



Chief Examiner Report

**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and
Education (Early
Years Educator) (601/4000/8)**

Assessment code: EYE/EA theme 1 & theme 2

Paper numbers: P003167 & P003168

Submission date: 16 January 2026

Introduction

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade achievements
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- assessment structure
- use of word allocation
- criteria requirements and command verbs
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- assessment criteria (AC)
- regulations for conducting examinations.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade achievements

EYE/EA Theme 1

The Early Years Educator develops children's school readiness through understanding of the current early years framework.

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	113
% of learners	0.00%	23.89%	41.59%	30.97%	3.54%	0.00%	Pass rate	100%

EYE/EA Theme 2

The Early Years Educator supports children's learning, development and school readiness.

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	11
% of learners	9.09%	27.27%	45.45%	18.18%	0.00%	0.00%	Pass rate	90.01%

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with JCQ [Instructions for Conducting Examinations \(ICE\)](#) document. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#) document.

Standard of learner work

There were a range of achievements demonstrated in this assessment. All learners successfully achieved Theme 1, and the majority also achieved Theme 2. Most learners attempted and achieved D and C grades, showing a generally secure level of understanding across the group. Several learners also attempted the higher grades, with some successfully meeting all aspects of the assessment criteria at that level.

The overall standard of work was mostly good for the grades achieved, with several learners able to apply their knowledge to practical examples to support their responses. However, for those attempting the higher grades, further development of answers was needed, particularly through closer reference to the command words to ensure the depth and detail required for higher-level responses.

Assessment structure

The criteria and tutor guidance have remained unchanged, and no changes have been made to the marking guidelines since the previous assessment.

Use of word allocation

Learners need to consider the word allocation in relation to the increasing demands of the criteria, as many D grade responses used more words than required, leaving fewer for higher-grade tasks and a significant number of learners did not attempt the higher grades or use the full word allocation.

Criteria requirements and command verbs

Learners should ensure that they refer to the Information for learners and tutors document to ensure that they meet all aspects of the criteria.

Attempts at higher grades were sometimes not achieved due to learners not meeting the requirements of the command words and lack of sufficient words to develop their answers to meet the higher criteria requirements.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

All work must be clearly referenced to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria. In most cases referencing was identifiable and aligned with the guidance given in the Information for Tutors and Learners document. Two identifiable and traceable quotations are required for each criterion.

Assessment criteria (AC)

EYE/EA – Theme 1

The Early Years Educator develops children's school readiness through understanding of the current early years framework.

D Criteria

The D criteria was generally well answered. Learners were able to focus on the requirements of the criteria and ensured that they related their answer supporting mathematical development and emergent literacy.

D3 showed good understanding of the use of reflection to support children through transitions, supporting responses with theory to both and reflection.

C Criteria

Learners who achieved the C criteria were able to summarise and discuss requirements of the current framework in relation to literacy, maths and partnership working.

Most learners were able to discuss an international approach that recognised child centred learning; however, a few learners gave a description and did not develop the discussion.

B Criteria

Some learners attempted the B grade and extended their responses to include analysis and evaluation.

Learners should be reminded that evaluation requires strengths and limitations, which was not evident in some cases.

Learners should also be reminded that they are required to compare and contrast aspects of two international approaches to meet the requirements of B3

A Criteria

Many learners did not attempt the higher grades, of those that did, many did not meet the requirements of the higher-level command words.

Some learners were able to show analysis of an enabling environment to support children through transitions.

The A2 criteria require learners to be able to evaluate and examine from more than one perspective. Learners need to be able to discuss the evidence from more than one perspective

A* Criteria

Limited responses given to meet the A* criteria. Responses given lacked depth and did not meet the requirements of critical evaluation

EYE/EA – Theme 2

The Early Years Educator supports children's learning, development and school readiness

D Criteria

All learners achieved D1 and D2 and D3 and most gave well developed answers. A good understanding of emergent literacy and mathematical development was evident, and learners showed understanding of the concept of school readiness.

D4 requires learners to include 2 references in their work. Most learners achieved this. Where references were not included learners were unable to achieve the full D criteria

C Criteria

Most learners who attempted the C grade achieved the requirements and were able to discuss the requirements of the framework for assessment and explain working in partnership. In some cases, the word allocation was not balanced in the C grade to give equal weighting to each question.

Good examples of discussion, explanation and summarising were evident.

Learners were mostly also able to correctly discuss an international approach that supports children's learning.

In some cases, learners made very minimal responses to C3 which impacted on achieve of the grade.

B Criteria

Some learners who attempted up to the B grade and extended their responses to demonstrate analysis and evaluation.

Learners were able to evaluate play activities to support mathematical understanding through enabling or limiting the children's development.

A Criteria

No attempts were made at the A criteria.

A* Criteria

No attempts were made at the A* criteria.

Regulations for conducting examinations

Malpractice

There were zero instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

There were zero instances of maladministration in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document in this respect.

Chief examiner: Shirley Jackson Hulme

Date: 5 March 2026

Chief examiner guidance – DELETE BEFORE PUBLICATION

Read before completing

- the audience for this document is teachers and other staff within schools
- the purpose is to give them valuable insight into how the cohort overall performed, areas of good practice and learner response, areas where learners clearly struggled to achieve marks, and other informative details from the papers you and your marking teams have seen
- a comment must be added for every criteria.
 - Was the quality and standard of the work varied or consistent?
 - Did learners attempt to answer all questions in the papers? Any patterns
 - If there were excellent responses what did learners demonstrate?
 - If learners were under-prepared was there a clear reason?
- avoid using language which may undermine confidence in either NCFE or the assessment task
 - Feel free to refer to questions as being 'challenging' or one on which some/many learners struggled to achieve AO3/higher band marks etc It's ok to talk about achievement in general terms, but avoid specifics
- reflect where learners got answers right/wrong, reflect common errors or issues with answers, and give support to centres in understanding what areas they may wish to focus on before the next assessment series.