

Nursery School Case Study

Midland Road Nursery School

Focus of the Case Study:

Supporting successful outcomes for children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium

'Up a tiny cobbled street, near an enormous football ground, there is a nursery school hiding. It doesn't look very big but it has a very big heart. Every day, laughing children run up the cobbles because they are so happy to be there. They are happy for lots of reasons' - Ofsted 2007.

The above letter to children as part of the school's Ofsted in 2007 still captures Midland Road Nursery School – both where we are in



the city of Bradford and what we do! We are one of seven Nursery Schools in the district, all of which have a long tradition of providing nursery education in Bradford. We provide integrated care and education for children from three months to five years

alongside a range of services for families as a designated Children's Centre.

We are proud to now be the lead agency for five children centres in the Lister Park Children's Centre Cluster.

School Message

Midland Road has a long tradition of providing high quality early years education. Play is at the heart of our curriculum and we balance child led activities with more focused adult planned experiences. At Midland Road we have a highly experienced team of caring and committed professionals who ensure a high quality learning environment both indoors and outdoors,. We know that children's well-being has a significant impact on their learning and development; so happy, safe children is our primary aim in



Metal sculpture of child's drawing on Midland Road

order to support children's learning and progress.

We also know that parents are the biggest influence on children's lives which is why we place so much importance on working in partnership with them. We work with children and families from a range of social, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and we believe it is this that makes Midland Road such a special place. Respectful and supportive relationships matter to us – amongst staff, parents and children.

Attainment and progress

From their starting points children at Midland Road Nursery make rapid progress. The 3 year trend shows significant improvement – all areas of learning showing between 19% and 35% increase for children who are ‘at’ or ‘above’ age related expectations upon leaving nursery. The largest increase being in Expressive Arts and Design. Of the 83 children who left the nursery in 2015 – between 80% and 91% of them attained at least expected development in one or more of the prime areas of learning.

Careful scrutiny of individual and cohort data at classroom and management level, inform

future priorities for all children. This year has seen a continuing focus on those children at risk of delayed development in particular the children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). Data for the Spring 2016 term showed that 7 boys and 5 girls (12 out of the 13 children eligible for EYPP) had made between them accelerated progress in 96 aspects of learning. One child was particularly successful, demonstrating accelerated progress in 16 aspects.

This case study considers how the nursery have used EYPP funding to provide a range of approaches to support excellent outcomes for this group of children.

Dance for Life

Midland Road is a small school with a small budget but EYPP funding has provided the opportunity to enhance provision in a way that they would not previously have been able to afford. Management firmly believe in drawing on skilled expertise, to supplement the already excellent experiences nursery provide. Using EYPP funding, external consultants for forest school and dance have been bought in. This wealth of experience and passion rubs off on all staff, bringing fresh ideas and allowing staff to constantly develop their own skills.

Dance for Life, a project within Bradford Council’s Community Sports & Activities development unit, offer classes and workshops across the Bradford district with the aim of improving young people’s health and well-being through dance.

All EYPP children are given the chance to attend the dance session for ¾ hour per week. The Dance for Life Coordinator spent time in nursery building relationships with the children who are also accompanied to the session by

nursery staff, ensuring continuity, 1:1 support and providing a secure foundation from which to explore and learn.

The dance sessions are multi-sensory, using music from different cultures and children’s



films. Children display high levels of engagement and concentration, and develop listening skills as they join in with action songs,



rock their bodies like a boat, move to music and explore scarves and bubbles.

All areas of the curriculum are woven through the sessions as the children make large rainbows, circles or write the first letter in their name. Understanding of shape and space is developed as they reach to the sky like rockets and adults further reinforce maths - 'we're getting into twos, in pairs', 'get 2 scarves, one in each hand', 'you need one more'.

The sessions have a big impact on children's progress. For example, one child who was initially very shy and insecure, lacking in confidence, now contributes ideas and speaks in clear sentences. During the dance session she commented to the other children, 'If you scream too much, you will burst the bubbles!'

Through the dance children have developed friendships, social skills and the ability to work together co-operatively. Whilst gathering in the

coat room, they excitedly call for each other to come, and chat and laugh together before they set off.

'The most impact for the children has been in concentration and fitness levels', says the dance for life co-ordinator. 'At first children were not able to jump to the end of the song – but now they can.'

Children's self-esteem develops as they gain confidence in moving their whole bodies – galloping, skipping, crawling and balancing.

To close the session, children and adults sit in a circle to reflect on the session. Adults respond positively, reinforcing children's comments, 'Yes, it was good to see you doing beautiful dancing today'.



Forest School

Indoor and outdoor learning have equal value at Midland Road. Suitable clothing is provided for both children and adults outdoors and staff share with families the health benefits of being outside. A leaflet also provides information for parents on the importance of learning outdoors. It says, 'Many parents worry that

children can catch a cold from playing outside, but being outdoors is not only beneficial for their development - it's essential'. Outdoor learning has been further enhanced through the purchase of Forest School sessions, attended by children eligible for EYPP.

Forest school takes place once a week in the nursery grounds. The space offers challenging natural features and surfaces for children to explore eg slopes, flat, path, grass, mud, steps, logs, trees. Children develop their resilience and physical strength as they are supported to manage their own 'risky' play.

The forest school leader, who is an external consultant and a qualified teacher sets up the space before going to meet the children, to provide open ended activities to spark their interest. These might include collecting twigs and stones, squares of calico to arrange their collections, woodland puppets, wool for winding round trees or sticks, a variety of containers for collecting/pouring/transporting/mixing, a large sheet for mud painting, digging for minibeasts.

Children lead their own play and display high levels of persistence, concentration, fine motor control and coordination, carefully pouring water into the narrow necks of bottles, or collecting small leaves and stones for pretend meals. Others explore lengths of rope – seeing how far it will go and how it moves. Adults support children to learn from each other for example demonstrating how to balance on a plank of wood.

Play develops freely for example in response to changing weather conditions by putting up a

shelter to catch the raindrops. Being outdoors offers children the opportunity to experience all weather types and they learn how they can stay dry and warm. There are lots of opportunities to develop children's listening, understanding and speaking skills.

Children use their imagination to develop new ways of playing as they explore the natural world. During one session, whilst lying on her back, a little girl with some physical difficulties spotted some berries on a tree. She was fascinated and attempted to work out how she could to get the berries down to feed the birds. This involved tackling the slope (too scary initially) and after comparing sticks to find the tallest one, she balanced the longest stick to reach the berries. 'Will the birds come here?' she asks. The story developed further each week as children made bird feeders, sang songs and told stories. 'The confidence they gain over 6 weeks is amazing', says the Forest School leader.

Back in nursery, the rich physical and emotional environment allows children to practice their increasing physical skills and challenge themselves in the context of extremely supportive adult/child relationships. One girl climbs skilfully to the top of the climbing frame while an adult patiently shows another child how to slide down the pole.



Core stories



Nursery use carefully chosen core stories as a stimulus for planning more directed activities. Families eligible for EYPP receive a copy of the core story for example this term the story is 'Handa's Hen'. One extremely proud mum brought a recording of her daughter at home using the book to tell the story and embellishing it in her own words. Enhancements are added to provision as children watch the development of real chicks, play with yellow dough and chicken cutters. A child height interactive display extends children's thinking around nest building materials and eggs.

Copies of the core and related stories are included in the library for all parents to share with their children at home. In addition parents receive half termly planning leaflets to involve them in their child's learning. The planning leaflets give ideas families can do at home for example, watch 'Handa's Hen' on YouTube or bring back a menu from a café to use in the mud kitchen café.



Special Time

Parental engagement is an important thread of EYPP and the school is developing a clear strategy to promote parents' engagement with children in the home learning environment through Special Time. Nursery recognise there are times when parent's lives can be very busy or stressful. In those times it can be hard to prioritise playing with and giving children the time they need to feel secure.

Special Time is an accessible way for parents/carers to regularly spend as little as

five minutes, giving their undivided attention and playing with their child. Parent's confidence develops, as they interact with their child and build strong attachments.

The child's key person and parental involvement co-ordinator meet with parents/carers and explain the principles and benefits of special time, giving them a leaflet which offers further guidance. They keep in touch with them weekly and offer a home visit if appropriate.

Why it works – underpinning ethos and practice

Forensic monitoring

Management are meticulous in planning and a clear monitoring schedule ensures no area of practice slips. Timely and forensic scrutiny of data and reflective analysis focus on individual children and highlight children who may be falling behind their peers as well as strengths in their learning. A termly targeted plan is put in place and 'Next Steps' agreed with all parents, ensuring a targeted, consistent approach, all staff reinforcing the learning and emotional needs of every child. Targeted planning is also shared with the Parental Involvement Coordinator who plays a key role in supporting families.

Staff quickly notice where children's progress has slowed down, and plan thoughtfully for each child. For example, two children whose progress in 'The World' had slowed down, were targeted for looking after the plants and tadpoles.

Child participation at the heart

Child participation is valued and extremely strong. Adults involve children in planning and making decisions. For example, a mud kitchen café has been developed following children's interest in cooking. Children made a ballot box to vote for their preferred name for the café and families and children are further involved by bringing recipes from home.



The environment is exceptionally calm and children are clearly at the heart of the nursery. Adults take time to talk to children and listen.



They value children's ideas and work – annotated pictures and photographs are displayed proudly on the wall with numerous display books illustrate through photos and comments, children participating in exciting, meaningful activities.

Warm, quality, friendly interactions at all levels are a key feature of Midland Road. Adults speak slowly, and get down to children's eye level. Their use of language support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Maths has been a whole team focus over the previous year and is very noticeably embedded in provision, practice and routines. Indeed, 95% of children leaving nursery in 2015, whose first language was not English, made expected/accelerated progress in Maths.

Staff are passionate about supporting children's learning and understand child development at all levels. Consistency between adults is a strength as is the quality of teaching. Characteristics of effective teaching and learning are evident throughout nursery and children are developing as confident, independent learners.