

Quality Improvement Visit

Setting: **Nursery Name**

Date: X Feb 22

Judgement: **Requires Improvement**

Consideration Points:

Consultant: **Consultant Name**

Areas of strength

- Notification call handled exceptionally well. <Staff Member> very positive and professional.
- Friendly and professional welcome by <Staff Member> and <Staff Member>. <Staff Member> also present and provided support to the nursery.
- The management team clearly have an ambitious vision for this nursery. There are a number of exciting ideas in the works – expansion, introduction of animals, development of outdoor areas, investment in resources.
- Learning walk is very good – with lots of evidence of reflective practice and ongoing improvement.
- <Staff Member> shares some very good examples of support for vulnerable children. Suggests excellent systems relating to identification of additional needs – SEN as well as emotional and practical support.
- Management confident in support for children with emerging SEN. They are working in partnership with parents to finalise IEPs. There is also liaison with external agencies.
- Really liked example of how 'Worry Monster' has been skillfully used to help children disclose anxieties. Great that team are alert to what is going on at home and in children's lives.
- Good example of partnership working with the school locally.
- Team are very well qualified – with majority at Level 3.
- Staff morale and wellbeing is a priority at this nursery. Employee of the Month scheme is fun and celebrates efforts of the team. <Staff Member> reports good impact since this was introduced.

- The nursery has a Mental Health Champion who has received MHFA training and is also supported by <Staff Member>. The team report this initiative has had good impact.
- Very good explanation of the Childcare Specialist role and wider support the nursery benefits from.
- Sound consideration of Covid adaptations and understanding of impact on children and families.
- Partnerships with parents seems strong – with regular newsletters communicating staff changes, notifying of annual leave and sharing changes in the nursery.
- Parents Forum meets twice a year and helps inform ideas. Great that representatives are given an official email address and also that there's a Dad on the forum to help encourage more diverse views.
- Open Days allow parents an opportunity to re-familiarise themselves with the nursery. Parents evenings also held regularly.
- Strong explanation of curriculum and how this is differentiated for age age-group.
- Enrichment activities are offered - including bilingual sessions. Management conscious of need to ensure language sessions are entirely age-appropriate and child-centred.
- Sports sessions are offered once each week and children learn a variety of sports.
- Separating the baby room into two sides feels like a wise move. Area for younger babies is very well presented and organised. Creatively set up. Lovely cosy areas with plenty of cushions. High quality resources to explore.
- Family albums have been created to support babies to settle – and I liked idea of making recordings as well.
- Unit Manager explains medication policy, use of teething gel and care plans very well.
- Accident forms are explained well by a practitioner.

- At lunchtime, dietary preferences are recognised and managed well. Practitioners wear red aprons to supervise children with 'allergy' red plates.
- Babies are encouraged to use cutlery – and staff offer praise when they use their forks, celebrating these successes.
- Serving dishes are provided and babies are encouraged to self-serve. Practitioner demonstrates great patience allowing Juno to do this.
- Staff are deployed effectively across the room, ensuring good supervision as children eat.
- Staff model good manners.
- Nursery has a strong policy that does not advocate physically waking children which advocates for their needs to rest fully.
- Practitioners are very responsive when children become upset.
- Outside, practitioners demonstrate great vigilance when they hear a child call out or cry. Excellent that they interrupt discussion with visitor to go and intervene and reassure children!
- Rooms have tissue and water stations.
- Some lovely moments of independence when children put their tissues in the bin themselves and grin broadly.
- In preschool there was a lovely sense of fun and atmosphere was playful. Children full of curiosity and very confident approaching visitors.
- Self-registration includes self-regulation with children placing their images to demonstrate how they feel. The children demonstrate great awareness of different emotions and confidently explain the colour system – great evidence of impactful teaching!
- Preschool elections are being held to support playful promotion of British Values.
- Children's interests are supported in the moment – <Staff Member> responds nicely today and gets a real thermometer for a child who is enjoying using the doctor role-play equipment.
- Children are given the choice as to whether they wish to wear aprons.

- Children are well supervised in the bathrooms.
- Cleanliness of bathrooms is monitored and signed off regularly – effective system.
- Staff communicate well with each other – e.g. confirming numbers of children they are taking outside or who are settling to sleep. They also share information about children’s routines – passing on messages about how much has been eaten, which is good team work and helps ensure parents given accurate handover.
- Staff work effectively with each other to support children’s transitions. <Staff Member> comes to collect <child> today and has a discussion with <Staff Member>.
- Staff speak very positively about training opportunities. Staff meetings are held regularly.
- Staff have regular supervisions and can explain what they are working and how senior colleagues help them improve their practice.
- Great that all rooms have direct access to outdoor play areas.
- Outside is mostly very nicely set up – with purposeful and engaging activities.
- Staff answer safeguarding questions very capably! Includes non-mobile bruising protocol and whistleblowing.
- Safer recruitment is effective.
- Chef explains menu design and allergy management very well. Puddings are low sugar. Dietary preferences are monitored and updated regularly – aware of risk of these being excessive. (Was very nice to be offered food and this was very tasty.)
- Chef is a positive presence in the nursery and interacts with the children when they come to choose and ‘buy’ snack from the ‘shop’.

Areas of development

- **Ensure sleeping children are effectively supervised and kept safe**
 - A child sleeping in Nursery room today was not well supervised and other children were able to crowd round and attempted to wake her up. She was asleep on a mat in the middle of the room.
 - Practitioners then began a dancing activity which saw children begin to jump around the child. I alerted the Room Leader who intervened to stop the activity, but then practitioners relocated to the carpet, the other side of the child and started a singing session.
 - This does not meet the needs of the sleeping child and demonstrates a lack of awareness, being too routine driven.
 - It is also ineffective leadership.

- **Quality of interactions is not consistently good**
 - Practitioners ask too many unnecessary, closed questions and do not always successfully tune-in or adapt their communication to match a child's development stage
 - This was identified in two joint observations and at other times.
 - Some staff speak loudly and an overly exaggerated way – perhaps due to nerves – but it feels inauthentic, creates some tension and children look baffled.
 - In the baby room during lunchtime, a practitioner repeatedly quizzes a child whilst they are eating – “What does it taste like?” “Is your plate empty or full?”
 - Preschool children questioned about water pollution while they are trying to catch fish. (Didn't seem relevant to the activity).
 - Coach staff to provide age-appropriate, gentle commentary rather than feeling they must question. This will demonstrate better understanding of how children learn.
 - Despite focus on Makaton, there is very limited use of it today.
 - Preschool group time was too large and staff had been trialling smaller groups but did not implement today.

- **Strengthen approach to planning to ensure curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced effectively:**
 - Colour of the Week, Shape of the Week and Word of the Week are not planned or implemented effectively.
 - Nursery and Preschool using this approach – but not clearly differentiating based on the abilities or interests of their children.
 - Makaton signs of the week are the same in all rooms, though use is very limited.
 - Playdough activity observed (Joint observation) was not coherent.
 - Leaders need to have oversight of planning

- Good that leaders are passionate and confident in challenging judgements (where they feel these are unfair) though must ensure they listen to feedback and have accurate understanding of quality of provision, as observed on the day.
- Ensure level of water in the fountains and ponds is BELOW the safety grid, otherwise there is a risk of drowning. Review risk assessments to ensure this is regularly checked.
- Make sure all gates are fixed and catches are working – one had an awkward bolt and no catch. (These MUST be secure if risk assessment of garden area is to hold up and children stay safe.)
- Despite ongoing focus, baby room lunchtime routine still needs improvement – today, the room was not ready and required a number of staff to sweep and clean up while children in the space. Room Leader responded and gathered the children for a group time, but children were not fully engaged and were keen to move off. (This this set the tone for interactions, as above.)
- Ensure older children remove outdoor shoes before walking through baby area to sleep room. (Consider need for basket to store staff shoes too and also a clear route through the room.)
- Recognise risk from staff sitting on floor while supervising mealtimes – this involves touching floor to get up and down and then staff are touching children's bowls and cutlery. (Get adult chairs)
- Follow children's lead and differentiate use of cups at lunchtime, so more capable babies are not given a lid. (This is supported at snack-time but not lunchtime, so let's be consistent.)
- Review the implementation of 'Meditation' sessions. Staff have not had sufficient training to deliver effectively and felt children were exposed and not really understanding purpose. Not a comfortable place to relax – particularly with traffic noise.
- Take forward IEP for SEN child and ensure use of Visual Timetable, Now and Next and Makaton is embedded across whole nursery. (This can be part of brilliant Universal Inclusive Practice rather than needing to be introduced individually for a specific child.)
- Visuals for Head Start Library need to be accurate. Steps communicated do not accurately reflect the display or system for borrowing books.

- Identify a speech and language tool to support assessment of children where there are concerns.
- Enhance opportunities for children to really exert themselves physically – everyday. Continuous provision outdoors offers very limited physical challenge, other than planks/assault course that the team set up. (Feel that climbing equipment is a priority and more space to use the football goal.)
- Review layout of space for older babies – feels less inviting and cosy compared to the younger side, dominated by tables. Carpet area is located by the door and doesn't feel very enclosed or cosy. Home corner 'kitchen' furniture is large for the space – so not easy to move round. Practitioner needed to lift up floor tiles to make room for chairs round the table.
- Reduce displays on windows in Preschool to maximise natural light.
- Consider proactive research into bereavement to support vulnerable child.
- Consider relocating the soft drinks fridge or frosting the glass – that is offered as a staff perk. Danger that this being positioned in foyer contradicts commitment to Oral Health.
- Baby room staff photo board is very 'professional' – though not all photos are warm and smiley. Adding information about staff hobbies and personal interests might be nice to provoke conversation from parents. Also good to specify the languages spoken as not everyone recognises flags.
- Great if children can self-serve pudding too – today the chef sent pudding in a large bowl which meant staff had to serve.
- Today child with intolerance to dairy was given raspberries while other children had apple crumble and custard. They pushed this away recognising it was not the same – review whether a more similar alternative could be offered in future.
- Toddler routine today involved children coming in and washing hands before carpet time, then washing hands again immediately afterwards ready for lunch. Is this necessary routine?
- Tidy clutter in bathroom area – cleaning materials and towels not stored neatly. Behind the screens needs to feel organised too.
- Display of planning and notices on walls – feels haphazard in some places which makes information sharing less effective.

- Some resources labelled and some not. More visual cues will help children make informed choices.

Please note: Quality Improvement Visits are designed to support settings to evaluate and reflect on their current practice. A tentative judgment may be given using the public document 150068. However, a Quality Improvement Visit offers advice, guidance and on-going support, therefore is not a mock inspection.

