



## INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) PROJECT

### EXAMPLE OF IECE PROVISION: WALES

#### 1. Abstract

Tremorfa Nursery is a maintained nursery school serving the community of Tremorfa in Cardiff, Wales. Tremorfa is classed as an area of deprivation within the city, with 91% of the residents claiming unemployment or disability benefit.

The setting provides nursery education for three- and four-year-olds. Children are admitted on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. Wraparound care is also provided for a small fee in an annex building and 16 children currently attend.

The setting identifies that over 70% of children enter the nursery with delayed speech, language and communication skills. Around 16% of the children are on the setting's additional learning needs register. Very few children have a statement of special educational needs. Currently, 22% of children speak English as an additional language. No children come from a Welsh-speaking home.

As a maintained nursery, the setting is required to teach Wales' Foundation Phase curriculum, a developmentally appropriate national curriculum for three- to seven-year-olds. The curriculum comprises seven Areas of Learning (six in Welsh medium settings and schools) and encourages a first-hand, experiential approach to teaching and learning.

The setting is staffed by one head teacher, three teachers, four nursery nurses, two learning support assistants and one-to-one support staff. The setting also employs staff for the wraparound care facility and a caretaker to look after the maintenance of the building.

Further details of Tremorfa Nursery can be found on its website:

<http://tremorfanursery.co.uk/>

#### 2. Inclusive features

All children are welcome in the setting, regardless of ability, educational need, culture and gender. Staff are familiar with the Equalities policy and it is published on the setting's website: <http://tremorfanursery.co.uk/policies.asp>

The setting has undergone recent further adaptations such as toilet facilities, ramps, etc., for health and care needs. The setting has a very long-standing commitment to parental involvement and partnership. It continues to work closely with families and



the wider community for example, and has a strong relationship with local health professionals.

The setting utilises a community room every day, staffed with a trained Community Nursery Nurse (CNN). The CNN offers a variety of sessions each day, from information sessions for pre-birth parents, to stay and play sessions for over 40 families. The setting feels that parental engagement early on is invaluable to contributing to longer-term positive outcomes for children. This element of the setting's practice is a particular strength and sector-leading. It is recognised as a source of support for settings and schools that wish to strengthen their engagement with families with partners.

### ***Capturing ALL children's abilities on entry to the setting***

Tremorfa Nursery use a variety of assessment tools to ensure that each child is accessing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, that the learning environment supports their needs and that all staff in the setting have a holistic picture of each individual child.

1. Well-being involvement and engagement using the Leuven scale over the first six weeks of entry into the setting. Practitioners use a 'traffic light system': Green – no concerns; Amber – keep an eye (may attend a nurture group or adult support); Red – concerns, discuss with family/other professionals.
2. Early years on-entry tracking system which assesses all areas of development.
3. I CAN stages of development tool to assess early speech and language used at home and in the setting.

### ***Children with specific needs have an Individual Education Plan: a working document which includes measurable targets***

For example, children with speech and language difficulties access intense targeted intervention from the setting's highly-trained staff. To ensure that all children are able to participate, the setting also has the following features:

- Well-established links with local special schools to provide:
  - on-going support for children and their families with additional learning needs;
  - staff training;
  - advice about learning environment, communication aids, etc.
- Regular reviews of the learning environment. For instance, the setting is currently working on becoming an autism-friendly setting so, for example,



displays are neutral with no bright overwhelming colours.

- Visual prompts are used for all children attending the setting.
- Staff meet daily to discuss planning in relation to children’s interests, skills and next steps in learning. All members of the team evaluate their practice and activities as they go along, reflecting this within daily evaluations. The setting’s leader feels it is vital that every staff member is listened to during the daily sessions and staff rotate around the setting on a fortnightly basis and work within different learning zones.
- Children’s development is documented in the form of learning stories. These include photographs, next steps, adults’ roles. The learning stories document a holistic picture of individual children’s skills, as well as providing information for discussion with parents, families and other professionals.

All children benefit from free play and can choose from a range of carefully planned appropriate activities. Children who require additional support can communicate their desired activity through a pictorial choice board. This provides them with a flexible appropriate curriculum, following their interests and moving them along the learning continuum appropriately.

It is also worth mentioning that Tremorfa Nursery has long been a beacon of good practice with regard to outdoor learning and play. It has worked hard to create a free-flow indoor/outdoor environment, developing features such as a small Forest School and an innovative pond within the grounds to encourage the children to engage with the natural world.

### **3. Inclusive highlight**

Tremorfa Nursery is proud of its inclusive ethos and has never turned a child away. As well as continually working to improve the physical environment (for example, utilising the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale assessment tool), its proactive approach to staff development, for the whole team, and its relationships with local special schools and, most importantly, with the children’s parents/carers makes this a highlight of provision.

Continuing professional development is a real strength of the setting. Not only do practitioners share their expertise within the team, but they also access a wide range of specific early years training. For example, all staff are trained in developing young children’s communication skills, Philosophy for Children and many staff are Forest School accredited. More qualified members of staff often take on mentor roles to develop other staff members. For example, one nursery nurse has taken on the role of special educational needs mentor, which means taking responsibility for



one-to-one staff mentoring, supporting individual education plan implementation and ensuring appropriate resources are available. All practitioners also take the opportunity to visit other sector-leading settings and schools across the UK, as well as sharing expertise with other similar settings in the city. They also regularly welcome local, national and international visitors wanting to learn more from the setting's practice and provision.

As previously mentioned, the setting works hard to engage the local community. A designated member of staff is building her skills and expertise in successfully engaging parents/carers in a very deprived area of a large city. Also, the setting often runs events and trips to enrich all children's experiences and to engage parents/carers in their children's learning and development. In addition, each child at the setting also experiences their own 'mini trip', linked to their own interests and learning in order to provide enrichment and a truly personalised curriculum. The setting works hard to reflect the community's cultural diversity within its events and to identify and celebrate special cultural aspects.

The setting's leader has worked at the nursery for over a decade, first as a teacher and now as a head teacher. She is passionate about early years and providing the best possible education and experiences for all children and their families. This passion is reflected in her team, which is committed to working together, sharing and developing knowledge and expertise to provide the best possible care and education for children, whatever their background or need. The relationships the team has built up with other professionals is a real strength; for example, the setting's leader obtains parental permission to speak to the local health visitor (HV) on a child's entry and so when she meets with the HV weekly she is able to discuss any issues or concerns quickly and, if necessary, discuss them with the child's parents. Safeguarding is also a strength of the setting, with rigorous procedures in place to deal with any issues promptly.

When welcoming a new child to the setting, the staff take time to get to know each child as an individual. As well as the assessments to understand each child mentioned previously, the setting's leader takes time to get to know the parents/carers as well as the child (if she does not already). Discussions and activities are in place, for example 'what's in a name?' where the family share the meaning behind their child's name, to support and settle children and their families into the nursery. Children are invited to taster sessions before they are three years of age and they are settled in at their own pace: for example, most children are settled in stages, but some children may be permitted to stay for full sessions sooner if their confidence allows.

As a deprived area, very young children in Tremorfa are entitled to Flying Start support (Flying Start is a Welsh Government funded programme available in



targeted areas supporting all families to give 0- to 3-year-olds a Flying Start in life. The scheme aims to provide intensive support services for children aged 0 to 3 years old and their families). The setting works with the Flying Start link teacher to work at points of transition to ensure the children are supported when starting at Nursery and any supporting information follows the child.

As well as its relationships with special schools, Tremorfa Nursery works hard to maintain relationships with the surrounding feeder schools to support transition out of the setting. For example, with the local primary schools they make use of their space, work together on an art project or hold events such as a picnic.

#### **4. Other evidence of quality IECE**

Many of the high-quality elements have already been highlighted in this case study. However, the setting does receive external recognition too. It has an excellent, long-standing reputation within the local authority, but perhaps more importantly the Welsh schools inspectorate has consistently deemed it to have excellent standards (the most recent inspection reports are available here: <http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6811017>).

The setting's leader feels that the constant driver in the pursuit for sector-leading practice is planning. All staff at the setting are aware of the different action plans, which are referred to frequently and used to constantly evaluate and improve practice and provision.

The setting benefits from visits from other early years professionals, including those from Luxembourg and Denmark in particular. Students from Germany also have links with the setting. The setting recognises the importance of learning from other international partners and many staff have visited other settings across Europe.