

Team development award



Winner The Training Depot Day Nursery, Luton

The Training Depot Day Nursery (TDDN), situated in a deprived part of Luton, has been transformed since coming under new ownership in 2006 and is now a beacon of good practice for other practitioners in the town.

The team structure is at the root of the success, which earned the setting an outstanding report from Ofsted last year.

Deputy manager Sandhya Godhania, who nominated the team for the award, says 'Whatever a practitioner's role within TDDN, their views and ideas are valued and implemented to benefit children and their families.'

When David Reavell took over the setting, one of the main challenges was to change mindsets of practitioners. This transformation was achieved slowly, through mentoring, coaching and input from different training providers to ensure staff were well supported.

Objectives and time frames are now agreed together at six monthly appraisals to ensure the team develops at a pace acceptable to individuals. The appraisals process has also been refined so continuous mentoring takes place.

Sandhya says, 'Each practitioner is treated

as an individual and their skill-set used to enhance the experiences of the team, child and parents. Practitioners are given a level of autonomy to put their skills into practice – by being given opportunities to manage small-scale projects for themed weeks, for example.

'Having a strong team ethos means all practitioners have roles that are interchangeable and can cross over easily to cover holiday and sickness. Our staff turnover is minimal, ensuring continuity of care for children and their families.'

The ethos is summed up by the Ofsted inspector, who says 'Staff are successful at motivating children and capture their interest and arouse their curiosity because they are enthusiastic themselves.'

Events outside work are organised to forge the team bonds, whether it is through a meal out or a trip to Paris.

'A committed and motivated staff team' Ofsted

Highly commended Bishop Auckland College Nursery, County Durham

The arrival of a new manager inspired staff to work together to drive up standards. Everyone was fully engaged in developing a clear vision for the future. Full-day workshops and evening sessions were made available, where goals and strategies were clarified. A training programme was devised and funding was obtained for improvements.

Growing Together, Lincolnshire Montessori, Stallingborough

Lincolnshire Montessori's two sites were both graded 'outstanding' at their last Ofsted inspections and have achieved the highest local authority quality scheme ratings. While training has always been a priority for the organisation, it has redoubled its efforts in the past year and launched Growing Together, a review of existing systems.

Finalist The Butterworth Family Childcare and Education Team, Bury, Lancashire

Criterion

Open to early years and childcare services that have built a high-quality staff team through good practice in recruitment and retention, training and career development