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Zully Grant-Duff
Chairman of the Children & Education Select Committee
Surrey County Council
County Hall
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Tuesday 22 July 2014

Dear Zully,

Thank you for your letter of 28 May 2014 and I regret the delay in formally replying. Surrey's maintained schools with nursery class provision are located in areas of disadvantage and therefore it is likely that children will struggle to perform at a similar level to that of their peers in other primary schools and in the non-maintained sector.

The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) provides a more extensive level of support to the non-maintained sector, as well as one which is dedicated to the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, than Babcock 4S is able to offer to maintained schools through its Primary Advisors. Consequently, in conjunction with Babcock 4S, it has been agreed that EYCS will extend this offer of support to all the maintained schools with a nursery class and the four Nursery Schools. This will enable the teachers and other practitioners supporting children in the nursery class to access the training courses provided by EYCS, receive advice and support for children with special needs and receive and support on all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Letters have been sent to all headteachers and to date 11 schools have taken up the offer. EYCS is meeting with schools to discuss whether they might be able to offer places for 2 year olds to access free early education place and at these meetings headteachers are being reminded of the offer of support from EYCS and it is expected that this will lead to greater take up in the future.

EYCS have also sent out a further reminder this month to those schools that have yet to take up the offer of support, though it is too early to provide any details of the response. EYCS will follow this up in the autumn term.

I have asked Phil Osborne, Head of EYCS to update me on the progress on this matter and it will be an item that we will discuss at our regular meetings. I have also asked Peter-John Wilkinson to raise the matter at Primary Council so that the schools that have taken up the offer can encourage others to do likewise.

I have suggested to Andrew Spragg that this be included as an item for update on the Committee's Forward Plan, which I trust you will be able to approve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda', followed by a horizontal flourish and a period.

Linda Kemeny
Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning