

ECEY6011
2405790
Word Count: 1821

Contents:

1. Group discussion – recorded on teams.
2. Reflective paper.
3. Reflective paper references.

Reflective paper

To begin, it is important to understand the meaning of 'quality'. Quality refers to a standard or expectation and how something is presented or delivered, focusing on effectiveness, consistency, and the overall outcome. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) set standards for learning, development, and care that define quality in the early years. It highlights that providing children with high quality care ensures their safety, health, and ability to learn and grow (Gov.uk, 2021).

Quality in early years settings is important due to the impact it has on children's development and wellbeing. High quality practice contributes to supporting the children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development by being an enabling adult, providing enabling environments and creating open valuable opportunities for the children. This enables the children to feel a sense of belonging and sense of safety within a nurturing environment allowing them to reach their full potential. Department for Education (2023) states that high quality practice has a significant positive impact on academic readiness and future outcomes for the children, they believe early childhood experiences help shape the child's future choices and outcomes.

To ensure high quality practice within the early years settings it is essential that practitioners support the child's learning, development, and wellbeing. To ensure continuous improvement and consistent effectiveness, early years settings use various quality assurance tools to evaluate and identify areas of improvement. The quality assurance tools monitor daily practice and focus closely on whether the children's needs are being met in setting. This section will focus on two methods of quality assurance, The Leuven Scale, and parental questionnaires. The Leuven Scale is a quality assurance tool used to measure the children's wellbeing and involvement (Irresistible Learning, no date). Parental questionnaires are also used as another tool for quality assurance; this method provides practitioners with valuable information about parental views. Gov.uk (2025) promotes the parental questionnaire tool to be a reliable way of evaluating many areas across early years settings and practice.

Furthermore, the Leuven Scale and parental questionnaires are both key tools used within the early years settings to analyse the quality of practice. However, both tools are used in different ways and focus on different areas. The Leuven scale tool is an observational approach developed by Ferre Laevers. This approach enables practitioners to measure children's levels of involvement and their overall wellbeing whilst engaging with activities by using a five-point scale. This provides the practitioners an insight to the child's emotional security and identify the child's needs to enable them to plan next steps to support the child enabling the best possible outcome (Learning Journals, no date). In contrast to the Leuven scale, parental questionnaires provide practitioners with parental or carer views and opinions. The views may focus closely on the quality of provision their child receives, the effectiveness and consistency of family engagement and how they see the setting overall as a parent or carer. Ofsted (2019) states the importance of family involvement when taking feedback from stakeholders. It is a positive way of taking honest and constructive feedback and identifying issues that may not be seen internally, this then allows the practitioners to make continuous improvement and professional development. Although both tools are used to ensure continuous improvement to achieve high quality practice for the children, both tools rely on internal and external feedback. The Leuven scale relies on practitioner observations within the setting, and the parental questionnaires rely on parental views, these could be affected by individual experiences. Therefore, both of the tools are useful in their own way, both combined enables a holistic view on the early years practice in settings.

The Leuven Scale has many advantages to helping identify the child's emotional state and how it affects the level of involvement through direct observation taken by a practitioner. These observations allow the practitioner to reflect and respond to any changes that may need to be made within the setting, this could be adjusting the activities or changes to the environment. However, there are also some disadvantages when using the Leuven Scale, it relies solely on practitioner views which could cause inconsistency when there are many practitioners that observe. The Leuven Scale can also help to identify emotional and behavioural changes which could be a sign of a potential safeguarding concern, these could be signs that a child is emotionally distressed or experiencing neglect. This supports the

safeguarding responsibilities for practitioners by the Department for Education, monitoring the child's wellbeing to ensure they are safe from harm (Department for Education, 2026). Additionally, The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2025) states that it is the responsibility of the practitioner to promote the welfare of the child and report and respond to concerns promptly, the Leuven Scale observational tool supports practitioners with safeguarding practice and responsibilities.

The parental questionnaires tool is also beneficial when supporting quality in early years settings. This approach provides practitioners with honest, and valuable parental views whilst allowing the practitioners to have an understanding on family needs and how effective the provision is in settings. Ofsted (2024) emphasises the importance of family engagement within setting, so using a tool that allows parental voice is a way of building trust and providing them with a sense of belonging to the setting. Using the questionnaires allows a variety of views from a wide range of families within the community. However, some of the responses may be unreliable due to influential factors such as individual expectations, personal negative experience or language barriers. Furthermore, using the parental questionnaires supports the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance, that highlights the importance of working with parents to promote children's safety and wellbeing.

Overall, both the Leuven Scale and the Parental Questionnaire tools support the quality assurance but in different ways. Both tools have been identified to not only evaluate quality, but they also support safeguarding within setting, they support practitioners to identify concerns early on and respond by placing interventions or further protection following statutory requirements.

Furthermore, for practitioners to make continuous improvements within settings, it is essential that they can take relevant, useful information from the feedback they receive about the effectiveness of the learning environment, experiences the children have in setting and the positive impact it has on the child's development. Through using the Leuven Scale, the practitioner could look closely at the wellbeing of the child and how this affects their involvement. By using this type of method, practitioners are able to identify what needs changing, these could be things such as, adjusting the learning environment, improvement of resources, positive adult interactions and ensuring adults are enabling new opportunities for the children.

However, due to the method using the practitioner's perspective, it is important that this evidence can be supported by using another method to gather more evidence to support the outcome.

On the other hand, Parental questionnaires provide the practitioners with external views of the setting, they would gather information on the quality of care provided to the children, family engagement and support and their views on their child's experiences. This type of method supports the practitioner to make continuous improvement in many areas by imbedding new interventions for family involvement such as stay and play, tea afternoons, allowing the parents and carers to network not only with practitioners but with each other and the children. This method also identifies any concerns that the family may have in regard to the child's needs, this could be additional learning needs (ALN) or any safeguarding concerns related to home. Therefore, practitioners can then support the families by referring them onto support networks, specialist teams to support with ALN and family support, allowing the best possible outcomes for the child and family.

In addition to using the quality assurance tools, professional development is also essential when maintaining and improving quality within setting. Consistency of training and refresher training on how to use the tools effectively will allow for a more reliable and accurate outcome, whilst ensuring use of the quality assurance tools is consistent across the setting. Observational sessions and reflective meetings allow practitioners to discuss their evaluation from using the quality assurance tools and enables them to reflect on their own practice. However, this approach allows other practitioners to understand identified areas of improvement, so each practitioner is involved in the planning and sharing ideas to implement positive changes.

Professional development also supports practitioners to be up to date with their understanding of policies and frameworks, this is essential for high quality practice and in areas such as safeguarding, practitioners must be able to identify and respond to concerns. Overall, professional development and training opportunities is essential in settings, it enables effective and high quality practice across the setting.

The information gathered from the quality assurance tools are analysed as a team not individually. To ensure consistency of improvement and high quality practice, it is important that all members of staff follow the improvement plan that is put together

following the feedback received by stakeholders. The Leuven Scale quality assurance tool supports the cycle of observation, assessment and planning, which is a key factor in high quality provision (National Day Nurseries Association, 2022). However, as stated previously the observational method should not be the only piece of evidence, it needs to be supported by additional evidence.

Quality assurance tools are useful to support practitioners' reflective practice, their able to evaluate their own practice and make informed decisions to improve outcomes for the children in their care (Early Education, 2021). However, if the tools are not used consistently then the impact on quality will be low as no areas of improvement will be identified. This is an expectation by Care inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn during an inspection, they expect to see settings making continuous improvement to ensure best care for the children (Care Inspectorate Wales, no date). So, it is highly important that all settings carry out these methods consistently to avoid failing inspections.

To conclude, to ensure that each setting and practitioner is delivering high quality practice it is essential that they have access to effective quality assurance tools, in this instance, the Leuven Scale and Parental Questionnaires. Although each tool is known as a 'quality assurance tool' it is important to use more than one method for a more accurate and reliable outcome. The Leuven Scale and Parental Questionnaire methods provide feedback on different areas of practice, but when combined it provides the practitioner with a holistic view of the setting and practice enabling practitioners to analyse and make effective changes. However, as research has shown, although each method used has its advantages, it also has disadvantages in relation to reliability, this shows the importance of using multiple resources rather than one. The quality assurance tools used during this assignment have shown that they do not only identify areas of improvement in setting, but they may also identify safeguarding concerns, that may be causing an impact to the child's wellbeing and involvement.

References:

Care Inspectorate Wales (no date) *How we inspect childcare and play services* Available: <https://www.careinspectorate.wales/how-we-inspect-childcare-and-play-services> (accessed: 1 April 2026).

Department for Education (2023) *Best start in life part 1: setting the scene* Available at: [Best start in life part 1: setting the scene - GO](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years/best-start-in-life-part-1-setting-the-scene) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years/best-start-in-life-part-1-setting-the-scene> V.UK (accessed: 30 March 2026).

Department for Education (2025) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework : For group and school-based providers* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf (Accessed: 31 March 2026).

Department for Education (2026) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c2c4ce380a2a73a7cf9df4/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026.pdf (accessed:31 March 2026).

Gov.uk (2021) *Changes to the early years foundation stage framework* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework> (accessed:28 March 2026).

Gov.uk (2025) *Childcare and early years survey of parents: 2024* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2024> (accessed: 29 March 2026).

Irresistible Learning (no date) *The Leuven Well-being and Involvement scales* Available at: <https://irresistible-learning.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-Leuven-Well-being-and-Involvement-scales.pdf> (accessed: 30 March 2026).

ECEY6011

2405790

Word Count: 1821

Learning Journals (no date) *The Leuven Scale for Emotional Wellbeing* Available at: <https://learningjournals.co.uk/what-is-the-leuven-scale-and-how-to-use-it/> (accessed: 31 March 2026).

National Day Nurseries Association (2022) *Observation, Assessment and Planning nursery training* Available at: <https://ndna.org.uk/face-to-face-training/observation-assessment-planning/> (accessed: 1 April 2026).

Ofsted (2019) *Education inspection framework: overview of research*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6034be17d3bf7f265dbbe2ef/Research for EIF framework updated references 22 Feb 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6034be17d3bf7f265dbbe2ef/Research_for{EIF_framework_updated_references_22_Feb_2021.pdf) (accessed: 31 March 2026).