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Miss Sandra Talton
The Gower School
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Dear Miss Talton

Ofsted survey: good practice in capturing the user voice

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, during my visit on 20 January 2009 to look at work on capturing the user voice.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included observations of activities, discussions with children and yourself and the scrutiny of records and documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- Children's levels of participation in decision-making are increased as they select and use activities and resources independently and confidently. Their views, needs and abilities are reflected in the well prepared environment. This helps them to feel empowered and gives them a shared sense of responsibility over their environment and experiences.
- Children learn to be independent from a base of strong relationships shared with their key person. Special responsibilities held by each key person provides children with the reassurance that they are being listened to and supported in expressing their views.
- Children who are new to the setting and are in the process of being settled benefit greatly from the range of effective strategies, such as home visits which are conducted primarily to find what matters to the child. The information gained from parents and the child are used and acted upon to enable a smooth transition to the setting.

- Children's choices of activities reflect their interests and practitioners plan to support these. Their views are sought by a range of strategies and used to inform food menus, planning of the environment and the purchasing of resources. This helps children to feel some sense of control over their time at the nursery.
- The setting demonstrates a strong commitment to communicating with other providers and professionals and working together for the benefit of children. This means there is appropriate on-going help and support to promote children's participation in matters which affect them.
- Parents observations of their child contribute to the ongoing planning and assessment process. This leads to staff gaining a better understanding of planning a learning programme which is in line with the child's recent expressions of interest.

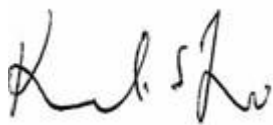
Areas for development

- Consider ways to seek the views of all children and their parents in the self evaluation process. Incorporate their contributions in order to assess the impact the service has on its users.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the user voice in your setting.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the inspector for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely



K. Sonia Lobo
Childcare Inspector