



I CAN Early Talk Accreditation Report: A Specialist Service for Children's Communication

I CAN Provision at Mayfield Nursery School, Midlothian

I CAN Accreditors

Jill Atkinson and Jon Gilmartin

	Achieved	Deferred
Outcome Measures	√	
Supporting children in your setting/service	√	
Specialist Education and Therapy	√	
Assessment	√	
Supporting Inclusion	√	
Admission, Transition and Outreach	√	
Working with Families	√	
Professional Development	√	
Staff Mix and Induction	√	
Management structure and support	√	
TOTAL/10	10	0

Achievement and Areas for Development

The I CAN Early Talk accreditation scheme is a quality assurance and quality improvement tool. The accreditation involves an inspection of a portfolio of evidence, and an onsite audit of practice using standards of service excellence, which have been developed by I CAN.

The accreditation visit was carried out over one day, with the morning being used predominantly for staff interviews, parent interviews and direct observation. The accreditors provided brief verbal feedback in the afternoon to disclose the success of the specialist accreditation.

Accreditation award

The specialist level accreditation is divided up into ten sections:

1. Outcome Measures
2. Supporting children in your setting/service
3. Specialist Education and Therapy
4. Assessment
5. Supporting Inclusion
6. Admission, Transition and Outreach
7. Working with Families
8. Professional Development
9. Staff mix and Induction
10. Management Structure and Support

To achieve Early Talk specialist level accreditation all 10 sections need to be scored as achieved.

I CAN Provision at Mayfield Nursery School has achieved a full accreditation award which will be valid for three years subject to successful annual interim reviews.

The service is to be congratulated on this achievement, which is a clear reflection of the high quality service at Mayfield Nursery School.

Signature of accreditors:

1.  2. 

Date : October 25th 2016

Introduction

Service strengths and Areas for Development

In summary, the strengths and Areas for Development for each of the sections were identified as follows:

1. Outcome Measures

Strengths in this area:

- The service provided documentation showing a wide and comprehensive use of assessment, record keeping and review to ensure good monitoring of IEP targets and children's outcomes
- Review of children's targets is held fortnightly, this ensures that individual children's performance can be monitored and adjusted frequently according to need.
- The Accreditors recognise the value of the Children and Young Persons Map and Plan (multi-agency assessment) which outlines services working together with the child and family.
- Although the team supporting the children have different working patterns, they try hard to ensure continuation of support and care with a strong focus on children's outcomes.
- Feedback from parents and visitors is recorded in a stakeholder feedback folder, this shows the teams willingness to consider the wider views of the service they provide.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- The Accreditors support the core team's development plans to create a comprehensive system for collecting and analysing children's outcome data including review of the questionnaires used and return rate.
- The team may wish to consider the presentation of that data that shows good outcomes for parents in addition to other professionals.

2. Supporting children in your setting/service

Strengths in this area:

- The model of this service includes mainstream children as well as provision for children with severe and complex speech, language and communication difficulties. As an inclusive early learning and childcare nursery provision, the staff work hard to ensure that the physical and learning environment is accessible to all children.

- The nursery ethos recognises potential or existing barriers to learning for all children. Careful forward planning ensures that individuals can access the curriculum at their own, specific level and according to their particular stage and style of learning
- They provide a balance of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities , focused group work, paired work and themed experiences provides appropriate pace, challenge and enjoyment in learning.
- The provision integrate therapeutic programmes into learning opportunities: Some examples include Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy strategies
- The key worker system provides a direct, familiar link for children, parents and carers and supports the development of a 'learning folio' to encourage metacognition and awareness of the learning process
- Robust systems are now in place to ensure new and changing staff engage in specific training relating to improving language and communication skills, specifically signing systems, Early Talk/Hanen, self regulation.
- Host nursery staff are supported informally on a day to day basis to ensure consistency of approach for all children.
- Staff are supporting many children on an outreach basis, this service has greatly expanded over recent years.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- We support the provision with the identification of training gaps with new staff members and plans being put in place to develop skills in supporting children with significant SLCN in a mainstream environment e.g. Signalong training, Hanen training which has led to an action plan for staff and is part of the School Improvement Plan.
- There are increasing demands on the Senior SLT's time, arrangements for purposeful liaison time and skill sharing opportunities needs to be an ongoing priority to ensure effective use of the SLT's time and thus maintaining the quality of the service.

- As the provision is currently not full and tends to fill up over the school year, consideration should be given to referral mechanisms for places to be taken up at the beginning of the school year to ensure they are running at full capacity supporting children's SLCN.

3. Specialist Education and Therapy

Strengths in this area:

- Joint specialist working between SLTs, teacher and CCDW ensure that planned programmes are designed to facilitate best progress
- Interventions and strategies are reviewed fortnightly and as part of ongoing teaching and therapy, so as to ensure needs are being appropriately met.
- Targets are informed by relevant external professionals as and when necessary and parents, to incorporate holistic needs of the child.
- Each child has a relevant curriculum target as well as specific speech, language and/or social communication targets.
- Communication systems are constantly being evaluated due to part time working of the SLTs. A 'group plan' is created between the I CAN Teacher and SLTs termly with each individual group being evaluated and planned for week by week.
- All the I CAN children receive specialist input by the I CAN staff on a day to day basis. This can take part in a variety of locations and by any one of the I CAN staff members.
- Staff activity time is carefully monitored in the provision; this ensures the best possible use of time to support the children's needs.
- A variety of therapeutic programmes are in place, both in host nursery and within the provision e.g. colour coding, Sulp, BSP, Word Aware.
- Parents play an important part in supporting and developing their child's progress within the provision and whilst daily contact is typically through the children's home school diary, parents are invited to come in regularly to the nursery for play dates and to observe sessions.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- The team have themselves identified that the nature of part time working presents many challenges within a specialist provision. Communication between

staff is seen as essential and systems are constantly being trialled and evaluated in order to improve time management and maximise input from the SLTs. This should be continued.

- The SLTs have already highlighted plans to trial the use of Core Vocabulary (Crosbie, Holm and Dodd 2005) to develop the functional intelligibility of speech for those children identified as having significant speech sound disorders. I CAN support the teams to identify and pilot new interventions and programmes to inform best practise.

4. Assessment

Strengths in this area are:

- Children arrive at the provision with a CYP Map and plan which are used along with I CAN assessments and observations to create a robust and SMART IEP, with appropriate intervention approaches and measure outcomes.
- IEP targets are evaluated fortnightly using a rating scale to ensure careful monitoring of each child's progress. Evaluation is informed by ongoing IEP intervention sheets and SLT notes which are accessible to the core team
- A wide range of standardised and informal assessments are in use and available on site. Additional assessment can easily be obtained from local community SLT department
- The team work jointly to analyse and evaluate assessment results. This informs a robust IEP including strengths and areas of needs.
- Assessment occurs in varied contexts – individual sessions, small groups and in the mainstream setting to allow for triangulation of results and evidence of consistency.
- Transition meetings typically take place mid-June prior to the children finishing for the summer at the end of June. Informal and formal assessment information from the above systems is collated by the SLT's and Teacher.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- The Accreditors have noted that the SLTs have planned to review the assessment and analysis of those children with speech sound disorders using the Diagnostic Evaluation of Articulation and Phonology (DEAP).

5. Supporting Inclusion

Strengths in this area are:

- I CAN at Mayfield Nursery School is an inclusive provision wherein children access mainstream early level learning alongside their peers. Appropriate and proportionate support is provided to enable children to access play environment, curricular learning and social interaction.
- Therapeutic programmes and support strategies are integrated into mainstream to provide consistency and increased probability of positive impact e.g. Sulp, Body Awareness Group, Hanen, Early Talk skills.
- A high level of skill sharing between specialist and nursery staff directly affects pupil progress e.g. use of self-regulation scripts and Signalong.
- Weekly mainstream planning is adapted and elaborated to ensure children from the provision are included and supported.
- The high level of skill sharing between I CAN and mainstream staff ensures consistency and an inclusive approach to supporting all children's communication.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- Continue to explore opportunities for provision children to experience enhanced links with future educational placement, post- PAG decisions, in term three.

6. Admission, Transition and Outreach

Strengths in this area are:

- A high level of consultation and support, both formal and informal, is offered to children and families during the transition process (both into and out of the provision).
- There is an enhanced awareness of the outreach consultative model across authority, following a number of awareness raising and consultation sessions with key staff and management. This has also involved presentations to senior staff groups e.g. NEG, and in the session 2016-17 will include presentations to the teaching staff in the new Early Years Learning Communities.
- I CAN provision staff are well placed for changes to service delivery as part of the authority Service Review e.g. consultation and specialist support base.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- We recommend that when the provision update their admission criteria, they contact other I CAN early years services with a view to refining and expanding the detail.

The Accreditors wish to note that the 3 identified areas of development by the team, outlined below seem entirely appropriate. Their ability to reflect and audit their own practice, skills and the service they offer to children and families are to be recognised.

1. A home visit during the summer holiday by the SLTs continues to be a successful opportunity to engage with parents and collect information about the child. We hope to enhance this service by including the teacher in these visits beginning summer 2017. This will help to ease transitions and familiarise children and families to the wider staff team.
2. Staff are developing the use of I CAN factsheets to support provision and outreach staff as well as provision and outreach parents. These are seen as a valuable resource in sharing excellent information and have so far been well received.
3. Service Review recommendations and developments around future service delivery may demand a more flexible approach to numbers of fully resourced and outreach placements and, in turn, ways of working by staff. For example:
 - skill sharing Ready Steady Talk with staff in other centres,
 - working cooperatively with other ASL specialists to support the development of practice that supports all children to develop their early language and communication skills,
 - the CCDW from the I CAN provision supporting children supported through outreach in the campus schools.

7. Working with families

Strengths in this area are:

- There is a well established system of involving families in multi-agency working that everyone recognises
- Staff have flexible approach to the varied needs of families, including enhanced use of home link diaries and telephone consultations when required
- There is an 'Open Door' policy for all family members – telephone and in person. This ensures there are opportunities for families to be partners in their children's learning, and be supported with understanding the child's learning style.
- Termly IEP and play date meetings are set and enable collaborative working with parents to evaluate and set targets.

- The families commented on how beneficial they found the home link books giving them an overview of what is being worked on and how they can help at home.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- Develop opportunities for meaningful family workshops, tailored to the needs of the children. This would enhance the support children received at home ensuring continuity of interventions
- Further develop systems for communicating with outreach families in order to build upon success of more informal end of year meetings and 'drop in' opportunities with outreach teacher.
- Monitor family engagement with questionnaires etc to explore whether electronic systems may prove more popular.
- From the Parent forum, it was suggested that a range of case studies are written for parents whose children have been offered a place. These studies would show the various pathways for a number of different children and the outcomes that can be achieved.
- Out of date I CAN logo on leaflets and external signage should be removed.

8. Professional Development

Strengths in this area are:

- CPD needs are evaluated annually and linked directly to needs of children in the provision.
- Annual planning day identified and used for a chance to look at the overview of completed CPD and further needs, for provision staff and the host nursery team.
- Action plan includes CPD as a standing item.
- There is ongoing staff activity mapping: Informally at meetings and by the HT, using timetable plans on a monthly basis
- Multi-agency skill sharing is already well established e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Educational Psychology.

Comments and Areas for Development- identified by the team

- Continue to develop work with Education Psychology Service linked to collaborative work detailed in School Improvement Plans 2015-16 and 2016-17.

- Continue to develop ongoing short training opportunities based on Hanen Principles which is integral to the School Improvement Plan.
- Allocating time to feedback in more detail about any CPD in order to further improve skill share opportunities between key I CAN staff.

9. Staff Mix and Induction

Strengths in this area are:

- There is a supportive staff team in place with a wealth of experience.
- High level of collaboration between staff exists with regular skill sharing during the nursery sessions between the provision and mainstream staff.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- Due to imminent changes in the Midlothian SLT team, the team should strive to maximise the use of allocated SLT time.

10. Management structure and support

Strengths in this area are:

- The role of the current Head Teacher in over viewing the service and enabling effective ongoing monitoring of service delivery is seen as a major strength. Her role is well integrated into I CAN core staff team and also has significant links with multi-agency professionals.
- The Accreditors were impressed by the Head teachers commitment to providing teaching time for all children in the nursery.
- There is a high level of skill-sharing with the host nursery core team, built into systems of planning and continued professional development audit of need.
- Management systems ensure that therapeutic programmes, interventions and strategies are integrated into the inclusive nursery setting through careful planning, skill sharing and resourcing. Examples include: Social use of Language Programme, Self-Regulation Positive Behaviour Management, Body Awareness (Occupational Therapy Sensory Group), Hanen, Early Talk, Signalong.

Comments and Areas for Development:

- Continued development of specialist and outreach service to reflect changes in local authority model of support for pupils with additional needs and the new Early Years Learning Community Model in Midlothian.

Summary

The accreditors acknowledge that the service provided a comprehensive portfolio of evidence which supported observations made on the accreditation visit and the formation of this report.

The service, I CAN Provision at Mayfield Nursery School is of high quality, characterised by professional staff who together provide an excellent example of good practice in early years communication and education for young children. It is worthy of note that the accredited specialist services in Midlothian have consistently provided excellent services for children with speech, language and communication needs for some years.

These strengths can be fine tuned further in line with the suggested Areas for Development described above. These are intended to give a steer to the focus for this next stage of development for the team and we hope will support the service in its continued and invaluable work with the children, families, schools and settings in the locality.

Many congratulations from the accreditation team.

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25th October 2016