

**Peers Early Education Partnership
(PEEP)**

**Annual Report
2008-09**

peep

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Section 1 Reference and Administration details

NAME OF CHARITY AND WORKING NAME

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)

CHARITY REGISTRATION NO:

1049764

REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

The PEEP Centre

Littlemore

OXFORD

OX4 6JZ

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sir Colin McColl KCMG (Chairman) (until March 2009)

Tim Brighthouse

Bernard Clarke

Michael O'Regan OBE

Helena Mitchell

Lesley Staggs

ADVISORS

Rosemary Peacocke

Alison Street

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Peter Silva

Section 2 Governance and management

CONSTITUTION

The Peers Early Education Partnership was established under a Trust Deed dated 15 September 1995 and registered as a charity on 10 October 1995. The Trust Deed details the objects of the charity and powers of the Trustees and was last amended on 17 June 1999.

ORGANISATION

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees. New trustees are invited to join the board by the current trustees. The Trust Deed sets a maximum of 10 on the number of trustees who can serve at any one time. Day-to-day management decisions are delegated to the Chief Executive, who is responsible to the Trustees. The Chief Executive is supported by a staff of 16.5 (FTE), including a small management team.

Section 3 **Aims, Objectives and Activities**

Aims of PEEP

The objects of the Peers Early Education Partnership as set out in the governing document are:

- To advance the education of children between the ages of 0-5.
- To promote research for the benefit of the public in the field of educating children.

A. Advancing children's education

PEEP focuses on this aim in four main ways:

- Delivering of the *Learning Together* programme to families in communities in Oxfordshire.
- Developing and running a PEEP-led Children's Centre.
- Providing professional development through training, support and mentoring to practitioners who offer the *Learning Together* programme to families.
- Working in partnership with central and local government and other voluntary organisations to disseminate *Learning Together*.

This is a five-year programme (birth to four) focusing on three areas of learning: literacy, numeracy and self esteem, and positive attitudes towards learning. It values and builds on families' existing knowledge and experience. PEEP is about making the most of everyday learning opportunities at home, such as listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books and stories.

WORKING IN COMMUNITIES – Oxford Accredited Centre

PEEP staff have now been delivering the PEEP *Learning Together* programme to families in the Oxford area for fourteen years. PEEP manages this work directly and raises the required funding. The work is done in accordance with a Strategic Operational Framework, which articulates models through which the intervention works. We offer outreach support to families ranging from visits and programmes in their homes, to drop-in sessions in places where they already spend time, such as a local shopping centre and child health clinics, to group sessions held in a variety of community venues.

Working in local communities in Oxfordshire is invaluable in that it:

- directly supports parents/carers with their children's development. Accreditation through the Open College Network (OCN) is also offered to parents/carers.
- enables the development of new applications of the programme.
- provides a place for newly-trained practitioners to see how the programme works, as well as providing an opportunity for experienced PEEP practitioners to extend their expertise by experiencing applications of the programme they wish to apply in their own communities.

Home visits Families with newly-born babies and/or new families to the area are offered a home visit, during which they explore how they could use PEEP ideas and materials to support their child's learning at home.

Open access activities These focus on drop-in facilities in which parents have the opportunity to get involved in supporting their children's learning without committing themselves to regular attendance. They are held in locations where parents already

go.

Room to Play is a project run in a former shop unit in a community shopping centre, where parents and carers can come when they like and stay as long as they like. It opens for 30 hours a week over six days, throughout the year. Experienced PEEP practitioners offer play activities and support, drawing on the *Learning Together* curriculum, focusing on each family in an individual and informal way.

Early Explorers consists of a 2-hour play and support session in a child health clinic where PEEP practitioners support health visitors and talk with parents about a range of issues, give out resources and signpost families to other provision. More vulnerable families can be offered a home programme or invited to attend the Early Explorers group.

Home programmes Home programmes are offered to families that have complex needs which are best met, initially at least, by supporting them in their home. They usually last for four to six sessions.

Groups A variety of groups are offered to families in community venues. The standard PEEP groups are available to all families within an area. They may be age-specific or multi-age level. Specialised applications of *Learning Together* for families with similar needs or circumstances are being developed, written up and made available for use by others. Their development, in Oxford and around the UK, has increasingly involved working in partnership with other professionals to deliver the programme. Specialised applications that we delivered this year included a transition group: 'Getting ready for pre-school', and 'Water PEEP' (in a swimming pool).

Community: Development of Children's Centre in Thame (and the surrounding area)

PEEP has been contracted by Oxfordshire County Council to set up (April '08 – March '09) and run (April '09 – March 2012) a phase 3 graduated children's centre for the wards of Thame, Chinnor and Aston Rowant. Our Children's Centre will be run in accordance with the DCSF guidance and service specification, while drawing on the PEEP community empowerment model.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is offered to practitioners who wish to:

- deliver the PEEP *Learning Together* programme
- develop their ability to be reflective in their practice.

This professional development is the basis on which the *Learning Together* programme is disseminated nationally. Training courses and support are offered, with advice and the sharing of good practice, to such organisations as local Sure Start children's centres, family centres, schools and local authorities to run the PEEP *Learning Together* programme.

The following spectrum of services is offered:

Consultation visits are offered in which preliminary discussions can take place with senior management in an organisation/local authority to determine the potential scope for using the PEEP *Learning Together* programme.

Information sessions provide managers, practitioners and support professionals with an overview of PEEP as an organisation and the *Learning Together* programme in particular, and an opportunity to ask questions and see the materials.

Visitor days to Oxford are offered for professionals wishing to see specific activities so that they can familiarise with the PEEP *Learning Together* programme before they start using it, or see specific specialised applications of *Learning Together* so that they can extend the work they already do. They can talk in detail to practitioners about how the programme works in practice.

PEEP for Practitioners training is available to those who will be delivering or managing the *Learning Together* programme. Practitioners go on to become registered, with an option to gain university accreditation with Oxford Brookes University, at undergraduate (15 CAT points) or Masters' (20 CAT points) level.

The **PEEP website** (www.peep.org.uk) provides general information for people new to PEEP, as well as having an extensive log-in area for PEEP trained practitioners, containing planning and other support documents and a discussion forum.

B. Promoting research in the field of educating children

PEEP focuses on this aim in three main ways:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of PEEP work in the community.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development offered through training, support and mentoring to practitioners who work with families.
- Conducting research in partnership with universities, other organisations or with central and local government on subjects that would be of general benefit to all work being done in education. This work would be of benefit to PEEP but does not necessarily focus on PEEP programmes.

Main Annual Objectives and strategies for 2008-09

Community: Oxfordshire Service Delivery

1. Maintain the central services of the core programme (home visits, child health clinic, home programmes, standard groups).
2. Maintain and develop flexible services within the core programme (Room to Play shopping centre project, Early Explorers project, Water PEEP, Transition into a foundation stage setting).
3. Mentor Oxfordshire children's centre practitioners and support student placements.

Community: Practice Development

1. Maintain professional support of practitioners in Oxfordshire and elsewhere.
2. Maintain links with local authority and children's centres.
3. Revise *Learning Together* curriculum and session plans.

Community: Development of Children's Centre in Thame (and the surrounding area)

1. Consult with local families and potential professional partners.
2. Scope potential venues.
3. Plan and promote services.
4. Recruit staff.

Professional Development: Training and Support

1. Deliver, attend and/or host PEEP and early years/ family support events.
2. Deliver training courses: *PEEP for Practitioners (PfP)* and *PEEP for Practitioners Extended* (with university accreditation).
3. Seek City and Guilds accreditation for PfP training.
4. Support and develop regional trainers.
5. Review and update website and information leaflets.

Promoting research

1. Deliver a 'Reflective practice' seminar.
2. Deliver 'Time to play' action-research project.
3. Complete Room to Play evaluation.
4. Initiate a project on research into practice.

Section 4 Achievements and performance

A. Advancing children's education

LOCAL PROGRAMME

Community: Oxfordshire Service Delivery

The range of PEEP *Learning Together* delivery has continued to empower families to participate, and to recognise the value of their own role, in their children's development. Some families chose to attend a group or have a home programme after having a home visit; others came across a PEEP practitioner and activities while having their baby weighed at clinic, or called into Room to Play while out shopping. In each of these places, parents and carers chatted to other parents and practitioners, sometimes sharing ideas and experiences about their child's development, or finding out about another service within the community. This range of support meant that parents and carers could continue to access the appropriate kind of support as and when they needed it.

1. Maintain the central services of the core programme.

Home visits

The home visiting system continued to work well, with PEEP home visitors maintaining close contact with health visitors and children's centre outreach workers where appropriate. 256 visits were made in the Leys to families with newly-born babies or families who were new to the area. This was a 25% increase on the previous year, mirroring the increase in the number of births in the area. An increasing number of families visited were extremely vulnerable, some with children who had child protection plans, and/or were non-English speakers. This had an effect on our capacity to offer as many specialised applications within the year as we originally intended; each home visit consists not only of the 30-60 minutes in the home, but can also include several phone calls, cold calls, missed appointments and related follow-up action. However, we felt that it was important to continue to offer a home visit to every family in the community.

Open access activities: child health clinic

Weekly play and support sessions were run by PEEP practitioners at two child health clinics in Oxford. Practitioners in these two clinics had contact with an average of 15-25 families each week. The clinics continued to be a useful way of

making contact with isolated families, offering some of them a place on a home programme or group, or sign-posting them onto other local support. Excellent working relationships have been maintained between the health visitors and the PEEP practitioners, with the complementary nature of their roles continuing to support more effective work with vulnerable families. Practitioners also developed display boards, each focusing on how parents could support an aspect of child development, which were changed regularly; health visitors used them to support their conversations with parents.

Home Programmes

Home programmes with 22 families were completed during this period, three-quarters of which were referred by health visitors or social workers. Reasons for referral all focussed on the support for enhancing the adult-child relationship, as well as additional factors that prevent family access to group or centre-based provision. A higher proportion of these families than those referred in the past, were experiencing difficulties. Problems included depression, learning difficulties, domestic violence and/or child protection issues. In addition, many families were new to the country and unfamiliar with both the language and family support and early education systems. We worked closely with our local children's centre's outreach team to reduce duplication of work, and to ensure that families were not over-loaded, for example home visiting was shared where appropriate. The impact of home programme work is not easy to evaluate; the circumstances of each family are unique and often complex. Changes can appear small, but may have a significant effect on parent-child relationships: practitioner reviews this year included observations that parents started to praise their children; isolated parents started to attend other provision, such as Room to Play or an English class, and some made friends with other parents more readily; a father felt more confident to seek help about housing problems; some parents felt more confident to support their child's development, for instance by joining in with play activities.

Standard PEEP groups

Eight standard PEEP groups were delivered each term, with 194 children and their parents/carers attending. There were:

- four baby groups with 85 families attending,
- two groups for one year olds with 57 families attending, and
- two groups for two year olds with 52 families attending.

Approximately a quarter of families moved onto the next age level group during this time. More families than in the past were experiencing complex issues, some of whom were being supported by Social and Health Care. One group of Polish parents who regularly attended a group wanted to set up a PEEP-type group with a focus on sharing Polish culture. PEEP and the Leys Children's Centre funded two of them to attend PEEP training, and they have now started their own group.

2. **Maintain and develop flexible services within the core programme** (Room to Play shopping centre project, Early Explorers project, Water PEEP, Transition into a foundation stage setting).

a. Comprehensive, flexible access activities: Room to Play

Room to Play (RTP) has now been operating for three years and receives of 250-300 visitors each week (adults and children), more during the holidays. We are clearly meeting a need, as was illustrated when we remained open during the February snow. The provision was no less busy, with many families turning up because the schools were closed, and homes were cold or lonely. The project

featured well in both a full-page spread in *The Times* and on BBC1's *The Politics Show*. In both cases, we received tremendous support from parents who were keen to share what they had gained from coming to Room to Play. In addition, a *Times* reader ran a marathon to raise funds for Room to Play.

A new planning system was developed, whereby five key daily play activities provided in Room to Play linked to the five developmental areas of the PEEP *Learning Together* curriculum. These and the fortnightly topic, such as 'Animals', provide a focus for parental engagement. Activities were still child- or parent-led, but facilitated discussion around early learning and development. In addition, key resources, such as small world and construction, were placed in baskets, so that they were permanently available for children to choose from and play with. Following a grant from Fox FM radio station, work on the 'greening' of the outside area (a concrete backyard, containing play activities and already much appreciated by families) started in the spring.

We have also been building on a link with Oxford's Healthy Living Initiative. Following on from some sessions they ran in Room to Play, where there was clear family interest, we were involved in a pilot for a Family Grub Club. There were four free sessions where three families, referred by PEEP, were supported with cooking together and then sitting down and eating together. The focus was on sharing ways of feeding a family healthily on a budget, as well as having a good time, introducing good eating habits early and encouraging sitting down at a table to eat. A Room to Play practitioner was released to support the families, but the pilot was funded by the Healthy Living Initiative with Ark T providing the kitchen. We also had one healthy eating activity every week in Room to Play and another practitioner attended the two-day Health Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY) training. A further practitioner attended a smoking cessation course, where the approach was very similar to that of PEEP's. Such training, currently offered by Oxfordshire County Council, is proving invaluable in our support of families attending Room to Play.

b. Specialised applications:

Early Explorers project

PEEP practitioners and health visitors continued to work well together to support families within one of the child health clinics once a week. They offer support to isolated and/or vulnerable families waiting for a home programme or place at the Early Explorers group. As a result of PEEP input, the health team's nursery nurse attended PEEP practitioner training, and began running a story-sharing session during the other child health clinic run by the health visitors. PEEP practitioners supported the health team to create their own treasure baskets, and the clinic room was made as welcoming as possible, with displays and mobiles.

The weekly mixed age group remained necessarily small, and attendance was variable, which was unsurprising given the vulnerability of the families. However, the increase in parental confidence at the end of one or two terms of attendance, when families were supported to move on to children's centre provision and Room to Play, was apparent. Transition between different types of provision was helped as a result of the same two PEEP practitioners who facilitate the group, also delivering home programmes, and working in the clinic and/or Room to Play. The transition was also helped by the involvement of a local children's centre practitioner in the group.

Transition into a foundation stage setting: 'Getting ready for pre-school'

This course was delivered in collaboration with a local pre-school, to support the parents and carers of children who were due to start attending the pre-school the following term. Families were offered a home visit, followed by three group sessions towards the end of term, and two more sessions at the beginning of the following term. Enrolment and attendance were high, and parents were enthusiastic in their subsequent support of the pre-school.

Water PEEP

Two sessions were delivered by a PEEP practitioner, children's centre outreach worker and a social and health care family support worker. Eight very vulnerable families attended. The families needed a lot of preparation and follow-up by the PEEP practitioner, but everyone seemed to really enjoy the sessions. Some families became more regular attenders of standard PEEP groups and/or met up socially, while one non-swimming mother signed up for swimming lessons. This was the first time that we had delivered Water PEEP in Oxford; a version was developed in Newcastle several years ago, and sessions have since been delivered in Derby, Clacton and elsewhere.

3. Mentoring

Mentor Oxfordshire children's centre practitioners

Experienced PEEP practitioners have continued to mentor practitioners from several Oxford children's centres who have recently completed *PEEP for Practitioners* training. This has contributed to the quality and sustainability of the support provided for families, as PEEP programme delivery is embedded and more practitioners become involved. Mentoring has been provided around the delivery of PEEP groups, drop-in sessions, home programmes and sessions in a foundation stage setting. One of the PEEP practitioner-mentors also co-led a group at a local housing association complex for very young parents, adapting the curriculum so that it met their needs and held their interest.

Mentor student placements

We provided placements for three more students from Oxford Brookes University, an Early Childhood Studies student and two Health and Social Care students, as well as three Oxford Academy Health and Social Care students. All of them supported delivery in PEEP groups or Room to Play. A Room to Play regular user on an Entry to Employment course began a weekly placement with us. We were also lucky to have a former nursery school and Children's Centre head seconded to us from the local authority for two terms, who learned about applications of the *Learning Together* programme and supported delivery.

Community: Practice Development

1. Maintain professional support of practitioners

Professional support, from both practitioners and managers, was offered to a range of managers and practitioners working in Oxfordshire, including speech and language therapists, the Rural Children's Centre and other local charities. Managers and practitioners also responded to questions regarding PEEP practice from around the country by telephone and email. They also participated in discussions during visits to the PEEP Centre by other practitioners. Practitioners also delivered workshops during information sessions for organisations, and

supported *PEEP for Practitioners* training, in London, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Other organisations all reported that they found it useful to talk with experienced PEEP practitioners about delivery; our practitioners also found they interaction beneficial, in terms of finding out more about the ideas and experiences of other people who work with families, as well as extending their own professional development.

2. Maintain links with local authority and children's centres

We continued to attend all relevant local authority meetings, including locality and children's centre leads meetings, and the advisory and team meetings of two local children's centres where we are delivering and/or mentoring practitioners. We continued to sit on the executive committee of Oxfordshire Parenting Forum. It continues to be difficult to access local authority structures after re-structuring, something experienced across the sector.

3. Review *Learning Together* curriculum and session plans

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was mapped to the PEEP *Learning Together* curriculum and folders. The information was added to the curriculum maps, which are downloadable from the PEEP website, and has been welcomed by practitioners. A complete set of multi-level session plans has also been added to the log-in website. A revised way of delivering the curriculum in Room to Play was also produced, and is working well. The *Learning Together* videos were transferred to DVD format this year.

Community: Development of Children's Centre in Thame (and the surrounding area): The Red Kite Children's Centre

Set up period: April 2008 – March 2009.

1. Consult with local families and potential professional partners

A consultation process with families was established. We visited all the statutory and voluntary settings that currently provide services for families, and talked with as many families as possible informally. We also distributed, with the help of settings managers, a tick-list of possible services (based on the children's centre service specification). This has received a good response rate; the vast majority were interested in drop-in play, singing and rhyme sessions, and support around children's behaviour. A third were also interested in activities for dads/ male carers, and support for those experiencing post-natal depression. A database was created for families interested in finding out more; they will be contacted with regard to participating in a parent forum or similar group.

We established links with health visitors, the social care team, the children's centre link social worker, the Thame locality co-ordinator, the early years SEN team, local and county librarians, the Rural Children's Centre project, local schools and members of staff from Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire PCT. The latter are important because Thame comes under Buckinghamshire PCT and because approximately one third of all children at school in Thame live in Buckinghamshire. We joined the Thame and Young Peoples' Network, the steering group for the Extended Services Partnership and the Locality Strategy Group, and established an advisory group.

2. Scope potential venues

Many potential venues were considered but it was finally agreed that a 'hub' would

be built on the site of John Hampden Primary School. Satellite venues will also be used both in Thame and the surrounding villages. The planning phase is underway and building should commence early in 2010. A temporary office has been rented in Thame town centre.

3. Plan and promote services

We have delivered 'taster' PEEP sessions and worked collaboratively with the Rural Children's Centre Project (which covers part of the area, until March 2009) in a number of ways, including supporting delivery of a PEEP group and participating at a fun day and at a healthy living roadshow. We have also started delivering a PEEP group in one of the nurseries, which is proving extremely popular.

We completed a development plan which includes drop-in activities, work alongside health visitors, PEEP *Learning Together* in groups and outreach and transition work with nurseries and pre-school settings. We are looking at ways of adding value to the existing services, both statutory and voluntary, in the area and will continue to work closely with partners.

4. Recruit staff

The post of Children's Centre manager was recruited internally. Two additional posts, Children's Centre PEEP practitioners, were advertised and have been filled. One of these posts includes administrative hours.

Professional Development: Training and Support

1. Deliver, attend and/or host PEEP and early years/ family support events

Consultation meetings and information sessions with a range of organisations and local authorities have continued to provide a useful introduction to PEEP for managers and practitioners. Some of the sessions held this year have also involved PEEP practitioners delivering workshops on various aspects of PEEP delivery, to give those attending a fuller flavour of the *Learning Together* programme. Following on from previous meetings or visits, the CEO also spoke at various events, including 'Building a Family Learning Community: a European context' in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the annual Childcare conference in Galway, Ireland.

We also welcomed a steady stream of visitors, both those who had heard about PEEP and wanted to find out more, and those who were PEEP-trained and wanted to find out more about particular aspects of delivery. The former included managers and practitioners from organisations from the UK and abroad interested in delivering PEEP and/or observing examples of good practice in social inclusion and early childhood education; Philippa Charles, the new Director of the Garfield Weston Trust and Doug Thomson, Development Director of the Sutton Trust, both of which have funded some PEEP work; Aly Nazerali, CEO and European representative of the Aga Khan Foundation; and senior education advisors from the DCSF.

2. Deliver training courses: *PEEP for Practitioners (Pfp)* and *PEEP for Practitioners Extended (with university accreditation)*

***PEEP for Practitioners (Pfp)* training** continues to thrive, with 742 practitioners attending the two-day course during the year, only slightly fewer than the previous year, when much of the training had been funded through the DfES's Early Learning Partnership project. Practitioners from all twelve UK regions, in particular

the south west and east, east and west midlands and Scotland, attended 54 PFP training events. The practitioners' occupations continued to be wide ranging; just over half were early years or family support workers, while the others included managers/ co-ordinators, teachers/ assistants, outreach workers, health visitors, librarians, speech and language specialists, social workers and volunteers.

Congratulations went to all the practitioners who managed to complete the university-accredited module within their already busy lives! 44 passed at undergraduate level: *PEEP: supporting parents and carers as first educators*, and 11 at Masters' level: *Critical perspectives on PEEP*. Following attendance at *PfP Extended* training, practitioners were offered a half-day workshop, where they were encouraged to organise peers support or 'buddying', as well as 1:1 tutor support online and on the telephone. At the exam board, the external examiner again drew attention to the quality of the reflective style and content of the work presented. He encouraged PEEP to explore further ways to disseminate this work in a field where literature and research is limited, which we did via the seminar (see Research section) and the PEEP website. It was also recognised at the exam board that the training had been rolled out within the context of rapid change and restructuring at a local authority/ PCT level, with many practitioners facing uncertainty or change within their jobs.

We also developed and piloted a one-day training course for practitioners and volunteers who are working in supporting roles within PEEP *Learning Together* delivery. The course has been refined after consultation in Oxford and with national trainers, and is being launched nationally in autumn 2009 with events in Luton and Somerset.

3. Seek City and Guilds accreditation for PFP training

Consultant Chrissie Hawkes, from Community Mothers, has been advising PEEP as to the best way to introduce City & Guild's accreditation to replace the PEEP registration process, and has mapped the curriculum into a Level 3 unit called Engaging with Parents. The national trainers have been consulted about introducing the unit into the 2-day PFP training, and the practitioners' handbook and the trainers' manual are being rewritten to incorporate City & Guild's. PEEP will run City & Guild's work through Chrissie's centre initially, and she has agreed to advise and guide in terms of quality assurance and standardisation as the portfolios arrive.

4. Support and develop regional trainers

More new trainers have come on board including four in Derby, one in Peterborough and one in Cannock. It is also hoped within the year to add new trainers in Somerset, North Somerset and West Lothian. Termly all-day Trainers' Network meetings have been well attended with trainers staying the night before the meeting in a hotel together and enjoying a communal meal. Contact with trainers continues with regular phone calls, email and there has been substantially more use of the trainers' discussion forum. There has been an on-going programme of updating local authority agreements with visits to most areas.

5. Review and update website and information leaflets

The PEEP website provides a useful resource for people working with families, who are interested in or already using the PEEP *Learning Together* programme. It contains a log-in area to support PEEP-trained practitioners. News and downloadable documents, include session plans, are continually added to. There were over 93,000 visits to the website this year (a 20% increase on last year) and

more than 18,000 documents were downloaded (a 40% increase on last year). New to the website is a books review page as a result of a project between book publishers and PEEP. Practitioners are testing out books with adults and children, and reviews are written up giving advice and guidance to practitioners and managers throughout the country as to the best books to use in their PEEP work.

We also developed a new range of information leaflets, focusing on different aspects of PEEP: delivery within the community, professional development, and information for managers. These will be available in autumn 2009.

B. Promoting Research

1. Deliver a 'Reflective practice' seminar

In February we held a collaborative event, with Westminster Institute of Education at Oxford Brookes University, to celebrate reflective practice. The latest successful PEEP accreditation students (at undergraduate and masters levels) were presented with their certificates. This was followed by a seminar entitled '*A celebration of PEEP reflective practice*' in which four accredited PEEP practitioners gave interesting and insightful presentations based on an aspect of their PEEP work that they had written about for their accreditation. Discussion was facilitated by an invited panel, consisting of Martin Needham from the University of Wolverhampton, who is the external examiner for the PEEP accreditation modules, Mary Wild from Oxford Brookes, and Alison Street, PEEP accreditation tutor. The afternoon ended with a presentation from Martin entitled 'Supporting parents in supporting their children's thinking'. The event highlighted the strength and distinctive nature of our existing partnership with Westminster Institute of Education. It provided an excellent professional development opportunity for the PEEP practitioners and trainers who came from around the country to attend.

2. Deliver 'Time to play' action-research project

Time to Play was a 12 month project (April 2008-March 2009) funded by the CYPF, led by PEEP, with Dr Susan Young from the University of Exeter as the principal investigator. The project's main aim was to improve the integration of young children of ethnic minority, particularly Muslim families, into the services offered by Children's Centres, by developing culturally appropriate approaches for mother and child sessions based on creative play as a foundation for learning. There were three phases:

Phase 1 consisted of interviews with 89 Muslim mothers, which fed into planning the practice. In Phase 2 play activities were discussed and explored with the parents involved and 20 sessions were held in each of the four children's centres, in Birmingham, Oxford, Southampton and Bristol. The Time to Play practitioners met for regular reflection on the challenges and opportunities arising, including questions these raised about the identities and values of both the families and practitioners. At the end the mothers said that they particularly appreciated sharing creative activities with other adults that included their children; discussing their children's development; tuning in to musicality and creativity based on what was enjoyable and meaningful; and sharing their own experiences, fears and aspirations. Time to Play practitioners learned to find creative activities that were relevant, enjoyable and could facilitate communication; to be open to unknown and unpredictable circumstances, such as accounts from refugees and expectations

about play for their children; and to reflect and plan with children's centre staff, challenging assumptions about play.

Phase 3 focused on disseminating recommendations for intercultural practice and materials that respect the mothers' values and parenting styles and support their children's development. A final practitioner reflection day and Oxfordshire Children's Centre workshop will be held in July. Two papers have been accepted for presentation at international conferences: Music Education and Research with Young Children (European Network) (MERYC) in Bologna in July 2009 and the EECERA conference in Strasbourg in August 2009. A substantial final report with detailed findings from the action research led by Dr Susan Young will be available in late summer, and the project has been discussed in an article by Young in *Early Child Development and Care*, Vol. 179, No. 5, July 2009, 549–559. Downloadable materials from the PEEP website for practitioners to use will also be available by the end of summer.

3. Complete Room to Play evaluation

The final phase of the evaluation of *Room to Play* by Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (Evangelou M, Coxon C and Sylva K) was completed in December, funded by the Sutton Trust. The issues emerging from the study continue to inform the on-going development of the project and are contributing to the development of a model for similar provision that could be developed in other areas. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used: semi-structured interviews with PEEP staff, observation, a quantitative questionnaire and interviews with users.

Broadly, the evaluation found that Room to Play was a unique and effective project which supported a wide range of parents and carers and their children in its first three years. It has been shown that the approach to Room to Play has been successful in creating an environment in which families, including those who do not access other settings, feel welcome and comfortable. A skilled and experienced staff of PEEP practitioners acted professionally yet personally, to form relationships with users so they felt both welcomed and valued. The convenient location, long opening hours and informal homely atmosphere provided an environment in which parents could gain confidence and build relationships with staff, their children and other users in their own time. It has been clearly demonstrated that it is possible to implement the PEEP curriculum in an unstructured setting where the practitioners are confident to introduce appropriate elements in a flexible and responsive manner. This was facilitated by the use of well-planned and appealing activities. Practitioner also passed on information about other issues beyond the scope of PEEP *Learning Together*. A combination of all these factors has been successful and effective in engaging families at risk and supporting them in 'moving on'.

4. Initiate a project on research into practice

We secured a 2-year, strategic CYPF grant from the DCSF for a project entitled *Early Explorers: Integrating with Partner Professionals*. PEEP will work with researchers from the University of Warwick, led by Professor Jane Barlow. Evaluation of the pilot of Early Explorers (described above) will analyse how the role of PEEP practitioners and health visitors integrate, and how colleagues learn from each other. The findings will inform the extension of Early Explorers into two contrasting areas (Thame and inner city Oxford) and inform the development of training that will promote integrated working for use by early years and health professionals. It will also build capacity within PEEP around monitoring and

evaluation.

Section 5 Financial review

The annual accounts for 2008-09 are attached.

Section 6 Future plans – 2009-10

A work plan for 2009-10 is attached.

