

Points of Excellence Supplement

The following points of excellence were noted during the QfA Assessment at **Once Upon a Time** on **14th November 2023**.

Section 1 – Ownership, leadership, management and organisation

Excellent practice noted:

Once Upon a Time Day Nursery has an excellent website. It provides potential parents with all the information they need to make an informed choice about the service. For example: A video of the setting is available to view, and a recording of a radio advert is available to listen to, along with other useful information, including their most recent CIW report, all Policies and Procedures, a Parent - Setting Contract, Menus, etc.

There is a detailed collection of policies and procedures easily available, the website has categorised them which is really helpful for staff and parents, '*...we wanted them to be easy for staff and parents to navigate their way through and jump in and out of*'.

CCTV cameras are positioned around the internal and external environment, the recordings of these are linked to a monitor kept in the office and we were told these are checked when something has happened such as a query from a parent, an accident, a near miss, etc.

Once Upon a Time Day Nursery have a highly qualified staff team. Staff are encouraged to complete their Childcare, Play, Learning and Development course to the highest levels and attend training in areas of interest as well as mandatory training.

Staff's skills are utilised, there is a skills plan in place and staff are encouraged to comment on what skills they possess and would be willing to share with the children, skills shared have included yoga, sports, IT, circus skills, storytelling, and many more.

Staff's wellbeing is promoted by the management team, they have access to free snacks and toiletries, a 'staff member of the week' award, teambuilding nights out/in or weekends away. There is also a jar available for all staff to contribute their ideas on 'any' topic.

The owner told us there is a 'democratic' management style, whereby all staff are consulted on most decisions made, "*We believe this is why we have maintained our staff, we are a very close team that work well together*".

The management team have created a 'protected lunch hour' for staff. Parents are aware that unless there is an emergency, children do not get picked up or dropped off in this hour. Surplus staff help to maintain ratio and staff are encouraged to take a break.

Section 2- Children's health and wellbeing

Excellent practice noted:

The management team have excellent links in the community including staff from NHS Wales, Flying Start Health Visitors, etc. The Manager told us that supporting parents to be aware of any health risks and helping them to make healthy lifestyle choices was of great importance. Health resources are shared with parents and health professionals are invited to Fundays where they can, *"...engage with parents and cement our health care messages"*.

We saw staff using pictured lanyards to help the babies understand it was dinner time and we heard staff asking the babies, *"Can I pick you up?"* and *"Can I put you in your highchair?"*

An effective transition policy is in place and covers all types of transitioning experiences children may need support with, such as: new siblings, death of a family member, moving home, etc.

Children are given the time and space to express themselves. The manager told us, *"We offer a safe space here, children are told it's ok to feel whatever they may be feeling"*. Children have the opportunity to use a worry log (a light up hand that children can touch and speak to) and they practice yoga and breathing techniques. The Deputy Manager explained how a child recently came into nursery feeling angry, all he wanted to do was breathe deeply, they breathed deeply together and then the child openly discussed what was troubling them.

"All staff have Food Hygiene certificates because we wanted them to be able to cook with the children as an activity".

Children are offered meals, snacks and drinks that are appropriate to the length of their stay and mealtimes take place in their designated 'play' rooms. All staff work together to provide a menu that considers a healthy nutritious and varied diet for the children in their care. We were told that when creating new menus, staff provide recipes from home, they reintroduce recipes that have worked well in the past, children's individual dietary needs are considered and when ready the menu is tested for a month and amended accordingly. Children plant vegetables and wherever possible they include these foods in the meals. The Owner explained we share the menus with parents and some parents have asked for the recipes so they can cook the same food at home. One parent told us, *"I really appreciate that my child is getting home cooked food, nothing is ever too much trouble for them"*.

Photos and a description of what the child likes to help them to sleep are positioned on the wall in the babies sleep room.

We saw a well-equipped sensory room and were told how this calming environment is available for everyone to use.

Section 3 – The learning environment and operational practice

Excellent practice noted:

Progress Days are also offered as a way of keeping relationships with parents open, they take place on a Saturday and it's a chance for parents to ask any questions, view children's 'Learning Journals' and look around the setting.

The setting has excellent links with the community and have started the process of working with a councilor to create a community space/garden that the nursery will be able to use. We were told they have also started building relationships with other nurseries in the area, this is a great way to share ideas and best practice.

Children have a voice and are listened to, "*Child satisfaction is usually assessed every day through observing play and listening to their ideas*", (QoC Report 2023). We were told how they are supported to contribute to future plans and saw a large piece of paper in each childcare group that detailed the children's ideas. We heard older children being asked how they feel during a circle time and saw emotion faces displayed in the other childcare rooms.

Management value their staff's opinions and have excellent communication links with parents.