



Membership Re-evaluation

Date: October 2017

Project Name: Newburn Manor Nursery School

Project Location: Townfield Gardens
Newburn
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NE15 8PY

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Summary of Evaluation: Recommendation – to award Investing in Children Membership Award™ for another two years. “***We like it here***”, the nursery children told me.

Sector: Early Years

Ages: 3 – 5 years old

Ward: Newburn

Number of beneficiaries: 80



Evaluation for Investing in Children Membership

Newburn Manor Nursery School



Introduction

The nursery provides early education in the north-west of the City. There are currently 80 children in the nursery who attend the school from three years of age until they begin reception class at a neighbouring school. They can attend either mornings or afternoons each week depending on the needs of the family. Some children access the breakfast club and/or after-school sessions. The outside of the building has lots of safe space for play and is a very open and pleasant environment. Since the last Investing in Children Membership evaluation there has been changes to the management team at nursery and I am delighted to say that the new Head Teacher Mrs Kay Mills generously supports the membership award.

I admit I was very excited to visit Newburn Manor Nursery, historically the setting is a place that offers a unique delivery of early education which is both bold and outstanding. The voices of young children have always been at the heart of their practice and children have thrived on opportunities to influence their nursery experience. I have worked alongside Mrs Mills before and I was curious to hear what changes have been made alongside existing practice. I was not disappointed. On my arrival parents were keen to talk to me before I had set foot in the building, Jays mum Katie said **"He loves it. They (the staff) know him so well and this is evident during the 1:1 sessions"**. Katie explained that parents meet with their child's key worker to talk about their child's progress. Katie said **"it's so good to be able to talk to Jay's teacher and share information. Jay talks about nursery all of the time when he is at home"**.

Setting the Scene

The doors opened and I was welcomed by Mrs Mills and the staff team. As always there was a warm and welcoming ethos to the building which gives an energy of focused excitement. It is clear that changes have been made and I felt the environment presented a nurturing and energized atmosphere. I was shown around the nursery before the children arrived. On the whole the nursery space is open-planned except for a room used to support the young children. Every opportunity has been taken to value the children and nurtured then to achieve a high standard and to be an independent, confident and happy influencer of change.

Evidence of dialogue & change

"Hello everyone how are you?"

Teachers began to gather at their stations and music was turned on. Mrs Mills opened



the doors, the day was about to begin. Children and their parents are all greeted each morning by Mrs Mills who welcomes the excited families into the Nursery. I stood in the hallway and children said “**hello**” to me as they marched passed. I have never seen so many **smiling** faces. Children were curiously looking me up and down clearly wondering why I was standing in their way.

I followed the children through to the main learning area and I couldn't believe my eyes. Children waved goodbye to their parents and joined their relevant class group. While the music continued to play the children and their teacher began a welcome dance. The complexity of the morning ritual is clearly part of the children's everyday routine. It was a fantastic start to the day and all of the nursery community joined in meeting and greeting each other with positivity and enthusiasm. Parents stood and watched for a short while taking in the scene, appreciating that their children were happy and included.

Our **School Vision**....one of our values is **happiness**, we encourage our children to be happy and we plan lots of experiences that make them happy. Each day when children arrive they have the opportunity to say how they are feeling....today one of our youngest children said he felt '**excited**' ...we asked him why and he replied "**because I am in Nursery!**"

One parent commented “**it's a great start to the day**”.

Younger children (those who had just turned 3 years) were in a smaller room doing their own welcome dance, again with excitement and determination. The routine in this room supports the children to build friendships and reaffirm relationships. There was lots of **singing** and **giggling** as children reconnected with each other.

Change

It is extremely refreshing to visit a nursery and observe children's happiness at returning to a place where they genuinely want to be. The staff team have clearly listened to the children's anxiety about staying at nursery without their parents. Children's first experience of independence is stressful and at times overwhelming as they manage newly emerging emotions and responsibility. Changing the welcome routine in response to children's concerns has created a positive start to the day, reassuring children that learning is fun and interactive.

Younger children had told the staff team that they felt secure in their own smaller room. The staff listened to this and have kept the space available the younger group.

Sharing achievements

Relationships in nursery are extremely important to both the children and the adults who support them. As relationships develop and grow children want to share their experiences with their teachers and friends about their interests outside of the nursery.



“We hope you are enjoying half term, don't forget to tell us what you have been doing - we love hearing from you”

The children are given time to share their activities and achievements outside of nursery during circle time. Children also share who helps them at home and what they like to do. I observed 1 child feeding back her achievements to her peer group. The children were so supportive of each other, asking questions and giving praise.

Change

Supporting children to share their experiences from outside of the nursery has strengthened relationships across the nursery community. The children have real pride in their achievements and have begun to understand the differences about the world around them.

The information gathered during this important information sharing activity is implemented into planning of activities and further learning. The greatest value is that staff listen and make meaning of situations described by the children, which helps the design of teaching techniques within the nursery community. For example the soft toys Dossie and Kwame have been introduced to help the children understand how to make choices and decisions.

Evaluating change and impact

Regular meetings with parents and carers are calendared during the school year to support children to have a say about matters that are important to them. Whilst the nursery facilitates these discussions with parents, children's voices are at the heart of these meetings. Children work with their key teacher before the meeting to identify information they would like to share. One child told me, "**At home what I like best is my hot wheels cars and I've got lots. I made a traffic jam. My mummy and daddy help me. When I grow up I want to be a policeman because he gets the bad guys**". The children I spoke to all agreed it was important that they get help to share information to adults.

Change

Sharing information between nursery and home has supported children to work towards identifying and achieving their aspirations. Seeing the world through the lens of a small child has enabled children to influence and identify priorities. A comment made by one child "**the big lego because people take the big lego cars and I can't find them**" instigated a conversation to find a solution to this problem across the whole nursery. This was a great example that was shared with parents about how much children find solutions to difficult situations. The child told me "**it's better now**" when asked about the lego cars.

Nursery Council

I was delighted to hear the nursery are exploring an effective model of a nursery-school council. Children from each of the nursery learning groups meet with the Mrs Mills to talk about the nursery. It was important that the children understood what areas they could influence and it was explained that the nursery were looking for feedback about any changes that had been made.

Change

Dialogue	Change	Recommendation
Children asked for improvements to the home corner.	New furniture was purchased.	Children could be involved in the purchase of items if you supported them with a budget. Children could also be involved in the set-up of any new areas in nursery.
The staff team identified that children were not always happy using the book area. Changes were made in consultation with the children.	Children were asked if they liked or enjoyed the new book area. The children agreed that the change was great. I observed a lot of the children going into the new area which was formally the IT area. It was very clear from listening to the children that the relocation of the book area was the right things to do.	
Nursery-school council	My discussions with Mrs Mills highlighted that this is a work in progress.	Children could be more involved in deciding who represents each learning group on the nursery-school council.

What are we going to do today and how are we feeling?

At the beginning of each session children are asked to identify the activities they would like to do. Various consultation tools are used within nursery depending on the age of the child. Outside of the room for the very youngest children a picture board is displayed. Children and their parents look at the board and talk about what activities are appealing that day. Parents write the names of their child on a post it note.



Change

The process of consulting with children supports the staff to identify current interests, emerging interests and if anything is missing. Activities requested are made available. In the nursery library books have been created for and by the children showing past activities and celebration. These valuable resources have been a great prompt to remind children they can expand their play and or come up with more ideas.

Staying safe in nursery

During group time the children in nursery are asked about staying safe in nursery. This is an annual questionnaire which provides an opportunity to about safety concerns.

Change

The results of the survey supports further learning and enables the staff team to provide safety strategies for the children. For example during the last survey a number of children shared their concerns about dogs. The nursery contacted the charity blue cross for pets who came to the nursery and talked about dogs and how to stay safe when they were around a dog. The children told me this was “**good**” and that they had enjoyed it.

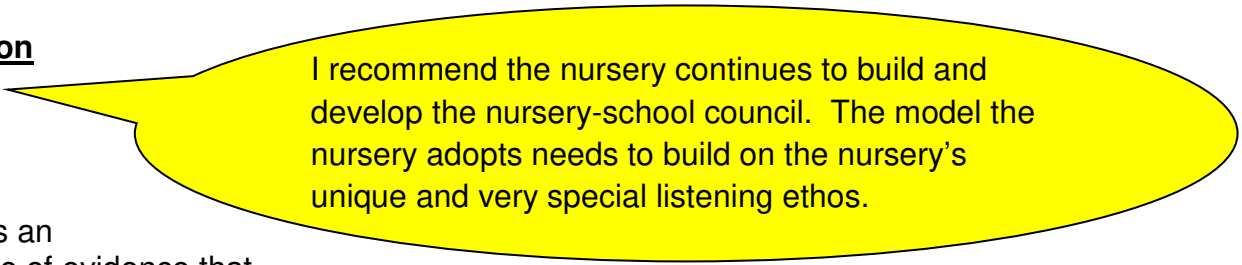
Afterschool Club

The nursery also has an afterschool club. The nursery has consulted with children who access this part of their service with the view of purchasing new resources.

Change

The children identified what activities they would like to do and what resources they needed. This resulted new equipment being purchased.

Conclusion



I recommend the nursery continues to build and develop the nursery-school council. The model the nursery adopts needs to build on the nursery's unique and very special listening ethos.


There was an abundance of evidence that demonstrated children's voices are listened to and taken seriously and ultimately acted upon. A range of consultation methods have been embedded across the nursery to capture dialogue from the children to support them to influence decisions and choices.

I spoke briefly to Lara who was trying to get herself ready to play outside. She told me this was the “**best nursery**” and Beau said his grandad liked coming to pick him up from nursery. Children in the red group “**cheered**” when I asked them if they liked nursery and gave a **thumbs up** to confirm they felt listened to.

Based on the conversation's I had with the children I met during my visit I would like to recommend that Newburn Nursery receives the Investing in Children Membership Award TM for another two years.

I would like to thank you all the children I spoke to who took time away from their busy play to talk to me. They sang me songs and told me stories which were all fantastic. “Thank you”.

Louise Cameron
Communities Officer
Investing in Children Newcastle
October 2017



Children agreed the important things in this report!