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A smooth transition: The Village Nursery

URN: EY334615

Region: North West

Remit: Early years

Provider background

The Village Nursery is one of four nurseries owned by the same provider. The nursery benefits from purpose-built premises and is located next to many employers within the Trafford Park area of Manchester. As a result, most children who attend come from a wide geographical area across the North West region of England. Many staff are engaged in study for further qualifications, with some studying for degrees or to achieve Early Years Teacher status.

Brief description

From settling new children to sending them on to school, the combination of an outstanding key person system and detailed record-keeping at The Village Nursery ensures that transition is smooth and children are confident and very well-prepared when they move on to the next stage in their learning.

This example is part of a [set of six](#), published in conjunction with the survey report *Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness*.

The good practice in detail

Before starting

Before children start in the nursery as babies, parents and carers are sent a booklet called 'My unique child' to complete and return. In it, they record a wide range of information, including:

- details about the child's family, their position in the family and important celebrations and events in family life
- information about the child's physical development – milk feeds, mealtimes, sleep, things they can do for themselves, behaviour, moods and feelings, sensitivities, speech and language and use of English
- favourite animals, objects or games, books, food, and groups attended such as 'stay and play'.

All of this information is used by the key person as the basis for planning to support the child's development and learning.

The nursery provides information about the child's named key person in the starter pack for parents and carers, as well as an explanation of the key person role. This helps families to understand why the nursery and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage place such an emphasis upon this way of working. More recently, the nursery has begun to improve links with families further by offering all new parents and carers a home visit before the child starts at the setting.

Settling new children

When children start at the nursery, the first session is about an hour long. Both the parent or carer and child attend the setting together.



The second day, staff encourage parents and carers to leave their child with the key person, giving them the opportunity to wait on-site or go offsite for a few hours.

A review of individual child's needs with parents and carers then leads to an agreed settling-in period, which is completely flexible depending upon their preference and the child's needs.

This explicit emphasis on valuing parents and carers' knowledge of their children reflects the deep understanding that both the nursery manager and the Early Years Professional have of high-quality provision for babies and toddlers. Both leaders are well qualified and experienced in working with the youngest children.

Initial and on-going assessment

- An 'About me' record is completed by the key person within six weeks of the child starting at nursery and shared with the parents and carers.

- It is then reviewed and updated at six-monthly intervals and shared with primary schools at transfer from the nursery.
- The key person records children's learning across all seven areas of learning through making observations of children's play, talk and activities.
- The record gives a clear overview of the child (for example, 'y is happy, polite and sociable') and celebrates what children can do (for example, for an older child, 'x can count objects 1–10').
- Importantly, it identifies next steps for their learning (for example, 'carry on helping x with his writing skills and encouraging him to write other familiar words such as...' or 'carry on with his speech and language programme').
- The key person decides which age band of the Early Years Foundation Stage that the child is working within. This is then checked by the room supervisor, the Early Years Professional and the nursery manager.
- All children's development is then recorded in a spreadsheet for the whole setting three times a year. This helps leaders to keep an overview of the progress that children make while at the setting.

Support for families and children during transition within the setting

Key to successful transition within the setting is the nursery's focus on building good relationships between staff and children through their 'positive attachment approach'. This way of working was praised during the [inspection of October 2013](#), when the inspector stated: 'An outstanding key person system is implemented by practitioners who have an exemplary understanding of how strong relationships promote children's wellbeing. This ensures that children develop strong, secure attachments early in their care and receive consistently high levels of support at all times. Comments made by parents such as, 'I trust them totally', 'It's like a second home', and 'It's not just a job to them', demonstrate the nursery's success in building robust relationships. High staffing ratios mean that children who require one-to-one care receive intensive support from a dedicated practitioner. As a result, their needs are given priority at all times. Children in the nursery demonstrate they are extremely confident and self-assured.'



Leaders are constantly striving to improve the setting. A recent step that they have taken to support transition from the two-to-three-year-old room into the pre-school room is the introduction of a laminated set of photos for parents and carers to borrow and take home about a month before the move. The current key person uses these in their room too, to explain how the new room works. The cards show the new room: circle time, mealtime, outdoor clothing room, Information and Communication Technology area and each child's personal belonging box. On the back are explanations and suggestions for parents and carers to talk about with their children.

Support for transition to school

During March and early April each year, staff begin to check with parents and carers which school their child will be going to. They send a letter to parents and carers about transition, detailing what staff do in nursery to support their child and what they can do at home, for example read stories to their child about school and talk to their child about their future teacher.

Letters are sent to feeder schools in April to request an opportunity for the child and their key worker to visit the school. This is followed up by phone calls. In May, staff in the pre-school room provide more information for children and families about the move to school. Changes are made such as turning the role play area into a school classroom. Staff share books with children about going to school. Parents and carers are invited to take these home and staff suggest what they might discuss with their child, for example the journey to school and who will take them, the look of the new classroom, their teacher's name and the school uniform.

Each child's 'Learning and development summary' is sent directly to the school at the end of the summer term before they leave nursery, usually to a named teacher. This includes comments upon the seven areas of learning, what stage they are at and their likes and dislikes. For children with any additional or special educational needs, the nursery ensures that they speak directly to the feeder school.

Other good practice examples in this set

[Ann Tayler Children's Centre Nursery](#)
[Little Stars Childcare Centre](#)
[Mayflower Primary School](#)
[St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School](#)
[Stanton Bridge Primary School](#)
[The Village Nursery](#)

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For education, the case studies do not recommend a single particular approach to teaching and learning. Ofsted has no preferred lesson structure or teaching style. We showcase and share a wide range of approaches that providers have found work well for them in achieving good outcomes for children, young people and learners.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

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