

# Integrating provision for two-year-olds in school: Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre

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**URN:** 100434

**Region:** London

**Remit:** Early years/Schools

## Provider background

Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre is a large school located in Islington, London. Pupils attending the school reflect the wide diversity in the local community. Many pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium funding and a high proportion speak English as an additional language. Half of all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The provision for babies, toddlers and two-year-olds has been integrated with the school for eight years.



## Brief description

This Ofsted good practice example shows how the school works across a wide age range of ages, from birth to 11 years, to secure the very best outcomes for pupils in

the community. In this setting, achieving excellence starts with the very youngest children – even if they are babies.

This is part of a set of eight good practice examples showcasing good practice in early years to support the report: '[Teaching and play in the early years – a balancing act?](#)'.

## The good practice in detail

Leaders are clear that the drive to improve standards across school begins with raising expectations for the very youngest children. Success in the early years has led to an increase of 27% of children reaching a good level of development between 2012 and 2014. Attainment in Key Stage 1 has also improved for two consecutive years as a direct result of the focus on early years provision. Expectations for Year 3 pupils are now higher too, which sets an expectation for stronger achievement and attainment in Key Stage 2.

## How this improvement was achieved

The school has:

- focused relentlessly on staff's professional development and training to improve qualifications and expertise, including through working with other professionals
- created a staff team that shares values and promotes consistently high expectations of children to develop the desire to learn
- used assessment information to track children's progress, setting expectations of their development and increasing staff accountability
- planned carefully to ensure continuity of learning.

## Developing staff expertise

Leaders insist that all practitioners have a thorough understanding of child development. All staff attend a programme of professional development tailored to their needs, which ensures that every adult performs effectively across the setting. Supported by governors, leaders took a conscious decision to use school funds to help practitioners gain a wide range of external qualifications. When recruiting new staff, leaders set their expectations high. As a result, only four members out of 38 do not have a level 3 qualification or above.

Professional development includes senior leaders too. They model exemplary practice in areas that have been identified as needing development.

When monitoring and self-evaluation showed the need to improve children's outcomes and skills in 'Understanding the world', all 38 staff used a training day to visit a wide range of settings. Here, they observed strong practice in this area of learning. Later, back at school, good ideas were disseminated through staff

discussion. This led to a consistent approach to planning the curriculum for all children in the early years from those in the baby rooms to those in Reception classes.

## Working together as a team

Adults' working hours have been renegotiated to enable all staff to attend in-house training, to plan together with colleagues and to moderate children's assessments. Thus, there is a common approach and a shared understanding of teaching and learning.

Planning and assessment in the early years occurs at least every two weeks. This ensures that learning intentions are met and also that staff have time to develop every child's interests in a meaningful way.

## Tracking progress and setting high expectations

### Strategic plan describing success criteria

The centre's strategic plan includes success criteria that require most children to reach a level of development that is at least typical for their age. This is a tall order for some children, given their starting points. All staff check children's achievements regularly against 'early years outcomes'. Their training has given them the skills to interpret the criteria to help plan and assess learning.

However, leaders wanted something more specific. So, they challenged the status quo by creating a school-based system to track children's progress throughout the setting from their starting points.

Leaders have taken this one step further and extended the whole-school accountability system into the provision for two-year-olds and under twos. They introduced the equivalent of termly pupil progress meetings – a well-established system for checking progress used in the rest of the school. Leaders admit that these strategies were initially quite controversial, particularly for staff working with the youngest children. However, staff have found the opportunity to talk about the children's progress valuable. Parents are actively engaged in the assessment process and report that they love the opportunity to talk regularly about their baby's or toddler's development in the same way as they do for their older children.

Leaders are keen to point out that performance information of this nature is just one measure that is used alongside a wealth of assessment evidence, which includes:

- benchmarking children's records during meetings of staff from different teams
- individual case studies
- internal and external moderation.

## Continuity of learning

Assessment information is also brought to life through practical examples. Staff have considered how key skills are to be continued and what this means for teaching and learning. They have established, for example, how the provision, from the earliest stages in the baby room, could promote physical development and gross motor skills. Staff reflect on how they should use equipment and resources to encourage babies to crawl then climb and cruise. Reception staff plan opportunities for children to manipulate and control large equipment. The subject leaders for physical education in the main school plot how these skills can be developed further in Key Stage 1 and beyond into competitive games skills. Specialist instructors in PE work alongside staff throughout the school from provision for two-year-olds to Year 6 to ensure consistent expectations and progress.

To conclude, the integrated provision is successful because forensic analysis of performance information helps leaders to pinpoint successful achievements or areas to be developed for individual children, for the early years provision or for the whole school. Having pinpointed areas to improve, leaders take swift action to ensure that all that they do has a discernible and lasting impact on children.

The good practice case studies that Ofsted publishes highlight specific examples of practice that providers of education, learning and children's services have used to achieve successful outcomes.

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. Complete our survey [here](#).

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