

Quality Counts Virtual Assessment Report.

Southern International School: Awarded Quality Counts

Level of Award: Platinum

Play & Learning

The school provides a range of facilities within the school grounds for early years children to access to support their learning and development. Activities and resources in the classrooms are accessible for each age group in the room and classes have a teacher and three teaching assistants for support.

There is a robust system of evaluation with staff meeting twice a week to review the learning environment, this enables staff to utilise their knowledge of children's current interests to plan provocations and experiences to meet their individual needs, activities are differentiated to support individual children's stage of development e.g. different activities at the phonics station. Teachers use 'in the moment planning' and weekly topics based on children's interests, these have included: shark week, giant squids and Big Ben. Specialist teachers for music and PE liaise with class teachers to ensure they provide developmentally appropriate activities linked to the early years curriculum.

Each classroom opens onto an outdoor space and children can free flow between both spaces and children are provided with an extensive range of activities to choose from. Observations of activities included: water play, painting, potions, tree climbing, sit and ride toys, story books, pestles and mortars, trays of sand and paintbrushes, climbing frames, slides and swings, glass bowl of ice and water, trays of flowers, diggers, natural materials in trays, tubs of water and paintbrushes. Children also have regular PE sessions which are linked to their learning and stage of development, with access to the school's gym and soft play equipment.

Early years classes were taking part in the schools STEM week and activities included making boats to float in order to gather the treasure map for the middle of the school pond and dropping an egg off the school building, wrapped in various packaging, to see if the egg would land undamaged.

The early years lead has a clear vision for the provision and has recently introduced a focus child approach to build a picture of the child; this approach incorporates information from parents, forming a triangular approach to information gathering. Recent evaluations of practice led to changing the ambience of a class, which was very brightly coloured, and adding new flooring and new furniture made by the schools maintenance team in readiness for the new term. The pre-k teacher has also changed the routine of her class, keeping the children in their classroom for meals and snacks as she found a trip to the school canteen took too much from the children's play time and has organised her room so the children can enjoy meals in the classroom.

The school have recently begun to use an online system, Tapestry, to support their observation, assessment and planning cycle and have trained the teachers and teaching assistants in how to use the system. This new system will enable the team to begin tracking cohorts of children and analyse the data to identify progress and any gaps in provision. Staff observe children in play and record wow moments/significant achievements and development steps which are then connected to areas of learning. Photos are used on tapestry and staff record the characteristics of effective learning. Next steps are identified from progress discussion and staff identify the support they need.

Each classroom has a quiet area with a sofa and cushions for children to rest and relax, there are books and cuddly toys available and staff are available to look at a story book together. Nursery children have a sleep in the sleep room as part of their daily routine and if children need further rest or sleep they can choose to go and have a lie down in the sleep room or look at a book. Children needing a change in pace can go outdoors to sit or walk in the surrounding nature, with native birds and greenery and two ponds which provide tranquil space for children to be calm and quiet.

Video observations show adult directed and free play activities, including reading a story, dancing, floating and sinking activities, bridge building, making boats, rescuing a treasure map from the large pond, circle time songs, a mobile telephone shop that had been set up after staff noticed children using the maths numicon as mobile telephones. I observed group activities and 1:1 activities and teachers and TA's gave positive praise and support. The KG1 teacher explained that he uses lots of language to provide a narrative to children's play to support their language development e.g. When a child is climbing the tree, 'okay, let me see you climb, you got up there fast, you are really high now'.

Parents use the tapestry online system. The school also have a class dojo to send group messages for events and reminders and overviews of the term. Staff meet with parents twice a day for verbal feedback and reports on progress are shared termly. Parents

interviewed on the day spoke of how teachers share information about activities through tapestry with photos and videos with explanations about the activities as well as home learning activities and transitions arrangements.

Transitions are flexible based on a child's individual requirements. All parents meet with the schools office manager prior to children starting at the nursery to discuss the child's needs such as likes, food allergies, any concerns, medical information (which is passed on to the school nurse). This information is then passed onto the class teacher during a transition meeting. Parents also attend a meeting to sign them up to tapestry and to discuss how to load observations from home.

Parents interviewed on the day spoke of how they know about activities through tapestry with teachers sending photos and videos with explanations about the activities and talk every day after school. Parents also discussed receiving home learning ideas to try at home. The early years lead has recently introduced parent workshops (one per half term) covering new initiatives/systems, home learning ideas, an overview of early years and Development Matters. The next planned workshops include language and communication, how EAL is supported and learning through play. Parents share ideas about festivals they celebrate at home and have provided food and resources for a Diwali festival and flowers and banana leaves for a Water Festival.

Each class has a parent representative that attends meetings to share any concerns or ideas they have.

Health, safety & well-being

The school head teacher is the designated safeguarding lead and he is supported by the Early Years Lead, both have completed the relevant training for the role. As there are no specific required elements for the country the school align their safeguarding to UK standards, including safer recruitment procedures. All staff are asked for a police check from their home country and Thai police complete checks for local staff. All staff are trained to safeguarding level 1 and the school provide in-house training so they can offer language support.

Safeguarding is an agenda item at phase meetings and staff knowledge is checked using scenarios and reviewing procedures e.g. reporting procedures to ensure all staff know when and who to report concerns too. All staff asked on the day were aware of who to go to if they had any safeguarding concerns.

All staff, spoken to on the day could describe the schools policy for reporting concerns and who they could go to for support. There is no multi agency approach in Thailand and safeguarding concerns would be passed straight to the local police department to investigate. The school's office manager liaises between the parents/police and the school and has received the relevant training to support her role.

All classes take part in peer observations; these can also be done 'cross phase' e.g. Key Stage 1 teachers viewing early years and vice versa. Observations of children show warm relationships with teaching staff.

The school have a range of policies and these are reviewed and updated regularly. New policies are introduced when required e.g. a physical contact policy after a teacher request. Staff and parents review the policies and provide feedback e.g. the new is reviewing the schools SEND policy during her induction period. Information is provided via the parent handbook and class dojo and the school have a school nurse who supports children with medical and health needs.

The school have adapted to covid restrictions with new staff having to go straight into a two week quarantine and adapting the school day with a temperature check on arrival. Reviews of the environment are conducted twice a week so staff can implement the necessary changes.

The school have CCTV cameras in each room. Safety audits are completed, which recently lead to some cupboards being removed and soft sponge being added to the toilet doors and risk assessments are carried out for external trips. There are guidelines for using each area of the school and discussed in phase meetings e.g. timings, numbers for bathroom area, garden etc. based on the schools risk assessments.

There are no available multi-agency support teams or organisations that the school can draw on locally and parents would need to travel to find an expert that could make a diagnosis so the school have developed their own support team within the school by recruiting teachers with prior knowledge or experience. Once a concern has been raised the staff meet with parents to discuss concerns and provide solutions.

Behaviour was very good in all of the activities observed during the accreditation process. There is a behaviour policy in place and the early years lead discussed how they have moved away from time out and are using positive reinforcement and how this is still a work in progress.

Children were encouraged to share resources, take turns and play cooperatively during all the videos and live activity. Children were very good at sharing space and resources, Children were pushing each other on the swing and taking turns with filling syringes up with water.

Menus are decided by the school owners and menus are published on the school website for parents to view. The school has achieved a local nutrition award. All allergies, cultural, religious preferences are discussed on joining and catered for by the school kitchen. Children eat meals in the school canteen (with the exception of the pre-K class). Portion sizes are controlled by the use of food trays and food is kept separate on the tray in case child does not like one particular food. Children bring in their own water cup and water is available all day.

Leadership & Management

The Early years lead has a strong vision for the provision and has a good understanding of her staff strengths and how to develop these further. Her commitment and passion to quality are clearly evidenced through discussion.

The school has a robust self-review process. Discussions with teachers and staff demonstrated a strong ethos of evaluating on practice and ensuring the environment meets the needs of the children. The school has a whole school action plan and individual review groups to look at specific areas of practice, staff can choose which review group they join. The Early years team use their phase team meetings to review their own action plan. Staff are given opportunities to lead on practice, for example, one teacher led on the development of the IT resources and has taken a lead on training the teaching assistants to use the Tapestry online system. TA's reported how helpful they have found this training to be. More regular reviews take place twice a week in class meetings and during the weekly phase meetings.

There is a parent club representative for each class. Examples of changes made following parent feedback include: after school parental supervised use of early years playground and Mandarin language activities were introduced to Pre KG class. The office manager and teaching assistants are the first point of call for parents. Information on concerns and complaints is available in the parents handbook. Parents also have opportunities through termly parent meetings; meet the teacher meetings, class dojo, daily drop off and collection times.

The opinions of children, particularly in KG2, are often sought e.g. the children have been invited to vote on their lunches using a token system and the early years lead asked Classroom teachers to gather students opinions by using pictures and asking about which outdoor playground project they would most like to see built next.

All outdoor play equipment is checked weekly and health and safety inspections are completed at least once per term. Incident Forms are completed by a teacher/witness and automatically sent to the senior leadership team to follow up where necessary. Policies, records and procedures are routinely checked to ensure compliance with legal requirements. The school have access to CCTV in each room so can monitor incidents/accidents. Incident reports are shared with the senior management team and reviewed in team meetings.

The early years lead reviews individual assessments and use development matters to monitor children's progress. The school have invested in Tapestry and are currently adding data for analysis. The early years lead has a clear understanding of her role and how she manages her team, their skills and strengths and giving out responsibilities to meet these strengths. Staff meet regularly with the early years lead to discuss their own development and children's progress.

There is a robust performance management cycle, which includes lesson and peer observations. The early years lead reviews teaching staff and teachers review their teacher assistants. All new staff are formally observed within four weeks of starting, all staff are formally observed

at least twice a year with the second observation being focussed on specific areas of practice. Teachers and teaching assistants were very positive about the support they receive from the early years lead

One of the schools priorities this year is staff wellbeing, all staff completed a well-being survey at the start of the term and the results were positive. Staff requested a staff room and this has now been created and includes a dart board and a golf course. Staff also have access to the school gym, aerobics classes to ensure staff look after themselves. The school have a member of staff leading on wellbeing.

Workforce

There are effective processes for supervision meetings and performance management. Staff discussed their access to a mentor to support their wellbeing, personal development and to discuss children's development. Mentors carry out observations of staff and new mentors are supported with joint observations to ensure consistency of standards.

Peer observations are carried out and all teachers take part (these sit alongside the formal observations that take place twice a year). The peer observation process is a reflective process based on strengths and constructive feedback. The observations can be cross department, giving teachers an insight into other areas of practice.

There is a training plan in place and staff spoke of recent training they had attended. Some was more formal training e.g. jolly phonics and other training was in-house training e.g. safeguarding children for teaching assistants. Staff can request training and must identify the benefit of the training and how this will impact on practice. Regular team meetings and phase meetings enable staff to discuss training and any changes to the environment or practice updates.

The head teacher plans for succession by reviewing trends of student numbers to plan for staffing needs. The school follow UK guidance for safer recruitment procedures and use TES to recruit teachers. The school have a robust process for helping new teachers to settle into the country which includes: hotel accommodation, accommodation checks, finance support, a local tour, putting them in touch with the current teacher to share planning and information to ensure a smooth transition. Due to COVID19 restrictions new staff are quarantined for two weeks so the school stay in touch online with online meetings with the current teacher, online lesson observations, introductions to policies and tapestry, staff handbook, induction checklists etc.

There are robust procedures for performance management and evaluating performance. The early years lead has a good understanding of her staff teams strengths and areas for development and has plans on developing these areas further.

Teachers demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of their age group with the experiences/provocations they prepared for children e.g. an interest in the fire station prompted the teacher to supply syringes and water for children to squirt at the wall (with the benefit of developing children's fine motor skills for the group of boys interested in the syringes). The children were very excited by the activity and had lots of fun. Teachers can explain the observation, assessment and planning process and how they record children's progress. This is supported by teaching assistants who have now received training on using tapestry so are now able to upload information and wow moments. Learning journeys are reviewed by the Early Years lead to ensure consistent quality.

All teachers observed were good role models, teachers were actively engaged in the activities and with the children, supporting their learning and providing a narrative for their play to encourage their English language. Teachers clearly know their children well and provide a range of experiences to choose from that have been implemented to support their interests and develop their learning.

Children with identified SEND have an Individual Education Plan, created by the class teacher, who meets with the parents to share information. The class teacher meets with the specialist teachers to ensure they understand the child's needs and strategies they use to support the child. The school has reports translated into English and Thai to ensure all professionals understand the information.

The school use their own teaching teams expertise to support children and families and provide excellent support for children, they ensure all relevant staff are aware of the strategies/support put into place and hold phase meetings to discuss strategies for supporting individual children if required.

The setting incorporates children's backgrounds into the setting and shares celebrations/food from other cultures.