



Walsall Children's Services

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 7 December 2010

Subject: Early Years Funding Sub Group – 9 November 2010

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Purpose of the report: To seek approval from Schools Forum to implement the recommendations of the Early Years Funding Sub Group detailed in this report.

Recommendation: To utilise part of the Early Years Extended and Flexible Offer Standards Fund Grant to purchase additional resource to develop policies, protocols and information packs for schools, to address the problems encountered in this pilot year.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Early Years Funding Sub Group met on the 9 November 2010, to discuss the potential use of £90k from the Early Years Standards Fund Grant for 2010-11.
- 1.2** Schools Forum agreed to the retention of the £90k contingency for the development of innovative projects in the Early Years sector. The Early Years Consultant had requested information from all settings to highlight the different approaches to delivering and managing the extended offer across the borough.
- 1.3** At the time of the meeting, not all schools had returned this information, and those that had, were in the main delivering five three hour sessions or six two and a half hour sessions.

2. The Recommendations of the Group

- 2.1** Given the two main patterns of delivery currently in place, the group felt that there was currently insufficient demand from Walsall parents for a fully flexible offer in maintained schools, and that where this service was needed, parents access the provision in the private and voluntary sector. However, a number of other issues were identified that the group felt needed further work, in preparation for the start of the next academic year.
 - 2.2** During the pilot phase a number of issues have emerged:
 - Access to the full 38 week, 15 hour offer;
 - Induction/transition process for children moving to or starting in maintained nursery provision;
 - Building relationships in Children's Area Partnerships or clusters to improve the transition process;
 - A need for the production of clear information for providers and parents in respect of the extended and flexible early years offer in Walsall;
 - A review of SEN processes, including accountability in the PVI sector for the progress of pupils with SEN;
 - Advice and guidance for maintained settings who wish to sell any spare capacity in their nurseries; and
 - Preparing for the delivery of a more flexible offer in the future
 - 2.3** The sub group's recommendation to the Schools Forum is that the £90k contingency is used to buy in additional support to address all of the issues detailed above, and produce the necessary policy framework, guidance notes, information packs and draft letters for parents.
 - 2.4** The additional support would be managed by the Early Years Consultant and would report progress to the Early Years Funding Sub Group and subsequently the Schools Forum.
- ## **3. School Forum Decision**
- 3.1** The Schools Forum is recommended to approve the use of the £90k contingency fund to deliver on the work detailed in paragraph 2.2 above.
 - 3.2** The Schools Forum will receive regular updates on the progress being made.
 - 3.3** Any unspent funds will be re-allocated to schools using previously agreed formulae.