



St Edmund's

Nursery School and
Children's Centre Services

**Centre of Good
Practice
for New Arrivals
March 2016**

Support services and partnership work

A community who live and learn together

Introduction

St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre has been selected as a Centre of Good Practice for New Arrivals to develop a programme of support for schools with children who are new to English and/or new to education.

At St Edmund's we provide high quality learning environments and teaching and learning for children from birth to five, including children in receipt of free education for two year olds.

We especially value creativity, the arts and outdoor play – alongside our high quality classroom environments we offer weekly sessions with a community artist, freelance singing and movement teacher and Forest School practitioner. We also have a large and well-resourced outdoor play area.

We have children with a wide range of special needs and have specialist resourced provision for children with complex learning difficulties.

We have worked extensively with our families to support their understanding of the importance of regular attendance and to build their trust and confidence in schools.

Our parents are very involved in the life of the school, attending our annual 'Better Together' day which supports our school improvement planning and generally coming in to visit and volunteer in the classrooms. Our 'Sharing Stories' workshops which are a key focus for raising children's communication and reading skills have 100% attendance. We offer a range of different groups and activities to support parents in their understanding of young children's learning and attendance is very good, for example eight Roma families attended our Family Links Nurturing programme. We have held family residentials at Nell Bank for both mums and dads and children.

We have several male staff, including one who speaks several EU languages, and we run monthly Saturday dads' club sessions for dads and children.

Our staff team fully reflects the diversity of the city, we have also been very successful in recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds to reflect the community of our school.

We support our parents in completing the Primary School admission forms and also with visits to their schools. We ensure parents understand the requirements of the Primary School such as uniforms, start date, times of day etc.

Through our children's centre cluster we have extensive contact with a wide range of agencies including health partners. Children's Centre staff undertake home visits, give advice and signpost families to a range of other agencies as diverse as fire service and the schools admission team.



Anne-Marie Merifield

Executive Headteacher

Work development areas

The inner city area where St Edmund's is located has seen considerable changes over the years in the structure of our community. Around 10% of the local community are from a Central or Eastern European background. These families are relatively transient with many families staying only a short time in the local area.

Around 10% of children (23) attending our nursery school are from a Central or Eastern European background, matching the local population.

Based on our experiences and communication with staff who originate from different countries, staff who work closely on a daily basis with the families and most importantly communication directly with our parents, we have identified three key areas that present the main issues in supporting communities new to the UK:

- Attendance
- Communication
- Social integration

Getting it right in all three areas is vital in the ensuring that children settle into school and achieve their full potential. As an Early Years setting and children's centre cluster, we provide support for families so that their children are settled before they reach statutory school age.



Services on offer

We can support other schools in the following ways:

Attendance

Home visits: Opportunities to shadow practitioners visiting Eastern and Central European families in their own homes.

Relationship between practitioners and parents:

Our visitor days allow early years practitioners, teachers, students and others to see an outstanding nursery in operation. We can provide a specific focus on families from Central and Eastern Europe.

Settling in process: We can provide information on our settling in process, and the special arrangements we have made for children from Central and Eastern European families.

Parent volunteers: Parents from Central and Eastern Europe who are now an established part of the St Edmund's community can come to your school to talk to your families.

Communication

Home language speaker: One of our team can talk to parents at your school.

Communication friendly classrooms: Find out how we make sure the classroom environment is accessible to all children.

Alternative ways of communication: e.g. Makaton

Developing trust: How to and identify and train key people in your school to successfully build bridges with new communities.

Social Integration

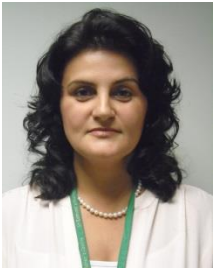
Special events: How we use open days, parties and 'Our community, Our World' week to ensure that all families feel part of our community.

Classrooms and communities: Ensuring that the whole classroom reflects the children who are there, for example the home area, number area and snack area.

Parents as volunteers: How to involve parents in supporting other parents, including pathways to paid employment.



Staff team



Ermina Kesedzic

Teacher

I came to Great Britain 23 years ago as a refugee from Bosnia fleeing a civil war in 1992. I have been working with young children and families for the past 15 years and feel that my professional and personal experience enables me to understand, empathise and support families and children new to England. Being in a position myself of arriving to a new country and not knowing the language, I understand the feeling of isolation, helplessness and anxiety that you can experience. Bosnian language belongs to the group of Slavic languages same as Polish, Czech and Slovakian which means there are similarities that allow me to understand and be able to communicate at least on a basic level.

I am a teacher with knowledge of how young children learn and develop and can provide a range of support to families with children birth to seven. While I still teach regularly I also have other commitments and responsibilities. St Edmund's NSCC is the lead School for Bradford West Children's Centre Cluster and I work across the cluster to provide support with quality, planning and provision. I have also recently taken the role of SENCO in our busy, resourced school and can support families with children that might need extra support.



Kulbir Bura

Children's Centre Service Leader (West Bradford Cluster)

Since starting my role at St Edmunds in September 2015 I have been responsible for the access and quality of services for our New Communities within the Children's Centre cluster reach area. I work closely with our new communities family support worker Juraj Tancos and our community engagement worker Ruzena Pestova.

The children's centre team support our new communities who have children under 5. We ensure that communities are able to access a variety of family services including health and education. We provide advice services in appropriate languages to support with entitlements, housing and other issues that arise for our new communities.

We work hard to ensure that at St Edmund's and across our 6 other children centre sites we provide a welcoming and safe environment for our new families. We ensure that Ruzena visits all new families at home who we have not seen, and will work on a 1-1 basis with any families requiring additional support.

We have managed through our Outreach programme to engage a number of families to take up the 2 year old offer. Our ethos of a warm welcome and an accessible environment has meant St Edmund's has become a Home from Home for many of our New Communities.



Amanda Jordan

Parental Involvement Worker

Parents are key to children's achievements. As Parental Involvement Worker at St Edmund's I help support parents as co-educators of their children, supporting our carers in lifelong learning opportunities. I supervise the running of many adult learning groups and responsible for the organisation of resources and training opportunities for our families. I develop resources to enable parent's to support their children at home such as the lending library and craft shop.

Parents are supported to attend our Parents Together group which is held monthly for our parents. The group enables parents to meet together, share future ideas and to be able to have time to get together and socialise.

Parental involvement is important when it comes to attendance and absences. Parents are contacted daily either by text or a call if children are absent. Parents also appreciate home visits which I provide when needed.

We have a number of events through the year that I organise, such as Us, Our Community, Our World Week, Healthy Living Week, Child Safety Week, and numerous one off events such as swimming, story time, pamper evenings and also many weekend events. These events take long and careful planning, and are crucial when it comes to parents' involvement in activities with their children, especially families from our new communities.



Juraj Tancos

Family Support Worker (West Bradford Cluster) and Early Years Practitioner

My role as a Family Support Worker involves working with families from Central and Eastern Europe (usually EU migrants) for whom English is a second language. I am from the same background as the families I am working with, and have the languages and cultural understanding to work with them.

I work with families who need additional support in order to maintain a stable, secure and happy home for their children. Once a family has been referred for family support, I will meet them to talk about what their needs are, and draw up an action plan together.

I also work in the classroom which involves direct work with the children from Central and Eastern Europe for whom English is a second language.

Most of the families I work with are from a Roma background, and come from countries where they were facing discrimination which impacted on all aspects of their lives. I went through the same system as the families and I am able to relate and to understand the issues and fears they are facing. Having a positive relationship with the families has helped St Edmund's to build trust and strong links with them.



Dina Gulbe

Early Years Support Worker

My name is Dina and I am from Latvia where I worked for 6 years as an early years practitioner teacher in a nursery, and 4 years as a teacher in a primary school. I've lived in the UK for 5 years so far. At first I attended nursery as a parent with my 2 year old son, my husband also engaged in lots of dads' activities. I started to study English, and to volunteer in nursery, before working in the children's centre and then in one of the rooms. Just recently, I have started my Foundation Degree here.

I am very pleased to share my previous experience and ideas with colleagues and to support families from Latvia or Russia here in the UK. As I speak Latvian and Russian fluently I am able to translate news and information about events in the nursery and in our community. I support parents with information about further education, and encourage them to volunteer.



Ruzena Pestova

Community Engagement Worker (West Bradford Cluster)

My name is Ruzena Pestova I come from Slovakia and I have lived in the UK for 15 years. My role is working with the new communities across the West Bradford Cluster. I support Eastern European families to access services such as the 2 Year Old entitlement, and early education, as well as supporting families in children's centre activities such as stay and play sessions and adult learning courses. The languages I can speak are Roma, Slovak, Czech and Polish. My bilingual skills allow me to support and help families with tasks such as registering with a doctor or dentist and contacting other agencies on their behalf.

My role is important in order to establish a positive relationship with new communities in the West Bradford Cluster, so that families feel welcome and involved in our community.



Parents' Voices

What were your main concerns before your child started nursery?

- *Someone might hurt my daughter*
- *She might cry*
- *Might not get used to nursery*
- *Might not understand others*

How did you feel when your child started?

- *I was scared of any accidents that might happen*
- *I was upset*
- *Time - too long for my child to stay in nursery*

What benefits have you seen?

My daughter's language has improved in her home language, also in English. Her knowledge and understanding has developed. My daughter follows instruction very easily since starting nursery.



What were your main concerns before your child started nursery?

Because I attended Stay and Play, I was sure that this place is the place where I want my child to start with early education.

How did you feel when your child started?

I was fine because I knew this place, also some of the staff.

What benefits have you seen?

My child's speech has improved, also his behaviour. I am very happy because this place will help my child to be ready for school.



Ofsted Feb 2015

“The school ensures that all children make rapid progress. The children from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Boys and girls achieve as well as each other.”

“Partnerships with parents are outstanding. All the parents who spoke to the inspector or completed the parental questionnaire fully recommend the nursery. The support to enable them to fully participate in their child's learning is exceptional.”

“Although children's attendance is not statutory at this age, the school has made a deliberate effort to improve attendance because leaders have noted that more frequent absence had slowed down the learning of some children. By successfully working with parents and children's centre staff, attendance is now at a level expected for the nursery. There are few unauthorised absences because staff respond extremely quickly to any unknown absences and contact parents straight away. Children are eager to attend because they feel secure and enjoy learning.”

Contact

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