

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Our ethos:

“The University Nursery focuses on creating a safe, happy, nurturing and inclusive environment where babies and young children develop as confident, curious and independent learners. We promote resilience, creativity and a love for learning through play-based experiences and enabling environments. The nursery works closely with the wider community to build a foundation for future success.”



The University Nursery is a welcoming and inclusive community where children and their families who work or study at the University of Warwick feel valued, supported and respected.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Each year, we evaluate our practice by reflecting on our strengths, celebrating our achievements, and identifying areas for further development. Our evaluation is informed by a range of sources, including staff supervision meetings and reflections, feedback from parents and professionals, action plans, and records of children's progress and outcomes. As an inclusive nursery, we celebrate diversity and are committed to recognising and supporting the individual needs of every baby and young child throughout their journey with us.

The importance of Parent & Professional feedback

We actively seek constructive feedback from parents and professionals to help gauge what we are doing right and what we need to develop. We do this in various ways:

- We publish a questionnaire on our website every 6 months for parents to register their general comments and suggestions.
- The setting hosts various parent information events, and we ask parents to complete a feedback form. Many thanks to those who took the time to complete a form after the **'Getting Ready for School Event', 'Transition Event' and 'Open week'**.
- In 2025, we sought parent's involvement in the introduction to a new catering contract which went out to tender. Parents were invited to a tasting session and completed feedback forms for our preferred supplier. Parents with children who have allergies were able to put their questions to the new catering provider and suggested an **opt in** rather than an **opt out** strategy when deciding if their children were to be offered desserts. This was taken up by the setting, and all children now receive natural yogurt and fruit after meals unless their parents decide they would like to **opt in** for the dessert of the day.
- Professionals' feedback, when working to support children with SEND, helps update and inform our practice. We have supported two children with an EHCP this year and we are constantly reflecting our approach with the insight of professional guidance.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

This evaluation has been divided into the seven Evaluation Areas used during an Ofsted Inspection. Under each heading I have listed our successes and areas of development for the **academic year 2025 to 2026**.

The Evaluation Areas are:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Inclusion**
- **Curriculum & Teaching**
- **Achievement**
- **Behaviour, Attitudes and Establishing Routines**
- **Children's Welfare & Wellness**
- **Leadership & Governance**



University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Safeguarding

The New Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for September 2026

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage' statutory framework has new requirements coming into force from September 2026. Listed below are the new requirements and what the setting has done to be ready to meet these requirements in **Green**.

- **Safer Sleep Requirements:** Explicit wording is moved directly into the main body of the EYFS rather than referencing external guidance. Rules dictate that babies under six months must always have an adult in the same room with them for every sleep, and children under two must be placed on their back in a separate, flat, firm sleep space.

Babies and young children have always been supervised when taking a nap, this will not change. Five new cots and mattresses have been purchased for the babies aged 12 months or under, with all under two-year-olds sleeping on a firm, flat bed or sleep mat. Staff have completed the 'Safer Sleep' Training and record their sleep checks.

- **Banned Dog Breeds:** Childcare provision is strictly prohibited on any premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present, extending rules to nannies and other registered providers.

Banned dog breeds are not allowed at nursery. We only encourage support dogs such as Guide dogs into our setting.

- **Allegations of Harm:** Providers must now inform Ofsted about allegations of "harm" instead of "serious harm" regarding anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises.

The Safeguarding Policy has been changed to reflect this change and staff have been updated during staff meetings.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

- **Recruitment and Vetting:** Enhanced criminal records checks are required for all volunteers (including supervised ones), and new employees are barred from starting work before their check is received.

All volunteers at the setting are recruited by the University's 'Warwick Volunteers' who vet each student and ensure they receive a DBS check. Each new staff member and apprentice has to have received a clear DBS certificate before they are allowed to start work.

- **Screen Use and Other Areas:** Providers must have regard to updated screen use guidance, alongside minor clarifications on weaning, eating, and domestic household

The setting follows Government Guidance with regard to screen time and does not allow screen time for under two years old. It is also very limited for other age groups.

- **Safer eating records.** Settings are required to hold information about each child's stage with solid foods, and to keep records of any choking incidents. This formalises mealtime risk management as a safeguarding responsibility.

All staff complete Paediatric First Aid training and Allergy & Anaphylaxis training. Staff sit with the babies and young children during mealtimes. Every child can be seen and heard by a staff member and any choking instances, no matter how small, are recorded and parents informed. Each room's '*All About Me Forms*' list each child's stage with solid foods.

- **Privacy during personal care.** Guidance on maintaining children's privacy during nappy changing is now statutory. Our setting is already doing this as best practice, but it is now a requirement.

In our setting, doors to the bathroom changing areas are kept open to safeguard children and staff but every effort is made to maintain children's privacy during nappy changing and potty training. Every child toilet has a door they can close. Babies and young children are asked if their nappy can be changed and no visitors are allowed to enter if there is a child having their nappy changed.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

We are also.....

Safeguarding training renewal every two years. All practitioners must now renew safeguarding training at least once every two years. Settings must document not only that training has taken place, but how practitioners are supported to apply it in practice. A training log alone is no longer sufficient.

The staff receive annual in-house Safeguarding training from our trained **Safeguarding Champion, Sarah (Purple Room)**. Every staff meeting has safeguarding on the agenda dedicated to a particular area of safeguarding, keeping information updated and in the forefront of staffs' minds. During annual staff supervisions, staff are asked several questions regarding safeguarding and how it relates to them, their responsibilities and their knowledge.

We are very excited to announce that we have a new **E-Safety Champion, Eve (Purple Room)**, who will be updating our E-Safety Policy when required, conducting staff training into online safety and provide parents with tips and ideas on how to keep their child safe when using different devices, 'Apps' and all things electronic. Safeguarding policies including E-Safety, Cameras and other devices as well as Mobile Phones in Nursery Policy cover all electronic devices capable of capturing or sharing images, not just mobile phones. Tablets, cameras, and any other imaging devices need to be included.

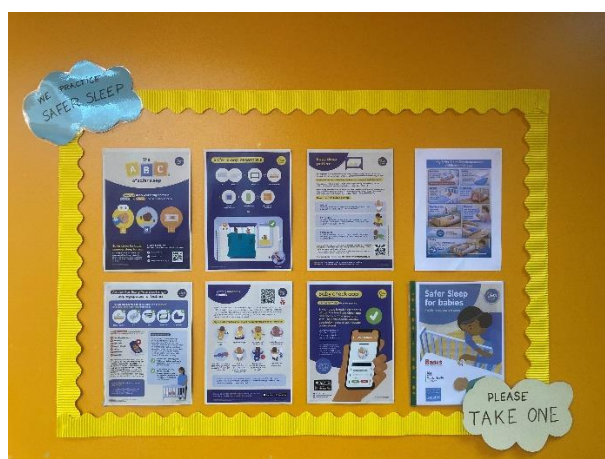
Whistleblowing obligations extended. Volunteers and apprentices are now explicitly included under the Whistleblowing Policy. As our setting supports student placements, Whistleblowing needs to be included in induction.

Whistleblowing has been added to our induction form for new staff, work experience students, T'Level students and volunteers. Whistleblowing information is displayed in the staff room with contact details of the setting's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Head of the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Dept at the university and the local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The setting's Whistleblowing Policy was updated in March 2026

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

CCTV- This year, the setting is keen to install CCTV throughout the nursery to improve security and safeguarding the children in our care. The recent media coverage and Government debate surrounding the '[Campaign for Gigi](#)' by the Lullaby Trust, gives compelling reasons why settings should have CCTV in all playrooms and outdoor areas. These will be installed later this year.



Safer Sleep Display



New cots for the up to twelve month old babies

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Inclusion

Bucket Time

Bucket Time (part of the Attention Autism Approach created by Gina Davies) is an intervention used to develop focus, communication, and interaction in children. It builds shared attention by having an adult reveal highly visual and sensory items one by one from an opaque bucket. The activity is usually structured in 4 distinct stages as children develop their attention spans, starting with the iconic bucket.

This year, Staff members from Green and Purple Room have completed the training and implement it in both rooms. It was first introduced to the children with SEND but is now used in an inclusive way, for all children, usually during circle time. It has supported children's focus and engagement and will continue to be part of both rooms' provision.

Fizzy to Calm

This year, staff from Green and Purple Room came back from 'Fizzy to Calm' training full of enthusiasm. They implemented it into their practice straight away to support children who have lots of energy and struggle to calm down and focus. When dealing with children with 'the Fizz' - a mental and physical buildup of stress, anxiety or fidgeting - the cognitive or grounding techniques support these children to bring themselves to a calm state. The small room between green and purple room has been converted into a quiet space with cushions to lie on and resources to play with that are calming. Both rooms use high energy activities and games to help children use up excess energy before focusing on a particular activity. This has been introduced this term and will keep evolving. It is an inclusive addition to both rooms' strategy in supporting children to regulate their feelings and help to focus and engage on activities. We are excited to see this progress.

The staff involved in training in both strategies have cascaded the information to the other staff and we are looking forward to seeing these strategies played out in the other rooms.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26



Fizzy

to

Calm



The **Fizzy to Calm** approach is an early years emotional-regulation strategy used with young children to help them recognise, express and regulate their emotions. The approach doesn't stop fizzy feelings – instead, it acknowledges them and safely guides children from fizzy states into calm ones. Children often can't calm down just by being told to. Their nervous systems need movement, sensory input, connection and time. Fizzy to Calm can validate emotions, support self-regulation, and build emotional vocabulary.

These are some of the Green Room activities that help us to focus, self-regulate and feel calm.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Curriculum and Teaching

Green Flag Award

This year, we were successfully awarded the Green Flag Award for 2025/26.

Please click on the link for the full [feedback from the Green Flag Organisers](#)

We focused on the three eco areas that needed to be developed within our setting. After completing the Green Flag Nursery Review by staff and children, we decided to develop the following topics:

Global Citizenship, Transport and Nursery Grounds

Global Citizenship:

The setting has been donating to the Canley Food Hub since 2021. This year we continued to support them but extended our reach to two other organisations. We donated clothes to the 'Global Care' Charity Shop on the Radford Road, Coventry, and food donations (for Ramadan and Eid) at the Ahmadiyya Food Bank in Leamington Spa. Parents, children and staff were very generous with their donations, and we learnt how to care for others who we don't know. Being kind and sharing what we have makes a big difference to us and other people.



Canley Food Hub

The Nursery Grounds:

Growing vegetables, caring for plants, harvesting and tasting produce at our nursery has been ongoing for a number of years. This year we extended this to produce a living wall in the atrium, firstly with green bean saplings

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

and then with a display of a mixture of live plants and artificial flowers to create a calming, creative display.

Transport:

The children went transport spotting on campus and tried to see as many forms of transport as they could from bicycles to tractors, buses and cars. We do realise that to support parents walking into nursery with prams that our pram shed is too small for the number of prams used daily. We will be looking into costings and designs of various pram storage ideas to replace or add to what we have already. Watch this space!



Our living wall

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

2026 year of Reading

2026 is the year for a national celebration of reading which is promoted throughout the UK to inspire and support children of all ages to foster a love of books and reading. The University Nursery promotes reading and storytelling at every age and stage. This year we had a successful number of **Warwick Volunteers called 'Little Readers'** attending weekly, sitting in each room, in the book corner reading stories to the children. We had **parents** volunteering their time to read stories in their home languages to small groups at circle time. This is always appreciated and the children get to hear a different language spoken and their home language spoken in nursery, which instils a feeling of belonging besides being inspirational. We are very thankful to all the parents who took part and we will be encouraging them to volunteer again next year. Purple Room and Orange room such a large group of parent volunteers coming to read, that a rota had to be produced. Fantastic!

Achievement

Helicopter Stories is a programme run in Green Room to promote storytelling and children's confidence. Designed for children aged 2 to 7, this fully inclusive approach uses storytelling to support progress in communication and language, personal and social development, and creative expression.

This year, all staff in Green Room have completed the training. Children tell a member of staff a story which is then written down.

Children act out each story, choosing which character they would like to be, working with their friends to bring their story to life. This year's cohort have showed lots of enthusiasm for this programme, and they have built on their skills such as working together, improving social skills, self-confidence and communication skills to create wonderful stories. These stories and photos of the children reenacting the stories are displayed in the atrium. The display is regularly updated.

This year the staff enhanced the experience by adding resources to the creative area so that children could scribe their own stories, independently

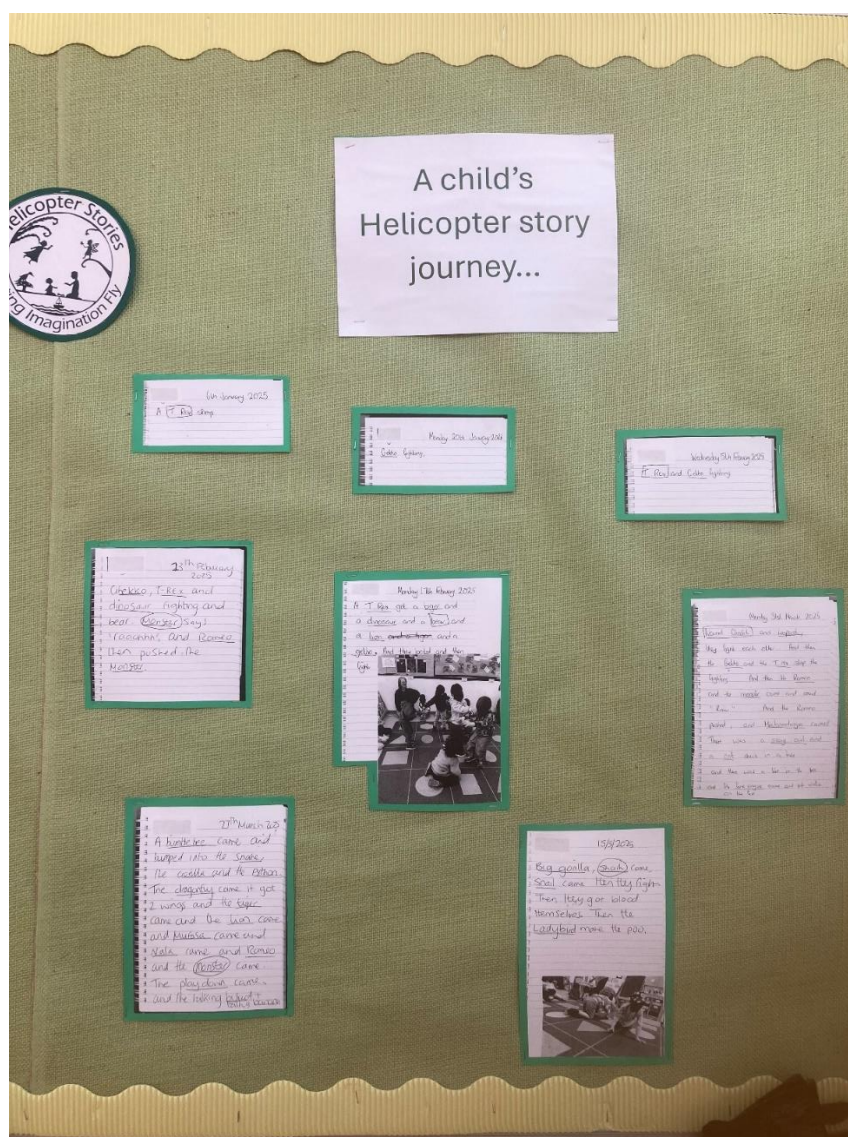
University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

from the staff. Clip boards, pens and paper were provided and children pretended to write their own stories and added drawings.

Helicopter Stories will continue to develop and evolve through staff reflections and training. The new cohort of children will be introduced to Helicopter Stories after the first half term. Please have a look at the display in the atrium that shows one child's progress through this year and how their stories developed together with their confidence, communication and social skills.

We are looking forward to seeing what the next cohort of children will be imagining.



University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Behaviour, Attitudes and Establishing Routines

It is known that Consistency creates a safe, predictable environment that helps young children feel secure, manage their emotions, and engage in learning.

At this setting, we are always improving our practice, routines and resources across all age groups to ensure consistent high standards of care and teaching are maintained and that all young children understand the expectations, routines and behaviours needed at every stage of their development.

The preschool room uses songs with the children to support with transitions from one activity to another. The staff agreed at the last meeting that all rooms would adopt the 'Tidy Up' song, together with the Makaton Signs, to support all children's transitions from play time to circle time. The 'Tidy Up' song is sung to the tune of the well-loved French nursery rhyme 'Frere Jacques'. If you would like to try this song at home, here are the words. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to learn the Makaton signs.

***Playtimes finished,
playtimes finished,
Tidy up, Tidy up.
Put the toys away
Put the toys away
Tidy up, Tidy up!***

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Children's Welfare and Wellness

Each year, the staff produce an action plan for each age group listing successes and achievements over the previous year as well as identifying areas that need developing. I have listed the rooms and the areas that staff felt needed developing and coincidentally, most of them are based around sensory or messy play.

Sensory and messy play helps young children grow by building brain connections, strengthening motor skills, and teaching them how to solve problems. Babies and young children learn about themselves and the world around them when engaging in sensory or messy play.

Our reflections of practice and identifying areas of improvement ensures that all children's welfare and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do.

Yellow Room Action Plan- Planned improvements

Areas	No:	Theme	Initiative(s)	How success will be measured	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress / Evaluation [Section to be completed 6 months after initial plan has been agreed]
IMPROVE	1	Teamwork & improving handover communication between part-time staff.	All staff to support everyone in the team. Communication book to be used to share information between part time and full-time staff. Staff are reminded to discuss any needs addressing straight away, being respectful to all.	A team that is fully informed, working together and supportive. All staff are kept up to date with the latest information through the communication book and word of mouth.	ASAP	Everyone	With different staff covering the start and end of the week, communication has improved with the use of the communication book regarding meals, bottles and any changes in individual sleep routines. This action has been completed.
	2	As the setting is receiving less 3- to 9-month-old babies and more 12- to 15-month-old babies, the planning needs to reflect this change in age group in the baby room.	The learning and development needs of all babies is provided for giving younger and older babies age-appropriate activities and opportunities to thrive that is appropriate for their age group.	All three yellow rooms and garden will be utilised to create enabling environments and challenging opportunities for babies to explore and grow. Staff completing more training where needed. Reorganisation of the rooms.	Before the end of this academic year.	Everyone	The small yellow room will be for the under 12-month babies from September. New cots have been purchased for Safer Sleep. Staff training completed to build confidence to provide exciting and challenging activities for the over 1-year olds. Monitoring by the manager to ensure consistency.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Orange Room Action Plan- planned Improvements



Areas	No:	Theme	Initiative(s)	How success will be measured	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress / Evaluation [Section to be completed 6 months after initial plan has been agreed]
IMPROVE	1	Improving quality of resources in Orange Room.	With the changes in staff team, current resources will be assessed and new ones ordered to improve the continuous provision in all areas of learning. Indoor resources Den outside Water play, outdoors	Resources will be ordered to fill gaps in the continuous provision and to refresh what is already being used. Furniture and the layout of the room may be restructured to benefit the children's experience.	ASAP	Everyone	With the change in the staff team, the room has been reorganised and resources purchased. Outdoor resources have been planned for and will be purchased in the next years budget in the first term.
	2	Developing the sensory/messy provision	Children need sensory play to explore all their senses and learn about themselves and the world around them. Sensory play needs to be regularly available and enhanced as the week unfolds.	Staff share resources and Ideas, Plan for sensory/messy play in the sensory trays weekly and enhance this play as children use it throughout the week extending children's learning through their interests.	ASAP	Everyone	With the introduction of the sensory play unit, Sensory/messy play is now planned for and available all week to children with ideas to enhance the activity during each week.
	3	Keeping staff work areas clean and tidy in the room.	To keep staff and the room in a calm, orderly state, the playroom must be clear of a build-up of resources etc.	When these areas are kept clear- Spare nappy changing area, staff desktop, kitchen, sink area.	ASAP	Everyone	With the reorganising of the room the staff have found it easier to keep their workstations tidy Action completed.

Purple Room's Action Plan- Improvements



Areas	No:	Theme	Initiative(s)	How success will be measured	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress / Evaluation [Section to be completed 6 months after initial plan has been agreed]
IMPROVE	1	Develop the garden provision	To create a garden area with a variety of continuous provision that stimulates, challenges and is fun. Tuff spot activities, water wall, kitchen, music wall, sensory wall, planters, tabletop activities.	Children show enthusiasm to play outside every day. There are activities and equipment that children enjoy interacting with. Changeable activities for the garden on the short-term planning sheet.	Over the summer	Everyone's	New tubs have been purchased for planting outdoors. These are now growing vegetables and herbs that the children help take care of and harvest. Planned activities for the outdoor space has increased with a variety of activities for children to choose from. The water wall is in use and the sensory wall was created but is now waiting for improvements
	2	More open ended and imaginary resources needed	For the room to have less prescribed resources and increase open ended & imaginary resources to offer children. Staff to decide what resources are needed and order.	Children's play type is recorded through observations and noticing how child led play has increased with these new resources.	Over the summer	Everyone's	Opportunities for Child led activities have increased. More open-ended resources have been purchased and being used to enhance play. Action completed

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Green Room's action plan- Improvements

Areas	No:	Theme	Initiative(s)	How success will be measured	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress / Evaluation [Section to be completed 6 months after initial plan has been agreed]
	1	Resources- Sand and water, small world and more Maths (natural)	Indoor and outdoor provision for sand and water needs to be developed so that all children can access a variety of resources independently. Other resources need to be sourced to restock items	When children have a variety of water and sand toys to select from. Small world resources are restocked, and the Math's provision has a variety of resources including natural materials.	ASAP	Everyone's	With the indoor sensory unit there is now independent access to all water toys and resources for children to select what they would like to play with. Sand toy provision outside has a new unit for easy access. Action complete
	2	Develop the Mud Kitchen	Redesign the outdoor provision for the mud kitchen so that children can mix, scoop soil, have natural materials to add to their play and a variety of utensils with expectations of how the space is to be used.	Children using the mud kitchen as it was designed, accessing material materials (herbs, stones, water, pine cones etc) independently to expand their play.	ASAP	Everyone's	The mud kitchen is greatly improved with new bark laid on the ground, resources available for children to add to their play such as herbs, pinecones etc. A real improvement on what it was. Action completed

Leadership and Governance

There have been a few changes to the leadership team in the last year due to the retirement of the previous manager. The setting's new manager is **Jo Warren**, who was appointed in July 2025; the new assistant manager is **Debbie Pinkerton**, who was appointed in October 2025 as well as a new nominated individual for Ofsted appointed this year, **Damien Homer**. The transition to the new leadership team has been smooth and with new leadership comes new vision.

Vision and Improvement

New Caterers- Together with the University's procurement department, we put our catering contract out to tender. NutriFresh won the contract and they now provide the nursery with nutritious, low salt & low sugar lunches and afternoon snacks.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

New lockdown process- In the world we live in, we need to ensure that the children in our care are safe in any given situation whilst in the nursery. Our Fire evacuation process is robust and practiced every term. We can evacuate the whole nursery in under 3 minutes. However, if there is a threat coming from outside the nursery, we needed to have a process where staff can lock the nursery down and take the children to 'safe rooms' out of sight of any potential threat. A procedure was created and each room now has a walkie talkie with an alarm button so every member of staff can alert everyone in the setting to any external threat. The alarm sounds different to the Fire alarm, and the lockdown procedure has been practiced with the support of the Community Safety Team. Staff have practiced the procedure with the children, and it is treated as a game. The children get used to hearing the sound and learn what to do when they hear it.

Expansion of the nursery- As the nursery has an extensive waiting list made up of parents who work or study at the University, we need to expand to provide childcare solutions and support parents' wellbeing. We are currently producing plans that include various options for the University finance and planning committee to choose from. Ideally, a separate nursery is required on campus providing 3 months to 5 years old places that would accommodate the present demand.

Staff Well-being and Workload

Uplift staff salaries who are FA2 to FA3- This year, a business plan was produced by the manager to uplift salaries of the FA2 staff to FA3. At the setting, we employ apprentices who attend college one day a week and work at the setting for the other four days. The apprentices are receiving a good wage, outstanding training and mentorship from the staff. If an apprentice is at the setting for a second year to continue their studies, they receive the same wage as our qualified and experienced FA2 staff. This increase in wages has been built into the budget and is waiting for approval from the director of the department. For FA2 staff who do not hold a childcare level 3 certificate, have met the requirements of the Level 3 qualification using the Department for Education 'Experience-Based Route for Early Years'.

University Nursery

Evaluating Practice 2025-26

Inclusion and Oversight

SENCo training- Having a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) in early years settings is vital for identifying additional needs early and ensuring every child receives inclusive, tailored support. Jo Warren, nursery manager, is currently the settings SENCo and has been for the last 5 years. Debbie Pinkerton, our new assistant manager, is now training to become SENCo and will take over this role in the New Year. In addition, Claire Carey, our senior Early Years Educator based in preschool, is also completing the SENCo training. It is planned that in the near future, all staff members will receive training in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) if they haven't already. This will ensure early detection and individual support given to babies and young children across the setting for those who may need it.