

DCSF Quality Case Study

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Twickenham, Richmond on Thames

Background

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery is a new nursery which opened in April 2007. The setting is based in a church hall, on one level, allowing good access to the facility. It is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year.

The setting is situated in West Twickenham in the London Borough of Richmond on Thames. It is a relatively affluent area and caters for a number of children from an ethnic background. The setting is registered for 48 children; occupancy fluctuates to a degree but is full for the majority of the year.

Developments

As a new setting the nursery comes under the local Early Years Department's Support and Intervention Programme C which caters specifically for new settings. With this support the setting has made considerable progress and was awarded a "good" rating following a recent Ofsted inspection in July 2008.

Monkey Puzzle acknowledges the level of support received from the Early Years team and the high degree of trust that has developed between the two parties.

Quality Assurance

With the help of the local early years team, Monkey Puzzle has developed a high quality of education and care. This quality has been based on and developed using the five aims outlined in the Every Child Matters agenda, i.e. be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, and Achieve Economic Wellbeing. These five aims are at the heart of the childcare agenda and are the top priorities for all children and young people.

Within the framework provided by the above-mentioned aims all the work developed, planned and delivered by the setting is led by observation. As the manager of the setting points out; "The children lead us by putting the curriculum into play rather than us putting play into the curriculum. The children are encouraged to form good relationships with each other, with staff throughout the setting and with visitors such as parents and other service providers. The importance of using observation to develop individual strategies is underlined to the staff when monitoring these interactions and relationships."

Since opening the setting has also worked hard to develop the outdoor facilities, with the assistance of the early years team. The importance of the six areas of learning is emphasised in the development of this outdoor facility as an extension of the work done with the children indoors. At all times efforts are made to link indoor and outdoor activities. Various spaces have been developed to extend the children's

learning experiences. As the manager points out; “We feel play is the best activity for children to enrich their learning experience.”

A significant area of development and a huge contribution to the overall quality agenda has been the work done to involve parents.

Monkey Puzzle recognises that the involvement of parents is a crucial factor in the overall development of the children’s learning experience.

With this in mind a great deal of work has been done and is being planned in order to improve and expand the involvement of parents. The staff are encouraged to seek opportunities to encourage the participation of parents. Parent evenings, a theatre show by children for parents, charity events involving parents, are just a few ideas developed and tried by management and staff.

From the day of opening, both staff and management have been thoroughly committed to improving quality. With the help of the local Early Years team combined with a lot of hard work and considerable ability the setting is achieving a very high level of quality in its delivery.

Context

The setting is situated in the West Twickenham ward of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. There are around a dozen towns and villages in the borough, although more than a third of its land is open space. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 examined communities at a Super Output Area Level and no areas within the Borough were found to be in the top 10% or 20% of the most deprived areas in the country. In fact, 24 of the Borough’s wards were in the 10% least deprived. Furthermore 68 of its wards were in the 25% least deprived.

Nursery Details

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