

Report of the Joint Childcare Managers to the
Anthony Roper Pre-school and Kindergarten CIO
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 18th October 2018, 8.30pm, The Plough, Eynsford

Please find below a report detailing the issues, development and ongoing matters of the Anthony Roper Pre-school:

Children's numbers

The Pre-school, being term-time only, has a cyclical pattern in terms of children in attendance. Since the last AGM, the number of children attending increased from September 2017 to July 2018, with a decrease again in September 2018, following the transition of many of our children to primary school. We can report, however, September 2018 saw a large increase in the number of two-year olds attending. This is a positive step, as it ensures we will have children for a long period prior to their transition to primary school.

30 hours scheme

We have successfully introduced and managed the introduction of the 30 hours scheme. This scheme was introduced to support those parents who fit a particular pattern of employment. Whilst there were initial challenges in terms of administration of the scheme, these have been ironed out and this now runs fairly smoothly. Our pattern of delivery, which is clearly set out in our current Terms and Conditions, ensures that we are able to deliver this in support of parents, whilst maintaining the financial stability of the Pre-school – no mean feat when an increase in funding saw a mere 3p per hour for three and four year olds to £4.00 per hour.

Improvements to the environment

We are continuing to develop and enhance the learning environment for our children. We have purchased equipment through our fund-raising efforts, as well as using what we already have, and considering what we can use – loose parts play is fantastic, as it allows us to not only offer open-ended activities to the children, but we can do our part by re-using items which would have otherwise been thrown away. These include, but not exclusively, real house bricks, tyres, crates, wooden planks, pipes, guttering, gravel, mud, electric reels, flower pots, bark from a tree surgeon (this now provides an interesting, natural surface in Wren Garden), etc.

In the moment planning

Following attendance at training, the Managers are implementing 'in the moment planning'. This way of planning ensures that the child is always at the centre, with their unique needs and interests always at the forefront of the skilled Early Years Educators' minds. The development of the paperwork and the team's understanding is going well and we are slowly embedding this practice. The vital role of parents in a child's life is being strengthened through partnership working and we are really excited about this development in our setting.

Sustainability

The children have been learning how to recycle and compost. They know that different packages go into different bins. They are able to look for symbols on packaging and confidently use the appropriate bin. If they are unsure, they ask a grown up. This simple step is the first aspect of improving our own sustainability, whilst supporting the children to understand their role in protecting their world. We are hoping to be part of the Education People's (Kent County Council) Early Years Education for Sustainable Development Award. The Award will be rolled out in the near future. This is a great way of supporting our children and their families and is something that we are very committed to.

Collaboration with other settings

We are the lead setting for a Collaboration of settings within the Sevenoaks area. We are known as the Sevenoaks Riverhead Collaboration. We co-ordinate meetings, share good practice and develop our Collaboration 'Development Plan'. We have secured two rounds of finance from Kent County Council, based on our Plan, and this has enabled us to carry out collaborative training. This is something we would otherwise have been unable to afford. We are continuing to develop our sustainability through this Plan and it is with this finance that we hope to join the Sustainable Development Award.

Special Education Needs

One of our Managers is a member of North Kent LIFT (Local Inclusion Forum Team) Executive Board. The Executive meets to discuss issues around Special Educational Needs across all aspects of education, from Early Years to Secondary school, and is attended by many professionals from all aspects of services for children. This gives our Manager a strong base for understanding the bigger picture, whilst having the voice of Early Years heard at a strategic level.

Recruitment

Recruitment within the sector is difficult, with high expectations for those who work in the sector but with often low wages. In spite of this, we have a strong team of capable, committed Early Years Educators and we should like to thank them for their hard work and commitment to the Pre-school. We are currently recruiting for a fulltime member of the team and we are fortunate that we have received some well qualified and experienced applications.

Thank you!

Firstly, we should like to say a big THANK YOU to our great team of Early Years Educators. They work extremely hard. Our expectations of the service they deliver is very high. They do this day in, day out and they are what make our Pre-school the happy, stimulating, safe, challenging and fun place it is for the children who attend.

Secondly, we want to say a huge THANK YOU to the Pre-school Committee. They work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep our Pre-school open. This is all undertaken in their own time with good grace and real commitment. **THANK YOU!**