

## **Answers issued to Members on 7 March 2008**

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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## Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

**Irene James (Islwyn):** What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to improve Nursery Education? (WAQ51431)

**The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt):** Since 2002/03 we have supported the provision of free part-time nursery education through specific grant funding. From April 2008 a total of £17 million has been included in the local authority Revenue Support Grant settlement to continue this provision.

Since 2004 we have successfully piloted a new early years curriculum—the Foundation Phase for 3 to 7-year-olds. This is a developmental, holistic curriculum tailored to the needs of individuals and is based on children learning through play and active involvement. From September 2008 the Foundation Phase will be statutory for 3 to 5-year-olds and will be rolled out to 3 to 7-year-olds by the end of the 2010/11 school year; a total of £107 million is being made available to support its introduction.

A key element of the Foundation Phase is the introduction of improved adult/pupil ratios—1:8 for 3 to 5-year-olds and 1:15 for 5 to 7-year-olds. This will enable practitioners to work in small groups both indoors and outdoors and will enhance the learning opportunities available to our youngest children.

**Irene James (Islwyn):** What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to boost primary school age children's ICT skills? (WAQ51432)

**Jane Hutt:** The revised national curriculum for Wales, to be implemented from September 2008, has particular relevance to the development of primary school age children's ICT skills. The revised national curriculum subject Order for information and communication technology and the non statutory Skills Framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales will both help to develop children's skills.

The revised curriculum focuses on the learner and has an increased emphasis on the development of appropriate skills. The revised Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for ICT (7 to 11 year olds) is designed to be flexible, motivating and relevant to the twenty-first century, and to enable schools to plan and deliver a curriculum in ways appropriate to their learners' needs. This will involve learners thinking for themselves, in active and interactive learning, developing and applying ICT skills in a range of contexts.

The Skills Framework has been developed in order to provide guidance about continuity and progression in developing thinking, communication, ICT and number for learners from 3 to 19. It will help schools plan the development of these transferable generic skills and underpins all subjects in the revised national curriculum. Opportunities for developing ICT skills across the curriculum are clearly highlighted in all subject Orders, so that they can be firmly embedded into the experience of learners across all of their learning.