

DSCF Quality case study

Blueberry Nursery, Hove, East Sussex

Background

Blueberry Nursery School was opened in Hove, East Sussex out of need in 1994, to address the lack of good nurseries in the area. Blueberry prides itself on offering a secure and loving environment in which children can grow and develop to their maximum potential in every aspect of their early lives. The nursery is privately owned and is managed by a small limited company made up of a management committee. It is situated in a converted house in Hove, East Sussex. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions run from 8am to 6pm.

The nursery is registered to care for 64 children at any one time and there are currently 120 children aged from 18 months to under five years on roll. Of these, 82 receive funding for nursery education.

Quality

Blueberry Nursery points out that it is the staff that makes the success of a nursery, but firstly a commitment has to be made to recruit the right people, with appropriate qualifications. The staff at Blueberry Nursery are all qualified to a minimum of Level 3, with many at Level 4 and 5. The nursery has further invested in its staff team by recruiting teachers since 1996, long before the government saw the value and worth of such an approach. The manager at the nursery has seen the value of government initiatives, such as the Transformation Fund very positively. The fund has allowed the nursery to continue to invest in its staff, and enabled them to study for foundation degrees and the Early Years Professional status. Other staff, not on these particular courses has been offered shadowing opportunities with health officers.

The staff at Blueberry Nursery are empowered to take responsibility and self-manage, with personalised budgets for individual rooms. This has increased the commitment of staff, been an effective time management approach, plus it has allowed staff to take pride in buying toys and other accessories for the nursery. As a result, retention rates of staff have been very high.

As the manager at Blueberry Nursery School states; “we are positive about inspections, because it enhances good practice. It also keeps our staff working towards better quality, and allows for the recognition staff deserve. It also acts as a great motivational vehicle to consistently improve.”

Investment in staff is coupled with strong parental involvement in the nursery. Parents are involved in the assessment and recruitment of staff, which allows for a different form of questioning and a different perspective. They are also involved in the planning cycle,

and through bi-annual surveys, which pinpoint areas for development. This has helped towards improving the standards of the nursery and establishing better customer communication. Seeing the need to communicate effectively with its customers, Blueberry Nursery offers parents the opportunity to register their thoughts, through its own website.

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