

Pilot Case Studies – Childminding Agencies in Schools.

Background:

The Northumberland Church of England Academy and the St Bede Academy (Bolton) were selected to be part of a Department for Education pilot study considering how Childminding Agencies could meet the childcare needs for schools in the communities they serve.

The Northumberland Church of England Academy is an ‘all through’ academy based on six campuses in Ashington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Lynemouth in the south east of Northumberland. The academy is significantly larger than the average-sized secondary school, and almost two-thirds of the learners are in the early years and primary phases.

The academy comprises three primary campuses for learners aged 2 to 11, two primary campuses for learners aged 3 to 11, a secondary campus for learners aged 11 to 19 and a 100-place Centre for learners aged 2 to 19 who have been identified with profound and/or multiple learning difficulties or severe learning difficulties. Most learners are of White British heritage and very few do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled learners or learners who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged learners, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is well above average.

St. Bede Academy Bolton is a Church of England Academy, working very closely with Manchester Diocese. St Bede Primary Academy is situated in the Morris Green area of Bolton. The Academy is a very well-established feature of community life and has many second and third generation families attending because of its reputation. It is expanding from two to three form entry with three classes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The building is a mixture of old and new with an innovative and imaginative extension for Key Stage two. About 30% of children come from ethnic minority groups. The major faiths represented in school are Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. The number of disadvantaged children is just below average.

Participation in the DfE pilot study has enabled NCEA and St Bede to work together and share experiences. St Bede were part of the initial Childminding Agency (CMA) pilot programme so had a lot of knowledge to share.

It was clear that each Academy had decided to set up a CMA for different purposes. NCEA saw this as an opportunity to offer families in the community they served access to provision that reflected the ethos of the Academy from birth as well as extending the wrap around provision on offer through breakfast and after school clubs. The Academy also saw the CMA as the option they would use for meeting the 30 hours childcare entitlement from September 2017. St Bede already provided childcare from birth through their day care provision. They saw the CMA as an opportunity to offer more flexibility for their parents and for families that used other schools in the locality.

Information about the differing approaches adopted by each school is outlined in the following individual case studies.