

## Case Study: From Pram to Primary (Grace Owen Nursery School, Sheffield)

Grace Owen is a free-standing nursery school that provides services for children and families in an area in the top 2 per cent of multiple deprivation. It is on the ground floor of a block of flats in an A\* listed housing complex containing almost 1000 dwellings, 90 per cent of which are currently empty and awaiting refurbishment. The ethnically-mixed population comprises White British, British Asian, African-Caribbean and others, including asylum seekers and refugees.

### What are we doing and why?

It is a school priority to make induction and transition as smooth as it can be. The key to our success is forming extremely positive relationships with children and their families.

We reach out to the community by placing posters, photos and information in local surgeries, shops, libraries and the post office.

We also visit baby clinics to talk with the parents of young children to make links, building confidence in parents whose children will attend the school.

We encourage parents to visit and to complete waiting list forms so that we can contact them as soon as there is a place or their child is old enough.

Parents have to cross the playground to reach reception, which is situated by the main entrance and is accessible from 8.00am until 5.00pm.

The cloakroom is deliberately distant from the entrance, so that parents have to walk through school to take children to their classroom.



Because we take children from six months into the under threes setting, and three-four year olds into the classroom, we have slightly different systems.

All parents are invited to come and stay with their child before, during and after their start date. This flexibility means we can be very responsive to parents.

Displays in the school invite parents to attend courses, coffee mornings and celebrations. This really helps to boost their attendance at these events.

One of the advantages of a shared site and integrated service is that parents make regular visits, just popping in to the classroom as part of their day.

Parents whose children are due to start at the beginning of term are invited by letter to an open afternoon.

This gives them an opportunity to meet the staff, learn about routines and expectations and complete a home-school agreement. Parents complete a form asking for feedback on the experience. If they are unable to attend for any reason, alternative arrangements are made.

These are then assessed to check where things have gone well and where improvements need to be made. We take parents' views seriously and always act!

As part of our LPPA work, we re-thought transition to primary school, including the creation of a newsletter for parents that includes photos of staff and describes routines and policies.



This is in addition to our usual practice of teacher visits and a six-session child and parent introduction held at the local primary school.

Records are shared with parents at the end of term and later discussed with primary school teachers at transition meetings.

## What has happened as a result?

- We have confident parents who know how we work
- Parents feel welcome and involved throughout their children's time at Grace Owen
- Transition to primary school reception is much improved
- We have developed strong links with a range of external partners



### TOP TIP



Think about working with parents at every stage of their involvement with the school