

Context:

The Mulberry Bush Day Nursery is a family run 55 place nursery in Marston Green, Solihull. The nursery employs ten members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level three or above. The two managers have level six early years teacher status. They were inspected in January 2019 with 'good' and 'outstanding' grades and the inspector reported that *'The use of additional funding is exceptionally well considered to ensure it has a very positive impact on individual children's progress. Managers continually check that gaps in learning and development are closing and that money is used wisely....Children make consistently good or better progress. They are independent, inquisitive learners, who are well prepared for school when the time comes. Those in receipt of funding are notably catching up with their peers.'*

Children in England are spending an increasing amount of their early lives in government-funded early years childcare. There is good evidence that attending early years provision can improve a wide range of child outcomes, from ensuring children's healthy cognitive, behavioural, social and physical development, to laying the foundations for future, longer-term developmental milestones. With this in mind, the government has set out a commitment to improving social mobility in its action plan, *Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential*, in part by focusing on early years education provision. *Education Policy Institute 2018*

This case study outlines the way managers and key persons in The Mulberry Bush support disadvantaged children and use the early years pupil premium (EYPP) wisely to support outcomes. In Solihull the reception age EYFS Profile inequality gap between the mean average (add all and divide by the number of entries) of the lowest 20% of children and the median average (order and find the middle value) for all children and others was 32.3 in 2018. The national figure in 2018 was 31.8 and the average local authority statistical neighbour figure was 30.69. Solihull has improved their local authority ranking from 104th in 2016 to 87th in 2018. We hope that settings consider this case study and reflect upon their use of funds and resources to help continue to narrow Solihull's attainment 'gap'. This will support children to have the best start in life.

Implementation:

Supporting all children:

Key Persons work hard to establish accurate starting points for children and plan 'in the moment' for their next steps in learning. This is successful because staff know the children very well and are always aware of what they need to learn next. (Ofsted 1.2019)

Staff ensure they get to know children and families well from before they start at The Mulberry Bush. They work closely with other agencies to support children with special needs, children looked after, and where there are medical needs. Observation based assessments are used by key persons to steer learning experiences and room leads oversee the needs of the room by analysing summative assessments. The setting supports physical opportunities and promotes the UK Chief Medical Officers advice to ensure children can be active. They share the need to physical activity for holistic development and well-being. The next steps 'tree' in the room identifies key learning experiences identified through termly assessment summaries and conversations with parents. The continuous provision is reviewed and enhanced every few weeks to ensure it meets the needs of all children. Parent termly summary reports confirm the child's next steps and gives suggestions for at-home activities.

Pupils in receipt of EYPP:

The nursery has four or five children in receipt of EYPP each term. In previous years the focus for the premium has been speech, language and communication with funding providing release for staff to ensure the support from speech and language therapists (SaLT) for video interaction therapy coaching is embedded. They are now a stage two setting and techniques are well used by staff. This year the focus has been physical activity as three children live

in flats and have limited opportunities for whole body- large movement outside the home. A ramp to support turn taking and an open ended wooden small world structure for imaginative play have been purchased and a new mud kitchen has been ordered. The second focus has been personal, social and emotional development (PSED). Some funds have been reserved for the summer term transitions activities taking place as the children move to their new setting. The open ended 'enchanted castle' enables imaginative play, story telling together and co-operation as children decide what structure it represents.



Decision making and monitoring of EYPP:

Where children are allocated additional funds the key persons and room lead pay particular attention to the children's interests and needs as well as finding out about parents' observations to aid allocation of funds. The home learning and lending library contain activities that are bought to support learning outside the setting. The children in receipt of funds were demonstrating slightly lower PSED and physical development on entry. They do not necessarily 'stand-out' from the other children unless they have additional needs such as those with medical needs or those looked after. The resources are enjoyed by all children and regular supervision discussions demonstrate the progress of all children, but especially those in special circumstances. Individual tracking is combined for room and setting progress overviews, which are monitored by leads. An EYPP record for each individual child identifies needs, interests, a record of consultation with parents, funding and its use, and impact. For example one child had communication identified on their SaLT report. Turn taking games and a 'talking Tigger' were purchased for use in the setting and at home. The outcome was improved vocabulary, language and turn-taking communication with adults and peers. Staff training in attachment has helped them understand the needs of one child but will also support practitioners to question and perhaps understand triggers for behaviours.

Impact:

Ofsted Inspection Report : January 2019 -Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding
Children's social development is promoted extremely well. A highly effective key-person system is used to tailor planning, teaching and care to each individual child's specific needs.Staff focus on drawing children into social activities and helping them with turn taking and sharing. .. Times of change in children's lives, such as moving on to school or starting at the nursery, are managed with a high degree of sensitivity and at each child's own pace.
The setting lead can see the progress made by each child during their time at The Mulberry Bush. As some children prepare to leave the setting, parents comment positively on their learning and development and the care given by the team.

Learning

- Discussion with parents and observations of the child helps staff to understand the child's context. It also builds trusting relationships and information sharing between parents and the setting.
- Practitioners know more about the child as they tune into them and they monitor the use of resources and the child's progress

- ☐ Researching the needs of children; such as their physical development and associated guidance, supports knowledge and understanding of child development
- ☐ Consulting with the children, for example about their wishes and wants for a new mud kitchen, as well as when observing the use of the environment as they play, supports the staff to adapt and ensure children's engagement in playful learning experiences

Next steps:

- ⊕ Look to build resources in the lending library with books chosen to suggest topics for conversation and vocabulary development as well as 'at home' learning experiences.
- ⊕ Reflect on the use of funds for transition activities for future children if this works well this year; for example to enable conversations with feeder settings and release staff
- ⊕ Further explore attachment theory, reflect on practice and continue to develop practitioner understanding

Research Links:

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/practical-tips-allocating-early-years-pupil-premium-funding> This 24 page booklet provides tips from the DfE funded 'Learning Together About Learning' project on how to make best use of Early Years Pupil Premium funding.

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/measuring-impact-eypp-funding>

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/eypp>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/early-years-toolkit> - Our Early Years Toolkit contains accessible summaries of education research. The Toolkits are designed to support leaders who are making decisions about how to improve learning outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children.

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/early-years-high-quality-provision/> Education Policy Institute (EPI) and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) have published two reports examining the key features of quality in early years childcare provision that have the greatest potential to maximise child outcomes.

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/2015/02/early-years-pupil-premium-guidance-for-providers/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/experiences-of-the-early-years-pupil-premium> -This small qualitative project involved 30 interviews with early years providers who had received EYPP funding.

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) is a major study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and undertaken by NatCen Social Research, the University of Oxford, 4Children and Frontier Economics. SEED is an eight-year study following approximately 6,000 children across England from the age of two, through to Key Stage One. SEED aims to assess the impact of early education on school readiness and longer-term outcomes for children including the most disadvantaged children in society.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-seed>

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/24-04-2019-to-grow-up-healthy-children-need-to-sit-less-and-play-more>

Links the setting found useful:

<https://www.earlyyearsresources.co.uk/search/early-years> – purchased resources for outdoors

www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity Every movement counts poster –physical activity infographic for early years

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications> – the setting used some of these useful documents ...including the guide to physical health and activity