

We visited Turvey Pre School on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th November 09 for their I CAN Accreditation as an Enhanced setting for children's communication. The accreditation scheme is a quality assurance and quality improvement tool. The scheme has a number of elements including an onsite visit using the standards of service excellence, which have been developed by I CAN. In addition the evidence is collected via a portfolio which is completed by the setting prior to the visit. The onsite visit was carried out over 2 days; information was collected through observations, parent interviews, discussions with staff and review of available documentation. During the visit the whole session was observed and all of the staff were involved in the accreditation of the setting.

Turvey consists of a small staff team who have a clear and knowledgeable understanding of the children in their care. They share a team ethos to provide a calm, caring and inclusive environment for the children. The setting also value and are committed to developing links with their families and local community. Families were welcomed and supported as they arrived and were allowed time to discuss any concerns they had. The children all have a personal 'scrapbook' which documents their progress and is sent home for parents to read and add to on a regular basis. The setting also encourages older members of the community to help in the sessions. At present the setting has one 'granny helper' and have had others helping them in the past. The children enjoy joining these helpers in with their play talking to them about their activities.

Children can access a range of activities both inside and out and are encouraged to move these around in order to develop their play e.g. moving the home corner equipment which was a vets during the visit, outside in order to further develop a dogs role play. This freedom allows children to gain ownership of ideas and play. Ideas to develop this further were discussed on the visit as staff mentioned that children can tend to stop any inside role play once outside. It was suggested that some more resources linked to the role play such as farm animals (posters, toys etc) could be introduced to outside to encourage play to continue and develop if children want it to.

Free play was encouraged and supported throughout sessions, both inside and out, with outside being freely available for the majority of the session. This was a positive opportunity which children confidently made use of. Staff encourage outside learning despite the difficulties this can cause them, namely that at present the setting has very little heating, therefore the play room is cold even without the free flow to outside with the free flow meaning heat retention is extremely difficult. Staff have worked hard to raise money to fund a new heating system which is in the process of being implemented.

The children were allowed time to develop and extend their play throughout, for example the vets role play developed so that children pretended to walk their dogs (with the other children pretending to be the dogs) other children developed the sand play into a building site where they stated they were building a rugby club. Staff supported language at these times modeling and repeating children's language so that children knew they had been understood and that their ideas were being listened to. It was discussed that staff could support the development of these activities further at times, for example when the children said they needed rugby people for the rugby club staff were prompted by the accreditors to get the toy people for the children. This could play could have been developed further for example providing dressing up which linked into the building theme.

Staff regularly encouraged children to problem solve and reason for themselves asking questions which supported this e.g. 'humm what could I use to make cement?' and 'if both of you want the stethoscope what could we do?'

Staff made activities fun for children for example when children were outside they chose the ribbons from the windy day resources but appeared a little unsure what to do as the wind had died down. Staff therefore suggested they find the wind and encouraged the children to chase the wind around outside saying 'you found it' when the ribbons began to blow and then repeating this process when the wind ceased. This play led to the development of the children's knowledge, play, language and vocabulary as well as encouraging interaction and problem solving amongst themselves.

Children were obviously proud of their achievements and were always keen to share what they had learnt with others receiving praise and adult interest when they did this. During sessions the staff were aware of those children who were less confident or less communicative and had a clear understanding of these children's needs. They were available to support these children if this was needed but did not overcrowd or single them out encouraging them to be independent and providing an inclusive environment for them.

All children's independence was encouraged throughout activities and any attempts were praised and developed. This was the case with attempts at communication, including non verbal communication. Staff were constantly calm yet enthused and made activities non threatening, providing a consistent, supportive and safe environment where children were given time to complete activities without being rushed and where all children's ideas were valued. Individual 1:1 play opportunities and activities were also available within the session and free choice was encouraged with toys being available in transparent and clearly labeled boxes at the children's level. This led to children being confident communicators who were able to attempt activities and tasks.

Children's disputes were managed sensitively with staff supporting the children whilst encouraging them to problem solve and reason with each other. Staff were able to adapt their language levels depending on the child ensuring the children had understood and were able to communicate to the best of their abilities. The children have a clear understanding of the rules/boundaries within the setting and were confident in supporting others with these.

The parents that we spoke with directly were extremely positive about the setting and the impact it has had on their child with one mother of a child who had experienced difficulties stating that 'staff had been fantastic, always being positive and supportive of her child involving the family in all the support that was offered'. Parents stated that they felt very well informed and supported by the setting.

The staff have clearly taken on ideas from the Early Talk training and are supporting and enhancing all children's communication skills. The overall pass rate achieved is 91%.

The three specific areas of strength and the three specific areas of development identified (as requested by I CAN) and agreed with staff are:

Areas of Strength

- Staff provide a calm, safe, supportive and non threatening environment which encourages children to be confident, independent and happy.
- Children have the opportunity for free choice and free play both inside and out throughout the session being allowed to transfer resources for their play between the two.
- Staff provide an inclusive ethos where children are all supported to be independent and access every activity on offer with staff aware of when their help is required and when they can stand back.

Areas of Development

- Staff need to develop their planning so that it clearly shows differentiation of tasks for children and how their planning informs this differentiation.

- The setting's main play areas, both inside and out, need to be developed so that they are more communication friendly spaces. The setting were advised to use Elizabeth Jarmin's books as a guiding resource. Reference www.elizabethjarmanltd.co.uk (small books from £7)
- Staff to develop their identification and use of key vocabulary throughout the setting following the children's interests to guide this e.g. scalpel, injection, vaccination and grooming for the vets, using pictures / photos to support this.

Congratulations to all of the staff for their hard work and success in achieving your ICAN Early Talk Enhanced Accreditation. Well done!

Clare Dyson and Jenny Amos



Central
Bedfordshire

Bedford Borough Council and
Central Bedfordshire Council
working together



Bedfordshire Community Health Services