

Policy Title and Number:

Quality Assurance Policy

Policy Reference Number: JIC-080

Legislation that informs this policy

1989 Children's Act

The Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

Childcare Act 2006

This list is not exhaustive

Policy

Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island is committed to delivering the highest standards of care and education.

Our quality assurance programme is designed and operated to ensure that our standards are as good, if not better, than anyone else's. To pass this test we need to have in place processes and practices that show clearly that we do just that.

What are our Components of Quality?

Essentially, we can separate our business into four general areas:

1. **What we provide** for children, including not just the provision of opportunities to learn and develop but also our monitoring of their progress and what we provide in response to it. This is *Curriculum* in the very broadest sense and everything associated with it.
2. **How we deliver it**; the way in which we ensure that each individual child - and each member of staff too - makes progress socially, physically and academically and also the steps we take to ensure that our policies and practices make for a safe, caring and effective delivery system.
3. **Who we employ** to work with the children entrusted to our care. We ensure that **the staff** in our nursery have the right personal qualities and the right professional standards through effective screening through the recruitment process, provision of professional training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date, and a remuneration policy based on sound leadership and performance management. While recruitment, training and performance management are the subject of separate policies, they are all part of a seamless approach to quality assurance.
4. **An Enabling Physical Environment**, which underpins everything else to create a safe and stimulating climate for learning.

How do we test the effectiveness of what is going on in our nursery?

There are many ways of doing this, formal and informal, internal and external. We as a company are able to utilize many forms of performance assessment at a variety of levels and to show parents the quality of what we offer, we use them all to demonstrate through evidence rather than by assertion.

We can separate tests for quality into internal and external. Clearly, external assessment is essential to provide independence and, hopefully, objectivity but internal assessment carries, in fact, the greater potential, simply because it comes from within, from the very people who are directly accountable for the delivery of quality. Properly carried out, it demonstrates a healthy attitude, a readiness to examine one's own faults and to do something about them. In a perfect world, external evaluation would simply be a health check although that is not how inspectors see themselves and not, indeed, what too many organisations require.

What Quality Assurance Measures should be in place?

We as a Company see the following to be the essential requirements:

- Principally, good leadership in our nurseries whereby managers and area partners not only know what to look for but have the leadership skills to enthuse staff to get things

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right, consistently checking and questioning standards on a day-to-day basis. Without such leadership, internal evaluation of performance has little chance of evidencing quality. .

- In support of good leadership, we have an internal inspection system that sets out every area of the work of the Nursery and is used as both an *aide memoir* and a guide for the monthly internal inspections of each nursery, carried out by our Local Authority Early Years Adviser This guide is also a useful document for directors making informal visits, though not in its entirety and not so that they can look at areas for which they have no expertise. That is best left to others but they should be looking for the obvious and they should be testing within their own experience. Critically, the guide makes a reference to the Company's policy documentation and part of the monthly inspection will be to ensure that these policies are both understood by all staff and are, indeed, put into effect.
- The assessment process for children includes provision for measuring and tracking progress. To do this properly, and at the same time to be a useful Quality Assurance tool, progress should be measured against expectations derived from early base assessment. Doing this gives parents an understanding and confidence in what we are seeking to achieve. It also picks up problems and facilitates the early identification of special educational needs. Knowledge that such an approach is in place gives parents and schools confidence in the education and care provided in our nurseries.

Other forms of internal assurance methods are a little more pointed.

- Appraisal of staff is crucial. It has to be done by the right people with the right skills and objectives and must be linked to the needs of both the company and the individual. The Company's separate policy document on Staff Appraisal forms another part of our seamless approach to Quality Assurance.
- A register of all complaints is kept in nursery, showing what they are, who has dealt with them and what was the outcome over what sort of period of time. Our directors keeping track of these derive three benefits: he/she is able to know that things that have gone wrong have been put right, they can gain an insight into where things are going wrong more often than they should, and they can pinpoint any member of staff who appears to be getting into difficulties and do something about it.

External Quality Assurance:

- OFSTED provides us with an expert, independent and objective Quality Assurance tool.
- *Journey to Excellence* is a scheme provided and signed off by Essex Early Years and other local authorities
- Our local authority provides our nursery with an Early Years Educations Adviser who visits us regularly to monitor the quality of our curriculum delivery and advise on any resources or equipment that may be needed.
- Our nursery is also regularly visited by Environmental Health and Food Hygiene inspections.

Date for review: April 2020

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