

**Welcome to Nursery**  
**Summary of evaluation 2007-2008**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

This report describes an evaluation of the Welcome to Nursery (W2N) programme in Solihull, which was carried out by the authors during the academic year 2007-2008.

W2N is a supportive programme offered to parents whose children are about to start nursery. The idea for W2N in Solihull came from a similar programme, which had been running successfully in Plymouth for several years. The Solihull version of W2N was originally developed and run in the north of the Borough, by Sure Start Chelmsley Wood (now the Chelmsley Wood Children's Centre) in collaboration with local schools and professionals from a range of agencies. The programme ran successfully each year between 2001 and 2007, and expanded to include additional schools and two Children's Centres. Unfortunately since 2007, it has not been possible to deliver the W2N programme in the same way due to difficulties in providing support staff from the local Children's Centres. This raises questions about the future direction and sustainability of W2N.

The rationale for W2N is based on evidence from two research areas about factors which have a positive impact on children's progress at school.

Firstly, there is a growing body of evidence nationally to suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between parental engagement with schools, particularly in the case of 'hard to reach' parents, and positive learning outcomes for their children (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003; Harris and Goodall, 2007; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008). The crucial importance of engaging effectively with parents remains a key theme in Government policy. The Family And Parenting Institute has undertaken research over a number of years on partnerships between schools and parents, and their recent report outlines several models which schools have developed to ensure that they form strong and effective relationships with parents (Page and Millar, 2009).

Secondly, there is increasing awareness that transitions between different phases of education can present challenges for children/young people and families, and a recognition that they can benefit from additional support at these times. This led for example to the development of Transition Information Sessions (TIS), which were piloted in some local authorities (though not Solihull) as part of the support offered to parents before their child started primary or secondary school (Day, McKenna and McPhillips, Department for Education and Skills, 2007).

### **1.2 Aims and ethos of W2N**

In Solihull, W2N was designed to engage with families at the point when the child started nursery, which is generally regarded as a big step in the lives of most children. It was hoped that making parents feel welcome and involved in their earliest contacts with schools, might have a positive and long-lasting impact on the relationship between home and school, and potentially on the children's progress.

From the outset, there was a fundamental ethos of working in partnership with parents, for example in the parent-centred approach to delivering W2N, and the ongoing emphasis on

asking for and responding to their views and experiences of participating in the programme. The draft W2N booklet, written by the Children's Centre teachers at the time, states *'Parental experience is valued throughout the programme...the programme is delivered in an informal style, which was deliberately designed to avoid telling parents what to do, but rather to respond to their needs and concerns...It must remain a flexible package that is centred on family needs and priorities'* (Slack and Payne, 2004)

The sessions were designed to introduce children and their families to their nursery in an informal and relaxed way. While the children explored their new environment, parents had the opportunity to explore a range of relevant topics with support and information from appropriate professionals. These include discussion of parents' feelings and concerns around their child making the transition to nursery, thinking about social and emotional aspects of children's development, how children communicate, play and learn, and health topics.

Professionals from different agencies (health visitors, library staff, educational psychologists, dental service, psychotherapists and speech and language therapists) were involved in delivering the sessions, alongside a member of the Children's Centre team and Nursery staff.

The aims of W2N are:

- To give parents more confidence about their children entering nursery
- To raise awareness of the important role of parenting and the significant part parents play in their child's education
- To give children a chance to experience the nursery environment with their parents nearby.
- To build a positive relationship between school and parents at a critical transition in a child's life
- To support and encourage parents to play an active role in their children's learning.
- To improve children's readiness to learn and raise standards of achievement.

### **1.3 Previous evaluations**

Over time there has been ongoing evaluation of parents' views of W2N, through the use of questionnaires at the end of each session and at the end of each programme. As part of the local evaluation of the Sure Start Centre in 2004, Mairi-Ann Cullen, Senior Research Assistant at the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), University of Warwick, carried out an analysis of the views of parents who had taken part in the W2N programme in 2002 and 2003 (Cullen and Lindsey, 2005).

Mairi-Ann Cullen examined the evaluation forms to see whether the aims of the programme were being met, from the perspective of parents. Her conclusions were that all aims were being well met. When asked whether information at each of the sessions had been useful, on average over the six sessions, 60% of parents said they had been 'very useful' and 39% said they had been 'useful'.

When asked what they felt they had gained from W2N, most parents said they had gained information about what their child would be doing in Nursery. Many felt it had been beneficial seeing their children mixing with others and settling, and they valued meeting with other parents. This had made them feel less isolated when bringing their child to school for the first time, and more confident about the whole experience.

In 2004, two Educational Psychologists in training (EPITs) from Birmingham University carried out a further evaluation of the impact of W2N, with respect to parental views and the children's ability to settle into nursery. Information was gained through focus group sessions with parents

who had attended the previous year's programme and with nursery staff. The conclusion of the study was:

*'...W2N impacted upon children and their families in a very positive way. It raised awareness of issues and enabled parents to support their children during and beyond transition into nursery. Increased confidence experienced by parents and children impacted in many ways not least in forming friendships and increased parental involvement in their child's education. Overall this difficult transition was made easier for children who became less anxious and for parents who were not made to feel redundant.'* (Underwood, 2004)

## **1.4 Aims of this study**

At the time we carried out our research, there was already a wealth of evidence to indicate that parents valued W2N, but there were growing questions about the sustainability of the programme, in the context of the roll out of Children's Centres and changing models of service delivery across Solihull Borough. It appeared timely to explore the future direction of W2N in Solihull.

As Educational Psychologists and presenters on the W2N programme since 2001, we set out to canvass the views of another key group of stakeholders, namely staff from the five schools in the original W2N programme, who played a crucial role in ensuring its success. It was evident that the commitment of schools would be crucial if W2N were to continue.

We were also interested in discovering whether there were any long term advantages for those children who attended W2N with their parents, compared with their peers who did not.

In summary, the broad aims of this study were to explore the question, 'Is W2N worth sustaining in the future?' and to examine whether there were long term benefits of W2N for the children and schools.

To support the research, we obtained funding from Solihull Children's Trust Board for the equivalent of two days consultancy time. Mairi Ann Cullen kindly agreed to act as our consultant. Her support was invaluable in developing the framework for the study and in helping to analyse the findings.

## **1.5 Methodology**

### Focus group

**To explore the views of school staff about whether W2N was worth sustaining, and if so, how it might be developed in the future**, members of staff who had had relevant involvement with the W2N programme were invited to take part in a focus group in March 2008.

A total of eight representatives from four of the five schools attended a focus group meeting to discuss W2N. The number of representatives from each school ranged between one and three. A Children's Centre Manager also attended. The EP researchers facilitated the meeting and Mairi-Ann Cullen took notes.

A representative from the fifth school was unable to attend the meeting. She was very keen to be involved and was therefore interviewed individually using the same questions, and her responses have been incorporated into the results.

The participants all had direct experience of W2N in various capacities, as teachers, teaching and learning assistants (TLAs), a Pastoral and Community Development Manager and an

Acting Head Teacher. One TLA had also been part of Sure Start and was a parent in the school.

Participants were asked to consider some key questions:

**Is it worth sustaining W2N in our five schools?**

If it is:

**Why is it worth sustaining?**

**Are there any changes /development that should be made for the future?**

If it is not, **why is it not?**

Parental questionnaire and school data

**To examine whether attending W2N had resulted in long term benefits for children who attended W2N compared with those who did not**, we decided to gather information about the cohort of children from the five schools in the original Sure Start area, who started nursery in the autumn of 2003 and were now in Year 3 (2007-2008).

The parents of the children in Year 3 were invited to take part in the study. Since response to questionnaires sent by post is notoriously poor, it was decided to talk to parents face to face at school Parents' Evenings in the Autumn Term. Senior staff in the five schools had reported that attendance at Parents' Evenings was high and would therefore provide us with access to a large percentage of parents. As Table 2 shows, the percentage of parents who agreed to take part, ranged from 34% to 100% of the total number of children in Year 3 in each school. We invited parents to take part in the study and to complete the questionnaire while they were in the school building.

94 families agreed to take part (out of 184 families with children in Year 3 across the five schools, or just over 51% of the cohort). They were asked to complete a short questionnaire, which gathered background information about the family (see Appendix 1). This covered information about the Year 3 (Y3) child (number of brothers and sisters; place in family); frequency of spending time together with that child on nine activities (e.g. playing together, reading together); whether or not the parent had attended Welcome to Nursery in 2003 and, if so, how many sessions had been attended; and, finally, some basic information about the parent (sex, relationship to Y3 child and highest level of education).

The five schools were then asked to provide data on the Y3 children whose parents had agreed to take part in the study and had completed the Parent Questionnaire. The schools provided information about attainment, attendance and exclusion from school.

Individual questionnaires were coded by school and whether the family had or had not attended W2N in 2003.

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## 2 Findings

### 2.1 Results from Focus Group Analysis

The 'notes and quotes' recorded by Mairi-Ann Cullen from the meeting were examined in detail. The two EP researchers reviewed the information separately and highlighted key themes, then met to discuss these in greater detail. There was a high level of agreement between the two reviewers.

**All participants and all schools represented expressed the view that W2N is worth sustaining.**

A discussion of the question 'why is it worth sustaining?' led to the following themes emerging:

#### Benefits for the children

Most participants felt that those children who attended W2N **settled more readily** when they started nursery in the Autumn Term, and were happy to separate from parents/carers from the beginning of term. W2N was perceived to have stopped the problems of crying and distress often associated with settling young children into nursery. There was a view that W2N children also seemed **more confident**, perhaps because they were familiar with the surroundings.

- *'...they're settled, so at the beginning of this amazing start for them, they're actually happy...'*
- *'The children....who went to Welcome to Nursery, they would come straight in and have settled a lot quicker.'*
- *'...they knew where they were going, they knew what the place looked like...'*

Children were also felt to have **developed skills** as a result of their W2N experience (and possibly also their experience of such activities as play and stay at the Sure Start centre).

- *'They know nursery rhymes.'*
- *'They can hold a paintbrush. Had experience'*

One participant mentioned the **emotional support** the children felt by having their parent (usually mother) accompany them to nursery in the summer term.

- *'And they're quite proud as well. Even though they're only young, they know, the...message it's giving to them is that mum or whoever, is coming to school with me, and children love that...'*

Two people commented that the children benefit through their **parents feeling reassured and happy** about nursery, implying that children are often sensitive to, and take their lead from their parents' behaviour and reactions.

- *'They benefit much more because their parents are happier and more relaxed'*

## Benefits for Parents

Several people mentioned the advantages to parents of being **able to meet and get to know school staff** in advance, which helped parents to relax and feel reassured that their children would settle in.

- *You've broken that ice to start with, haven't you?*

One participant mentioned that parents had been able to meet the head teacher, secretaries, dinner staff, who had talked about school routines, which was felt to help parents.

One participant felt that due to the success of W2N, parents recommended the school to other parents.

Other people mentioned the benefit of parents being able to **meet a range of professionals** who worked with the school.

- *'...they met so many different people in our school and they could see our perspective and where we were coming from.....And it was an opportunity for them to all share ideas and build that relationship up.'*
- *'I think it's useful, them seeing a face and not being frightened or worried or defensive about meeting these different professional people because sometimes they do think, "Oh, it's the health visitor. Oh, it's such and such". Again, it's they've seen them; they're human; we can have a laugh with them. It's informal. It's another positive experience for them.'*

In the 2004 evaluation carried out by EPs in Training, parents commented that it was important to them, to meet other parents at this critical time, when they were understandably anxious about their children starting nursery. The friendships made by parents often continued for years afterwards.

Many of those in the focus group reiterated the importance of **parents getting to know one another** through attending W2N. For example, one group of mothers had continued to meet through the 6 week summer holiday using the school premises.

- *'The parents found they got to know each other a little bit beforehand... they enjoyed talking to each other...it's what parents get out of it.'*
- *'They've formed relationships as well. It's a link for them, isn't it? Because sometimes mothers come and it's their first child in this setting and it's a friendly face. 'Oh, you were at that meeting'.'*
- *'And they talk outside, don't they? Outside the school gate, you see them talking. And the ones that haven't been don't talk as freely'*

Several participants referred to the benefits of parents becoming more actively involved as a **means to develop their own skills** and **to support the wider school and community**. In one school, a group of parents who had attended W2N continued to meet together and made links with the Pastoral and Community Development Manager. They eventually started a Parent Teacher Association, which had continued successfully for the last five years.

- *'From that, over the last five years, we've got a sustainable PTA that won a national award last year and it's purely from some of the links from Welcome to Nursery.'*

Another group of parents from the same school who had been more recent members of W2N, had continued meeting and formed a group to promote the school within the area.

- *'We had quite a difficult younger element of mums...when they came to the following coffee morning, they've now formed their own group. They've set up. They've done some training and they, again, have come through Welcome to Nursery and they want to promote the school within the area and raise awareness and do it themselves. So that would not have happened without Welcome to Nursery...'*

One member of the focus group was a parent who attended Sure Start centre and W2N. She was so impressed by the work of the Sure Start team that she decided to attend a college course and become a Sure Start worker.

- *'I remember ...thinking 'I want to work there' and that's why I actually went to college and I got the orange t-shirt [the uniform of the Children's Centre childcare staff]. And actually quite a lot of our mums from here [school] are actually on childcare courses now, aren't they?'*

### Benefits for the school

Several school staff mentioned that having **the opportunity to share the school's viewpoint and to give information on routines and responsibilities** was helpful in achieving a smoother entry into nursery.

- *We had the Literacy Co-ordinator come down and talk about the reading scheme and you know all kinds of different things. I've talked about play and how we teach and set the Nursery out. That's been beneficial, just to give them our viewpoint...'*

Nursery staff benefited from W2N in gaining the opportunity **to get to know beforehand the children they'd be having**. Another aspect of a smooth transition was that because the children settled quickly, **staff time was not taken up in calming upset children**. There was also the suggestion that W2N **developed the skills of staff** because *'it helps them to be more flexible, it changes the routine, and they have to go with the flow a little bit on those days...you do something different'*.

Others suggested that these contacts helped to **build parental commitment to and support for the school**.

Some comments reflected the **improved relationship between staff and parents**, and the fact that parents were more ready to approach teachers.

- *'I think, yes, because it breaks down the barriers that used to be there between teachers and mums and, because I'm in to the health aspect of children, it helped for them to tell me what their problems were long before we had to go through the first couple of months and then discover what happens. Everything; from speech problems to autism and all sorts of things were raised ....'*

Other school staff had noticed the **improved percentage of parents attending Parents Evening**, perhaps because of parents' increased confidence and the relationship they were able to build with staff.

- *'We've had a lot more parents that came to parents evening because they didn't feel that they couldn't speak to you whereas before, when I first started Nursery a long time ago, we didn't hardly get any who came to Nursery. So that has made a big difference.'*

One person made very positive comments about the impact of W2N on **the ethos of the whole school**. She saw W2N as enabling schools to build partnership with parents, due to its emphasis on 'open door' policies, creating an open, informal culture and dialogue, and breaking down barriers. However, she stated that it was vital for the school's senior management team to be fully 'on board', supportive of W2N and to demonstrate their commitment so that everyone in school understood the purpose of the programme.

- *'I think it is seeing how it does impact on the whole school when you've got parents who feel comfortable, who understand your policies, who feel they can come in and challenge things...'*

Several schools had developed the W2N programme to suit their own local circumstances e.g. extending the sessions, opening to a wider group, inviting parents to discuss other themes such as healthy eating, bullying, developing parent groups with the Family Support Worker, and offering 'drop-ins'. The **flexibility** of W2N appeared to be regarded as an asset.

#### Changes/developments for the future:

The participants engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about potential changes or developments that could be made to W2N in the future, with a particular focus on sustainability. The main barriers to W2N being sustained were described as shortage of money, and staffing and capacity issues. One person questioned whether W2N was reaching those parents who would most benefit and it was suggested that there might be the need to think again about the purpose of the programme. One participant commented that the views of parents should again be canvassed to ensure W2N was meeting their needs.

There was a consensus that W2N would be difficult to fund and run solely through schools. There was strong support for Children's Centres to continue to play a key role, promoting a single model that all schools could take on. Most participants favoured the continued involvement of outside agencies to help with co-ordinating the programme and providing practical support with tasks such as sending letters out etc. The involvement of different agencies was also valued in helping participants to learn what people's roles are and how agencies support each other, thus making them more accessible to parents.

With regard to practical changes in the programme, a wide range of suggestions was put forward, reflecting the extent to which individual schools had already adapted and developed W2N to suit their own needs and circumstances, or saw the potential for doing this in future:

- Ways to encourage as many parents as possible to take part (personally inviting parents, making home visits, asking committed parents from previous years to be involved)
- Modifying the sessions (having fewer, making them more informal, asking parents to choose content etc)
- Adapting the set up of sessions (parents staying with their children, mixing W2N children in with Nursery children)
- Developing involvement of wider school staff (for example in 3 schools the Family Support Worker was involved with families over the holidays, or ran additional drop-ins and activity sessions; ensuring that all nursery staff attend sessions where possible to get a flavour of the whole programme)

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## 2.2 Results from Parental Questionnaire

In total, 94 questionnaires were completed (Table 1).

**Table 1** *Parent questionnaires returned*

School code	Number (N = 94)	Percentage of total sample
51	17	18
52	26	28
53	32	34
54	5*	5
55	14	15

In this report, in all cases, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. 'Parent' refers to the adult who completed the questionnaire – in one case, this was a grandparent.

**Table 2** *Percentage of questionnaires completed as total of children in Year Group*

School code	Number in study/total number in Year 3	Percentage of Year 3 taking part in the study
51	17/26	65%
52	26/58	45%
53	32/49	65%
54	5/5*	100%
55	14/43	33%

\*Small numbers due to possible forthcoming closure of the school

### About the parents who returned the questionnaire

Of the total number of parents who returned a questionnaire, 43 (46%) had attended at least one session of Welcome to Nursery (Table 2) with most of that group (74%) having attended all six sessions (Table 3).

**Table 3** *Attendance at Welcome to Nursery*

Attended Welcome to Nursery?		
	Number (N = 94)	Percentage
Yes	43	46
No	51	54

**Table 4** *Number of sessions attended*

If yes, number of sessions attended?		
	Number (N = 43)	Percentage
All 6 sessions	31	74
More than 1; less than 6	7	17
1 session only	4	10

Almost all (98%) of respondents were the biological parent of the Y3 child. The exceptions were one step-parent and one grandmother. Most (74%) of the 94 respondents were female, with 13% being male. Usually, one parent completed the questionnaire but in 13 cases (14%) both parents did so. Table 4 shows the highest level of education of the respondents – where couples completed this questionnaire and there was a difference in highest level of education (two cases), the mother’s level of education was chosen.

**Table 5** *Highest level of education of parents completing the questionnaire*

Highest level of education	Number (N = 94)	Percentage
Left at 16	46	49
Left at 17 or 18	9	10
Post-school (not HE)	34	36
Attended university	4	4
Post-graduate	1	1

When respondents were divided into two groups, those who attended Welcome to Nursery and those who did not, and compared using the Mann-Whitney test (suited to a non-parametric sample) there was no statistically significant difference between the highest level of education of those who attended Welcome to Nursery and those who had not done so (U = 1083.000, N1 = 43, N2 = 51, p = 0.911, two-tailed).

#### About the Year 3 children

When respondents were divided into two groups, those who attended Welcome to Nursery and those who did not, and compared using the Mann-Whitney test there were no statistically significant differences on any of the biographical information provided (number of siblings, number of brothers, number of sisters, or place in family) between the children of those who attended Welcome to Nursery and those who had not done so.

#### Joint activities

Using the Mann-Whitney test to compare the two groups (those who attended Welcome to Nursery and those who did not) in relation to the frequency of particular activities done together with the Y3 child, there were no statistically significant differences between them. Table 6 shows the basic frequencies. For each activity, the most common response is highlighted in bold.

**Table 6** *Frequency of certain activities done together*

Activity done together	Frequency of activity (Percentages) (N = 94)				
	Every day	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Occasionally	No response
Playing	<b>37</b>	28	18	17	0
Reading	<b>42</b>	34	19	3	2
Talking	<b>94</b>	5	0	0	1
Drawing, painting, making things	4	16	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	1
Watching TV	<b>67</b>	14	11	6	2
Playing computer games	11	15	32	<b>35</b>	7
Household tasks	26	19	<b>29</b>	26	1
Singing	22	18	21	<b>35</b>	3
Sport or physical activity	23	17	29	<b>30</b>	1

Attainment, Attendance and Exclusion data

*Attainment*

Schools provided the Key Stage 1 national test results (summer term 2007) and the teachers' assessment of National Curriculum levels at end of autumn term 2007 for Reading, Writing, Maths and Science, for the children about whom parents had completed a questionnaire.

To aid analysis, the National Curriculum Levels were converted to a scale – where W = 1, Level 1c = 2, Level 1b = 3, Level 1a = 4 and so on up to Level 3a = 10.

Scale:

<b>NC Level</b>	W	1c	1b & 1	1a	<b>2c</b>	<b>2b &amp; 2</b>	<b>2a</b>	3c	3b & 3	3a
<b>Scale</b>	1	2	3	4	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	8	9	10

The expected Level at KS1 is highlighted in bold.

Where levels were not divided in the results reported by schools, Level 1 was equated with Level 1b, that is the middle of the Level, and coded as 3. A similar pattern was used for L2 (coded as 6) and L3 (coded as 9).

Comparing the two groups of children – those whose parents had attended Welcome to Nursery and those who had not, using the Mann-Whitney test, there were no statistically significant differences between the attainment of the groups at either summer term or autumn term in relation to Reading, Writing, Maths and Science.

*Attendance*

Comparing the two groups of children – those whose parents had attended Welcome to Nursery and those who had not, using the Mann-Whitney test, there were no statistically significant

differences between the attendance of the two groups in any one year from Reception, through to Y3.

*Exclusions from school*

None of the children about whom information was collected had been excluded from school.

**Summary of findings**

On follow-up in Y3, there were no statistically significant differences on measures of attainment, exclusions or attendance between the group of children whose parent/s had attended the 2003 Welcome to Nursery and those who had not. Nor were there any statistically significant differences between the two groups of children or their parents on any of the factors covered by the Parent Questionnaire.

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## Conclusions and recommendations

- The participants in the focus group were unanimous in agreeing that W2N was worth sustaining, and they provided a rich qualitative analysis of why they thought this should be the case. A strong theme which emerged was that school staff perceived W2N to be mutually beneficial for children, parents and schools. The wide-ranging discussion about potential changes or developments that could be made to W2N in the future, illustrated the potential for tapping into the imaginative and resourceful ideas of school staff for adapting and developing W2N to suit local needs.
- The analysis of the parental questionnaires and the school data found that, by the time their children were in Year 3, there were no differences between the families in the study who attended W2N and those who did not. This was the case across a range of quantitative measures (children's attainment, attendance, and exclusions) and qualitative measures (such as parental perceptions of level of involvement with their children). However it is possible that a larger sample of the Year 3 cohort might have produced different results.

Although the evaluation did not find long term differences between those children who attended W2N and those who did not, it provided compelling evidence from staff, based on their daily experience, of the value of W2N in helping children and their parents to feel happy, secure and better prepared socially and emotionally for the transition into school. The main implication from this study and previous evaluations of W2N, is that the particular strengths of W2N lie in its ability to build partnerships with parents at a crucial early stage in their children's school career, and to promote better social and emotional adjustment of those children. Future evaluations of W2N might usefully focus more closely on the immediate benefits during the Nursery year, for example looking at measures of children's social and emotional adjustment and parents' perceptions of feeling welcomed and involved in the life of the school, as reflected for example in increased attendance at parent's evenings and other school events.

The study has highlighted the question of sustainability, and if W2N in Solihull is to be viable and run successfully in the future, it is recommended that the following issues will need to be addressed.

- At a strategic level, it might be useful to review where W2N sits in the raft of initiatives that contribute to Solihull's plan to improve outcomes for children and families. For example, W2N might form an integral part of the 'core offer' of Children's Centres/extended schools/parenting strategy across the borough, with its emphasis on supporting transition and involving parents. It would need to be considered how might this be achieved and who might have overall responsibility for its implementation.
- Reflection on the gaps in W2N and how might these be addressed (for example, 'harder to reach' groups of parents who might be less likely to attend such programmes).
- Efforts to maintain the quality and ethos of W2N, while ensuring that it is manageable and has the flexibility to be adapted to changing contexts and localities. One way forward might be to agree a consistent package and approach, and provide relevant training to achieve this.
- Consideration of how to strengthen links between partner agencies, for example by establishing a multi-disciplinary working group to plan key elements of the programme and provide guidance to schools and Children's Centres.
- Clarifying future resourcing of W2N, for example exploring funding sources, to produce a pack of materials and for training.

In conclusion, W2N is a programme with the potential to support a number of national and local priorities, as follows:

- There is strong evidence that it supports parents and provides good opportunities for schools to build partnerships with parents at a crucial early stage;
- It offers specific support to parents at an important point of transition, with a particular focus on reassuring and supporting parents as well as increasing parental understanding and empathy with regard to the personal, social and emotional needs of their young children, and;
- It lends itself to locality based and integrated styles of working, for example through its emphasis on multi-agency co-operation, its potential as a vehicle to develop links between schools and Children's Centres, and its flexibility. Schools in the north of the Borough have valued it and demonstrated a high degree of commitment to ensuring its success. Furthermore, as locality working is developing in Solihull, there has been great interest from schools and partner agencies across the Borough in adapting W2N and developing a workable and sustainable model, which can form part of their package of support to parents. At the time of writing, one example of the enthusiasm for the W2N programme is the pilot to introduce W2N to schools in the Lyndon area, with support from the local Children's Centre and extended services.

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## Appendix 1: Parental questionnaire

### Questionnaire for parents/carers of Yr 3 children

All the information you provide on this questionnaire will be treated as **confidential**. When we report on our research, no names of schools or individuals will be used.

#### About your Y3 Child

1) How many brothers and/or sisters does your Yr 3 child have?

None (*please tick if this is the case*)\_\_\_\_\_

Brothers (*please write in the number*)\_\_\_\_\_

Sisters (*please write in the number*)\_\_\_\_\_

2) What is this child's place in the family? (e.g. eldest child, second child, third child)

(*Please write in*)\_\_\_\_\_

3) What does this Yr 3 child like about school? (*please tick all the ones that are true.*)

Being with friends\_\_\_\_\_

Reading\_\_\_\_\_

Playing at break times\_\_\_\_\_

Writing\_\_\_\_\_

Maths/number work\_\_\_\_\_

Physical activity lessons\_\_\_\_\_

Drawing/painting/making things\_\_\_\_\_

Singing/dancing/drama\_\_\_\_\_

One or more adults in school\_\_\_\_\_

Doesn't like anything about school\_\_\_\_\_

#### You and your Yr 3 child at home

4) Please think now about the time you spend at home with your yr 3 child, with or without other children and adults being around. Think about the activities you do together and about how often you do them. (*If the statement is true for you, please tick one box showing how often you do that activity. Otherwise, leave that row blank.*)

We spend time...	Every day	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Occasionally
...playing together				
...reading together				
...talking to each other				
...drawing/painting/making things together				
...watching TV together				
...playing computer games (or similar) together				

...doing household tasks together				
...singing together				
...doing sport or physical activity together				

**Before your Yr 3 child started at nursery**

5) Please now think back to the summer before your child, who is now in Yr 3, was due to start at nursery. It would have been the summer of 2003. Did you go along to any of the 'Welcome to Nursery' sessions that happened in schools here in Chelmsley Wood?

(Please tick one option.) Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If you **did**, please also answer the next question, Q6.

If you **didn't**, please go straight to the section below, 'About You'.

6) How many sessions of 'Welcome to Nursery' did you attend? (Please tick one.)

1 session only\_\_\_\_\_ All 6 sessions\_\_\_\_\_

More than one session, but not all of them\_\_\_\_\_

**About You**

7) Are you: female?\_\_\_\_\_ male?\_\_\_\_\_ (Please tick one)

8) What relation are you to the Yr 3 child? (Please tick one option)

Biological parent\_\_\_\_\_

Foster parent\_\_\_\_\_

Adoptive parent\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's partner (living together)\_\_\_\_\_

Step parent\_\_\_\_\_

Grandparent\_\_\_\_\_

Carer/Guardian\_\_\_\_\_

Aunt/uncle\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_(please describe)\_\_\_\_\_

9) What was your highest level of education? (Please tick one option)

Left education at 16 or earlier\_\_\_\_\_ Left education at 17 or 18\_\_\_\_\_

Attended adult/further education college\_\_\_\_\_

Did an apprenticeship\_\_\_\_\_ Did work-based training\_\_\_\_\_

Attended university\_\_\_\_\_ Post-graduate\_\_\_\_\_

**That's it - you've completed the questionnaire. Thank you very much!**

Mairi-Ann Cullen, University of Warwick

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