

## East Sussex Case Study of Local Authority support to Schools and Early Years Settings

### 1. Why were we working with these settings?

As part of the expansion of funded places for two year olds East Sussex Early Years Improvement team worked with Primary Schools and Early Years providers to increase capacity and raise quality.

### 2. What have we done?

#### Context

East Sussex put in place a Multi-agency project board in May 2009 dedicated to the work of expanding places for identified two year olds and monitoring quality across the sector. This has brought together Children's Centres, Health, Social Care and Private and Voluntary Early Years providers across the sector to work together to remove barriers for families who wish to access a funded place. It is chaired by SLES Senior manager Early Years.

**Quality Development** to meet the expectation of all provision being Good or Outstanding. Audits of provision for two year olds and improvement work have been completed with all schools and pre-schools. This has been via Early Years Consultants working with Head Teachers and Early Years Foundation Stage Leads to identify what works well and what developments are needed. Working with 'Requires Improvement' Early Years provision and schools to meet the demand from families in areas where there are currently not enough places. Specific quarterly monitoring is now in place for all 'Requires Improvement' provision that offer funded places for two year olds to ensure their standards are maintained.

Training courses jointly developed with Brighton University for those caring for 0 – 36 month old children have been targeted at provision across the whole sector. This training has helped practitioner's gain greater understanding of child development and meeting the needs of two year olds.

Resources totalling £343,859 have been allocated to all providers offering funded places for two year olds to meet their needs, concentrating particularly in prime areas of learning and development.

Conference held in June 2014 and May 2015 targeted Early Years providers across the whole sector, with national speakers with the aim to improve quality provision by indepth focus on the development needs of two year olds.

**Vulnerable** families known to Social Care, Key Worker Service, Children's Centres and Health teams have been given particular attention. The Project Board have worked jointly to ensure advice and support is provided to these families and barriers to accessing a free childcare place removed.

**Communication** Strategy is in place across the sector to inform providers of Early Years provisions what was happening and how to communicate effectively with families, providing a brokering role where necessary.

**Marketing** Strategy in place across the whole sector, providing Early Years providers with tools to help market their provision. Lifting the profile of outcomes for children who access Early Year's provision.

**Capacity building** for 2 year olds especially in schools by increasing places in Early Years provision that is already in place or providing new provision. Detailed data analysis of Department of Work and Pensions information has produced maps giving 'hot spots' for focus on capacity building. To date £2,840,806 has been allocated to capital projects. This has included implementing the strategy of helping schools who already take three and four

year olds lower their age range to include two year olds.

**Data sharing** protocols in place with Children's Centres and Health to aid take-up of funded places and improve safeguarding across the sector.

### **3 What has the impact been?**

Take up of funded places for two year olds currently (March 2015) sits at 78.14%; this is 16.4% above the national average. This means that out of a possible 2155 potentially eligible families, 1684 eligible two year olds have accessed a funded place.

Of those 2155 eligible families, 94.5% have responded to the publicity and marketing put in place by East Sussex and so enquired about potential funding.

Capital projects across the County, especially on school sites will, by September 2015 have provided an additional 1142 funded places (i.e. 15 hour slots) to meet demand.

The number of Ofsted Good/Outstanding settings has increased from June 2014 where it was 76.9% to March 2015 where it has risen to 86.2%. Enhanced work from the Early Years Improvement team and the focused work around the Expansion Project for two year olds has seen an increase in the quality of provision within East Sussex.

The Multi-agency board has been awarded an East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Outstanding Achievement Award for the impact it has made on the outcomes for children and the support it has provided to vulnerable families.

#### **Comments from recent Ofsted Inspections:**

Ofsted feedback, Summerfields Nursery, November 2014 -

*"The management team has effective systems to evaluate their provision and practice. These help them to inform the nursery's priorities and to drive improvement. They work effectively with the local authority support team, welcoming and implementing ideas and suggestions."*

Ofsted feedback, The Farmyard Nursery, January, 2015

*"Recent information from the local authority shows that there has been exceptional progress over the past two years regarding how well prepared children are for school. This enables the management team to identify areas where staff can further develop children's learning."*

Ofsted feedback, Linda Silburn , Childminder, October 2014

*"She has recently taken part in the local authority quality assurance scheme and regularly completes reviews of her practice alongside a local authority support worker" Oct '14 Report*

Ofsted feedback, Hollyhocks Montessori Playschool, June 2014

*"Staff have addressed recommendations raised at previous inspections thoroughly and work willingly with local authority advisors to further improve their practice"*

Ofsted feedback, Malling Windmill Nursery, December 2014

*“They work effectively with the local authority support team by completing regular audits, creating action plans and setting targets for improvement”*

Ofsted feedback, Bodiam Pre-School, January 2015

*“Staff make good use of information gained at training courses to review and improve their overall practices and the educational programmes in the pre-school. For example, a recent letters and sounds course helped staff increase ways in which they promote children's literacy skills”*

#### **4. What are the next steps**

The multi-agency project board will continue to meet and use its personnel resource and data collected to target and support eligible families to access two year funding and also support the implementation on the Integrated Progress Review for two year olds.

The Early Years Improvement team will continue to support all Early Years provision taking funded two year olds.

Regular monitoring will ensure standards are maintained and identify any further training requirements.

Increase role for the Early Years Hubs within Education Improvement Partnerships.

Conference promoting excellent practice and outcomes for children will be held annually (next one 11.05.15), inviting nationally renowned guest to speak and providing additional resources.

- In most cases hopefully this will be a positive story about lighter touch monitoring of the schools progress and how you plan to build capacity to sustain the improvement
- This might include reference to the role of EIP, ongoing support from LLE/NLE and or movement towards Federation
- In cases where progress hasn't been as hoped this is the place to set out what you are going to do differently next and what lessons you have learnt from the experience