

Case Study: Wise Owls Nursery/ Whitesmore Wise Owls Nursery - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Planning



Background

Whitesmore Wise Owls Nursery and Wise Owls Nursery are situated in purpose built premises in the north of Solihull. Both Nurseries operate from three rooms and have enclosed areas available for outside play. The nurseries employ appropriately qualified early years practitioners, including those with Early Years Professional Status. Both settings are jointly owned and lead by Sue Evan and Gina Godwin. Whitesmore Wise Owl Nursery at their most recent Ofsted inspection was judged as 'Outstanding'. The inspector Adelaide Griffith noted:

"The vast range of interesting resources and the highly creative environment challenge children in their play. As a result, they develop significantly in all areas of learning."

(Inspection report: Whitesmore Wise Owls Nursery, 27/09/2013)

In May 2017, Wise Owl Nursery were also inspected by Ofsted, they were highly praised for their effective monitoring and assessment systems. They were judged as 'good'.

(Inspection report: Wise Owls Nursery, 26 May 2017)

Areas of focus for the setting:

To introduce the ILD- 'Interactive Learning Diary' into their setting

To improve outcomes for children across all areas of learning

To develop the children's characteristics of effective learning (CEL)

To develop the opportunities provided in the settings for children to self-initiated learning

Introducing a new way of working

Implementing the 'Interactive Learning Diary' brought about some key changes in the settings. Training was undertaken by the teams. A full understanding of the various capabilities of the package was obtained.

As part of the initial implementation of the ILD package, personal information and data needed to be inputted into the computer software. This created a central management system. The ILD was introduced in phases. Firstly, it was used as a new way of documenting children's learning and development by storing observations and photos. The practitioners used the system to support them with making relevant links to development matters statements. Initially, this was highly supported and guided by the curriculum leaders.

The leaders reflected on the changes implemented into practice. They responded and adapted to the initial teething issues as they arose.

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The ILD enabled the setting leaders to obtain a full overview of the children's learning and development. The leaders used the data generated to support their team to effectively use the information to inform their planning for individuals, key groups and the cohorts. Through coaching and mentoring the leaders identified the further support and training required for practitioners. As a team, the yearly overview of the EYFS curriculum was reviewed. This information was then filtered into more in-depth medium term plans.

Room leaders were encouraged to audit their learning environments and ensure their provision supported children across all areas. In the first instance, the medium term plan clearly mapped out intended learning intentions for the children. New learning opportunities were threaded into the plans. The room leaders supported and encouraged the plans to be used as a working document. Knowledge of the children needs and interests were then added alongside their ideas for provision enhancements.

A new approach to planning was introduced. This was based on a two weekly planning cycle. Week 1 introduced new learning activities and experiences. Week 2 focuses on consolidating learning and thinking.

Week 1 of the planning cycle has a greater focus on adult-led and adult directed learning. Week 2 incorporated more child-led and child initiated learning opportunities, to enable children to build on their learning experiences and demonstrate their learning. The role of the practitioner within the planning cycle is clearly outlined within the plan. This provides support for practitioners to identify key teachable moments and by highlighting effective play partner strategies. The planning clearly sets out the enhancements required for the learning environment.

The 'Focused Family Group Planning' runs alongside the weekly plans and highlights the learning intention for the groups and identifies the focus for adult directed support. In the early stages, the curriculum leaders highly supported practitioners to ensure appropriate intentions and teaching approaches.

Impact of the changes on children, families and practitioners

Gaps in children's learning have become easier to identify.

Weekly planning is more responsive to the individual needs and interest of children.

The training and support provided for practitioners has developed their confidence in organising and inspiring learning opportunities across the EYFS curriculum and supported them in the development of their characteristics of effective learning.

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Parental involvement has increased and all parents have accessed to the ILD via the mobile application. Parents have also been making a greater contribution to their children's learning diaries by sharing home learning experiences.

Where next:

To continue to reflect on the changes made to daily practice to ensure systems are not overly burdensome, particularly in regards to paperwork

To continue to strengthen moderation of assessment

To continue to review and reflect on the coverage of the curriculum

For further information:

<https://www.interactivelearningdiary.co.uk/>

<https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/family-information-service-directory/3186/wise-owls-nursery/>

<https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/family-information-service-directory/3178/whitesmore-neighbourhood-nursery/>