

Early Years Site Visits

Visit 3: Kintore Way Nursery School

Location: 97 - 102 Grange Rd, London SE1 3BW

Visit date: 29.01.15

Members present: Cllr Barrie Hargrove, Cllr Veronica Ward & Cllr Eliza Mann

Children's Centre contact: Sharon Donno (Head teacher), Terri Cole (Deputy Head Day Care)

Officer support: Julie Timbrell

Summary of notes taken:

Activities / services provided

Core offer is provision of accessible and affordable childcare as a route out of poverty. Babies are accepted from 6 months up until entering primary school. Once they are admitted to the Centre they have a place at Nursery School, there is no need to reapply. This is to reduce the amount of transitions.

The nursery is part of a Children's Centre and provides wrap around care and a range of complementary and additional activities for families and childminders.

Admissions, waiting list, referrals

120 full time equivalent places are provided.

Long waiting list for under 3's for full time or part-time places.

There is an unmet need for baby places and concern that this is then met by unregistered childminders.

The nursery gets referrals from Social Services for children in need, and there is funding from the Local Authority to subsidise fees for some of these families.

Teenage parents can access places through 'Care to Learn' and the Nursery accommodated two 15 year olds and one 16 year old last year.

There is some additional CAP funding for working parents and those seeking work but this scheme is undergoing changes and some funding has been withdrawn.

The nursery receives a number of formal and informal referrals for children with special needs. A very high number of children at the Centre have special needs; around 40 % and they have become locally known as a nursery that is able to accommodate these children well.

Outreach

An outreach worker is employed to encourage take up of all the Centre's activities by local families.

Admissions policy

(This is simplified)

Priority for places is given to

- Looked after children
- Children with special needs

- Siblings
- Nearest nursery
- Balanced mix of ages

Criteria for full time Nursery place is given to

- Vulnerable families
- Children with special needs

Extended wrap around care priority is given to

- Vulnerable families (safeguarding)
- Parent/ Carers working or studying

Work with other Children's Centres

They work closely with other Children's Centres and exchange good practice. The Nursery offers teacher input to South Bermondsey with a shared post. They also share and offer good practice around leadership, management and teacher functions.

Economic situation

Places are funded through a combination of fees, subsidy from the Free Early Education offer and a cross subsidy from Southwark Council as a Children's Centre.

This is essential to keep the cost of Day Care economically viable for parents. The centre has to identify the deficit of fees to service and negotiate that with Southwark Council as part of the Service Level Agreement.

In order to respond effectively to a family in crisis or an urgent requirement to give a place to a child in need identified by Social Services the Nursery ideally need to have some spare capacity; but there is an economic cost to this that has to be recognised.

Impact of SFF

If the Nursery no longer receive 'place' funding and instead have 'participation' funding it causes a problem for toddlers moving from day-care into the Nursery School as the funding does not kick in early enough. Also they will only qualify for a part time place (12.5 / 15 hours) but may need to move to a full time place and there is no mechanism to manage this. If they have special needs there may be additional costs. At present both full time and part-time Nursery School places are free and parents only pay for additional wrap around care if they need it. To sustain a place as outlined in the present SFF arrangements would entail either the parents or the Nursery bearing additional costs to manage the transition and neither is viable.

The other additional issue is that that the impending change to a single point of entry to primary schools means that the Nursery School will have too thin a slice of time (3 yrs 3month – 4 yrs) to be sustainable.

Solutions

Participation funding starting earlier would help

A Children's Centre factor for settings that combine Day - Care provision with a Nursery School provision.

The nursery offer's teacher led provision and this is of higher quality but more expensive. Some consideration has been given to providing different types of staffed care to reduce costs but maintain quality. For example wrap around activities and lunch does not need to be teacher led.