



## ESCAL Communication Friendly Quality Mark for Early Years Settings

### Sunflower Children's Centre - Accreditation Visit – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Evidence presented by Sunflowers Children's Centre showed that it meets or exceeds the criteria in each section of the Communication Friendly Audit. The whole setting has a coherent approach to the development of speech, language and communication, based on a consistent pedagogy and a whole setting philosophy of improving communication skills in order to raise aspiration and attainment. There is clear evidence of the impact of the setting's approach on the children, who are confident and keen to talk. The setting's strong management drives the priority of improving communication with passion, energy and commitment and ensures that resources and staff are appropriately deployed and strategies are regularly reviewed in order to develop children's speech, language and communication skills most effectively.

- The setting is welcoming; from the moment you arrive you are greeted by friendly helpful staff. The entrance area is well planned and inviting with colourful displays for parents, visitors and children. This contributes to evidence that shows the setting values and respects child and parent voice. It is rich with information including nursery information, EYFS Parent's Guide, ESCAL information and other local and national relevant information for parents.
- The nursery vision is embedded throughout the setting with a particular focus on the importance of developing children's speech, language and communication skills, partnership with parents and carers, the community and external agencies. A passion and commitment to the above is demonstrated by the staff and throughout the setting. The nursery demonstrates they have excellent relationships with parents and carers and that working in partnership by using parent planning sheets and operating an open door policy is just the start of how this setting communicates with, respects and values parent's involvement and feedback.
- There is strong evidence of excellent leadership from the management team which consists of the centre owner, manager, 2 deputy managers, 2 room coordinating managers and 6 team leaders. This is evident through the common pedagogical approach demonstrated through robust systems and practice that have been implemented by the collaborative working evidenced by the senior leadership team, including ensuring a highly qualified workforce to ensure the best possible opportunities and outcomes for the children in their care. The staff are qualified to a high level with three staff with degree level qualifications, one member of staff with level four qualification, eighteen level three qualified members of staff, three trainees, all with level two, and one working towards a degree.
- The nurseries self-evaluation form (SEF) is comprehensive and detailed and updated regularly in line with the latest OFSTED requirements, legislation, EYFS and nursery developments. The nursery has comprehensive and detailed policies, procedures and records. The management take a lead on the delivery and implementation of the EYFS and have good procedures in monitoring staff practice and delivery. The management team identify and prioritise their workforces training needs; they have in house training on a regular basis and have a detailed training plan. Good induction systems are in place for new employees.



- This setting is rich in language! A holistic approach has been taken, in all areas of the setting, ensuring children engage happily in conversations with parents, staff and each other. The environment is rich with communication aids and strategies to support children at wave one, two and three, throughout all areas of nursery both indoor and outside. Children are accessing talk boards, communication boards and visual timetables as demonstrated in all rooms. Children in the rooms were using snack boards with confidence and independently alongside Makaton signs to make choices and socialise with staff and their peers. There was some excellent modelling of other examples and evidence of children using communication tools both supported and independently. Children are provided with inclusive communication rich play spaces and learning experiences. During our visit we witnessed all children engaging in stimulating activities independently with staff scaffolding their learning consistently.
- The interventions seen throughout nursery support children at wave 1, 2 and 3 successfully. Wave 1 includes use of visuals to label areas, resources and daily routines that support independence. Wave 2 includes communication boards and talk books and wave 3 includes the use of specific one to one interventions, including individual timetables and PECS Picture Exchange Communication System following speech and language therapy programmes. The nursery demonstrated that within their provision children show good levels of progress. The children communicate freely whilst they access the provision. They are keen to ask questions and use language to create stories and roles. Janette and I observed a vocabulary group time, cued articulation session and an Urdu lesson which all demonstrated the staff used of good communication strategies and techniques that kept the children engaged, extended their thinking and offered opportunities for talk.
- Children's speech, language and communication skills are monitored in house using the ESCAL SLC trackers, individual needs are identified and appropriate support and interventions are put in place. The children have access to small groups that are well planned and structured to develop children's expressive and receptive language skills. We witnessed adults scaffolding children's SLC development using a range of effective strategies such as modifying or extending their language to reflect the developmental level of children, with objects of reference, visual support and Makaton. Staff respond appropriately and with care to children's verbal and non-verbal methods of communication. Children are identified early and appropriate interventions are put in place in partnership with parents and carers. Staff are confident to refer to other agencies for advice and to refer children as required.
- The setting is extremely inclusive and this was evident throughout the nursery. The environment is adapted to meet the individual needs of every child to ensure a high quality placement to ensure the best possible outcomes are met. Nursery shared detailed and well organised children's SEN files that demonstrated good partnership working with other external agencies including Speech and Language Therapy, the Autism team and Early Years Inclusion Team. The team has recently been trained on the new SEND graduated approach including when and how to refer to other services.
- The nursery environment is rich with stimulating activities and experiences; the outdoor space has been recently developed. The outdoor area meets the requirements of the EYFS and allows children to explore creatively and problem solve in communication rich spaces. Every space has been well planned and maximises learning opportunities in partnership with the children.



- The wellbeing of children is a high priority. It was evident that children have good attachments and positive caring relationships with staff. This was witnessed throughout all the rooms; I witnessed the strong relationships key workers have with the youngest children in baby room.
- The nursery understands the impact of well-planned transitions on children's wellbeing, emotional and social development both into nursery, movement through nursery and leaving to go to school. Implementation of their comprehensive transition policy and practice support this. The nursery offers providing support for the children who attend as part of the 2 year FEL. The families are offered a home visit and receive a visit pack with sections on communication and language, personal and social and physical development. Parents are invited to 2 year FEL workshops with a week focusing on communication and 'Every Child a Talker' materials. The nursery has excellent links with other settings and schools that children attend. The nursery attends the family of schools meetings to ensure that they are supporting each other with both transition and education. The last meeting had a focus on literacy and phonics.
- The nursery has an ESCAL Champion who attends the ESCAL briefings and other events. The nursery is keen to ensure children begin to develop literacy skills at the earliest point and have introduced the use of story bricks to promote talk, creativity, children's voices and developed children's sustained shared thinking. Books are available in all areas of nursery to support learning, not just in the designated book corners.

### Next Steps

- The nursery will continue to develop the nursery environment in partnership with the team around the child, to ensure it is communication rich with interventions and strategies.
- As identified in the audit, the nursery would like to identify a second ESCAL champion.
- Continue to reflect on good practice and to continue to evaluate and make changes to enhance the communication rich spaces for the children.

