefits of the Quality Mark

1

**Offers external recognition** of the impact of the work of leaders and practitioners in improving the quality of provision for young children and the standards they achieve.

2

**Helps your setting/school continue to think** about how to improve the quality of service offered to young children and their families.

3

**Provides a holistic evidence base for continuous improvement** through the multi-dimensional aspect of Quality Mark. (Quality Mark includes structural characteristics, such as statutory adult-child ratios and practitioner qualifications, interwoven with process quality factors, such as the pedagogical approach and types of interactions that influence the quality of children's experiences in Early Years settings/schools.)

4

**The guided process of rigorous self-evaluation** helps leaders and practitioners identify strengths, prioritise key areas for development.

5

**Regular reviews** identify the impact of your practice.

6

**The process of audit and self-review** will add value to current provision and support improved outcomes for children.





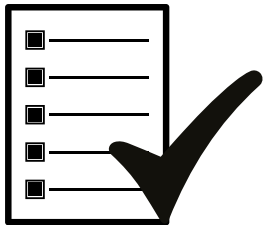
“Quality Mark has the benefit of ensuring children are being taught basic skills well and that any gaps in attainment and progress are identified early; it also ensures that we are forever striving for improvement”

LISA HUMPHRYES, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER,  
RUSH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

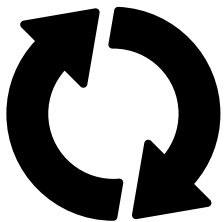
# Background of the award

## An internationally shared view of effective teaching and early learning

The Quality Mark for schools was developed in 1996 to provide a framework to promote, support and celebrate the improvement of literacy, language and mathematics. The framework was extended to include Early Years in 2008 in recognition of a growing understanding that high quality early childhood experiences have lasting benefits for young children (Sammons, P. et al 2008). Implementation of the Tribal Early Years framework followed a national pilot funded by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA). Participants included local authority advisers and early years practitioners representing the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors.



The revised Quality Mark Early Years continues to support those who lead and work in early years to undertake effective self-evaluation and continuous improvement which drives better outcomes for children, their families and society. The updated guidance and audit tools reflect findings of international studies which identify shared views of high quality early years provision and its short and long-term, positive impact on children's learning (e.g. Sammons et al., 2008, Melhuish 2004; 2011).



Empirical research into how children's competencies develop and are interconnected continues to evolve. However, there is a consensus that early learning is a holistic concept that involves developing children's interrelated and mutually reinforcing, physical, social-emotional and cognitive skills (Tinajero, Loizillon, 2012).

# Background of the award

## Continued...

The Quality Mark Early Years is based on this consensus. The required elements of the award reflect the themes and key domains of the OECD's ongoing survey, 'Starting Strong' (OECD 2012, 2017a) and those that are being included in the International Study of Early Learning and Child Well-Being (OECD 2017 b). These studies reflect a growing body of research from neuroscience, that the quality of early childhood provision is the most significant factor underlying the long-term impact on children's outcomes, fostering the cognitive and non-cognitive skills which are important for success in later life.

'Starting Strong 5' highlights that, "the brain sensitivity of highly important developmental areas such as emotional control, social skills, language and numeracy peaks in the first three years of a child's life." (OECD 2017). As these domains are integral to the Quality Mark Early Years, those settings/schools who meet the requirements of the 10 Quality Mark elements can be assured that they are evaluating their provision against internationally shared views of effective teaching and early learning.



“I feel that the benefits are many, the greatest being another pair of eyes, not working in the school, who can challenge, question and offer advice as to how we can improve further.”

HELEN STOKOE, HEADTEACHER,  
STANNINGTON FIRST SCHOOL



# Aligning your provision with the international Quality Agenda

The Quality Mark Early Years and associated audit tool complement and support national and international visions of a dynamic sector that delivers high quality early education and care. The process of reflection and self-evaluation is integral to the Quality Mark and is key to the accreditation process. As leaders and practitioners, you will gather evidence of your provision and practice, engage in robust self-evaluation, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and set and implement targeted actions to support further improvement.

Self-evaluation and evidence gathering gives your leaders and practitioners the confidence to explain the cycle of review and continuous improvement. You will also find that the collation of information for the 10 elements is a valuable source of evidence for inspection.

# Completing the Quality Mark

Quality Mark Early Years activity can stand alone or complement and integrate with other local and/or national initiatives to improve young children's achievements. You control the timescale for the external assessment of the award; the length of time taken to achieve accreditation will vary according to your setting's starting point and your ability to demonstrate progress and sustained good practice. All practitioners, and others involved with the setting (paid or voluntary) should be involved in working towards your accreditation. Involvement in the process will contribute to the development of leadership and management skills such as auditing, action planning, monitoring and evaluating, in a practical context and with a tangible outcome.

Your accredited Quality Mark Assessor is an experienced Early Years improvement specialist and will help guide and support you along your continuous improvement journey, using the Quality Mark audit tool as the framework for progression.

The assessment process - a virtual visit prior to the 2 year accreditation - focussed discussions with key stakeholders, observation of learning environments via a virtual 'learning walk', and a review of relevant supporting evidence and documentation.

# Impact of the Quality Mark

## Confidence in your setting

Parents/carers, as well as policy makers, inspectors and advisers of early years provision seek assurance that those who educate and care for young children meet their individual needs and prepare them well for school and later life. Leaders who have a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement are most likely to succeed in reassuring interested parties that they will promote the best outcomes for the children attending. Achievement of the Quality Mark Early Years contributes positively to parents'/carers' confidence and consequently to the sustainability of your setting.

Proprietors, management committees and governing bodies (or their equivalent) will find that work undertaken to achieve and sustain the Quality Mark Early Years award offers a meaningful context in which to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision, practice and outcomes. It will also demonstrate how they are actively carrying out their role to drive continuous improvement.



## Benefit every child

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Achieving the award will show that you recognise that the early years of a child's life are a period of intense learning and development. You will use developmentally appropriate practices, an informed knowledge of the needs of each child and an understanding of the social, cultural and linguistic contexts in which children live, to support each child's physical well-being and motor development, social-emotional development and language and cognitive abilities during this crucial phase of life.

The criteria of the Quality Mark Early Years are based on a general understanding that young children learn best when they are well-cared for in a nurturing and supportive environment. The elements give significant focus to how well practitioners support children to learn

through different types of play, which is recognised as being so important to children's well-being and development that it is set down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

### **Enhance your provision for the long term**

Undertaking the award shows that you understand that self-evaluation and quality assurance processes are not one-off, short-term activities. The process, and the actions which follow, must enhance the provision for children's care and learning. Achieving the award will show that your setting gives children a strong start to help them to become well-rounded, confident individuals who are prepared for their next stage of learning.



“The feedback enlightened us to how we could improve communication with our parents of SEN children. We are very proud in our achievement and hope to share our good practice.”

SARAH HARRISON, HEADTEACHER,  
POUND PARK NURSERY SCHOOL



# The Quality Mark framework

## A comparative model

Your Early Years setting will achieve the Quality Mark Early Years when you demonstrate that the criteria for all 10 elements are met and can provide evidence that participation in the award has had a positive impact on your provision and practice.

The table on the next page illustrates how the Quality Mark Early Years elements align with a range of key levers, processes and systems used to measure the quality of early childhood education and care in different contexts.

QUALITY MARK ELEMENT		OFSTED COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN ACCREDITATION STANDARD	STANDARDS FOR BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS	OECD STARTING STRONG III AND IV
1	A whole setting strategy to improve children’s abilities and achievements	Leadership and management (integral to all key judgements)	Leadership and management (10) Curriculum (2) Assessment (4) Health (5)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Part 2) Welfare, health and safety of pupils (Part 3) Suitability of practitioners, supply practitioners and proprietors (Part 4) Premises and accommodation (Part 5) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Quality Goals Curriculum and learning standards Data, research and monitoring

QUALITY MARK ELEMENT		OFSTED COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN ACCREDITATION STANDARD	STANDARDS FOR BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS	OECD STARTING STRONG III AND IV
2	<b>An analysis of the assessment of young children's abilities and achievements</b>	Leadership and management Teaching, Learning and Assessment Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Assessment (4) Leadership and management (10)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Data, research and monitoring Monitoring child development and outcomes
3	<b>Setting appropriately high expectations for young children's development</b>	Leadership and management Teaching, Learning and Assessment Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Teaching (3) Curriculum (2) Relationships (1) Leadership and management (10)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Part 2) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Curriculum and learning standards Monitoring child development and outcomes
4	<b>Planning 'next steps' in learning for young children's development</b>	Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Curriculum (2) Teaching (3)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Part 2)	Curriculum and learning standards Monitoring child development and outcomes
5	<b>Regular review of progress made by all children</b>	Leadership and management Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Assessment (4) Leadership and management (10)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Monitoring child development and outcomes
6	<b>A commitment to improving the skills of all practitioners</b>	Leadership and management	Teachers (6) Leadership and management (10)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Workforce Quality Monitoring of practitioners' quality linked to professional development
7	<b>A balanced use of child-initiated and adult-guided play-based activities</b>	Leadership and Management Teaching, Learning and Assessment Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Teaching (3) Curriculum (2) Relationships (1)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Part 2) Leadership and Management (part 8)	Curriculum and learning standards Workforce Quality

QUALITY MARK ELEMENT		OFSTED COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN ACCREDITATION STANDARD	STANDARDS FOR BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS	OECD STARTING STRONG III AND IV
8	<b>The use of appropriate environments and resources</b>	Leadership and Management Teaching, Learning and Assessment Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Physical environment (9)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Welfare, health and safety of pupils (Part 3) Premises and accommodation (Part 5)	Quality Goals Curriculum and learning standards
9	<b>Partnership working between families, carers, practitioners and professionals in supporting young children's learning and development</b>	Leadership and Management Teaching, Learning and Assessment Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare (N.B the domain of physical development is expected to include health, growth and fitness and sensory/ motor development)	Families (7) Community relations (8) Health (5)	Quality of education provided (Part 1) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Part 2) Welfare, health and safety of pupils (Part 3) Provision of information (Part 6)	Family and community engagement collaboration between practitioners and parents. Quality Goals Curriculum and learning standards Monitoring child development and outcomes.
10	<b>An effective procedure for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in practice and provision</b>	Leadership and Management (& integral to all judgements)	Leadership and management (10)	Leadership and Management (part 8)	Monitoring the quality of curriculum implementation, practitioners- child interaction, teaching and care, collaboration between practitioners, responsiveness to child's needs, collaboration between practitioners and parents.



“We will be improving our hearing journals, including more photographic evidence. Doing the QM helps to focus on the above areas and to reflect on them. A very useful tool which we use to help improve our nursery and what we offer.”

**CLARE MASTERS, QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER,**  
**GLAISDALE DAY NURSERY**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who can apply?

The Quality Mark is available to all schools with primary and secondary aged pupils, this includes mainstream and special schools, maintained sector and independent schools of all sizes. Schools must be in a good or better Ofsted category or equivalent to work towards the award route. If a school is not yet in a good category they can still become members of the Quality Mark and will follow an improvement route which has a focus on the 10 elements related to current school priorities.

Schools interested in accreditation should contact : [enquiries.qualitymark@tribalgroupp.com](mailto:enquiries.qualitymark@tribalgroupp.com) for details of the award, the support available and associated costs.

## How long is the Quality Mark (Early Years) award valid?

The Quality Mark Early Years is awarded for two years. At the end of that period the award can be renewed for a further two years (and in subsequent cycles) providing the setting continues to meet the criteria for all 10 elements and can demonstrate that holding the Quality Mark Early Years has had a positive impact on its provision and practice. This includes an ongoing emphasis to the areas of communication, language and literacy as well as mathematics together with other areas of learning within the statutory framework.

## How is the provision assessed?

An early childhood specialist, accredited by Tribal, will review and evaluate the evidence during an assessment visit to the setting. The recommendation for the Quality Mark award can only be made by an accredited assessor. There is no prescribed start or end date for the award. Applications can be made throughout the year.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What does the evidence about the practice and provision need to show?**

An Early Years provider in a setting or in school provision will be required to show that at the time of the assessment:

- it meets the appropriate criteria for its context in all 10 Quality Mark Early Years elements
- the whole setting/school is committed to improving communication, language, literacy and mathematics taking account of the age and stage of development of each child and within the EYFS framework
- the abilities and achievements of young children in communication, language, literacy and mathematics are improving. Settings spend varying amounts of time working towards accreditation depending on their starting points. They must show that all elements of the Quality Mark Early Years elements are met before the award can be granted.

It is not possible to gain accreditation by making a commitment to meet all elements in the future. Evidence to show that the quality of provision and practice meets the criteria for each element must be provided at the assessment visit and should come from a wide range of sources. Possible sources are included, but not limited to, the examples included with each element in the audit tool.

There is no prescribed amount of evidence required to substantiate each element. Participants may find that they have much of the evidence readily available, as it will have been gathered for other purposes. Each setting should make a professional judgement in selecting the most appropriate evidence to illustrate how they meet criteria in the context of their setting. As highlighted in the audit tool guidance the same piece of core evidence may be used for more than one element, provided the

# Frequently Asked Questions

analysis relates to the relevant criteria. Evidence should be summarised on the self-audit tool. The presentation of the evidence is a decision for the setting but should enable the assessor to easily identify how the elements are met. The self-audit tool may also serve as a useful working document to support the collation of relevant evidence.

Assessment is not based solely on an evaluation of the evidence submitted or a review of documents. The assessor will gather additional evidence during focused developmental conversations during the virtual evaluation visit. An assessor will also seek evidence through discussion with key stakeholders, such as English and mathematics subject leaders, parents/carers, representatives of any governing body or trustees. Where appropriate, assessors will talk to and take account of the views of young children. It is expected that any improvements that take place add value to the provision and in most instances, relate to a period lasting longer than one academic year.

## How is achievement of a Quality Mark recognised?

The Quality Mark Early Years is awarded by Tribal. Schools and Early Years settings holding the award are entitled to display the logo, which is supplied electronically, on information and publicity materials, such as a letterhead, prospectus or advertisement. Those who achieve the award also receive an award certificate.

For further information on the Quality Mark please contact: [enquiries.qualitymark@tribalgroup.com](mailto:enquiries.qualitymark@tribalgroup.com)



**T R I B A L**



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