



Record of Contact

School:	St. Mark's Elm Tree CE Voluntary Aided Primary School	Early Years Development Adviser	Ashley Councill
Date(s):	8 th December 2016		

Staff Seen:

Head teacher (HT)
Early Years Leader (EYL)

Purpose of Contact:

To support school leaders with self-evaluation of the Early Years provision and its impact on children.

Context/background:

The Early Years provision at the school includes a 79 place Nursery class which is run as a beginning (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning) and end of week (Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, Friday) session. There are two Reception classes currently with 29 and 30 children. Nursery and Reception have a shared outdoor area. There are both hard and soft standing areas with a range of appropriate resources to support children's identified next steps in learning. The indoor provision throughout the Early Years classrooms is well organised to support children's application of their learning in play. Planned activities include a range of resources that reflect the children's current interests and learning and they also support an overarching theme.

The EY Leader is also the Nursery teacher and started the leadership post in September. Positive impact, particularly to the environment and partnerships with parents can be seen, and with a clear vision and action plan there is further capacity to improve.

Both Reception teachers are experienced. Teaching assistants who support the Early Years have a range of experience and qualifications from Level 1 to Level 4.

Evidence considered during the visit

The Early Years Leader and the EYDA discussed:

- A learning walk
- An observation of teaching and learning in the Reception and Nursery classes
- Other discussions based on: self-evaluation document, children's learning journals and action plan.

HT, EYL and EYDA jointly scrutinised and discussed children's progress and attainment and the school's assessment practice supported by data.

Main Findings

Leadership and Management:

- The school judges leadership and management as Outstanding and the evidence presented supports this view.

- There is an effective system in place to monitor the quality of provision and children's outcomes. EYL scrutinises observations, assessments and weekly planning from the EY team and carries out at least one half termly book scrutiny. Moderation is carried out within and beyond school to support accurate judgements. Cross moderation with private providers where children attend both settings also supports accuracy of assessments.
- Action plans are updated regularly and reviewed for impact. Areas for development within the Early Years, feed into the school improvement plan. Intervention has been implemented for developing partnerships with parents. Impact of this can be seen through increased contributions by parents of children's learning at home, positive feedback to HT about stay and play sessions to support learning at home and a sharp rise in the number of parents completing Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) forms (seven additional forms completed in the last term).
- Additional targets include using a new electronic observation and assessment system (EExAT), challenging children through continuous provision and behaviour management. Impact can be seen through interventions on these targets as all EY practitioners are observing and assessing children on EExAT (monitored by EYL), challenge is now a consistent focus throughout EY with differentiated challenge cards within the continuous provision areas and consistent behaviour management strategies are being applied by all staff. HT and EYL are continuing to monitor this and where necessary appropriate targets feed into practitioners' appraisals.
- Members of staff from the EY attend Local Authority, Assessment and Moderation Partnerships (AMPs) and other training to support their further development and that of the team. EY staff are due to attend 'Quality Interactions' training to support identified targets.

Outcomes for children:

- The school reported that children make typical progress in all areas of learning. The evidence presented supports this view. The majority of children currently in EY entered at age related expectations but this varies for each aspect. The lowest baseline data for children working at expected levels was in The World (14%) but 96% of these children went on to achieve the Early Learning Goal in this aspect.
- The proportion of children attaining a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2015/16 was 67%. This is above the LA average of 65% and slightly below the national average of 69%. This is below the individual school data for the number of children achieving Prime areas (83%), Literacy (70%) and Mathematics (91%). EYL reported that the GLD had reduced due to a significant number of children achieving all aspects of GLD apart from the writing aspect. HT and EYL have identified this on EY action plan and have plans in place to reverse the trend including introducing the Read Write Inc. program into nursery, providing more opportunities for mark making within the nursery and more opportunities for writing both indoors and out.
- An analysis of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data from 2016 has identified that the school is above the LA average for children exceeding in all prime areas and reading but is below LA average for exceeding in all additional specific areas. HT and EYL are addressing this through investing in iPads for technology, children are attending Music Bugs, EYL is ensuring that Reception children have access to creative provision (craft and junk modelling) and ensuring that staff engage with children when playing in the role-play.
- The school appropriately supports disadvantaged children with three children in 2015/16 in receipt of pupil premium. The school has a three tier model for supporting these children from the universal offer of a school jumper and book bag to more specific intervention depending on the individual child's needs. This includes resourcing such as a fine motor skills board, providing enriching experiences such as Yoga Bugs and to one to one support in both groups and for intimate care. This is evidenced by data; where 67% of children entitled to EYPP funding achieved a good level of development (GLD). This is higher than the LA average of 52%. No children eligible for EYPP achieved exceeding in any aspects of learning and development.
- The school judges itself as good and in the light of data and evidence presented on the visit the EYDA agreed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment:

- The teaching in Reception and Nursery observed during the visit was discussed and consideration was also given to planning and children's learning journals. The school judges the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as good and the evidence seen during the visit supports this judgement.
- Children's achievements are celebrated in a range of ways such as a sticker stop and weekly certificates in mathematics, literacy and being kind. These certificates are presented in weekly worship and parents of those children who have been awarded are invited to attend.
- The provision reflects the children's needs and provides appropriate challenge for the children, both indoors and outdoors. Provision and planning is changed and adapted appropriately as required in response to the children's next steps and interests.
- Regular assessments inform the children's trackers. Children's next steps are identified and feed into planning. The school uses learning journals and has started using EExAT. Despite some teething issues with the app the EYL has implemented effective systems to track the children and is using the EExAT programme to monitor assessments from all members of the EY team.
- The assessment process described by EYL is robust and follows the guidelines set out in EY documents, Statutory Framework and EYFS profile purposes, principles and processes.
- The school uses Read Write Inc. which is started in nursery. Phase One Letters and Sounds is also used in addition to this. This programme meets the requirements of a systematic, synthetic approach. Phonics lessons were observed and children were streamed according to need. Children were all positively engaged within these lessons. The school is aware of the need to monitor children's application of their phonic knowledge.
- Baseline assessments are completed over two weeks after a child has attended for four weeks. Consideration is taken if children are performing low on the Leuven well-being scales and the baseline is re-evaluated accordingly to ensure accuracy. Parents are invited to attend a settling in meeting and this allows parents and teachers an opportunity to verbally share information to contribute to a baseline assessment.
- Parents are invited to stay and play sessions where they are able to take part in specific play activities with their child. This session and an accompanying pack, supports parents with ideas for ways to help their child at home. Impact can be seen through parents now sharing activities that they have done with their child at home. Parents are also encouraged to complete Proud Petals. This supports the school's effective range of methods to inform parents about their children's achievements. EYL reported that when EExAT is fully working that there will be a parent app to facilitate parents with sharing learning from home.
- The school operates an open door policy to ensure that there is a personal point of contact, particularly for those parents who may be reluctant to engage with school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare:

- The school judges personal development, behaviour and welfare in the Early Years as outstanding and the evidence seen during this visit supports this view.
- Children in Reception and Nursery demonstrated very positive behaviour, high levels of self-control and co-operation during the visit. Children were engaged in activities which:
 - supported opportunities to learn to share
 - promoted independence
 - allows them to respond well to each other and adults
 - gave opportunities for them to develop ideas and set their own challenges (e.g. dough area and post office writing)
- Children's characteristics of effectively learning are continually assessed through the EExAT trackers and further evidence the children's active engagement in activities and the opportunities for children to create and think critically.
- Risk assessments are carried out in both the indoor and outdoor area, with checklists in place for staff to complete on a daily basis. The school reported that the children are encouraged to assess their own risks and shared examples e.g. using balance bikes on ramps. Children use a system of Danger Detectives where they identify risks and ways to keep themselves safe. EYDA observed a child picking up a toy to avoid a tripping hazard. The TA celebrated this with the whole class.

- Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated where appropriate.
- British values are embedded into the curriculum and the ethos of the school. EY uses a system of 'Huggy Bear' for praising children when displaying positive British values such as respecting. The curriculum provides further opportunities such as celebrations of traditions.
- HT and EYL shared the current attendance figures. Impact can be seen through developing partnership with parents and employing a Pupil Welfare Officer, as over the autumn term 2016, the attendance of children has increased by 2% from 95% to 97%.

Recommendations

The Early Years Lead:

- To implement interventions for writing to increase the number of children achieving GLD. **(June 2017)**
- To identify possible interventions to support increasing the number of exceeding levels of development for all children (including EYPP) and to use external moderation opportunities to identify these exceeding exemplifications. **(June 2017)**

Evaluation of the impact of the contact

The Early Years Leader has been supported in the process of self-evaluation of the Early Years provision and is confident that provision is having a positive impact on children's learning.

Details of Next Visit:

N/A

Copy to be sent to:

Headteacher
Chair of Governors
SIA
Chief Adviser