

Visit to Kids Unlimited Nursery **Monday 23rd February 2009**

Attending:

Scrutiny Board Members

Cllr B Lancaster

Celia Foote

Scrutiny Support

Laura Nield

Kids Unlimited

Gail Jones & colleague

- The nursery is extremely large, with capacity for 237 children. However, at present only around 160 places are filled.
- Places are only open to the children of First Direct staff.
- Some babies join the nursery as young as 3 months, but the average starting age is 6 months.
- The nursery is open from 7am to 6.15pm, to cover the range of shift patterns of First Direct staff.
- The parents pay £2.76 an hour for childcare. This is subsidised by the company.
- Both parents and staff have had a very positive response to the EYFS 'Key Person' requirement. Relationships between parents and their child's key worker are generally very close.
- Every child has two key workers, to ensure cover if one is on leave or off sick.
- Each member of staff covers a maximum of 10 children.
- This system has proved very valuable in dealing with any complaints or issues at the earliest possible stage.
- The management also meet with the room supervisors on a weekly basis to discuss priorities.
- The nursery employs a teacher who works in the pre-school section.
- There are currently two SEN children who attend the nursery, although management have found it difficult to employ staff to work with them, as many are only funded for specific times – for example, 10 hours a week, term time only.
- It was suggested that the nursery may benefit from closer links with the Council when recruiting staff.
- Currently the team do make the most of any LCC training on offer, and have found staff in early years to be flexible and supportive.
- For example, a lot of the staff have done the LCC 'portage' training for SEN children.
- In terms of the transition to primary school, there is no consistent transition, as the children go on to a range of schools across West Yorkshire.
- However, many teachers do visit the nursery to meet the child before he or she moves into their school, and when this happens the teacher will also have a discussion with the child's key worker.