

HOLLAND & HURST GREEN FAMILY LINK

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Report for Tandridge Local Committee 23.06.06 From Helen Acraman; Family Link Worker

Holland Junior School and Hurst Green Infant School have been fortunate to receive funding from Surrey Children's Fund to employ a Family Link Worker to help build stronger links between the community and the schools.

- I am able to support families when problems arise that affect the children within the family. This could be because there has been a break down in the parental relationship, financial hardship, behavioural challenges with the children, domestic violence, bereavement, or simply because the family are new to the area and do not know how or where to access local facilities.
- I can offer practical help
- I can see people in their own homes
- I can listen to the concerns and problems of the family and help them to move forward
- I can be available for the family during a crisis.
- I can attend meetings with them and
- I can liase between agencies on their behalf.

I am currently supporting 17 families (around 37 children). Some of these require more intensive support than others. Four families need intensive support; seven are receiving regular support and six are contacted most weeks. There are families that both schools recognize would benefit from the support but as yet I haven't made contact with them as either they have been difficult to access or because of my already busy schedule.

Initially my most challenging objective was to gain the trust of the service users. This was mostly done by arranging fun days and workshops for parents/carers and their children. There was a tentative uptake but now more parents attend when invited.

For the children I was, and still am, available at breakfast club where we now have over 100 children on the register-with 40-50 children attending most mornings at Holland Junior School. The challenge here has been to recruit volunteers as the number of children using the facility has grown and grown.





I also run after school clubs, for the children I am involved with, on 3 evenings each week, two at Holland and one at Hurst Green. The children love coming and they have a lot of choice about what they would like to do. I have a helper each evening at Holland School which enables me to chat with the children and to listen to them. I am hoping to be able to secure funding to enable me to have a helper at Hurst Green School so that I can offer places to more children there.

I also run a Coffee Club on Monday afternoons for anyone to call in and have a chat. The first two terms were increasingly successful at Hurst Green Nursery. After Easter we moved to an alternative venue as the Nursery was re-opening. Since then the numbers have dropped. I will be conducting a survey to assess the viability of continuing in September and will apply for further funding if it is seen as a useful service by the users.

Recently I have facilitated a Parenting Course at Holland School on Tuesday evenings, which is attended by parents with children from both schools and from the wider community. The initial course will end in July but I would like to keep it going on a rolling programme in the area so that it is accessible to anyone who wishes to participate and is not viewed in any way as unusual or stigmatising.

I am currently overseeing the setting up of an official after school club at Holland Junior School. There has been very positive feed back from potential users and soon staff will have to be recruited if we are to open in September.

I also attend Child Protection Conferences and Core Group meetings for children attending both schools.

I look forward to be able to support these vulnerable children and their families and others in the future.

Helen Acraman