

Level 2 Examiners' Report

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

January 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	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	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
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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 recent Unit 216 assessment was in line with new specification. This was the first series where a case study had been provided based on Learning outcomes 1 and 2 only. Learning outcomes 3 and 4 are now removed following extensive consultation with stake holders. A variety of question types and command verbs were included, similar to those used in previous series. This variety in question type enabled assessment of a range of knowledge and skills, with basic command verbs, such as list or identify, providing ample opportunity for lower tariff marks to assist learners' overall achievement. A wide range of marks were awarded with many falling in the higher bands. Most learners attempted all questions and made good use of the case study provided, although a small proportion left some responses blank, particularly in section B of the paper.

Learner Performance and adjustments

Whilst most learners demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding, several areas of the paper seemed to be challenging, this was particularly evident in part B of the paper. The mark scheme was discussed by examiners at conference and these difficulties were acknowledged. Utilising the positive marking principle, adjustments were made to the mark scheme, these changes allowed for a fair approach where all correct attempts, showing partial knowledge and understanding, could be awarded marks accordingly. Marks across the full range of bands were awarded with overall attainment often exceeding 50% of the overall mark available.

Key Areas of development:

1. Understanding of Command Verbs

- An improved understanding of command verbs was seen in this series. Many learners were able to access higher mark bands where they showed good understanding and application of command verbs such as, describe or analyse.
- However, some learners still indicated lack of understanding of higher tariff command verbs such as discuss, describe, and analyse. These learners often answered using lists or bullet points which did not provide the depth of understanding and knowledge required.
- This suggests a need for more explicit teaching around interpreting and responding to command verbs, particularly in extended response questions.

2. Question-Specific Challenges

• Question 7 (Learning Outcome 2.1):

This was a two-part generic question with no link to the case study provided. Learners were required to explain how the outdoor environment supports the holistic development of children in the early years. Many learners showed a basic understanding/knowledge of play linked to PILES, however, there was limited explanation of the outdoor environment. This lack of understanding/knowledge was evident in part b of the question where many learners identified climbing frames or bikes as opposed to natural resources.

- **Question 8 (Learning Outcome 2.3):**

Also a two-part generic question although part a and part b were not directly linked. Part a required learners to outline the principles of the Flying Start initiative / programme in Wales, Part b required learners to Describe how a cylch meithrin may best meet the needs of individual children and their parents/carers. Some learners were able to show a limited understanding of Flying Start with only few expanding the outline to include knowledge of the work of the Health Visitor or the involvement of the Speech and Language Therapist. Many learners found part b challenging and often made no attempt to respond. Of those responding knowledge was limited, often including incorrect information.

- **Question 9 (Learning Outcome 1.3/1.2):**

Learners were required to Discuss the expected stage of speech and language development staff may see when observing a 4-year-old child at Part a. This was followed with Part b where the question asked for a description of the support staff might provide for a 4-year-old. Both parts showed limited understanding of speech and language stages or relevant literacy support. Many learners discussed the incorrect age/stage of development at Part a. Part b indicated limited knowledge of suitable literacy support with many suggesting formal structured sessions as appropriate.

3. Reading and Interpretation

There was clear evidence that learners are making good use of the case study to answer questions in part A of the paper. This supported learners in gaining a good range of marks. However, Part B of the paper proved more challenging in places with learners often referring to the case study information as opposed to the information in the questions. This was particularly evident in age related questions and/or questions related to L.O. 2. This led to missed opportunities to demonstrate understanding and gain higher band marks for the second half of the paper.

Recommendations for Teaching and Assessment Practice

To support improved learner outcomes in future assessments, 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. This would be particularly beneficial in Part B of the paper.
- **Reinforce Core Content:** Ensure that key areas of the specification, such as the Flying Start Initiative/Programme in Wales and Different Education and Childcare settings, are revisited regularly and assessed through varied formats (quizzes, case studies, discussions).
- **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

January 2026

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

Overview of the Unit

A range of question types were used in this paper covering learning outcomes 1 through 2 as required. Although all questions were in line with previous series and comparable in style to past papers, the layout of the paper had been changed. A case study informed Part A of the paper, whilst Part B consisted of generic questions. Both part A and Part B contained questions from the full range of Learning Outcomes. The range of command verbs used were varied and standard to this qualification.

The various question types used were familiar to learners and included short answer questions, such as outlines, along with some more challenging opportunities for learners to analyse or discuss their knowledge.

Responses were varied with most learners attempting the majority of questions to some degree. Lower-level learners were also able to gain marks where one-word answers were required to meet command verbs. Some questions were left blank or contained brief information costing learners' valuable marks.

Comments on individual questions/sections

PART A

Question 1 (a b) L.O. (1.1 1.2)

Both parts of this first question were well received by most learners. The content of the case study was understood by most and the responses referred to the appropriate age and stage of development. Examiners noted an increase in learners understanding of puberty. Many of the responses were able to develop a description in line with higher band marks. In some instance learners seemed to misunderstand the requirements, referring to younger aged children or focusing on social and emotional development in place of the physical aspect as per the question, this cost them 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. Some learners did not refer to body parts appropriately, although this did not cost them marks, centres should remind learners about the use of technical/correct terms. Part b, consisting of a table, and worth 2 marks, was completed correctly by most learners, this enabled lower-level learners to gain marks towards a positive overall outcome.

Question 2 L.O. (2.1)

A higher tariff question, based on the case study, required learners to develop a discussion indicating knowledge and understanding of how physical activities and team games may support health, well-being and development. The more able learners remained focussed on the requirements of this question.

Many gave examples to support their discussion which showed an in depth understanding of the topic and enabled higher band marks to be awarded. Some learners lost focus as they developed a response based on holistic development therefore omitting to discuss health and wellbeing in relation to physical activities and team games. Once again learners may benefit from a reminder to read information carefully before commencing their response. Centres may also consider expanding learners understanding of the difference between the terminology used in questions based on the Learning Outcomes in the specification.

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 comprehensive school as stated in the case study. A total of 4 marks were available, and many learners developed an appropriate response and included relevant information based on the scenario, referring to the cost, transport or individual needs. This type of response enabled examiners to award from the top band. Some learners curtailed their responses around risk assessment, presenting a general response based on safety factors for a field trip. Marks were also lost where the command verb was not adhered to and learners presented a list. The second part to the question required an explanation showing knowledge and understanding of how reading books and completing puzzles 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. Where higher band marks were achieved it was evident learners had read the question and the case study, this enabled them to expand and remain focussed. These learners presented a clear explanation covering all areas of development and mentioned both reading and puzzles. Some learners lost marks where they focussed on either reading or puzzles and based the explanation mainly on cognitive development or referred to much younger children. Moving forward with this new style of examination, learners may benefit from a reminder to utilise the case study and read the question thoroughly, along with support in understanding that an outline is not the same as a list.

Question 4 (a b) L.O. (1.4 1.5)

The first part to this question was based on support for children's emotional development. Many learners took an individual approach to their responses and examiners had agreed to mark using the credit any other response guidance where information was correct and focussed on emotional development. This ensured most learners gained valuable marks across a range of bands. The positive marking strategy was utilised by examiners at Part (b) where learners were instructed to identify 3 ways the after-school club may support social development. Most learners gained marks here with some awarded a full 3 marks. Some marks were lost where learners did not attempt an answer in all three boxes provided. Some learners had written extended answers within the same boxes. Centres are reminded that, where learners do not make appropriate use of the boxes/lines provided in this type of question, examiners will mark the first response in each box/line only.

Question 5 L.O. 2.3)

A standalone question enabling learners to develop an analysis across a range of 3 bands, allowing more able learners to gain up to 6 marks. Some learners showed a very good understanding of the after-school club and remembered to refer to both children and parents/carers, as the question required. These learners often used practical examples to support their analysis allowing for higher band marks to be attributed. Some learners showed limited understanding of the afterschool club and based their analysis on teachers and classrooms, often not mentioning parents/carers.

Centres are reminded that although the specification now only includes learning outcomes 1 and 2 the examination will still consist of a full range of questions based on the content of these outcomes. It may also be beneficial to remind learners to read questions properly e.g. where information contains the words children, parents/carers marks will be lost where only one section is referred to.

Question 6 (a b) L.O. (1.6 1.4)

The first part of this question, where the “name” command verb was used, allowed learners to gain 2 marks for basic 1-word answers. Most learners were able to name suitable activities which were often specific games, and marks were awarded for the full range offered. Following conference discussion, examiners were reminded that Tiffanys friends may have come from a wide age range and this should be considered when awarding marks. Marks were lost where learners repeated activities already mentioned in the case study.

The second part of the question, worth 4 marks, was well received by most learners. Many presented good or very good summaries which indicated clear knowledge of the importance of friendships.

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.

PART B

Question 7 (a b) L.O. 2.1)

Both parts of this first generic question required learners to show an understanding of the outdoor environment in the early years. Most learners recognised the switch to generic questions and moved away from referring to the case study correctly identifying the change in age group. Part a invited learners to explain how the outdoor environment supports holistic development, examiners saw a range of responses. Most learners developed a response in line with the middle band requirements making good use of their knowledge to explain various outdoor environments with links to some aspects of development. Some learners were able to develop the explanation offering practical examples of how these environments supported holistic development. These practical examples made the difference to the band awarded with some gaining higher band marks. Some learners lost focus on the question and developed a response based on play in general as opposed to the outdoor environment, examiners implemented the positive marking strategy, and most were awarded some marks where the explanation linked to holistic development. Where some learners had lost marks at Part a there was ample opportunity to recover at Part b and most were able to do so. Three 1-word answers naming natural resources in the outdoors were required and examiners saw appropriate responses including twigs, water, mud or trees. Marks were lost where learners named inappropriate resources including bikes or climbing frames.

It is suggested that centres remind learners of the change from Part a to generic questions at Part b. Also, learners may benefit from encouragement in identifying key words, in this case, Natural resources.

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

Both parts to question 8 proved challenging to many learners with some not responding at all. Part a required learners to outline the Principles of the Flying start initiative, and whilst some showed understanding at middle band level very few were able to outline in enough detail to gain the higher band 3 marks available. Some learners were able to outline basic information, such as, the initiative is free and in disadvantaged areas, but few mentioned the Health Visitor service or the Speech and Language Therapists contribution.

A further 4 marks were available at Part b, however responses here were limited, many were left blank, contained incorrect information or referred to basic childcare provision in a general manner. One of the main functions of the Cylch Meithrin is to provide services through the medium of Welsh, very few learners identified this and some had tried to translate the Welsh to English. Positive marking was applied which allowed some learners to gain 1 mark.

The Flying Start Initiative/Programme is a significant Government initiative and as such should now be embedded in teaching and learning strategies in all centres.

Learning Outcome 2.3 lists childcare settings available to families, the Cylch Meithrin is one of the settings identified. Where centres may not be familiar with all the services available it may be beneficial to learners to invite guest speakers to impart information and support knowledge and understanding.

Learners may also benefit from encouragement to give a brief response rather than leave a blank, this could mean the difference to 1 mark as opposed to 0, as a result this 1 mark could make a difference to the overall outcome.

Question 9 (a b) L.O. (1.3 1.2)

A total of 10 marks were available for this final generic question.

6 marks were available at Part a which required learners to discuss the expected speech and language stage of development for a 4-year-old. Most made an attempt at this part of the question and were able to gain lower band marks where they identified speaking in sentences or increased vocabulary. Some learners attempted to expand; however, information was often incorrect and included ideas from the wrong age/stage of development e.g. a 4-year-old babbles or has a vocabulary of 200 words.

Part b of the question was also attempted by most learners. Some of these attempts were very good and able to achieve the higher band mark when resources, such as role play, were mentioned or activities such as storytelling. There was some loss of marks where focus was on formal reading and writing skills.

Centres might find it useful to remind learners not to include figures e.g. 200 hundred words, unless they are sure they are correct.

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.
- Learners may benefit from revision of terminology/vocabulary.

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](#)

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