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**Play Station Nursery Self Evaluation Form 2014**

**Section 1: Our setting**

Our setting ethos is based on the emotional well-being of each and every child whilst providing for them a safe and secure base from which to explore and learn in an actively stimulating setting; with the genuinely warm and caring, understanding support of knowledgeable practitioners.

**The Nursery**

Play Station Nursery Ltd is a full day care setting providing care, learning and development for children from birth to five. (For the purpose of this report 'children' is a direct reference to all those babies, toddlers and young children who attend Play Station). Play Station has been in existence for a little over thirteen years. It was established as a nursery by Joanne Knight, following its transition from Joanne's family home to a commercial organisation. The building is a renovated Victorian building. It is a safe, homely and comfortable setting situated across all three floors of the building. A purpose built, self contained unit is situated at the far end of the rear garden; providing for children from 3-5 years old. We currently have 52 children registered to attend the nursery, with a maximum of 41 children attending the nursery in any one day. 48 of these children are white British. One child is of black African ethnicity. Two children are of mixed race (white and black African). There are no children at present who have English as an additional language at home, however we ensure all children at our nursery are educated on and experience a range of different dialects.

The setting is open 5 days a week 7.45am until 6.15pm, 51 weeks of the year.

**The Staff Team**

The staff team consists of

* Joanne Knight the owner
* the practice leader and manager Ruth Hill
* a team of twelve other early years staff
* and a cook.

Joanne has a level 4 qualification and due to personal circumstances stopped just short of completing her foundation degree qualification. She may yet resume these studies. Joanne is present at the nursery most days.

The Manager of the setting has a BA Honors Degree in Early Childhood Studies from Plymouth University and has achieved EYP Status. One staff member holds a First Class Honours Degree in Psychology, and is now working towards her early years qualification level 3. Another staff member holds one year studies at degree level in Social Work, but changed training path and decided to pursue her passion for a career in childcare.

Nine members of the staff team hold a full and relevant early years qualification ranging from Level 2 to Level 4. The remaining three staff team members are each nearing the completion of their level 3 studies. Two staff members are currently undertaking a Leadership and Management course.

Eight of the practitioners are long standing team members, one has well over a years’ service with us and the remaining have been employed recently or within the last year, to cover a new additional site being opened and the previous manager leaving. One member of staff is currently on maternity leave.

**Context and recent significant information**

We have recently opened a new term-time provision based in a Sure Start centre in Filton called ‘Play Station Nursery @ Filton’. Two of our team members from this site were promoted to run the toddler and preschool group there, with the preschool lead practitioner also being the group leader for the setting if the manager Ruth Hill is not present. The setting opened in September, so numbers of children and staff are expected to gradually increase over the coming months. Any more staff members required for the new setting will not be acquired from our existing team. Naturally we expect our relationship and links with the Sure Start centre to increase over the coming months, as our staff team works more closely with them; sharing facilities, knowledge and resources.

We have recently added a conservatory and outside toilet to connect the main house with our outside area, improving accessibility to the garden and opportunities for free-flow play.

**Section 2: Views of others**

Listening to children is ingrained in the ethos of Play Station and the staff team. It is through children's communications (both verbal and non verbal) that we are able to make judgements regarding their preferred play, their developmental patterns, how we can support their holistic growth and how we can nurture their participation in their own learning. Where age and ability appropriate, children are encouraged to communicate their thoughts, ideas and personal play plans so that we might support their learning in an appropriate and sensitive way. Children settle quickly and with ease when they join the setting and we believe this is an initial and very valuable indication of the environment that we have created. Children's learning journeys are evidence of the positive feedback children provide to us, as they play and learn safely and happily amongst us.

Parents and/or carers are provided with many formal and informal opportunities to communicate their views. Practitioners are available at both dropping off and collection times for information sharing and discussions. This is a valuable time for both parties. In November 2009 the first parent representative meeting took place. An invitation was extended to all families to become a representative, though this was on a first come first serve basis in order to maintain a greater degree of manageability. There is a parent board at the reception door of the nursery so that other parents are able to identify and communicate with these representatives should they wish. Meetings are held every four months and a great deal of e-mails are exchanged in the meantime regarding quality control and improvements that can be made.

As a result of these group meetings we now have an e-mail address and a website as alternative (and it would seem preferred) methods of communication. We also have the e-mail addresses of our families so that information can be shared with them as quickly and conveniently as possible. The web-site is also for communication purposes and can only be accessed by parents using a username and password that is for nursery use only. Upon the request of the parents this website contains child development information and advice, parent support information including contact details for parents experiencing difficulty in their lives for whatever reason, Play Station newsletters and the development plans for the nursery and the children who attend.

Almost our entire uptake is as a result of repeat business or personal recommendation.

We have strived to provide parents with the knowledge that we are here for them and their children, we are to listen, provide advice if required and certainly be instrumental in the positive care, learning and development of their children. We have strived to provide them with opportunities that give them a genuine chance to voice their opinions in a way that is convenient to them. We have worked from the basis that contrary to popular opinion it is not always families who are 'hard to reach' but it is indeed the settings that appear intimidating and unapproachable. We are confident that parents and carers associated with Play Station would regard us in a very favourable and positive light. Parents are able to view their own children's learning journey's whenever they wish and there are sections for them to complete. We actively pass parents their children's learning journey's to review and comment on every four months.

In addition to our previous SEF edition, we have now begun conducting our own collection of feedback from parents through a variety of methods. A particularly successful example is the parental feedback questionnaires that ask parents to comment on a range of in depth elements of our provision. Anonymously or not, parents feel confident to convey their opinions about what they enjoy about our setting and equally important; how we can continue to move forward in establishing a setting that is built on an informative, constructive committee of adults and children. One aspect of the questionnaires that provides an excellent insight, is the box that asks for the children’s own views of our provision. This box (that is filled out with the help of their parents/carers) adds an extra dimension to our assessment, where children’s voices can be heard explicitly through recording the discussions they had with their parents/carers. Without these views of the children; we cannot formulate an accurate evaluation of our provision, and they are a fundamental contribution to the views and values that inform our progression as a setting. We also actively engage with nursery review websites aiming to best inform parents on our standard of provision.

Our online community has grown in appreciation of the type of media that parents and families are using. We have created a Facebook page that shows galleries of the activities/experiences that children have been enjoying, as well as detailing important events and messages in the nursery calendar. On this page we have also begun sharing articles and videos relating to early years topics; we hope that parents will engage, comment and share in discussions about the videos and articles, in order to create an online forum. Through these comments we can also identify any areas of particular interest for coverage in the coming months, addressing any areas that parents feel they need extra support with.

Feedback from other professionals has been positive, commending us on our relationships with parents, and our attachments with children. We successfully completed the process of applying to open a new provision in the Surestart centre at Filton, something that we secured over a large number of other nursery organisations. Being awarded this from the local council demonstrated to us that our standard of provision is highly commended. We had feedback from an Early Years Inclusion Support Worker that we have worked with which I have included below.

‘I have supported three children at Play Station Nursery on occasions since June 2012. I have supported two children in the preschool group and currently supporting one child in the 2-3 year old group.

The staff have always been friendly and accepting of my support. They have been open to any suggestions that I’ve made, i.e. changing the routine, using key fobs and visuals , managing staffing to ensure that the children who require one to one sessions receive them.

The staff are willing to learn and make the most of any professionals who work alongside them, asking for help and advice. They use the suggestions to inform planning and individual Play Plans.

The staff at Play Station are very accepting of children’s individual needs, having different expectations for individuals who are unable to follow the general routine. They respond in a kind, caring manner.’

Wendy Parslow (Early Years Inclusion Practitioner)

A recent example of actions following discussions with outside professionals such as our area SENCO, is the improvements made to our garden area which now has more natural, open-ended, child led resources and experiences. A sensory garden, construction and messy play area was added and our sandpit is now much more engaging and facilitates better learning experiences. Throughout the nursery as a whole, changes to the way things are labelled and stored has also meant that children now understand the concept of belonging and place, and ensure that play and learning can be an easier, more efficient experience.

### Section 3: Meeting Needs

At Play Station we have a highly qualified and experienced staff team who work conscientiously, consistently and reflectively to ensure that what we do is the best that can be provide for those children and families within our care. We know that children's early experiences impact greatly on their future life chances and in delivering the EYFS we remain very mindful of the ECM outcomes and how what we do and say has a huge influence on children's learning opportunities, as well as their personal dispositions and attitudes. There is a great deal of time allowed for children to initiate their own play and learning. The ethos of Play Station is very much based on providing children with an active learning environment. This is scaffolded by knowledgeable and sensitive practitioners who are able to act spontaneously as well as identify future planning provision.

A new addition to our documentation of a child’s learning is at the start of a child’s time with us; we make an informed judgment on their starting points and plot this on a tracking grid. This identifies any developing areas of need at the earliest possible opportunity, and is reviewed termly to ensure progress is being made. Practitioners have since commented on how this is a useful resource when tracking a child’s learning. Resources and planned activities are based on the observations of the children as individuals and as a group. Each child's learning journey contains a current and relevant action plan with regard to their individual development. Practitioners feel this works well though new and improved planning ideas are always welcomed. For this purpose regular staff/planning meetings take place that enable ideas to be shared and implemented. Children’s interests and next steps are explicitly identified and accounted for on each month’s planning. Individual actions or experiences for each child are combined to create a pool of rich, stimulating ideas for practitioners to facilitate through the month. Most important to note is that these child-initiated and adult led activities are then evaluated and furthered/amended to become a process of learning and development rather than isolated learning experiences. Specific areas in each age room are informed and then designed purely from children’s interests, where developmentally possible requested verbally by the children.

Children clearly enjoy coming to Play Station; a fact that parents often comment on. Children's actions and words are closely observed and information is shared with parents; each allows us to track children's development. It is this robust tracking procedure between the setting and home that allow us to assess the children's development and plan for their development.

Our observation, assessment and planning procedures have been reviewed countless times over the last two years. They have been revised and since tweaked. We are confident that our good practice has grown along with our understanding of the EYFS to provide children with outstanding opportunities for personal and academic growth. Getting to know me sheets are provided as useful indicators to practitioners of the child’s interests, preferences and views. Babies and young children's responses/views are sought through their responses to activities and these are recorded in their own learning journey's.

Children settle into nursery life at Play Station quickly and happily. This is a good indication of the importance that is placed upon supporting children's personal, social and emotional development and how successfully practitioners facilitate this. When children begin to enjoy their surroundings and the support they receive from the adults; they are able to achieve in the stimulating environment that is provided for them. Visitors and families alike always comment on the positive atmosphere that is present, the relationships between staff and children and the care that is taken to support their achievements and enjoyment; inextricably linked as they are. Children are active learners; they are given consistent and daily opportunities to explore and investigate their surroundings. Observations of children demonstrate how they are able to work in a social group or very often independently of their peers. In house training has developed the practitioners understanding and use of sustained shared thinking. This has encouraged the practitioners to truly focus on children as individuals and achieve a greater insight into their interests and levels of understanding. EYP network meetings focused on 5x5x5 creativity that has been communicated to the staff team. Within an active learning environment that supports children's understanding of acceptable behaviour children are encouraged to consider questions such as 'what if...?' and 'what will happen if I...?' And ‘I wonder how...’ Children enjoy and achieve across all areas of their learning and practitioners in all age groups of the nursery are conscientious, caring and knowledgeable.

Recent assessment of the learning environment and the numbers/ages of children within the nursery enabled us to make a major change in our provision. For several years the idea of shifting the location of each age group around in the nursery had been one that we had discussed, one which was finally facilitated based on an increase in numbers of preschool age children and a decrease in 0-2’s. Consequently, the preschool group now runs from the separate building at the end of the garden (which was previously the location for the 0-2’s.)

There are specific elements of this change that benefitted each age group within the nursery individually, but there are also over-arching advantages and a common outcome for the setting as a whole. A new conservatory with doors leading to the garden was built onto the main house with the sole aim of creating free-flow for the children in the main house where this was very difficult before. An outside toilet is also nearing completion, aiming to improve facilities for the children in the garden and ease of supervision for staff.

With the new access to the garden from the other building, preschool children would now be also able to have free-flow and increased opportunity for outside learning. Opportunities for learning through peer modelling would be much more frequent, as the 0-2’s spend time with the other age groups much more frequently. The preschool children now seem to be more focussed and engaged with activities of their choosing - resulting in their learning being accelerated. More engaged children generally means that they are more comfortable and settled within an environment, which is something parents will notice and be satisfied with. The area SENCO has given very positive feedback about the change to the learning environment, commenting on how it looks much more functional and engaging than before and that it was a positive change for the children.

The transitions of the age groups to new rooms meant that as a nursery, we were more equipped to offer places for two year olds benefitting from the Early Intervention Grant. This is a positive step for local disadvantaged families who are looking for quality childcare and an opportunity to access a setting with highly qualified staff. Equally for children with health, educational or additional needs, the ease of access to outside was a great progression, particularly for two of the children in the preschool group who suffered with muscular dystrophy who we were then able to effectively support as they developed their physical skills.

Staff maintain effective management of any children with IPP’s and collaborate with parents and multi-agencies to offer an inclusive approach to their learning whilst with us. Staff attend training sessions at the earliest possibility to ensure they feel confident in implementing strategies and targets. The staff are committed, enthusiastic and effective in teaching and supporting learning as well as meeting the range of additional needs that our children have.

We firmly believe that when children are happy and feel safe and secure they will naturally feel confident to actively explore the world around them. Confidence, competence and resilience are attributes that we remain ever mindful of. Levels of communication, literacy, numeracy and IT use are high and as a result children's development in these areas is often outstanding. Nurturing children's positive and healthy dispositions and attitudes toward their learning is a necessary pre-requisite of them being ready, willing and able to progress to their own full potential; this is a priority at Play Station that serves the children well. Children are very active, tremendously inquisitive and are often able to play independently. Children are given sensitive opportunities to solve problems, have their achievements recognised and progress to more challenging problems. There are often children at Play Station from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who are encouraged to share their experiences via personal communication, photographs, information from parents and IT and literature resources. Celebrations of culture are explored and considered throughout the year and where appropriate the adventures of commercial characters are given some attention.

### Priorities for Improvement of Meeting Needs

**Parental Engagement through a new Parents Forum**

Parental engagement is always at a high level within our setting and written and verbal feedback from parents and carers remains ever positive. Yet we endeavour to continuously improve the connection that we have with our parents and how we can bring the community into our setting. We strive to be aware of the circumstances of each parent/carer in our provision and to maintain an effective service to help families receive the support that they need. We ensure that vulnerable parents gain the confidence to be able to engage with us and access the information and help they need to get involved in their children's learning through building trusting, strong relationships with staff who have in-depth quality knowledge of their child(ren). One of our continuing priorities for improvement lies in acknowledging the importance of successful relationships with parents and carers and the ways in which we can increase these. A new parent’s forum evening which invites all parents to get involved in the ongoing development of the setting is coming up in March. We have designed these evenings to be more inclusive than a specific section of parents that forms a parent representative group (which we formerly have done) and will aim to welcome both mothers and fathers, with children from all age groups, economical backgrounds, parents with EAL and parents who might be classed as a hard-to-reach parent. These groups would cover a variety of topics, but all with the sole intention to identify how as a provision, we might try and satisfy the needs of all the families not only within our provision, but looking into the wider community.

**Making links with other settings to collaborate and share ideas**

A project that I have already begun which holds an aim of wider improvement in the local community is an idea sharing project that sets up links with a range of different settings in the area to enable practitioners (not just managers) to visit each other's settings to gain inspiration, advice and ideas. Topics covered on the visits will be determined by the individual settings to ensure that the visits have optimum effectiveness and results. The other settings involved in this project have already commented on how beneficial it is and are positive that it will enable our settings to improve in the knowledge of the needs of the wider community.

**Parent’s understanding of the EYFS**

Another key area that we feel needs developing is parent’s engagement with the EYFS. This is a nationwide, government responsibility and one that we feel is not being addressed at the moment. Our efforts to combat this will be in form of creating accessible support booklets for parents on how best to support their child within each of the EYFS areas. These booklets will be accessible, informative but not prescriptive, aiming to be inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities of parents of children of ages 0-5 years old. Most importantly they will help advise parents on invaluable experiences they can be instrumental in giving their children in order for them to have the best start in life possible.

### Section 4: Children’s Wellbeing

Whilst at Play Station children engage in a healthy lifestyle that includes eating a balanced diet, including fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and water, a great deal of physical exercise and high standards of hygiene.

Children are expected to wash their hands after using the toilet and after engaging in messy activities as well as before snack and meal times. From the baby unit through to the pre-school group children engage daily in outdoor play and music and movement sessions (sticky kids for example). These sessions are greatly enjoyed by all of the children regardless of their age and ability level. As previously mentioned children are provided regular out of setting experiences that require them to walk to a local park/field where they can enjoy more vigorous physical activity.

Meal times are regarded as a social event during which the children and staff might discuss the food that is available, the source of the food and how it helps to make our body and brain strong.

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Children are expected to wash their hands after using the toilet and after engaging in messy activities as well as before snack and meal times. Visual prompts are a great tool for enforcing this.

Our provision offers facilities for all ages, stages and developments. We are fortunate in being able to offer “quiet areas” to give children the chance to sit and reflect on how they are feeling or to have somewhere to go if they are feeling overwhelmed. We use positive reinforcement techniques for behaviours – this involves our nursery rules which are displayed visually and implemented throughout the day by staff through visual key fobs on their person and through visual reminders located all around the setting. Through this, prevention remains the technique rather than reprimand. At the area where the nursery rules and expectations are displayed, the importance of key visuals and a one minute sand timer are understood and implemented should a child’s behaviour require this kind of response. Whilst we understand that there are many different behaviour techniques, our strategies are chosen based on our close involvement with inclusion support workers and area SENCOs which we have been lucky enough to work with closely at Little Stoke.

Our morning includes “Registration” time where we sit together and welcome each other to nursery. We give the children the choice to sing either “where o where o”, “Good morning”, “Look who’s here”. Children’s choice and voice remains the theme throughout the day that keeps our practice strong. We endeavour to use Makaton throughout registration and are attending a training course held by Ruth Hill to enhance our use of Makaton at all times of day. From working with Inclusion support workers we have sound understanding that visual time tables are key to all children especially those with SEN, as well as being an aid to build confidence and inclusion within the group. During this time children are given the opportunity to choose which activities they would like to do throughout the day. We have noticed this is working well as it facilitates opportunity for conversations between the children and supports relationship building between them. It also gives them the opportunity to be heard within the group and for us to model good listening/speaking skills.

Specific practices have been implemented where other provisions may overlook the necessity; such as the inevitable situation where two or more children are communicating to a practitioner simultaneously. Seemingly minor strategies for practice such as establishing with each individual child that each of their thoughts are valued and will be heard, but that they might like to listen to each other in turn so that everybody’s thoughts can be shared. Holding the other child’s hand and using eye contact (if they are comfortable with this) gives the child waiting a physical and visual indication that their communicative efforts and patience are appreciated. (Simultaneously modelling good listening and communication skills to the other children).

Children confidently make choices about their play and are often involved in daily decision making opportunities.

The older children are each responsible for ensuring a certain job is done each day. For example ensuring the book corner is tidy at tidy up time or counting the children that will be attending lunch, counting and giving out the cups or forks, etc. The children have taken these responsibilities on board with a sense of value and importance.

National charity events such as comic and sport relief as well as children in need are supported by events within the nursery that fully include children and their families. Children are encouraged to realise and begin to understand that life for many does not involve the luxury items they consider to be part of normal life. As many cultural celebrations as possible are celebrated day to day, be this subtly through resources provided or more explicitly such as making flags for ‘Australia Day’ or talking about what makes us happy on ‘National Smile Day’.

Recycling and sustainability issues are receiving much more considered attention within the nursery and this will continue to grow as children become more and more accustomed to consider the issues that drive recycling. Children are able to grow their own fruit and vegetables whilst at nursery in the plastic greenhouse and in the planting beds designed for this purpose.

Children are encouraged and supported to act in safe and appropriate ways, using adults words and actions as their models of reference. Children are encouraged to take risks particularly by way of trips to the local parks, school field and local playing fields. Trips that take us further afield might involve (for the older children) the use of local transport, this is a source of great excitement and learning and needs to be carefully planned for (risk assessments are considered and completed accordingly). Children are encouraged to consider safety aspects of such trips and of course the use of large play equipment. Children are aware that they are not to attempt to enter the kitchen area due to dangerous equipment being present. Children are also aware that an adult must be present at all times to ensure their safety. Our behaviour management and conflict resolution procedures are introduced to the children as early as practicable, this includes the opportunity for children to empower themselves and be confident to say 'stop' and tell if necessary. The relationships between practitioners and children are appropriate and mutually caring, this enables children to feel confident about communicating their joys and their sadness or concerns.

All practitioners are CRB checked and undergo both child safeguarding and paediatric first aid training. Key person systems are in place. Students and other visitors are not left unsupervised by the staff team. Child:Adult ratios are often exceeded each day and certainly on trips outside of the nursery setting. We are confident that children feel safe to a high degree.

**Priorities for Improvement of Children’s Wellbeing**

* Improve the effectiveness of the outside provision to be more stimulating and challenging
* Introduce more Makaton into the daily routine
* Ensure visual routine/timetables are rolled out and used intrinsically within the daily routine of the children
* Continue to put focus on the labelling and valuing of emotions being experienced by children through visuals and appropriate modelling from adults

**Section 5: Leadership and Management**

**Leadership**

Ruth Hill is the practice leader and manager of the setting. Ruth has gained a second class honors degree in Early Childhood Studies with Plymouth university, and achieved EYP Status. Ruth is a very dedicated member of the team, having joined initially as a nursery nurse and quickly having displayed high levels of ability facilitating her promotion to preschool leader where for three years she worked with her team to ensure her practice was informed by sound experience with her staff team, wider professionals and children and families alike. Her aptitude for facilitating the learning and development of the children translated itself also to her staff team who supported her move in becoming the practice leader and manager of the setting in 2013. Ruth’s in depth knowledge of the elements that it takes to work at each level of practitioner role means she maintains a healthy, supportive model for good practice; supporting the staff team on a daily basis, identifying training needs and general priorities for improvement across all areas of practice and within the physical environment. Ruth has held a wide variety of training sessions after the normal working hours. This has enabled the staff team to gain a greater understanding of the expectations placed upon them, whilst becoming more and more knowledgeable about the EYFS and child development in general. Staff meetings, training sessions, planning meetings and informal discussions during the working day provide the basis for discussions that are concerned with improving the provision. The vision and values of the nursery and the significance that we put on the outcomes of each individual child is reinforced at each of these meetings.

Staff who are deemed consistently high role-models are promoted to positions of leadership, and appropriate responsibility is bestowed on these persons to ensure standards are continuously raised when Ruth is not able to be present.

Continuing professional development that offers practitioners with a reflective basis from which to make professional assessments of their practice alongside a consistent reflection on the emotional, social, educational and physical environment that is being offered remains a priority. Remaining vigilant with regard to safeguarding will continue to be an area of considered focus. Recent meetings that have involved the room leaders and the management team have provided a valuable opportunity to prioritise areas of practice that require focused consideration. These meetings are a new addition to our practice and offer an excellent platform to share information and ideas within a manageable group that is representative of the whole staff team. Priorities and issues raised at these meetings will be further discussed at staff meetings, or if necessary on a one to one basis.

**Maintaining a motivated team**

Leadership has been observed by Ruth from both angles, both before being manager herself and after – meaning she has direct experience that can inform her management of a team. Praise and positive guidance has been identified as something that team thrives on, so a staff ‘Wow Board’ has been created for both management and practitioners alike to write on, saying thank you or well done for quality aspects of practice that are observed. This is working well to keep team morale high and good practice highlighted to other staff members for motivation.

Staff meetings are more balanced, having equal dedicated time for positive feedback as well as areas for improvement. Where meetings were sometimes one-way, they now have much more of a forum style, allowing all practitioners an arena to learn from each other; not solely the leader. This has been particularly successful when discussing recent topics of behaviour management routine, and planning and assessment issues, where experiences can differ greatly from group to group. We are now able to act much more cohesively.

The ongoing meetings and reflection upon individual and group needs naturally leads to a continuing wish list of resources. Resources are deployed appropriate to the needs, interests and abilities of the various age groups. All staff members are given the opportunity to compile a wish list of resources whenever they feel it is appropriate and communicate their reasons for their choices. Discussions regarding the environment are always on-going as practitioners strive to respond to the needs of the current children. Children showing advanced development are given more challenging opportunities within the setting, where this is considered appropriate and the parents/families are in agreement. This will be catered for and documented via the child's individual learning journey. The level of academic achievement that some practitioners have achieved alongside those who are long standing staff members or parents themselves, often lends itself to a mutually beneficial working relationship that works very well in the best interests of the children. Within the physical and financial limitations we believe that children have access to some excellent resources and an outstanding staff team.

Sustainability is being given focused consideration as we endeavour to recycle each resource that is no longer of use within the nursery.

**Equality and Inclusion**

Children's individual learning journeys were developed to ensure that all children are given every possible opportunity to access the EYFS framework and be able to achieve to their fullest potential. The experiences provided are planned as a direct result of the observations and assessments of each child, this ensures that each child is included or their learning needs taken into account. At planning meetings each key person is essentially there as a representative of their key children in order to ensure that group planning is as flexible and diverse as needed.

One of our strengths is our ethos that the resources are stored in drawers at the children's height and are labelled with a photograph or word of what is inside the drawer. The resources and toys are easily accessible and in reach for all the children.

At present there is a child with a renal condition meaning he needs catheterisation once every 3 hours. Training of the toddler room leader has meant he can access long sessions on multiple days in our provision, greatly improving the outcomes for his development. Other nurseries have denied his access, meaning the family being threatened with possibility of getting lost in the system. One child in the toddler group has been statemented with autism and a hearing impairment. An inclusion support worker works closely with the room leader who is also the key person to provide inclusive practice. We work hard to ensure this child shares in as many elements of the daily routine as possible. Our work with this little boy since he joined us in the baby group has been extremely highly commended by the area SENCO and ISS team, acknowledging that often boundaries of ratios, funding and resources available can provide challenges for settings, but that we have not let this happen and he is progressing as well as they could hope without being in a specially suited provision. Staff have also supported two children with diabetes through the preschool group. Staff worked hard alongside the parents to constantly assess, amend and administer insulin injections in accordance with their health needs at the time. Again, other nurseries had let the parents down in the past and parents had commented on how glad they were to have such a cooperative, helpful setting.

The families of all children converse in English regardless of their ethnicity. This is however a little unusual and we have indeed provided for children with physical, learning and behavioural difficulties in the recent past. Practitioners are aware of how to proceed in these situations and if necessary Ruth Hill (setting SENCo) would be available to work closely with the child in question and their family.

No child would be declined acceptance to the nursery on the basis of gender, ethnicity or learning difficulties however they manifest themselves. The property is a three storey town building and clearly this has it's limitations under some circumstances (i.e., wheelchair access)

Policies and procedures are routinely rotated on the website and on the parent notice board as well as the full file being available to parents whenever they may wish to review it.

**Assessment and EYFS**

Facilitating learning within each EYFS area is assessed systematically through the new planning system that was implemented by the manager. It explicitly highlights where any gaps in practice or learning environment might occur. Day to day, week to week, practitioners can see where they have been implementing adult led learning opportunities and observing child-initiated experiences within each EYFS area for the group. An individual course of learning can also now be explicitly seen for each child in their learning journey; following starting points, observations of their interests, addressing any areas of need, identifying next steps for them, evaluating and then planning activities that further learning. Individual stories of learning can be seen for each child on the group planning ideas.

**Safeguarding Children**

We are confident that our current provision in terms of staff understanding and implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and risk assessments is of a high standard. In the last few years, the child protection co-ordinator Ruth has had high involvement in a range of child protection issues. She has looked after two children from a family on a child protection plan and has attended team around the child meetings, child protection core conferences and meetings for three other families who have had a range of different concerns relating to the welfare of the children. She has also guided staff on appropriate procedures after identifying concerns. She is now in the process of starting a CAF for a child who has previously been lost in the system 4 times but finally we have now been able to engage with through careful planning and thought to engage with the mother. All this has been valuable experience in child protection, but has also acted to highlight the knowledge and understanding that is already been established. Great care is taken to support children's health and well-being both physically and emotionally. Over the last year policies have been reviewed and improved upon in order to ensure that each and every child is offered protection from harm in any way.

All staff are CRB checked. No visitors or students are left unsupervised, neither too are those staff team members who are within their probationary period or those staff team members who are both inexperienced or indeed lack any formal qualifications. Daily health and safety checks are carried out by each group and according to the areas of the nursery accessed during any one day.

The behaviour management strategies of the setting support children's ability to feel safe, keep themselves safe and when necessary tell another person to stop what they are doing to them.

Individual risk assessments are created specifically for each area of the nursery, and all staff, volunteers and visitors are aware of these and know how and when to add to them to ensure safety is always a priority.

**Self Evaluation**

Self-evaluation, including the completion of this SEF, has and continues to be carried out as a team. Room leaders have been instrumental in assisting to create this document.

We are regulated by Ofsted, where we have had consistent ratings of ‘Good’ with areas of ‘Outstanding’. Each year, we act on the actions advised by Ofsted, SENCOs, EYATs, and government legislation to continuously aim for an even higher rating.

In addition to the discussions that take place within the setting, between practitioners and with parents, the views of the settings Play link development worker and the LEA advisory teacher are sought, self evaluation discussed and areas for improvement considered and if deemed appropriate, acted upon.

Ongoing and continuous CPD as well as in house training and discussions seek and facilitate consistent improvement within the setting. Communication is key in ensuring this happens. Regular one to one meetings and appraisals identify any areas for training and improvement, and create an arena for feedback on the manager/leadership performance (where otherwise difficult). Areas of practice that need particular focus or under-performance are dealt with sensitively and professionally. Often the reasons for under-performance are complex and it is the leader’s role to establish how best to move forward. Inappropriate practice is never ignored and a disciplinary system is adhered to.

**Partnerships**

The partnerships of the setting with other professionals (ie, Area SENCo and inclusion support workers, development workers and the LEA generally), parents, higher education establishments and training providers alike, are all held in respectful and high regard. Our increased communications with parents in particular have had very positive effects on both the staff team and the children. In the event of a child or children requiring the services of other professionals we are able to respond appropriately and liaise in a professional and effective manner, all in the best interests of the child and their family.

**Engagement**

The setting takes the view that parents and carers are not necessarily hard to reach but it is in fact the settings themselves that are. Perhaps new and unchartered (if not intimidating) territory for parents and carers! On this basis parents are given every opportunity that they may wish, to converse with the staff team and management team.

Parents are spoken with at length at drop off and collection times if required. Parents are welcome to view the learning journey of their child and/or children whenever they wish. Parents are actively encouraged to take their child's learning journey home with them at least every 3-4 months for their review and to add their own comments. Parents are offered the opportunity of a private meeting with their child's key worker and/or room leader at this or any other time should they wish.

Parents have been and are still being provided with details of the EYFS, how this relates to nursery life and how they might consider supporting their child's development at home in keeping with the provision of the nursery and considered best practices. We are very confident that this is an outstanding area of our practice. The new booklets being created will hopefully be a valuable tool in decreasing the gap between practitioner’s knowledge and practice, and the home environment. There will be an opportunity for parents to respond to this information with their own thoughts and ideas about how to facilitate the EYFS areas at the parent’s forum meetings that we will be holding. It is important that practitioners recognise that whilst parents are often there to share advice with, they are equally important to learn from.

**Ambition and Improvement**

The last few years have been a time of great change and improvement.

* increasingly challenging times of economic difficulty
* dramatic increase in vulnerable families and children with complex needs accessing the setting
* the integration of the 2 year old education grant
* the decline in numbers of 0-2’s accessing the setting
* change in management
* the ever-shifting goals set out by government legislation

Despite/owing to these changes, we are even more confident in what we want to achieve, how to do this and how we want to be perceived as an early year's setting.

Reflecting on practice is now more ingrained in practice than ever before. We ensure that the type of practitioner that we employ has a natural instinct to reflect, something which cannot always be taught. This continuous reflection from all staff means that even tiny elements of practice are assessed, changed or implemented at all times. This has enabled us as a setting to review the ideals and beliefs that influence our practice and ensure that each of the staff team are acting collaboratively and from the basis of a shared understanding. The team are now working more cohesively than ever with Ruth leading them in a way that has been learned from years of observing and reflecting on her own knowledge and understanding. Specific in house training sessions have included the careful consideration of children's outcomes within the ECM directive. Many targets have been achieved though small improvements are often recognised and acted upon. The tracking systems alongside staff recruitment and training has been of the highest priority and are considered by all practitioners, parents and LEA representatives alike to be robust and effective.

Targets for improvement sheets are being created and acted upon periodically through the year, with all practitioners being encouraged to contribute to these, for example improving the resources for the upstairs role-play area in the preschool to be more stimulating and also to develop the outside classroom environment in the garden.

There is a great deal of overall confidence in the leadership and management from all associated with the setting. Rigorous procedures are in place for reflecting on the policies of the practice and these are considered and shared by the staff team as well as with the parents. There is a very positive feeling of providing outstanding practice, in order for children to realise their full potential. A development plan is currently being considered by the room leaders and Ruth Hill that will be delivered to the staff team and parents for their consideration.

As the previous notes in this evaluation will demonstrate great steps have been taken to ensure that the evaluation process is inclusive for all of the staff team and indeed the parents and other professionals associated with the setting. Any weaknesses will be addressed and appropriately actioned. Our last Ofsted inspection recommended that we consider the ways in which children’s artwork and creations are displayed and valued within the setting. We now have a wealth of examples of children’s experiences, artwork, and creations displayed all over nursery, and corresponding comments and captions next to them in order for adults to be able to view the context. We have gone a step further and put up relevant photos of children in the provision at child-height. For example in the kitchen role-play areas, photos of the children pretending to eat the food can be seen. In the garden attached to the Poddely construction resource can be found pictures of the past creations and constructions that the children have made. These work successfully in inspiring and stimulating children to revisit and extend the experiences and learning opportunities facilitated there.

**Priorities for Improvement of Leadership and Management**

* Two staff members from 0-3’s age group are nearing the end of their NVQ Level 3 Leadership and Management course. After they complete this, they will aim to cascade their training to other members of staff in order to maximise the potential for effective leadership within the nursery.
* Planning and improvement for increasing the numbers of children in the baby room.
* Staff meetings planned at a date that corresponds with relevant training courses from South Gloucestershire training services that staff have been on in order to better facilitate cascading of training.
* Improving the outside classroom especially now that there is more ‘traffic’ and a higher level of use being made possible by the improved free-flow element to the garden.
* Document the success of all the priorities for improvement mentioned in this document to inform the next SEF.

**Section 6: Overall Quality and Standards**

The children’s starting points are now explicit and clarify the beginnings of a journey of growth and development with the support of an experienced staff team. Our current planning, assessment and observation process eliminates any possibility of our children’s needs not being met, and with the help from staff training, EYFS documentation, and appropriate leadership and management, children are constantly working towards their potential every step of the way. Most importantly, we are consistently mindful that a child’s potential for success is facilitated through ensuring their prime areas of learning are the focus of every single experience they have in this setting. More focus is now going to be put into ensuring parents are as confident as possible in facilitating the EYFS at home through the EYFS booklets that are being made.

Feedback from parents and our close work with area SENCO and ISW’s have ensured our practice is kept to an outstanding level, and our ability to listen to and implement the children’s views is ever-growing. We continue to work with the ISW and area SENCo and EYAT to assess and progress our practice.

Disadvantaged children/children with additional needs are given expert care, due to handpicked practitioners that possess the acute skills that are needed to nurture their growth. We are lucky to be able to welcome an increasing number of disadvantaged, hard to reach families to the setting thanks to our location within the Sure Start Centre. Fortunately also benefitting from working in such close proximity to the team of Sure Start workers, the building is now functioning even more to provide a cohesive service for families in the area.

Children who have never attended a setting before and have often come from a turbulent, traumatic childhood are happy and making great progress with us. This can be seen through their learning journeys that document through pictures and observations the amazing journey that they are embarking on.

Feedback from the area manager for Inclusion Support Service has shown us that our safeguarding and child protection procedures are outstanding and that staff find a successful balance between adhering to the protocols for safeguarding, whilst successfully maintaining relationships with the parents and carers of the children concerned. Staff have effectively reported concerns to First Point (the local point of access to children’s preventative, social care and specialist services) and are confident in the process that is instigated upon such concerns. Training will continue to be sought on attachment and trauma, SEN and safeguarding to ensure our practice is at an outstanding standard.

Feedback received is always appreciated and acted upon and appropriate documenting and action plans put in place mean that the nursery is always moving towards child/family-centred goals. The EYAT’s next visit in February will be focussed around helping us to successfully evaluate and improve our provision.

Overall, we are working hard for a more joined up approach to workforce development that pays equal regard to the continual professional development of staff as it does for creating an integrated network with parents and the community.