

Guide to Nursery Education

Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes

Nursery education places are provided in the following LEA (Local Education Authority) settings:

- Nursery schools and early years centres
- Nursery classes or units attached to primary schools
- Special schools, including community nurseries

LEA nursery provision is community provision and the available places are open to all children. You can place your child's name on one or more nursery waiting lists. In the case of a nursery unit attached to a primary school, separate waiting lists must be kept for nursery and school. A place at the nursery does not guarantee a place in that school. Nor do you have to use a school's nursery class in order for your child to be eligible for a place at that school. The school's admission policy will be different from the nursery. You can ask about your child's chances of moving on to the main school.

Legally children do not have to start main school until the term after their fifth birthday. In practice most children start school earlier, aged between four and five years. The actual start point varies according to the arrangements of individual schools and parental wishes. Talk to the school of your choice or to the Admissions Officers at Education Bradford Pupil Services, on **01274 385601**.

LEA nurseries are staffed by qualified teachers and nursery nurses, with an adult child ratio of between 1:10 and 1:13. Provision is mostly part-time, five mornings or five afternoons per week. There are sometimes full time places for older nursery children and those with special needs, offered at the school's discretion.

Nursery places in registered settings

As well as nursery places in schools, many playgroups, most day nurseries, some independent schools and some childminders, are registered to provide free or subsidised part-time nursery education sessions to 3 and 4 year olds, through the Nursery Education Fund.

Settings which are registered to receive the Nursery Education Fund work towards the Early Learning Goals, follow the Code of Practice for special educational needs and are inspected by an Ofsted nursery inspector.

The Nursery Education Fund will fund a free or subsidised place to children from the start of the term after their third birthday. To be eligible for the Nursery Education Fund your child must be registered at the nursery or playgroup on 'headcount day' which is near the beginning of each term.

Ofsted Inspection Reports

Inspection reports are produced by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) for all schools and Nursery Education Fund registered settings following an inspection. You can ask to see a copy or view the report on the internet at www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspect

Choosing a Nursery School or Nursery Class

Parents and carers should look for the following:

- Welcoming staff who are engaged with and listening to children
- Activities carefully planned by staff who understand what children will learn from them
- A well cared for environment, full of interest for young children
- Well ordered attractive areas for role play, clay/dough, cutting and sticking, sand and water, drawing and writing, painting, small and large construction, books and music
- An outdoor play area designed for safe but challenging learning and exploration
- Sensitive recording of children's achievements and observations of their learning
- Children's own work carefully displayed
- Opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in the nursery

The Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage was introduced in 2000. LEA nurseries (and day nurseries/playgroups which are eligible for the Nursery Education Fund) use the Curriculum Guidance to the Foundation Stage when planning the curriculum for 3 – 5 year olds.

“The Guidance is intended to help practitioners plan to meet the diverse needs of children so that most will achieve and some, where appropriate, will go beyond the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.” (The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage).

The Curriculum Guidance recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers and it values the key role they play in a child's development. This partnership is promoted by valuing and building on a child's previous learning. The Guidance also emphasises the importance of **play** in a child's learning. “Well planned play, both *indoors* and *outdoors*, is a key area in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.” It outlines effective teaching and learning for each area of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

Special Needs

Bradford Early Years and Childcare Service can provide support to registered childcare settings to enable them to meet the individual needs of a child or young person attending. For further information please phone the Area Special Needs Co-ordinator on **01274 437493**.

Useful contacts:

For a list of nursery provision in your area or more information about the NEF contact:

The Children's Information Link
Bradford Early Years & Childcare Service
The Wool Exchange
Hustlergate, Bradford, BD1 1RE.
☎ **01274 437503**

For more information about schools admissions contact:

The Admissions Officers
Pupil Services Support Office
Education Bradford

☎ **01274 385601**

For information about registration and inspection of childcare settings:

OFSTED
www.ofsted.gov.uk

☎ **0845 601 4771**