

#NWOBC - Meeting notes from the closed meeting between the North West Ofsted Big Conversation Steering Group and Ofsted. 9th February 2021.

Present:

Elaine White, Ofsted, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector – Early Years.
Elaine Sagar, Sunflower Nursery Group, Co-chair.
Rachel Buckler, Early Years Hub, Co-chair.
Cary Rankin, CEO, Bertram Nursery Group.
Ursula Krystek-Walton, Head of Early Years, Bertram Nursery Group.
Jo Kinloch, Director, Mulberry Bush Nursery Group.
Nicole Politis, Director, Portico Day Nurseries.
Claire Roberts, CEO, Kids Planet and Kids Allowed Nurseries.
Sarah Neville, Knutsford Childminding.
Clare Beswick, Owner, Superstars Nursery.
Jane Casey, Director, Happy Faces Out of School Club Ltd.

Apologies:

Claire Robinson, Registered person, Spotted Dog and Stripy Horse Day Nursery.

Agenda:

1. Routine inspections in the Spring term
2. Inspector visits to early years settings and COVID-19 testing arrangements
3. NWOBC, open meeting, March 4th
4. AOB
 - Paediatric First Aid training – renewal of certificates – RB
 - Feedback from childminders about ongoing inspection activity that can be done online rather than face to face in the setting -SN

Meeting discussions:

1. Routine inspections in the Spring term
 - EW updated the group regarding inspection activity that is taking place during the Spring term. Given the guidance provided by Government, plans to deliver assurance visits in settings from Ofsted are suspended until March 8th at the latest. No inspection activity also referred to as 'graded inspections' currently takes place. Remote activity continues and, in some circumstances, visits to settings will occur only if deemed necessary, and safe to do so by Ofsted.
 - Regulatory work continues through telephone calls and discussions between Ofsted and early years providers. There are occasions when regulatory work will be conducted as a blended visit so there will be time on-site, meeting staff and managers but also if possible, there may be some work done off site. For example, it might be appropriate that the feedback to the provider could be conducted off site to reduce time that inspectors spend in settings.
 - All registrations are being completed face to face. In exceptional circumstances where it is a known provider or corporate registration, Ofsted may conduct the registration event remotely.

2. Inspector visits to early years settings and COVID-19 testing arrangements

- EW communicated with the group that Ofsted inspectors undertake lateral flow tests within a short space of time before visiting a setting. Evidence of negative test results will be presented by Ofsted to settings on arrival. Full personal protective equipment (PPE) is used by inspectors when they attend onsite activities. During the current situation inspectors will not be going from setting to setting on any one day.
- SN asked if Ofsted would consider undertaking certain elements of inspection remotely as a permanent arrangement even after the COVID 1- restrictions are lifted. EW explained that there is still the expectation for Ofsted to return to face to face inspection in the future and reiterated the need for Ofsted to see children.

3. NWOBC, open meeting, March 4th

- Ticket sales for the open meeting on the 4th of March are good and sales continue to increase. Sales are now made on the new NWOBC website which makes for a more cost-effective way of working and enables better management of the event given the high numbers of attendees.
- Discussions took place as to whom would be available to attend the event from both Ofsted and the NW steering group. This event will be delivered virtually with the support of a company who are managing the technical and operational requirements.
- The programme for the evening will be similar to that of the October 2020 event. Ofsted will deliver their presentation and engage in a Q and A opportunity with the sector. Questions will be invited through the Slido app which can be accessed by anyone attending the event prior to and during the event.
- Alice Sharp will deliver a keynote presentation at the end of the evening.

4. AOB

- RB raised some concerns from providers regarding them not being about to renew paediatric first aid certificates in line with the latest EYFS disapplication requirements due to training not always being available to them. This is a particular concern for some childminders. EW explained that whilst the EYFS disapplication applies, inspectors will consider providers 'best endeavours' that ensure that PFA requirements of the EYFS are met. Elaine has agreed to include this topic in her presentation for further clarity at the open OBC event on the 4th March.
- The group discussed the ongoing relationships between providers and their Local Authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. EW explained that examples of support and engagement from LA's with the sector is regularly communicated with Ofsted's senior leadership and is then fed back to the DfE.

Next closed meeting date yet to be confirmed.