

Level 2 Examiners' Report

Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development:
Practice and Theory
Level 2

Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
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Executive Summary

The Summer 2026 Unit 216 assessment was based on the new specification that was first introduced in the Winter 2026 series. This was the second examination series to use the revised case study format, with questions now focused on only two learning outcomes. A variety of command verbs and question types were used, consistent with previous assessment series. The assessment structure provided learners with opportunities to access marks across the full range of the paper. It enabled examiners to assess different levels of knowledge and understanding effectively, with lower-tariff questions using straightforward command verbs to support learner achievement. The full mark range was utilised, with marks awarded across all bands and a significant proportion of learners achieving marks in the higher bands.

Most learners engaged well with the case study and attempted all questions. However, some responses contained unanswered sections or demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of the topic being assessed.

A good level of knowledge and understanding was demonstrated; however, some areas of the paper seemed to be challenging. As in previous series, the mark scheme was discussed by examiners at conference and by utilising the positive marking principle, adjustments were made allowing a fair approach where all correct attempts, showing partial knowledge and understanding, could be awarded marks accordingly.

The understanding of command verbs is increasing from series to series with some learners now able to access higher marks when showing a good understanding and application of the range of verbs used. However, some learners still indicated lack of understanding of higher tariff command verbs such as discuss, describe, and analyse. Bullet points or disjointed lists, which did not indicate a depth of knowledge, meant examiners could award only bottom or middle band marks. More explicit teaching around interpreting and responding to command verbs, particularly in extended response questions, could support learners, enabling them to achieve higher band marks.

There is some evidence to suggest that learners are making good use of the case study to answer questions in part A of the paper. Those learners utilising the case study appropriately were able to gain a good range of marks. However, an increasing number of learners seemed to lack focus on the case study content and responses were of a general nature. This was, as in the last series, particularly evident in age related/person specific questions. Although part B was generally well received, once again as in the previous series, some learners-based answers on the case study content as opposed to the information in the questions. This led to missed opportunities to demonstrate understanding and gain higher band marks for the second half of the paper.

Some responses indicated limited or no knowledge and understanding of several sections of the specification. Many learners lacked knowledge in relation to continuous provision and co-operative play, and marks were lost where no attempt at a response was made.

To support improved learner outcomes in future assessments, centres should consider the following strategies:

- **Embed Command Verb Practice:** Regularly incorporate activities that focus on interpreting and responding to different command verbs. Use past paper questions to model what is expected in a “describe” versus an “outline” response.
- **Teach Question Deconstruction:** Help learners break down questions into manageable parts. Encourage them to underline key terms and identify what each question is really asking before they begin writing. Remind learners of the importance of reading and referring to the case study in part A of the paper. Encouraging use of names or job titles within answers could also support learner focus.
- **Reinforce Core Content:** Ensure that key areas of the specification, such as Types of play and provision are revisited regularly and assessed through varied formats (quizzes, case studies, discussions). All specification content is covered in the level 2 textbook, e.g. continuous provision. Learners could benefit from access to the textbook for revision purposes.
- **Mock Exams with Feedback:** Run timed practice papers under exam conditions, followed by detailed feedback sessions. Focus on both content and exam technique.

CHILDREN'S CARE, PLAY, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICE AND THEORY

Level 2

Summer 2026

UNIT 216 UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S CARE, PLAY, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Overview of the Unit

Following the revised assessment format, questions once again only focused on Outcomes 1 and 2 of the specification. The assessment remained consistent with previous series in terms of content and level of demand and incorporated a full range of question types. Learners were presented with a case study at the start of the paper, followed by Part A, which contained questions directly related to the case study. Part B then consisted of a series of generic questions that were not linked to the case study. Across both sections, a range of learning outcomes was assessed, and the command verbs used were varied and in keeping with the standard approach for this qualification.

Question types included short answer questions, such as outline or state, alongside some basic identify command verbs where one-word answers were required. Some command verbs offered opportunity for higher level learners to present a more in-depth response where they were required to evaluate or consider their knowledge.

Multiple choice questions, where learners were able to click on the correct answers, afforded opportunity for all learners to gain valuable marks.

Although most learners made some attempt at answering most questions there were some gaps in knowledge. Some left questions blank or input brief or incorrect information, this cost learners valuable marks though examiners made good use of the positive marking guidance.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Part A

Question 1 (a b) L.O. (1.5)

Both parts of this first question were linked to learning outcome 1.5. in relation to co-operative play. Many responses were developed in line with middle or higher band requirements where they indicated good or very good knowledge and understanding of cooperative play at 1a. However, some learners presented responses based on other stages of play development, for example solitary or parallel play. This error cost learners' valuable marks at this early stage of the examination. Centres might find it useful to remind learners of the importance of reading both the case study and questions carefully as information, such as age of a child, may be relevant to the response required. Part b, an extension of part a, consisted of a basic command verb question requiring learners to identify 2 activities linked to co-operative play. Where learners had responded appropriately to part a of this question most were the able to gain the full 2 marks available at part b. Marks were lost where responses were not specific to co-operative play with some learners leaving this question blank.

Question 2 L.O. (2.1)

A higher tariff question, requiring learners to develop an evaluation indicating knowledge and understanding of how staff interaction in the cylch meithrin could support Kim's holistic development.

The more able learners remained focussed on the requirements of this question and gained middle to higher band marks. Some gave practical examples to support their evaluation which showed an in depth understanding of the topic and enabled higher band marks to be awarded. Some learners lost focus on the wording of the question referring to Kim and her brother as opposed to staff as the question required. A good understanding of holistic development was shown by some learners. This was not always the case and marks were lost where the full range of areas of development was not included. Once again learners may benefit from a reminder to read information carefully before commencing their response.

Question 3 (a b) L.O. (2.2 1.6)

A 2-part question although not directly linked to the same learning outcome. Two command verbs were used, firstly, part (a) required an outline in relation to the visit to the park as stated in the case study. A total of 4 marks were available, and many learners developed an appropriate response which included relevant information based on the case study, referring to safety, risk assessment, nappy changing facilities. Those referring to the characters in the case study indicated better understanding of the response required, for example many learners mentioned obtaining permission from Bethan for the visits, this type of response enabled examiners to award from the top band. Some responses were generic, making links to groups of children of a variety of age ranges, these learners lost marks. Marks were also lost where the command verb was not adhered to and learners presented a list, although examiners used positive marking where possible.

Part b of this question required an explanation, enabling learners to gain up to 6 marks where there was very good knowledge and understanding of how singing rhymes and looking at picture books can support holistic development. Some degree of understanding was shown by most learners though this was varied in depth, and a range of marks were awarded. Higher band marks were achieved where learners had explained links to holistic development in its entirety. Some learners also remained focussed on the case study and showed understanding of the age of the child mentioned, this also supported higher band marks. Some learners lost marks where they focussed on either singing rhymes or looking at picture books in relation to cognitive development only.

Learners may benefit from a reminder to utilise the case study and read the question thoroughly, this may help them remain focussed on the required age and stage of development as outlined in the scenario presented. Referring to names and ages of characters could also support a more logical response.

Question 4 (a b) L.O. (1.4 1.3)

The first part to this question was based on support for Sion's emotional development during a transition. Most learners gained marks across the range of bands where some level of understanding was shown. Some learners considered a visit to the cylch meithrin as well as identifying suitable transition activities. Marks were lost where learners failed to observe the content of the case study, firstly, Sion's age, secondly, some learners focussed on Bethan and Kim in place of the childminder as the question asked.

The positive marking strategy was utilised by examiners at Part (b) where learners were instructed to state three ways the child minder may best meet Sion's language development needs in readiness for attending the cylch meithrin. Originally, according to the mark scheme, examiners were looking for links to the Welsh language however, many stated general language development support. Where these responses were relevant to Sion's age marks were awarded, this enabled most learners to gain the full 3 marks available.

Question 5 L.O. (1.1)

A standalone question enabling learners to develop a discussion across a range of 3 bands, allowing more able learners to gain up to 6 marks. Few learners showed a very good understanding of Sion's expected general patterns/milestones of physical development, with many learners disregarding Sion's age and identifying general patterns of much younger or older children. Marks were also lost where learners presented a list as opposed to the required discussion. Centres are reminded that the age range of the specification is 0 – 19 years and the examination can consist of a full range of questions based on this range.

Question 6 (a b) L.O. (1.4 2.3)

Many learners were able to present a good outline falling into the middle band requirement thus gaining between 2-3 marks. Some learners were able to outline practical experience making clear links to how a secure attachment supports the way Kim plays co-operatively in groups, building relationships and co-operating with others, these learners were awarded a full 4 marks from the top band.

The second part of the question, worth 6 marks, required an analytical response. There was a mixed response to this question with only some learners making good use of the case study information. Where learners had read the scenario and taken a logical approach to the question based on the routine provided, higher band marks were achieved. Marks were lost where learners presented a response based on the value of routine, omitting reference to Sion's routine with the childminder.

Once again, centres should remind learners about reading case study content and questions carefully before responding. This will be particularly beneficial moving forward with the case study format. Learners may also benefit from drawing on practical experience to support analysis and content.

Part B

Question 7 L.O. (1.2)

This first question in the generic section of the paper required learners to click the correct answers from the multiple-choice list. Most learners gained a full 4 marks where the correct 4 patterns of intellectual development were chosen. Some learners missed the opportunity to gain 4 easily accessible marks when making incorrect choices such as hearing or vision. Where this type of question requires learners to make a choice and click answers centres might remind learners to check their responses before moving on.

Question 8 (a b) L.O. (2.3 1.4)

A two-part question based on 2 separate learning outcomes. Part a of this question, from learning outcome 2.3 made use of the command verb assess. A 6-mark question, learners needed to assess the benefit of statutory school provision for children aged 3-18 years. Although some learners recognised the switch to generic questions and, moving away from the case study, were able to focus on the change in age group, some learners remained focussed on Sion and Kim, this limited the marks awarded. Most learners developed a response in line with the middle band requirements as evidence of understanding the higher age group was limited.

A lower tariff question, to meet outcome 1.4, using the state command verb, proved challenging for most learners. Some made little or no attempt to respond here, whilst others could not answer in relation to Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and instead referred to Attachment Theory. Once again, it was evident that some learners were still referring to the case study content, this could be seen where learners stated links to attachment theory and Kim's relationship with the key worker. Following discussion at conference, examiners utilised the positive marking guidance and awarded marks where possible, for example, where learners referred to crying or screaming this was considered correct based on the mark scheme which stated, behaviour issues or outburst and tantrums. Marks however were lost where clear understanding between RAD and attachment theory was not shown.

Centres are reminded that although learning outcomes are now reduced, the full age range and content of the specification is still in use. Also, learners may benefit from a reminder of the change from Part A to Part B where the case study is no longer in use.

Question 9 (a b) L.O. (2.2 2.1)

4 marks were available at Part a which required learners to summarise the meaning of the term continuous provision. Some learners were able to develop a basis/good summary based on a safe environment for which marks were awarded from the first 2 bands. Many learners focused on safeguarding and indicated lack of understanding and knowledge of continuous provision, there responses lost marks.

Part b of the question was attempted by most learners. Some of these attempts were very good allowing learners to achieve the higher band mark. These learners took a logical approach to the question and presented evidence based on each aspect of holistic development linked to the activity in the question.

Centres might find it useful to remind learners to look out for key words. For instance, where the word holistic is in the question higher band marks can be awarded where learners consider each aspect.

Summary of Key Points

- Centres are reminded of the importance of wording used in questions. Learners should be encouraged to read question requirements carefully and apply the instructions accordingly. This is particularly pertinent to the new format.
- Centres are encouraged to read individual question feedback. This may support future candidates. Each individual question response above contains suggestions for moving forward, centres may find this useful for future exams.
- Centres may consider further development on use of command verbs. Learners are still losing valuable marks where command verbs are not followed appropriately e.g. an outline is not a list.

- Centres are reminded that questions are written in line with the specification and questions can be taken from across the range of content.
- Learners may benefit from revision of terminology/vocabulary.
- Learners may benefit from clear instruction on the format of the exam paper. Part A concerns the case study whereas Part B contains generic questions.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4264

Email: CCPLD@WJEC.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory | Health and Care Learning Wales](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Contact us | Health and Care Learning Wales](#)

CPD Training / Professional Learning

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