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Miss H Harris
Ashton Gate Out of School Care
Caretaker's House
Ashton Gate Road, Ashton Gate
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Dear Miss Harris

Ofsted survey: good practice in capturing the user voice

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 March 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, staff and parents and scrutiny of records and documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- Consultation is embedded in the core work of staff at the setting. It is an ongoing activity and effective strategies are in place to ensure that the voice of all children and parents is heard. For example, the children's views were sought on the types of activities and trips they would like during the school holidays. These were then included on a funding application.
- Information communication technology is used very well to capture the voice of all children. Examples of good practice include a video project where children talked about what they liked least and best about the setting. Children have also recently used cameras and voice recorders to share their views about the setting.
- A range of effective strategies are used to capture and act upon the voice of children and parents. For example, situated in the entrance area is a suggestion book where children share their views, suggestions and ideas about the setting. Staff respond positively to children's suggestions. They give honest feedback so children can see how their views have been taken seriously, and where and why it hasn't been possible to act on their suggestions.

- The inclusive environment promotes a culture of equality of opportunity and the setting has recently evaluated their provision for inclusive practice. As part of this review they have developed their children's questionnaires to ensure that all children's views can be sought through drawings as well as words.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are well established. A key person approach supports close attachments between individual children, their parents and staff. Staff record observations of the things children say and their interests, along with information from parents in 'key person' books. This information is then used to plan activities which maintain children's interests and extend their learning.
- Children feel a sense of ownership at the club. When they first start at the setting all children are allocated a 'buddy', who is another child who introduces them to the other children and shows them around the setting. They report that this system makes them feel 'responsible' and 'good'.

Areas for development

- Develop strategies to consult children in the recruitment of new staff.

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

Heidi Falconer
Childcare Inspector