

Early Years Site Visits

Visit 5: Puddleduck Nursery

Location: Saint Anthony with Saint Silas Community Centre, Merttins Road, Nunhead, SE15 3EB

Visit date: 12.02.10

Members present: Cllr Veronica Ward

Children's Centre contact: Carol Bromley - Senior Manager

Officer support: Julie Timbrell

Summary of notes taken:

Background

Puddleducks has recently moved location and found much better premises which has allowed it to extend its opening hours. Formally it was open term time only from 9 - 3pm. Since September they are open from 8 - 6pm and for 50 weeks a year.

Activities / services provided

Core offer is provision of day-care, including the Free Early Education offer, for children aged 2 – 5 years.

Admissions, waiting list, referrals

There is a long waiting list. There could be unmet need for full-time places suitable for working parents. Many of the nurseries existing children and parents have part time and term time only use of the nursery but as the nursery extends their opening hours they will be less able to offer this pattern, although they intend to accommodate their present cohort. This may mean that families who want this pattern will not be so well provided for.

Some referrals come from Social Services and they keep a space available for emergencies.

They link up with the outreach worker of Ivydale Children's Centre and the health worker to promote our services locally.

Admissions policy

Criteria are:

- are able to match children to places
- length of time on the waiting list
- Referrals from Social Services
- Siblings and other family using the service

Work with other settings and the Council

There is a good childminding unit across the road.

The Council has recently provided capital funding to extend the play area outside.

The nursery is quality assessed by the Council to ensure provision meets the right standard to offer the Early Years Foundation stage.

Economic situation and impact of SFF

The provision of 3 hours per day used to mean that parents often did not buy additional time; which had a negative impact on the nursery's economic viability. The purchasing of extra hours makes the provision of the free entitlement more sustainable. Parents use working tax credits and business vouchers to help buy more time.

The amount Southwark gives to settings per hour is quite generous; however if this is not enough the nursery is concerned it will have a knock on effect of raising fees for extended provision.

The new requirements for graduate leaders will mean that nursery costs will rise. We support this as it raises quality but this comes at a cost.

Recruitment is an issue as it is difficult to find well qualified staff.

The Nursery would like financial information as early in the business cycle as possible so it can make accurate financial forecasts.