

Partnership working in Out of School settings

To further improve provision and outcomes for children and families, strengthening partnership working is a key statement found within Ofsted inspection reports. This includes working in partnership with not only children and their parents or carers, but also schools and any other professionals involved in helping to meet children's/young people's needs.

Below is a series of extracts taken from various government publications about what the statutory requirements are and how Ofsted judge settings to meet these requirements, in relation to partnership working.

These are followed by examples of statements taken from recent Inspection reports for Out of School settings. Together these will help you identify and plan for what you need to do to improve this aspect of your club's practice.

If you feel you need further support in this area, please contact your Childcare Improvement Sufficiency Officer for support and ideas, or other out of school settings for peer support

Extracts from the EYFS – [Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage 2024](#)

- **3.50** Where the provision is solely before/after school care or holiday provision for children who normally attend reception class (or older) during the school day, there must be sufficient staff as for a class of 30 children. It is for providers to determine how many staff are needed to ensure the safety and welfare of children, bearing in mind the type(s) of activity and the age and needs of the children. It is also for providers to determine what qualifications, if any, the manager and/or staff should have. See details on page 6 for the learning and development requirements for providers offering care exclusively before/after school or during the school holidays.
- **3.77** Providers must maintain records, obtain and share relevant information (with parents and carers, other professionals working with the child, the police, social services and Ofsted or their CMA, as appropriate). This is to ensure their setting is safe and efficiently managed, and the needs of all children are met. Providers must enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and/or carers (and between other providers, if a child is attending more than one setting). If requested, providers should incorporate parents' and/or carers' comments into children's records

- **3.82** Providers must share the following information with parents and/or carers:
 - How the EYFS is being delivered in the setting, and how parents and/or carers can access more information.
 - The range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share learning at home.
 - How the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.
 - Food and drinks provided for children.
 - Details of the provider's policies and procedures - making copies available on request. This includes the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.
 - How staffing in the setting is organised.
 - The name of their child's key person and their role.
 - A telephone number for parents and/or carers to contact the provider in an emergency.

Extracts from the [Early Years Inspection Handbook](#) that relate to partnership working

- **Point 68** states that when carrying out an onsite inspection the Ofsted inspector must make arrangements to talk to parents – this may be almost immediately if parents are present – and to check that the provider has informed them about the inspection
- **Point 108** states that wherever possible, the inspector must find out the views of parents during the inspection, including those of any parents who ask to speak to them. Meetings with parents must take place without the presence of leaders or staff, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This will contribute to judgements about how well the provision works in partnership with parents to support children's learning and development, and the promotion of their well-being.
- **Point 109** states that where the provision has been notified in advance, parents will know that an inspection is taking place. The inspector should consider the arrival times of children and parents to the setting and should set aside time to speak to parents. The inspector may arrange to speak to parents by telephone if this is more convenient for parents.
- **Point 110** states that if the inspection is carried out with no notice, the inspector must check how the provider obtains and uses their views to improve its service. If there is no evidence relating to this, the inspector must consider whether the partnership with parents is good enough and the inspector may choose to contact parents by phone to request their views.

In applying the EIF to inspections of before and after school care and holiday provision:

- **Point 239.** Childminders who only offer care before and after school or during the school holidays, for children who normally attend Reception (or older) classes during the school day, do not have to meet the learning and development requirements for those children. For children younger than Reception age, the childminder should be guided by, but does not have to meet, the learning and development requirements. In both cases, this means they only have to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS. The arrangements for inspecting this type of provision are set out in part 3 of this handbook: [Applying the EIF to inspections of before- and after-school care and holiday provision](#).
- **Point 251** states that the provider must demonstrate how they work in partnership with parents, carers and others.

Extracts from recent Ofsted inspections within Leicestershire in relation to partnership working for those out of school settings that have been graded as 'met'

Working in partnership with parents

- Partnership with parents is very effective. Parents are overwhelmingly positive. They state that they benefit from regular updates and receive ongoing support on how to support learning at home. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) feel well supported and are grateful for the links between the setting and external agencies. They state that without the support of the setting their child would not be thriving and making friends.
- Parents are delighted with the care and support the manager and staff provide. Parents receive daily updates on their child's progress and are supported to learn at home with their children. Parents comment that the manager and staff are warm, kind and welcoming, which contributes to the family feel the nursery promotes.
- Staff actively seek written feedback from children and parents and make changes based on what they say. For example, children said they would like different snacks and staff have introduced new items, such as breadsticks and dips.
- Parents say they value the club and the holiday activities and feel their children are safe and well cared for. Communication with parents is good. Staff send out newsletters to parents to keep them up to date with plans for future activities. They talk with parents when they collect their children about their child's day and what they have been doing
- Parents are complimentary about the club. They are pleased that their children are always happy to attend and are supported well by the staff at the start of their children's school day. One parent said they felt reassured that staff

administer children's medication safely and ensured it was in a safe and secure place.

- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents receive daily feedback at the end of each session about how their children have been, and any messages from teachers are shared. Parents appreciate the support and guidance staff offer them and their family. They report how much their children enjoy their time at the club.
- Parents speak warmly about the care and activities staff offer at the club. They say they feel fully informed about their child's key person, and any messages from school and club are exchanged effectively at the end of each session.
- Parents report that their children love their time at the club. Staff are supportive, friendly and caring. They talk about the staff's care being seamless, which is supported by their excellent communication.
- Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents speak highly of the staff; they say that they are friendly, helpful and know their children well. Parents comment that they are happy with the service provided and that their children look forward to attending the club.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff establish positive relationships with them and keep them fully informed and involved. Parents are happy with the club and praise the friendly, caring and professional staff. Parents comment on the wide range of activities on offer that keep their children engaged and excited.

Partnership working with schools

- Young children benefit from an effective key-person system. The key persons ensure that there is consistent communication between parents and the teachers at the school. For instance, they chat with teachers at the end of the school day to gain information about the children's well-being and to obtain any messages for parents.
- The manager and staff work closely with teachers who work in the school to ensure transitions from school to club run smoothly. Teachers share information with club staff as they collect children, passing on any messages needed. S
- The club liaise effectively with the school to meet any arising needs and support children to be confident individuals.
- Partnerships with the infant and junior schools that children attend are effective. Staff use drop-off and collection times to communicate with teachers and exchange important information about the children. This helps staff to meet the individual needs of children.
- Partnerships with the on-site school are strong. Staff talk to teachers to ensure that they are fully up to date about children's care, education and emotional needs. They gather information about themes and special events that children are learning about at school so they can continue this learning at the club.
- Staff at the club work closely with the linked school. Effective communication and sharing of relevant information ensures that children are kept safe and children with additional or specific needs receive a consistent approach to their care.

- They liaise closely with the school to identify any children who may require additional support, and they are supportive and understanding of children's different needs.

Working in partnership with children

- Staff spend time talking with children and listening to what they have to say. They engage in conversations that enable children to share any worries they have. For example, some children will soon move on to secondary education, and they talk with staff about their recent visit to their new school. Staff help to build children's confidence and resilience by discussing their experiences and explaining what to expect.
- Staff encourage children to make choices during their time at the club. They confidently choose from a wide variety of exciting activities and resources inside and outside. For example, children chop vegetables to create vegetable print pictures
- Children arrive happy and eager to attend the after-school club. They have good relationships with the staff team and are greeted warmly on arrival. Children chat eagerly about their day at school with the staff and share what activities they would like to do at the club.
- The staff know the children well. They get to know them before they start at the club by attending school open evenings and offering support to children during settling-in sessions. They ask about what children like and dislike and then thoughtfully plan themes and activities based on what they are interested in.
- Staff treat children with kindness and respect. They involve children in making decisions about the activities they would like to take part in while at the club.

(Ofsted, 2023/24)

Useful resources

- [Building successful relationships with your host school – a guide for Out of School providers](#)
- [Building effective partnerships with your Out of School provider – a guide for schools](#)
- [Working with others – PACEY fact sheet](#)
- [Foundation Years – working with parents](#)
- [Out of School Information, support, and resources](#)

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