



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REVIEW REPORT

FOR

CARING DAYCARE Ltd.

and

MAJOR MINORS Ltd.

Presented by David Englefield

Investors in People Assessor

On behalf of Inspiring Business Performance Limited

Review completed 29th July 2011



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COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

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1. Introduction

It was a great pleasure to return to Rosevale Holdings (referred to as the Company in this report) to undertake a combined review of the two nursery groups Caring Daycare (CDC) and Major Minors (MM). The Company has grown since the last reviews with the addition of two more nurseries within CDC and both of these were visited. The assessor was very impressed by the quality of these developments. Very noteworthy are the continuing ethos and family culture of the Company which remain real strengths and the basis for its success.

It was evident from all of those spoken to across CDC and MM that they really enjoy and take pride in their work and have generally very good working relationships with the managers they come into contact with on a day to day basis. This includes Senior Management who visit all nurseries very regularly.

The expansion of the senior management structure with the appointment of two area operations managers to support the Operations Director has been very successful with the nursery managers and deputies speaking highly of the levels of encouragement, support and constructive feedback provided by them. This will be expanded upon under section 3 relating to the focus of the review.

The high emphasis on continuous improvement using both internal and external reviews is a further real strength and the last two nurseries, which had Ofsted inspections very recently, both achieved Outstanding in all areas. Again this is covered in more detail within section 3 on the focus of the review.

The first section of this report gives a summary of the strengths and development areas and key findings in support of the focus for this review. Appendix 1 shows graphically the Evidence Requirements assessed and the outcomes achieved and Appendix 2 gives the findings by Indicator/topic of the Standard. Where Indicators are closely related they have been grouped together as agreed to aid the 'flow' of the report.

2. Strengths and areas of good practice

A summary of the good practice noted is given below under the topics of the Standard with related topics grouped together to aid continuity. These will be expanded upon under Appendix 2 where the findings from the review are given:

01: Business Strategy

- The Mission Statement, Philosophy and Principles have been reviewed and updated to align them more closely with the way the Company is working and its aims and objectives based around the five Every Child Matters criteria. This enables all staff to associate closely with these and they clearly understand the focus on the provision of high quality, safe and developmental childcare, and enjoy their jobs.
- Succinct nursery business plans have been produced in the form of an action plan and are linked closely to the Company 2011 strategies and objectives. These are in the process of being discussed with nursery staff and their inputs obtained before they are updated and finalised.

02: Learning and Development Strategy; 08 Learning and Development; 09 Performance Management

- Mandatory training is well planned, closely monitored, and reported upon to ensure that individual needs and nursery percentage requirements are met. There is also a strong focus on qualification based learning and development including NVQs (now replaced by Diplomas) and 2-year Foundation Degrees that can be extended by a further year to a BA. Individual training needs are discussed at the annual appraisal and revisited at the 6-month review. The degree based training

has been very effective in creating 'graduate led' nursery management, where managers are more knowledgeable and more reflective on the performance of their nursery. This is supporting continuous improvement and high standards.

- The summer staff conference last week was particularly successful with a very talented and dynamic trainer used to deliver training on Sensory Play. It was evident from talking to staff this week that the staff were very motivated by this and have already purchased resources and implemented ideas in their rooms.
- A Teacher in MM Godalming is held in very high regard for her technical skills, theoretical knowledge, and interpersonal relationships with staff. These are used to support the one to one and group learning that she provides within her nursery and to staff in other nurseries in CDC and MM on NVQs etc. She is seen as always making time to help if needed.
- PTS assessment support of NVQ candidates was very effective and has been extended to include specific training on key topics on Fridays. This has also been well received and is of good quality.
- The Wisborough management training for nursery managers starts with a discussion on individual needs and then sessions over the 3 days are geared to supporting these. There are generally 3 managers on each cohort and the learning experience is felt to be of high quality and very beneficial. As a consequence this is now being extended to the deputies.
- A training evaluation form is used following training and the comments are recorded on the computer system for monitoring and feedback. In addition, discussion of learning occurs with the manager; followed by cascading relevant learning and materials through room and staff meetings as appropriate. People spoken to said that his sharing of learning is very helpful.
- The induction of new staff, including bank staff, is well planned, structured and generally very well supported and effective. This enables staff to learn and become effective within the 3 month probationary period. New staff spoke of being made to feel very welcome by colleagues and managers enabling them to settle quickly into their team.

03: People Management Strategy

- There is a real drive to involve everyone in inputting ideas and suggestion that will move the nursery forward. This occurs through room and staff meetings and on a day to day basis when discussing planning etc. In addition a 'blue skies' thinking has been introduced by a nursery manager which entails identifying a 'wish list' for future improvements. People really do feel encouraged to make suggestions and feel that these are listened to and, where possible, supported.
- A 'Value Onion' form of questionnaire used with parents has recently been introduced at a staff meeting at MM Godalming to gain feedback from staff on what attracted them to the nursery; what they enjoy; what will retain them; etc. This information is being used to identify where any improvements can be made. The questionnaire is being developed now to make it more searching with SMART questions and then will be implemented in the other nurseries.
- There are a number of staff who are dyslexic or need specific help and examples were noted where they have been well supported by both managers and colleagues. Where possible training sessions are arranged on the days that part time staff are working, and bank staff are invited to attend.

04: Leadership & Management Strategy and 05: Management Effectiveness

- The creation of an area manager structure has been an excellent move and those in contact with the area managers feel that the weekly meetings and length of time they are able to spend in the nursery have really improved communications; support; feedback supporting the maintenance of standards and continuous improvement; decision making; taking action etc. They are all liked and respected and felt to be very effective in their role.
- There is a good management structure of room supervisor; third in charge; deputy; nursery manager; and area manager up to the Operations Director. This supports career progression,

succession planning and cover when an individual is away. It also helps to ensure that new nurseries are immediately able to adhere to company policies and procedures as there will always be employees based there who are fully familiar with these, even if more senior positions are filled by external recruitment. It was noted that the vast majority of promotions are made from within, but the Company will recruit externally when there are specific reasons to do so such as with Petworth and Noah's Ark in order to find the right person.

- Job descriptions are being updated and finalized currently and there are handbooks for nursery managers and deputies and one for room supervisors is just being completed. There is also a comprehensive checklist by day; week; and month. In addition, the requirements of a nursery manager are also given as 'key factors in leading, managing and developing the team', which includes the skills of a manager as a leader; fixer and administrator. Thus managers are very clear on the expectations of them. The appraisal process also reflects headings related to leadership and management.
- Manager's meetings have been developed to now include an hour when they are able to discuss any issues and concerns as a team before they are joined by senior management. They also select a 'hot topic' to discuss, and are involved in reviewing policies and procedures. This has made the meetings more productive and effective in the sharing of knowledge and experience and in developing the Company/nurseries.
- The overall feedback from those asked was that their manager is approachable, helpful, supportive and effective, and working relationships are generally very good across all levels. This supports effective team work. See development suggestions.

06: Recognition and Reward

- There is a 'practitioner of the month award' with individuals being nominated by colleagues and this supports peer recognition of performance. It was noted in Dorking CDC everyone puts the names of people who have been particularly helpful/effective on a board with why they have nominated them and their own name. At the end of the month the person with the highest number of positive comments is the winner. These approaches really encourage team working and mutual respect and recognition.
- At the summer and Christmas meetings awards and certificates are presented and achievement celebrated. This is motivating for those involved.
- People feel that they do make a valued and valuable contribution to the nursery through their work and in supporting 'events' to promote the nursery, although some mentioned they would like to receive a little more regular feedback and recognition. See developments.

07: Involvement and Empowerment

- It was evident that staff are involved at all levels in decision making at a level that is appropriate to their position. This involves collecting evidence in support of the QIA modules and making appropriate changes (in Surrey based nurseries); taking action on any feedback after an Ofsted inspection, and when area managers observe rooms using their knowledge of the requirements of ITERS/ECERS; making changes to their rooms and introducing new resources when as a team they feel it can be improved. They are also very involved in the observations and developing the profiles and planning for the on-going development of children in their room. Focus groups are also used where appropriate. As a consequence everyone does feel involved and people do take ownership of making changes and improvements.

10: Continuous Improvement

- There is a very strong emphasis placed on continuous improvement and this will be covered within the next section as it has been a focus for this review.

3. Feedback against the agreed objectives

The objectives for the review were to receive feedback on:

- A) The development of the management structure under the Operations Director and the effectiveness of succession planning to support further expansion.
- B) The addition and integration of two more nurseries within Caring Daycare since the last review - with sites in Petworth (2009) and Camberley (May 2011). It is planned to seek one more nursery over the next few years.
- C) Raising the performance of all nurseries to match the best in terms of occupancy and profitability, with the development of planning, KPIs and marketing.
- D) The focus on continuous improvement and quality including the development of nursery resources, as they are the key to reputation and on-going success.

Point D is supported through the 4 Evidence Requirements under Indicator 10 – *Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed* – which are:

- 10.4 Top managers can describe how the organisation has used self review techniques to improve its strategies for managing and developing people.
- 10.5 Top managers can describe how the organisation has used information from external reviews, including the previous Investors in People assessment or review, to improve its strategies for managing and developing people.
- 10.10 Managers can describe how they review and evaluate people management and development and use this learning to shape future activity.
- 10.13 People believe that managers are genuinely committed to improving the way they manage and develop them.

Evidence in support of the above was obtained through interviews and written information provided and details of the findings are given below.

Findings

A) Development of the management structure under the Operations Director and succession planning to support further expansion.

An area manager structure was introduced towards the end of 2009 based on the promotion of two managers to become area managers supported by the Operations Director. The Operations Director has been mentored by the Director and was supported with help from a life coach when she first became Operations Manager. She in turn has supported the effective induction of both managers to the role and uses a coaching style to support them. There is an operations meeting each week to discuss their reports on their nurseries' progress, any issues arising, and future plans.

In addition to their responsibilities for assigned nurseries they also have other roles. One manager continues to oversee learning and development, a continuation of her previous role as Childcare Development Manager. The second manager has a responsibility for staff planning to ensure the nurseries are not under or over staffed, and the Operations Director also focuses on longer term strategy with the other Directors.

The area managers visit the nurseries they have responsibility for each week and are able to spend the time that they need in each one. This may be the whole day. More in-depth discussions are now able to be held with nursery management and the area managers visit the rooms to observe and

provide feedback on the good practice seen and any areas for improvement. They have all been trained in performing ITERS and ECERS and use this knowledge in their observations. People spoke of how positive this approach is with recognition being given where it is due, and constructive feedback provided. Staff do not see it being at all 'threatening', but helpful in maintaining and improving standards.

The area manager structure has been proven to be very effective and all nursery managers/deputies spoken to confirmed what an improvement it has made in terms of the level of communication and the support provided when needed, and the speed with which any actions required from the visit are taken. There was nothing but praise of all three managers and they are liked and respected for their knowledge, and technical and people skills.

With respect to succession planning a number of examples were noted of staff progressing from unqualified to achieving qualified status and then to becoming a room supervisor. It was also noted where individuals have moved, or are moving, through the career structure from room supervisor to 3rd in charge and then to deputy and manager. This is excellent.

At MM Godalming, the nursery manager is on an extended leave and the deputy is acting manager. She is supported by two staff appointed as deputies. Having a further manager who is not room based has been a real benefit as it has enabled the deputies to observe and feedback in rooms; help out in the room at busy times; and be more accessible to staff if there are any questions or problems. There was good feedback from staff at Godalming on the way this arrangement is working.

Whilst vacant positions are advertised internally and promotion is normally of existing staff, it was mentioned that there has been one deputy and two nursery managers recruited externally. These were as a result of not having internal candidates with either with the necessary length of experience/maturity, or an ability to move to the nursery concerned. It was noted that the recruitment of the two nursery managers externally has involved in a higher level of support and feedback from the area managers than had been anticipated.

The successful Wisborough management training for nursery managers has now been extended to deputies. A 3-day externally facilitated management course is planned for later this year for the nursery managers plus there is to be internal training on budgets which are being cascaded for the first time. This has been proven to be a sound investment.

Leadership and management and technical training are also supported through sessions in the nursery manager's meetings. These have been changed in format to enable an hour for them to discuss between them any issues and concerns and gain the support and advice of their colleagues. They also select a 'hot topic' for discussion at the next meeting. These activities are really supporting the development of the nursery managers.

The active encouragement for staff to do Foundation Degrees and BAs, where it is applicable, is also supporting career development through internal promotion and succession planning. This is enabling a 'graduate led' management within the nurseries, which is showing real benefits in terms of the use of reflective practices leading to continuous improvement.

As a consequence of these developments any future need to recruit externally will hopefully be minimised.

B) The addition and integration of two more nurseries in Caring Daycare since the last review with sites in Petworth (2009) and Camberley (May 2011). It is planned to seek one more nursery over the next few years.

The commissioning of the two new nurseries at Petworth and Camberley has been managed effectively and both are very well appointed in terms of the high quality of the decor, furnishings and resources. Camberley is a real 'show nursery' both inside and outside with development of the garden area. This is managed by a nursery manager who was previously the manager of Woking and the occupancy is increasing steadily, although this is taking a little longer than expected. The Operations Director has this nursery as one of the two that she oversees and feedback indicated that she has been very effective in supporting the opening of the new nursery which occurred in May, and the nursery manager.

In Petworth, which was opened in 2009, the occupancy is growing more slowly and there are action plans to support this. The nursery manager has recently returned from maternity leave and is being closely supported by the area manager to make the improvements needed. The deputy who has been acting manager spoke highly of the support from the area manager who, in addition to the weekly meeting, has called her daily to check all is going well and that she has no problems. This high level of support and encouragement is very much appreciated.

The area manager structure seems, from the comments made, to be providing the support, advice, guidance and constructive feedback needed to the nursery managers or acting nursery managers/deputies to support the quality standards, and the work towards achieving the occupancy levels required.

C) Raising the performance of all nurseries to match the best in terms of occupancy and profitability, with the development of planning, KPIs and marketing.

The key to profitability is to achieve the highest possible levels of occupancy in relation to the capacity of the nursery and to ensure that the required children to staff ratios are maintained. These are the two fundamental KPIs. There are others related to induction and retention; staff costs as a % of revenue; capital expenditures; margins; number of leads converted to starts; etc. There is work underway to develop these further and training is planned for the nursery managers in the next month or so on budgets. This will be the first time that this has been done and it will further support the focus on profitability as financial accountability is made more explicit and moved down through the Company.

Under-staffing has required the use of expensive agency staff increasing costs, and over-staffing also results in increased costs. One of the area managers has a specific responsibility for overseeing staff planning in order to maintain the staffing ratios required and does a staffing plan a week in advance. She receives by 4pm each day a report from each nursery on the expected children numbers and staff numbers for the following day so that any further action needed can be taken.

It was evident that the number of bank staff has been increased to provide the flexibility of cover required and this in turn has reduced the requirement for agency and reduced costs. The movement of staff between nurseries to cover absences is also carefully controlled leading to greater efficiencies.

Underperforming nurseries are identified and the area managers work closely with the nursery managers to increase occupancy and performance through action plans.

The objectives in the Company business strategy have been distilled by each nursery manager into a succinct business plan in the form of an action plan. These are now being presented to staff for their feedback and suggestions and the plans will provide more focus, and further support monitoring of performance. Each nursery also has a marketing plan that reflects the activities to be undertaken to build relationships with parents and encourage prospective parents to visit the nursery. Staff are actively involved in devising and implementing these.

The web site is a major factor in publicising the Company and individual nurseries and in gaining enquiries that are carefully monitored, actioned and followed up. Advertising in a number of different publications/outlets has been used and a detailed breakdown of their costs and effectiveness has been produced enabling the Company to focus on those areas where returns are maximised and cost-effective. There was a marketing review undertaken for the period 1st February 2101 to 31st January 2011 which also identified further areas to consider.

However, one of the most effective marketing activities is through word of mouth referrals from existing parents with children in the nursery and this amounts to 65-70% of new starters. The Company has introduced 'Value Onions' undertaken 6-monthly to gain feedback from parents at parent's evenings, and in one nursery it was noted that this has also been used when parents collect their children from the nursery. The questions cover why they chose the nursery; what they like about it; and where they feel improvements can be made etc. This is used to support continuous improvement and high levels of parent satisfaction, which in turn aids referrals.

It was mentioned in MM Godalming that the 'Value Onions' approach has also been trialled with staff at a staff meetings to gain a structured feedback from them on what attracted them to MM; why they enjoy working there; what would make them feel more supported in their job role; and are their training needs being met and if not what training do they feel they would benefit from. This was undertaken to support further improvements, although the feedback was generally very positive. It has been decided to change the questions to be more in-depth and SMART and then to use them at all nurseries.

Internal and external review are also used to monitor quality and improve performance and consistency across the Company. Please see the comments made under point D and, later in this section, the evidence identified under the 4 additional Evidence Requirements assessed.

In all, the actions the Company has taken, and is taking, are enabling very high occupancy levels to be achieved and maintained in some nurseries and for a small number of others there is active support to increase their occupancy.

D) The focus on continuous improvement and quality including the development of nursery resources, as they are the key to reputation and on-going success.

There is continuous improvement through on-going development across the Company and a summary of the areas noted is given below. These will be expanded upon later in this section, together with the evidence supporting them, under the 4 additional Evidence Requirements assessed during this review.

- Surrey funding for ITERS and ECERS stopped in 2010 and so there is no longer an external assessment/input against these standards. However, the area managers, Operations Director and other specific staff have been trained in ITERS and ECERS and they use their knowledge of the standards as a basis for their observation and feedback, and continuous improvement when they visit the nurseries.
- The Surrey Early Years Quality Assurance (QIA) Programme has 5 modules and these are being worked through in all the Surrey based nurseries. West Sussex has indicated it will be developing a similar scheme in the future and this will then be considered for Midhurst and Petworth.
- A questionnaire, based on the 'Value Onions' approach is used with parents and a variation has been trialled at MM Godalming to gain feedback from staff to support continuous improvement. This has been covered previously.
- The nurseries are inspected by Ofsted, and the two inspections that have been undertaken very recently achieved 'Outstanding' in all areas. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is used 6-monthly to record progress and identify further developments.
- Investors in People is used across the two groups to improve business and people development practices.
- The regular meetings from the Directors down to room meetings all support continuous improvement

In terms of resources, the quality of the decor, furnishings and resources at Petworth and even more striking, Camberley, were mentioned previously. It was also noted how improvements to the playground and garden have been made at MM Godalming, and play areas in other nurseries.

In interviews with staff at MM Godalming it was mentioned how the nursery manager who initially was covering for the nursery manager on extended leave had introduced 'blue skies' thinking at staff meetings. She had used this in her own nursery to encourage staff to create a 'wish list' of improvements and resources that they feel would be of benefit. Action was taken on a number of these and this was motivating for staff.

In talking to staff in all nurseries it was clearly evident that they are continually looking for and applying new ideas and resources to stimulate play with the children. A key example was following the summer staff meeting and training on Sensory Play a number of staff had purchased items to support this. E.g. sponges; treacle; materials to go into a sensory box etc.

The drive of the Company to continuously improve and maintain the highest standards is noteworthy.

Findings against the additional Evidence Requirements

10.4 Top managers can describe how the organisation has used self review techniques to improve its strategies for managing and developing people. THIS IS MET

The approaches used include:

- The Surrey Early Years Quality Assurance (QIA) Programme has 5 modules – Being Healthy; Staying Safe; Enjoyment and Achievement; Making a Positive Contribution; and Organisation. These are being worked through in all the Surrey based nurseries, with some now starting their last module. West Sussex has indicated it will be developing a similar scheme in the future and this will then be considered for Midhurst and Petworth. For those nurseries on the programme it involves a visit from Surrey staff to observe the rooms and then feedback on the areas they feel need to be developed. An action plan is produced with nursery staff who are all involved in discussing this feedback and gaining the evidence in support of the module. Once this is completed it is assessed and then sent for external verification. The process has improved the understanding and performance of staff and has led to many small improvements such as increasing resources to the correct level; new resources to stimulate learning through play; establishing learning bays etc.
- The self-evaluation form (SEF) is a part of the Ofsted process and is undertaken about 6 monthly to monitor performance and development and create an action plan for further development. The Ofsted inspections also provide feedback although the two most recent awarded the nurseries Outstanding and so the developments were very minor – such as introducing a photo time line in the babies room and increasing involvement for parents in children's learning and a small change to the fire evacuation procedure. These have been done.
- ITERS/ECERS training has been undertaken by the two area managers, the Operations Director and selected staff and whilst Surrey no longer supports and funds this approach, this training enables the managers to observe within the nurseries against the standards during their weekly visits. This is enabling improvements to be made such as the introduction of learning bags in the rooms; new equipment and resources; development of the garden and play areas; free-flow for children etc.
- The Value Onions approach was introduced by the Operation Director and this questionnaire based approach is used to gain feedback from parents, and now it has also been trialled with staff using a different version of the questionnaire. This was described previously, and it is to be further developed and rolled out across all nurseries to provide more evaluative feedback.
- The Mission, Philosophy and Principles have all been reviewed and updated and communicated to staff so that there is a clearer appreciation of the aims of the Company and expectations of staff. In addition, nursery business plans are now drafted and being presented to staff for their inputs. These are in the form of a succinct action plan with the objectives taken directly from the Company business strategy for 2011 with the actions the nursery will be taking to achieve these detailed. This is the first time such an explicit link and approach has been used and is giving more clarity and understanding.
- As mentioned previously the weekly visits of area managers to the nurseries is used to observe in the rooms, identify good practice and to give recognition for this, and also identify areas for improvement. These, together with any other areas discussed with the nursery manager form the basis of an agreed action plan and examples of these were seen.
- Job descriptions have been reviewed and updated and an example related to a room supervisor was provided which encompasses, the main purpose of the job; and the key responsibilities relating to – childcare and education; health and safety; operational; team; communication; and

general. In addition it is supported by a room supervisor's handbook that has been developed and a room supervisor's checklist with actions on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Managers and deputies already have their equivalent of these. This is a robust approach.

- The annual appraisal and 6-month review process works well in agreeing individual objectives and development needs and in discussing and gaining feedback on any other areas. Professional development plans are used to raise individual performance and examples were provided of these being applied.
- The nursery manager development programme through Wisborough is based on individual needs discussed prior to the course and this has been very successful. It has as a result now been extended to include deputies.
- Induction has been developed with an induction handbook and the questionnaires used by MM have been incorporated as a standard in the induction process across both groups to check that the knowledge and understanding required at each of the three stages has been achieved.
- Where possible and applicable, recruitment is targeted on qualified staff and with the support for qualification based training, outlined previously and in Appendix 2, the qualified skills base within the Company has increased by around 25-30% compared to 3 years ago. This is reflected in improved planning and delivery of activities for children.
- Feedback from nursery managers has led to the time allowed in their meetings for networking and discussion on concerns and issues and gaining advice and support being extended to an hour. This has improved the effectiveness of the discussions. In addition a session is dedicated to either technical or management training and also they agree a 'hot topic' to discuss in the following meeting. This is supporting their learning and development.
- A focus group was introduced for the Early Years and this has supported the introduction, planning and delivery of the EYFS.
- Policies and procedures were numbered sequentially as they have been introduced. They have now been grouped under 'themes' so that the related ones are all together. This has made learning them and referring to them easier for staff.

10.5 Top managers can describe how the organisation has used information from external reviews, including the previous Investors in People assessment or review, to improve its strategies for managing and developing people. THIS IS MET

The external reviews used include Investors in People; Ofsted, and QIA visits by Surrey staff. With respect to the improvements resulting these include.

For Investors in People a few examples of the changes made and improvements resulting as a result of the previous feedback have been given under 10.4 and so will only be mentioned briefly here:

- Introduction of the business plans for nurseries has resulted in a higher level of involvement of nursery managers in planning; made the nursery objectives more explicitly linked to the Company objectives; the action plan format has kept it succinct and clear; and it is leading to a more explicit involvement of staff.
- The area manager structure is providing a much higher level of support to, and interaction with, nursery managers. This has improved communication and performance across an increasing number of nurseries.
- Better planning of staffing has reduced the number of times cancellation of individual's training due to staff shortages has occurred. It has also reduced costs of agency.
- The good performance of the NVQ provider PTS has led to them running good quality Friday workshops on specific topics where it was proving very difficult to book on to Surrey courses due to a reduction in the numbers being run and these being over subscribed.

- Job descriptions have been updated and made clearer.
- A room supervisor's handbook and checklist has been introduced to ensure consistent understanding and performance.
- Induction has been developed and is now more consistent and checks knowledge and understanding.

With respect to Ofsted, the most recent inspections found the nurseries 'Outstanding' in all areas and examples of feedback were given under 10.4.

Likewise with the QIA process and visits by Surrey staff, feedback results in an action plan and has resulted in improvements being made and some of these have also been highlighted under 10.4. The verification process at the end of each module confirms achievement of the standards and most nurseries are now on, or have completed and achieved, 4 modules. This enables managers and staff to be fully conscious of the level at which they are performing in relation to these standards.

10.10 Managers can describe how they review and evaluate people management and development and use this learning to shape future activity. THIS IS MET

There is a regular and on-going review of the management and development of staff as it is a key element of the culture of the Company and this arises through:

For managing people:

- The range of meetings from the directors meetings down to room meetings all reflect on performance and achievement levels, and one to ones can lead to professional development plans where individuals need to improve significantly. Action plans are also used from one to one and other meetings to drive improvements and learning.
- Managers reflect on their own management style and approaches through their appraisals and reviews and via the nursery managers and other management meetings.
- The appraisals and reviews with staff enable objectives set and learning identified to be reviewed and new targets set.
- Room observations highlight good practice but also where improvements are needed.
- Whisborough management training starts with self-analysis and discussion on the areas that the individuals would like to cover. These are then addressed within the programme. There was excellent feedback on this training and it is being extended to deputies as a result.
- Nursery managers observe rooms and they observe each other and give feedback at senior meetings and discuss findings and improvements.
- Value Onions are being used with parents and now with staff to drive further improvements.

For developing people:

- The training plan is produced with information from appraisals and the nursery managers, and is closely monitored with reports produced by nursery managers collated into an overall report by the area manager responsible for training and development. This confirms the percentages trained in mandatory training against the percentage target set. This will then lead to any remedial action being undertaken in terms of more courses etc.
- As the provision of training from Surrey has reduced with the cuts and the courses run are over subscribed and not always easily accessible the Company has implemented additional Friday training sessions through PTS in MM Godalming so that staff are able to access the training they need.

- The role of the Teacher in MM Godalming has been extended to give more support to staff learning both within the nursery, through the Friday sessions at Woking, and through visiting other nurseries where needed. With the last NVQ candidates completing probably this year and newer staff doing Diplomas, the Friday Woking sessions in support of NVQ candidates is currently being reviewed.
- The Whisborough training for managers has proved so effective it is being extended to deputies.
- Making development part of staff and room meetings that also encourage ideas for improvement.
- Following training a written evaluation is returned and the comments recorded on computer to aid monitoring and selection of courses and trainers.
- Managers said they are talking more to staff following any training and encouraging them to feedback learning and notes and materials at staff and room meetings. As a result colleagues are now benefiting more from this opportunity to learn.
- The induction of the new area managers to their roles was supported with weekly meetings as a team to share ideas and discuss issues and plans for the next month etc. External coaching has been used by Operations Director and she has used a coaching approach with the two new area managers. Budget training is planned.
- The induction process has been improved with the introduction of questionnaires at the end of the three stages. This has improved the checking of knowledge and understanding and there is a more consistent and structured approach to inducting new staff.

Managers gave the examples below of how they have improved the way they lead, manage and develop their reportees and a few of the many comments made are given below:

- Through developing team working and dynamics across the nursery and working in rooms to help out, which builds rapport and understanding. They now speak to people as soon as any issue arises to nip it in the bud. They are developing observing and feedback skills.
- Discussing with colleagues how to handle conflict and as a result they have developed their skills in doing this.
- When appraising her staff, a manager asks for feedback on her as a manager and what more she can do to support them.
- Nursery managers observe rooms and they observe each other and give feedback at senior meetings and discuss findings and improvements e.g. they have changed their approach which for one tended to be over critical to now looking for the positives and not snapping.
- Being told of the importance of listening and showing you are listening. They now do this and she has developed her people skills in this area.
- Looking at the wider picture to support and motivate staff, and being approachable at all times to help and support team learning as well.
- Developing her assertiveness and becoming more effective and improving her communications.

10.13 People believe that managers are genuinely committed to improving the way they manage and develop them. THIS IS MET

Staff found this quite a difficult question to answer as it has never been really discussed and it was evident that specific feedback on the way staff are managed has not been consistently and explicitly sought, although the Value Onions approach recently trialled at MM Godalming will help to support this.

Some managers do seek feedback on their management approach during appraisals, meetings, one to ones, etc. but some do not and this is a development area.

However, there were many examples given where staff feel that their manager has shown a commitment to improving the way they manage and develop them. These included:

- More involvement in inputting ideas and suggestions rather than being 'told'.
- A person was told off by a manager for not arranging an activity with the children and they explained that they had been to lunch and had not been told what was needed. The manager apologised and has changed their approach as a result and ensures they communicate to everyone.
- Another said that if there are any misunderstandings then she tells her manager and they will listen and accept your opinion and take any action needed. However one manager is not good at getting things done.
- One mentioned that you can challenge what the manager says and they will listen and if they agree they will take action. They feel that as a result they have all developed as a team and are working more effectively. Communications are better and the atmosphere has improved and the manager is much more open to ideas and suggestions. Improvements in working with children and parents have been introduced as a result.
- Another comment was that the manager now tells people when she is stressed and they all try to give her more support in her role. This has built team work.
- One person said that colleagues had told her off over something she was not doing after discussing this with the manager. The individual went to see the manager to ask why the manager had not taken her to one side and had a word with her about this as it had not been very nice to be told by one's own team members. The manager apologised and said they would do this in the future, and have.
- There were comments on improvements in management style arising with the introduction of new deputies and/or managers. For example; the manager who took over for a period of time at MM Godalming was thought to be an excellent manager and introduced a 'blue skies' thinking to create a wish list and demonstrated she wanted to make changes and improvements.
- The Company seems to be a lot more organised now over the last 1.5 years and people know what they should be doing and there is more teamwork.

With respect to development all feel they are well supported by their line manager on a day to day basis and see them as approachable; accessible; and very helpful. With respect to more senior managers the same is true, although there are differences in management style, all are seen as supportive of training giving feedback where improvements can be made; supporting induction, mandatory, qualification based, and on-going training.

Appraisals/reviews are performed and training needs discussed and following training an evaluation form is completed and cascading of learning occurs through a staff or room meeting dependent on the nature of the learning. The support from the Teacher at MM is really appreciated. Comments relating to improvements made included:

- There is now a more consistent approach to people cascading and sharing ideas and learning through the staff and room meetings.
- The Friday training is an improvement and very effective.
- The staff conference last Friday was the best they have been to and the trainer was brilliant and very motivational.

There was one comment that once qualified it is more difficult to gain specific training and more information on what is available would be helpful.

Suggestions for improvement related to section 3 are given under section 4 'opportunities to improve', so that they are all collated into one section.

4. Opportunities to improve

The findings from the review are provided under Appendix 1 and 2 at the end of this initial section, and these provide the rationale for the comments given below. The headings used are from the 'topics' of the Standard.

It should be noted that the suggestions are not in any way mandatory and there may be other actions that are more appropriate. Whatever approaches are used they should be evaluated as early as possible to ensure they are cost effective in delivering the improvements sought. It would be a good idea to use your existing 'action plan' based approach to deciding how and when you will take action on the ones you feel are most relevant to you.

Comments put in *Italics* indicate where the Company should consider further developments that are currently beyond the Standard in the Extended Framework, but where they could further help to support the business at this time. There was already some evidence arising from this review in support of a number of these.

01: Business Strategy

- To ensure that the nursery business plans are completed with full staff input and that SMART targets are set for all objectives to aid measuring and monitoring of performance. I.e. avoid words like 'improve' unless it says from what to what.
- To complete, issue and discuss the new job descriptions to ensure everyone is clear on what is expected of them.
- *By agreeing core values in relation to the Mission, Philosophy, Principles, Business Strategy, appraisal capabilities etc. everyone will be clear on the requirements and standards that underpin success. I.e. What does a good employee look like?*
- *Developing a wider range of relevant key performance indicators could be useful in setting business critical targets and help to improve performance. For example parent and staff satisfaction levels etc.*
- *'Environmental considerations' can be used as a way to gain new customers through the publicity related to this. It may be helpful to consider a specific strategy/planned approach to this to also reduce operating costs and improve efficiency.*
- *How about 'social responsibility', could a strategy in this area also boost marketing activities and performance?*

02: Learning and Development Strategy; 08 Learning and Development; 09 Performance Management

- With the reduction in external funding and a more focused application required for funding, it will be important to ensure that an appropriate level of training is maintained to support all staff to the correct level. Could more training be delivered by talented and interested staff/managers i.e. using internal expertise/champions to run training sessions?
- Or could more use of computer based training packages be made? How about developing a central learning resource in each nursery and centrally for the Company where training materials and information on important topics is stored and made available to staff/managers? This formal capture of learning materials following training, ideas, and action plans, into a central resource will help to ensure that it isn't forgotten and can be re-visited and used for training others.
- Avoid people feeling that training is being 'done' to them by ensuring there is a clear understanding why they are going on the training and what it is expected they will gain from it, and will share with colleagues.

- Ensure that the training policy is clearly displayed and that staff know what formal training is available to them sufficiently far in advance.
 - You are reviewing the effectiveness of the Friday support sessions with the Teacher at MM Godalming as these have a mixed attendance levels and with the change to the 'Diploma' approach it may also be time to make changes to the focus/ improve effectiveness.
 - To ensure a clarity of career path in terms of the competencies and experience needed and the training available to support it. This will underpin succession planning.
 - To ensure the induction process is consistently applied across all nurseries and a formal evaluation is performed at the end to measure its effectiveness and identify any ways it can be improved.
 - Consider a specific induction process and training to support promotion and increased responsibilities e.g. room supervisor; 3rd l/c; deputy; manager - based on the specific competencies and knowledge needed in relation to the checklists and handbook etc. See Indicators 4/5.
 - To ensure that there are clear outcome objectives agreed for any learning and development being supported whether it is on the job or a 'course'. In this way learning is more likely to be applied, improve performance, and be cost-effective.
 - To further develop the appraisal process you may like to consider whether the capabilities described fully embrace the requirements of an 'effective' employee. For example, you may want to reflect and include the behavioural aspects in the list of attributes that embrace the values. This would further underpin the individual performance standards required.
-
- *A well thought through and planned approach to the learning and development strategy will build individual performance and the capability and capacity of the business.*
 - *It can be very beneficial to take a conscious account of peoples preferred ways of learning (learning styles) and whilst managers have received training in this it may be helpful to cascade this to deputies and 3rd l/c as well. This will help to ensure that where possible people learn in the most effective way for them. Involving staff in making decisions about their own learning can really support this, as can trying a range of different/new and flexible approaches. This can all help to maintain a culture of, and desire for, continuous learning.*
-
- To take care that after any learning there is a sufficiently in depth discussion on what was learned, how this will be applied in the job, and who else will benefit from the knowledge so that this is cascaded appropriately.
-
- *Learning is already an every day activity, and the use of innovative and flexible approaches will further support this and enable people to achieve their full potential.*
 - *Continuing to ensure that all learning is valued, celebrated and shared where appropriate will be encouraging and motivating for employees, as well as help in developing their capabilities.*
 - *To seek ways in which coaching and mentoring opportunities can be used more widely and cost-effectively to support personal development and enable people to achieve their potential.*
-
- To formally evaluate all learning supported to ensure that individual, nursery and company performance have all improved and that it has been cost-effective. To use the information to further improve the cost-effectiveness of learning.
-
- *Use of key performance indicators will enable the effectiveness of training to be measured in terms of its impact on improving performance in areas key to the success of the Company.*
 - *The effective development of employees will also be able to be evaluated in terms of their personal career development and the ability to promote from within as the Company grows.*

03: People Management Strategy

- It was mentioned in one nursery that there is a white board on which staff write up their ideas for discussion at the next staff meeting. In others a 'blue skies' approach has been used. There is a suggestion box, which is not well used. There could be a benefit in devising approaches that can be consistently applied across the nurseries and groups to gain more and better ideas.
- Some organisations find that using focused 'ideas generating meetings' or 'competitions' can help to drive continuous improvement. For example related to cost savings; increasing occupancy; increasing efficiency; improving quality; marketing ideas etc. Some form of small prize for the most ideas/those implemented can be motivational and cost-effective. It is important to welcome all ideas and give feedback if they will be used, and if not, why not.
- *To consider a 'person specification sheet' based on the competencies sought to ensure that when recruiting this supports making the best decision as there are a very small number of staff recruited who are seen by colleagues as not having the commitment to the children and childcare that is desired. However, recruiting positive personalities where individuals have the desire and ability to learn is key, as it is easier to train for skills than to change people's attitudes and behaviours. This can lead to a diverse and talented workforce and enable the Company to make the most of people's talents.*

04: Leadership & Management Strategy and 05: Management Effectiveness

- To develop the existing competencies for managers both from a generic standpoint where they are applicable to all, but also detailing the specific requirements and levels related to the different levels of management position. This would have a number of benefits.
 - It would enable managers to self-assess against these and to score their level of expertise enabling their strengths and development areas to be discussed and agreed with their line manager. A personal development plan can then be produced to raise their performance and common needs could be met by 'group' based training. This would raise overall performance and lead to a higher level and greater consistency of management across the Company.
 - The defined competencies could be used within a 'career development strategy' that employees could refer to that would show them the level to which they could aspire and the competencies and experience needed for this role. This would also enable a structured approach to induction and training related to the different positions and support succession planning.
- Use of a 360 degree feedback system for appraising managers, or detailed employee questionnaires, can be useful to gain feedback on strengths of management. By scoring these and repeating yearly it will enable the monitoring of improvements in the way people are managed and developed and this can be used as evidence to identify the effectiveness of the management training provided.
- The normal staff appraisal could include feedback on the manager E.g. How could I support you more? What should I stop doing? Etc. This could also support improvements in management.
- To re-publicise to all staff the expectations they should have of management, so there is a clear and consistent understanding. This could help to improve manager's performance
- An approach to Skills South East may prove useful in that they can ask a Leadership and Management Specialist Adviser to contact you at no cost or obligation, to provide impartial advice. (0845 026 4298 or info@skillssoutheast) In addition there may be grants available for any appropriate training for the Director and Senior Management. Consideration could also be given to the NVQ route to develop management skills and/or define appropriate competencies.
- *Encouraging everyone to develop appropriate leadership capabilities will help to empower and motivate staff to perform to a higher level in their roles.*

- *Effective development of managers will enable them to be role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing that raises the capabilities of all employees. Establishing and building upon a common coaching style across the Company will reinforce this and help people to develop themselves and their careers. This will require the culture of openness and trust to be maintained.*

06: Recognition and Reward

- Whilst people do feel recognised and appreciated it is important to ensure there is regular positive feedback when appropriate, especially at times of high workloads or pressures to maintain motivation.
- *Starting meetings with a ‘celebration of successes’ can be a positive opening, and it is always important to finish on a high note. Building on the current approaches to encouraging employees to give recognition, praise and saying ‘thank you’ - where appropriate - to colleagues is also motivating for those concerned and builds even stronger team working.*

07: Involvement and Empowerment

- To continue to delegate responsibility and accountability in an appropriate way to enable staff to grow and develop. To consider building on the focus group approach to support this.
- *To continue to support effective consultation and involvement as part of the culture of the Company, encouraging people to challenge the way things work if they feel there is a reason to do this. This will help to further support continuous improvement.*
- *People are supported and trusted to make decisions, and this is important to encourage people’s commitment to the success of the business.*
- *To build on the good levels of sharing of knowledge and information, as this will also support a culture of continuous improvement. It will also help to create a sense of ownership and maintain pride in working for the Company.*

10: Continuous Improvement

- To have an annual review of all ‘HR’ related and management processes to ensure that they are delivering in a cost-effective way the outcomes wanted. To involve staff in this review to gain their feedback. To evaluate any changes made and then communicate to staff the improvements resulting, so that they become more open to, and willing to, change practices.
- *To continue to use and build upon self review and using information from external reviews/benchmarking. This will help to provide the information and feedback needed to ensure the effective management and continued development of operations.*
- *Gaining people’s views on how they are managed should show where improvements have been made, and as a result employees commitment and loyalty to the Company will be maintained/increased and they will continue to believe it’s a great place to work.*

Other

- The Director may like to consider only attending a part of staff meetings to provide a ‘company update’ and receive feedback from staff, as it was mentioned that some staff may feel inhibited in saying what they feel whilst he is there.

Additional areas to consider and support available

Investors in People Interactive

This **free** online support tool is designed to guide you through development activities and help you maintain the benefits of using Investors in People as an organisational development tool. Obtain an on-going understanding of your organisation's current strengths and development areas by using the tool's diagnostic function which is built around 5 management practices which relate directly to the Investors in People indicators

You can also review and update your progress within the tool and access a wide range of downloads, good practice tips, templates and other resources to inspire and inform - no matter where you are on your Investors in People journey by using www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive

Managers Pitstop

IBP has teamed up with [Managers PitStop](http://www.managerspitstop.com), to offer **free** online Leadership and Management training for managers, business leaders, human resources professionals and individuals. The training, which would normally cost some £200 per person, is available as bite-sized audiovisual online tutorials that last between five and 25 minutes, the training covers recruiting, coaching and managing people.

Each tutorial is accompanied by a selection of downloads which include top tips, exercises and resources for further training. The wide range of topics covered include: absence management; developing people; delegating to others; managing change in business; resolving conflict; evaluating training; recruitment interviews; inductions; barriers to performance; and self-esteem. Log on via our website or using the link below:

www.managerspitstop.com/ibp

Promoting continuous improvement

IBP offers an integrated advice and assessment support service, workshops, surgeries and networking events to promote continuous improvement and maximise the benefits of working with The Standard. We also work with a team of highly experienced consultants to offer an extensive range of tailored business support and organisational development solutions to help improve business performance. Details of the support available to you can be found on:

Internet: www.ibp.uk.com Telephone: **0800 612 3098** Email: info@ibp.uk.com

Health & Safety

Information available on the HSE website could be useful in maintaining both your compliance and staff awareness. Visit www.hse.gov.uk for more information.

Leadership and Management

Sources of information on the relevant capabilities required include the Institute of Leadership and Management - visit www.management-standards.org and also Business Link - visit www.businesslink.gov.uk for general business information and links to the DTI Inspirational Leadership Index.

IT Skills and knowledge

For interactive training packages for developing the IT skills and knowledge of your staff try www.learnirect.co.uk for ideas. A good number of these courses are either free of charge or reasonably priced.

General business advice and employment legislation

For general business advice and employment legislation incorporating DTI 'best practice', the following website might be useful: www.businesslink.gov.uk.



T: 0800 612 3098

E: info@ibp.uk.com

W: www.ibp.uk.com

5. Recommendation and Next Steps

Having carried out the review process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Assessors by Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, the Assessor is totally satisfied that both Caring Daycare and Major Minors continue to meet the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard. Well done.

Also, you have met 4 Evidence Requirements from the 'Your choice' part of the Investors in People Framework. Well done.

Both the Assessor and IBP would welcome your feedback on this review and you will be supplied with a Client Feedback Questionnaire to complete on line. We would very much appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire once you have had the opportunity to digest this report.

Should you wish to contact a Client Relationship Manager at IBP for any reason, please telephone 0800 612 3098, use the contact option on our website www.ibp.uk.com or send an email to info@ibp.uk.com

The maximum period between Post-Recognition Reviews is three years. However, it is Inspiring Business Performance's policy to maintain contact with you between reviews. This is done via regular e-bulletins, and contact from Inspiring Business Performance and from the Assessor. The first contact from the Assessor would normally be in about six months' time, principally to find out how you are progressing with the suggested opportunities to improve and to see if you need any further support.

I would like to thank you for your hospitality whilst I was on site and to wish you every success in the future.

Thank you.

David Englefield

Investors in People Assessor

4th August 2011

APPENDIX 1: Assessment Outcomes Table - Evidence Requirements Framework Matrix Showing Evidence Requirements MET (✓) and NOT MET (X)

Core Standard										
Total number of core evidence requirements assessed - 37										
Total number of core evidence requirements met - 37										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	N/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
5	N/a		✓						✓	
6	✓									

Wider Framework										
Total number of additional evidence requirements assessed - 4										
Total number of additional evidence requirements met - 4										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core				Core	✓
5	Core		Core						Core	✓
6	Core									
7										
8										
9										
10										✓
11										
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APPENDIX 2: Summary of findings against the Standard as ‘topics’

As agreed, this is structured under the Indicators, grouped together where it is relevant to do so to aid continuity, showing the ‘topics’ (in Italics) of the Standard. A summary is given relating to the supporting evidence identified from the written and verbal information provided.

01: Business Strategy

- *The organisation has a vision/purpose, strategy and plan.*
- *People are involved in planning.*

Findings:

The Mission is based on the provision of high quality nursery care and education through working in partnership with children, parents, families and the community to make a positive difference to all. It also outlines the five areas of Every Child Matters as the focus for achieving better outcomes for children.

The Philosophy is based on ‘the team share a common goal for each individual child and an absolute commitment to supporting all children from their earliest years in learning and developing life skills so they can grow and reach their full potential’.

The above are underpinned by six Principles embracing:

- Integrated care and education for all children supporting their individual needs to ensure outstanding outcomes in their development and learning.
- Encouraging parents to take part in activities to ensure services are flexible and reflect their needs.
- Children and families to be happy, healthy and achieve their goals.
- An integrated approach to services to improve the outcomes for every child.
- Working positively with local professionals to ensure effective and positive partnership working in areas such as special needs, language and education.
- The nursery to be the first local port of call for all families with young children.

The Mission, Philosophy and Principles have all been reviewed and updated to align them more closely with the way the Company is working and its aims and objectives based around the five Every Child Matters criteria. These were seen on the notice boards in staff rooms and all of those spoken to have a very good appreciation of the high standards set and expected in delivering high quality, safe and developmental childcare. It was evident that people do enjoy their jobs.

A copy of the Rosevale Group Business Strategy for 2011 was provided and this has around 13 key priorities. Some of these are given below:

- Successful launch of the new Camberley nursery in May and consider a further nursery in Surrey and possibly adjacent counties that will complement and meet existing high standards.
- Investment in existing nurseries with major projects at MM Godalming and Dorking and CDC Guildford, Woking and Noah’s Ark to maintain positioning as the best in each market it operates in.
- Continue to build a highly qualified, graduate led, nursery workforce and minimize the use of agency staff.
- Employee turnover to be no more than 15% as a result of improved retention through more effective induction, appraisal, personal development and recognition.
- Build on the accreditation as an Investor in People to reinforce our position as childcare employer of choice and a genuine family of professionals.
- Achieve a minimum of ‘Good’ but ‘Outstanding’ being the usual in Ofsted inspections. Progress towards achieving Surrey EYCS recognised Quality Assurance Award (QIA), with the first nurseries completing these in 2012.

- Improve occupancy with particular emphasis on key nurseries and growth in sales by promotion of extra sessions and effective marketing plans being implemented in each nursery.

The strategy is discussed and agreed with Senior Management.

Individual nursery business plans have now been produced by the nursery managers and these are directly linked to the Company strategies and objectives. They are in the form of a succinct action plan which is a sound approach. The plans are in the process of being discussed with nursery staff and their inputs obtained before they are updated and finalised. It will be important that these have SMART objectives.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

02: 08: 09: Learning and Development
02: Strategy, 08: Learning, and 09: Performance Management

- *Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan.*
- *Resources for learning and development are made available.*
- *The impact will be evaluated*
- *People's learning and development needs are met.*
- *Investment in learning can be quantified.*
- *Impact can be demonstrated.*

Findings:

Learning and development Indicators have been grouped together for continuity reasons to make the findings 'flow' and easier to read. The following points were noted:

Details were provided of the investment made in the various areas of learning being supported and the overall budget. This is controlled centrally and is the responsibility of an area manager who previously undertook this role as the Childcare Development Manager.

There is a Nursery Termly Training Pack to report on the identified training needs of the staff; the training activities in house and external that are planned and the individuals attending these; and the training individuals have attended including a 'qualification analysis form' and 'mandatory training evaluation form'. This information is collated and acted upon centrally.

In addition:

- There is a summary of the 'in-house training sessions booked' for the term giving the course; venue; date; time; costs; provider; number attending; and comments. This is circulated to the nurseries.
- There are details of 'Friday Training Workshops' for the term and these have a very similar layout to the 'in-house training sessions'.

This all seems to work effectively based on the feedback given.

The 3 key areas of learning and development relate to mandatory training; qualifications based training; and management development.

Mandatory training is well planned and the 10 areas are closely monitored and reported upon termly with associated 'action points' to ensure that individual needs and nursery percentage requirements are met. These cover First Aid; Safeguard; Food Hygiene; Manual Handling; Epipen; Fire Safety; Health and Safety and CAF. There was good feedback on the quality of this training.

There is also a strong focus on qualification based learning and development including:

- NVQs at levels 2, 3 and some at 4. These have now been replaced by Diplomas at the corresponding levels. The provider used is being effective in supporting the programme, and data was provided showing that in 2010 - 26 achieved L2/3 and 3 at L4
- 2-year Foundation Degrees that can be extended by a further year to a BA. The degree based training has been very effective in creating 'graduate led' nursery management, where managers are more knowledgeable and more reflective on the performance of their nursery. This is supporting continuous improvement and high standards.

In 2010 - 5 achieved graduate level (levels 5, 6 or 7) qualifications. In 2011 there are 31 doing L2/3; 6 doing Foundation Degree and 1 doing a L7 qualification. A table showed the total numbers of qualified staff at each level in each nursery and the percentage of qualified staff employed overall.

- Management development is based mainly around the Wisborough training and there have been around 4 cohorts of 3 nursery managers that have completed/are completing this programme to date. This is tailored to the needs of the individual nursery managers attending, and is now being extended to the first cohort of deputies. There was very good feedback on the quality and helpfulness of this training. In addition it is planned for all nursery managers to undertake a 3-day management training towards the end of this year to further develop their knowledge and skills. Training on budgets is also planned.

Individual training needs are discussed at the annual appraisal in January and revisited at the 6-month review. Interviewees confirmed that they have had their reviews, or are having them now, and that the process works well in discussing their learning needs. Virtually all of those spoken to had undertaken a number of training activities this year and confirmed that their training needs were either up to date or had been identified and are planned to be met. They see the Company as being committed in providing the training needed to enable them to perform their role effectively, and are normally clear as to why they are going on the training and what it should achieve for them. There was a feeling however that sometimes 'training is done to them' and they find out about activities they are scheduled to attend that may not have been discussed until this time.

A training evaluation form is used following training and the comments are recorded on the computer system for monitoring and feedback. In addition, discussion of learning occurs with the manager, followed by cascading relevant learning and materials through room and staff meetings as appropriate. People spoken to said that this sharing of learning is very helpful.

The induction of new staff, including bank staff, is well planned, structured and generally very well supported and effective. The people spoken to felt that this enabled them to learn and become effective as quickly as possible and to complete their 3-month probationary period successfully. New staff spoke of being made to feel very welcome by colleagues and managers, enabling them to settle quickly into their team and the nursery.

Where staff change rooms or are promoted there was also good feedback on the help and support from colleagues and their line manager. Nursery managers and deputies spoke highly of the support provided by the area managers through their weekly visits to the nurseries they oversee. One deputy who was acting manager for a period of time said how supportive her area manager had been in helping her in her new duties and, in addition to the weekly meetings, called her every day to check all was well and to answer any questions or concerns she had.

Feedback on training included:

- Senior management spoke of the improved management capabilities arising from a graduate level management structure that has also had specific management development training (Wisborough etc) tailored to their needs. This is supporting

expansion in the number of nurseries, succession planning, and appropriately skilled cover for managers on maternity leave etc.

- The summer staff conference last week was particularly successful with a very talented and dynamic trainer used to deliver training on Sensory Play. It was evident from talking to staff this week that the staff were very motivated by this and have already purchased resources and implemented ideas in their rooms such as a sensory box and contents and; sponges; treacle etc. People spoke of there being a very positive response from children to these in learning through play.
- A Teacher in MM Godalming is held in very high regard for her technical skills, theoretical knowledge, and interpersonal relationships with staff. These are used very effectively to support the one to one and group learning that she provides within her nursery and to staff in other nurseries in CDC and MM on NVQs etc. She is seen as always making time to help if needed.
- PTS assessment support of NVQ candidates was very effective and has been extended to include specific training on key topics on Fridays where it was proving difficult to use Surrey based courses due to a restricted number of sessions being run, which are then over subscribed. This has also been of good quality and cost effective in meeting people's needs.
- The Wisborough training for nursery managers, and Foundation Degree training has made individuals more reflective on their management style and the performance of the nursery. Managers spoke of improving in areas such as being more assertive; delegating more; improving communications; better interpersonal relationships; and dealing with conflict.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

03: People Management Strategy

- *People are encouraged to contribute ideas.*
- *There is equality of opportunity for development and support.*

Findings:

This Indicator reflects a different focus on learning and development and so has been treated separately.

It was noted that there is a real drive to involve everyone in inputting ideas and suggestion that will move the nursery forward. This occurs through room and staff meetings and on a day to day basis when discussing planning etc. All Surrey based staff are involved in discussions and the collecting of evidence for the QIA programme.

'Blue skies' thinking was mentioned by staff at MM Godalming which was introduced by a nursery manager whilst covering a portion of the existing nursery manager's extended leave. This entails identifying a 'wish list' and has led to improvements being made.

A 'Value Onion' form of questionnaire used with parents has also been introduced at a staff meeting at MM Godalming to further gain feedback from staff on what attracted them to the nursery; what they enjoy; what will retain them; etc. This information is being used to identify where any improvements can be made. The questions are to be developed to be more in-depth and SMART and it will then be used in all nurseries.

In one nursery a white board is used to capture suggestions which are then discussed at the staff meeting. A suggestion box was mentioned, but this did not appear to have a great deal of use.

People really do feel encouraged to make suggestions and these are listened to and, where possible, supported.

With respect to an 'equality of opportunity for learning and support' staff feel that the Company is committed to providing the opportunities for training needed to ensure everyone is able to perform their job effectively and to support career development. There were many examples noted where unqualified and qualified staff had been supported through NVQs and higher levels of training where appropriate, and had been promoted to room supervisor/ third in charge/ and some had progressed to deputy and manager.

The appraisal/review process applies to all full time and part time staff and to bank staff who are working on a more frequent and regular basis. Appropriate training for bank staff is also supported including the structured induction process.

There are a number of staff who are dyslexic and examples were noted where they have been well supported by both managers and colleagues to enable them to overcome any weaknesses they may have.

Where possible training sessions are arranged on the days that part time staff are working and bank staff are invited to attend training events.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

04: Leadership & Management Strategy and 05: Management Effectiveness

- *Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people.*
- *People know what effective managers should be doing.*
- *Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop their people.*

Findings:

The creation of an area manager structure has been an excellent move and those in contact with these managers feel that the weekly meetings and length of time they are able to spend in the nursery have really improved communications; support; feedback supporting the maintenance of standards and continuous improvement; decision making; taking action etc. They are all felt to be very effective.

There is an effective management structure from room supervisor; through third in charge; deputy; nursery manager; and area manager up to the Operations Director. This supports career progression, succession planning, and cover when an individual is away. It also helps to ensure that new nurseries are immediately able to adhere to company policies and procedures, as there will always be employees based there who are fully familiar with them, even if more senior positions are filled by external recruitment.

It was noted that the vast majority of promotions are made from within but the Company will recruit externally when there are specific reasons to do so such as with Petworth and Noah's Ark.

Job descriptions are being updated and finalized currently and there are handbooks for nursery managers and deputies and one for room supervisors is just being completed. There is also a comprehensive range of checklists by day; week; and month. In addition, the requirements of a nursery manager are also given as 'key factors in leading, managing and developing the team', which includes the skills of a manager as a leader; fixer and

administrator. The appraisal process also reflects headings related to leadership and management. Thus managers are very clear on the expectations of them.

Managers meetings have been developed to now include an hour when they are able to discuss any issues and concerns as a team before they are joined by senior management. They also select a 'hot topic' to discuss and review policies and procedures. This has made the meetings more productive and effective in sharing of knowledge and experience and developing the Company/nurseries.

In a more formal way, the focus on management development through Wisborough management training has been very effective, and this has already been mentioned under Learning and Development. Also mentioned previously under Learning and Development has been the on-going support for Foundation Degrees and higher levels of qualifications. This has created a 'degree level nursery management' structure which has contributed significantly to the development of the skills and knowledge of managers and the success of the nurseries.

Overall, staff do feel that their managers are effective in leading and managing and developing them and were able to describe this in many of the terms within the requirements of a nursery manager given as 'key factors in leading, managing and developing the team'. However, a good number of staff had not seen this document and publicizing the expectations to them would help in raising their awareness of what they should expect of their manager.

There is a culture of giving constructive feedback through internal review processes such as appraisals and reviews; staff, room and one to one meetings; work on the QIA programme; observations by Senior Management based on ITERS and ECERS; and day to day when the occasion merits it.

Managers gave examples of giving feedback to staff which included:

- A gate was left open in the garden and staff were told of the importance of ensuring this is kept shut for safety reasons
- Telling someone they were not listening properly to their staff and they have improved.
- An action plan was put in place for one person as they were continually making mistakes and they are improving.

Staff gave examples of receiving constructive feedback from their line manager that included:

- Being put with a more experienced person to build their confidence which has happened.
- Suggesting that a wall display could be made more sensorial and they used different materials to do this and the manager was pleased.
- Suggestions on how to improve a leaflet on special needs, which were made.

The overall feedback from those interviewees who were asked is that their manager is approachable, helpful, supportive and effective, and working relationships are generally very good across all levels. This supports effective working and team work.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

06: Recognition and Reward

- *People believe they make a difference.*
- *People believe their contribution is valued.*

Findings:

There is a strong culture within the Company of giving recognition where it is due. This is from the top down and includes:

- The Christmas and summer whole staff meetings where individual achievements in terms of qualification based training etc. are celebrated and also a 'practitioner of the year' award given.
- There is a 'practitioner of the month award' with individuals being nominated by colleagues. This supports peer recognition of performance. It was noted in Dorking CDC everyone puts the names of people who have been particularly helpful on a board with the reasons for the nomination and their own name and at the end of the month the person with the highest number of positive comments is the winner. These approaches really encourage team working and mutual respect and recognition. .
- People do feel that they make a valued and valuable contribution to the nursery through their work and in supporting 'events' to promote the nursery, although some mentioned they would like to receive a little more regular feedback. See developments. Examples included:
 - Being congratulated on room changes they had made.
 - Being congratulated for good displays.
 - Receiving continuous praise for her work.
 - Receiving awards as practitioner of the month.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

07: Involvement and Empowerment

- *Ownership and responsibility are encouraged.*
- *People are involved in decision-making.*

Findings:

It was evident that staff are involved at all levels in decision making - at a level that is appropriate to their position. This involves collecting evidence in support of the QIA modules and making appropriate changes (in Surrey based nurseries). Taking action on any feedback after an Ofsted inspection, and when area managers observe rooms based on their knowledge of the requirements of ITERS/ECERS etc. As a consequence they do feel involved and take ownership of making changes and improvements. They are also very involved in the observations and developing the profiles and planning for the on-going development of children in their room.

Examples provided included:

- Making and using a sensory box with sensory items for use in the room.
- Discussing ideas for changing the room layout with managers and being given the permission to do this and seeing the benefits from this.
- Inputting into the planning and then following the plans in doing observations, profiles and next steps.
- Putting booklets together for room bookings.
- Buying resources and then using them in the rooms.

Some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.

10: Continuous Improvement

- *Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management.*

Findings:

The Company is keen to continually develop and improve its approaches and a wide range of examples were noted which have been included in a full description under the areas of focus for the review including 10.4, 10.5, 10.10 and 10.13 under section 3 of the report 'feedback against agreed objectives'. As they are also supportive of the three evidence requirements under the Standard in this Indicator they will not be repeated here. However, some suggestions have been provided under point 4 'opportunities to improve' for the Company to consider where its performance could possibly be raised further.
