

Hertfordshire: Arlesdene Nursery School

Rationale:

Your context and reasoning

What did you focus upon in your setting?

Why did you choose this area?

Arlesdene is a maintained nursery school.

Focus:

- We chose to focus on transition to, during and from nursery.
- We wished to look at the key-worker system to determine its value from a parent's perspective.

Reasons:

- We chose this because we had previously moved children between key-worker groups during their time with us. However, there were always mixed reactions to this.
- We wanted to find out what parents thought of the key-worker system and how they felt about their children moving groups.
- We also wanted to determine whether the information and processes we have for children starting at nursery were appropriate. As children leave us to go to primary school, we wanted to know how supported and confident parents felt about that transition.

Process:

Your journey or story

What did you do, for example, team discussion, training, curriculum development?

Record your reflections – what were your emerging questions?

What are the 'ah, buts' and how did you overcome them?

Why did you choose this area?

We discussed the issues with the staff and then refined the action plan. Since the work would be done by the headteacher and senior teacher, we allotted ourselves certain tasks.

The first thing we did was to send out a questionnaire to all parents, looking at the three points of transition and the key-worker system. The results were collated by the headteacher and then staff met again to discuss the findings.

From the results we were able to make certain decisions:

- to keep the key-worker system;
- not to change the children's groups during their time with us;
- to amend slightly the transition to nursery from our own Rocking Horse Daycare;
- to survey parents of children who have recently left us, to determine what information they would have liked us to supply to help with the children's transition to primary school.

The staff were very interested in the work and the results prompted a lot of discussion. There were 'ah, buts': as a staff we have often discussed these issues, although never formally. Since the workload was also being carried by the headteacher and senior teachers it did not put any further burden on the already overworked and underpaid nursery nurses! They were keen to be a part of it through discussion and they will, if need be, help in the future if they are asked. Parents were informed of the results of the questionnaire and the future work to be undertaken.

It has been a very motivating exercise so far. Firstly, it has supported our good practice and confirmed areas where we should improve. Secondly, it has enabled us to reflect on how we could support parents at the final stage of their journey with us – the move to primary school.

Practice:

Examples of emerging practices

What practice has started to emerge in your setting as a result of Sustaining Success?

What is the impact so far on practitioners?

What has been the impact on children's learning?

What is the impact on parents and carers?

- Our intake meeting for new parents has been modified slightly.
- We have changed the way children move from our own daycare into the nursery.
- We are no longer moving children between key workers and groups.
- We are developing further support for parents as the children move to primary school.
- We have developed stronger links with the main primary school that children move on to and this dovetails with their working with us as we develop into a Children's Centre by March 2008.

The impact has been that staff have looked objectively at our practice and have been willing to change indeed; they welcome it. Children will feel more settled and will not have to cope with a change of teacher while they are with us. This will provide greater continuity and confidence. Parents can actually see that their opinions have been noted, or if not, why not, and they can see that change has occurred. Parents have also been given more concrete advice and guidance about the move to primary school.

Possibilities:

Where next?

What are the possibilities for further exploration of practice?

How will you extend and share your learning with others, for example, other settings?

In terms of the future, the parent-support package for their children's transition to primary school will continue to be a major undertaking. Children move on from our nursery to any of eight or nine schools but it is hoped that parents will be given useful ideas and advice to help them to support their children.

Our action plan forms a small part of the larger Sustaining Success group action plan. We all chose different aspects of 'transition' that we felt were appropriate to our settings. It will be exciting to share – as we plan to – the work with each other and we may be able to see how we could better support children. For instance, one setting is looking at transition and SEN.

Since transition is very topical it may be that our work is discussed county-wide as well.