

# ANNUAL REPORT

Paint Pots Nurseries (Southampton)

October 2019

## Nursery Group of the Year 2018 / 19



At this time last year, we celebrated the remarkable achievement of being recognised as the national nursery group of the year for 2018 in the Nursery World Awards. It has been a challenging but also a very fulfilling year for us. It is wonderful for our team to be recognised in this way but this is not why we do what we do. What gets us all out of bed each and every day is our mission—to make a difference in the lives of our children, families, our team and the communities we operate in through 'Love, Laughter and Learning!'

## Take your dog to work day...



....was a huge success at several Paint Pots!

**Visit to Kenya** In May, David, Izzy, Katie and Lisa spent a week in Kenya volunteering in special needs and baby rescue centres in Kisumu and Nairobi. It is one thing to read about poverty and inequality but to experience it first-hand and to meet those affected—real children, changes our perspective and resolve. It would be difficult to be unaffected by this experience and remain undetermined to work for a more just, kind and compassionate World. We are all global citizens. We all have a responsibility for the children of the World, not just those we have a relationship with through Paint Pots. Katy said, 'It was very emotional, I spent a lot of time in the Special Needs unit and all you want to do is help. I will never forget my experience in Kenya. I am very grateful for the opportunity I have had to visit. It was truly amazing.'



## In the News



Paint Pots has featured in several national magazines this year including an article in Nursery World on helping one of our children to overcome speech and language difficulties.

Our men appeared on a Channel 5 News feature, in Nursery World and in Early Years Educator. Paint Pots has also been the focus of various online blogs.

Children and Team members from Paint Pots Waterloo Road, featured in a special Management pull-out in Nursery World with some beautiful images throughout the publication.



Paint Pots has signed up as a supporter of Gender Action – an award programme which promotes and supports a whole organisation approach to challenging stereotypes. By joining Gender Action, we are demonstrating our commitment to ensuring all our children can reach their full potential, unrestricted by their gender. Boys and girls at Paint Pots have equal opportunities, team expectations and aspirations for them.



We are also members of the



Men & Boys Coalition - a network of organisations, academics, journalists, professionals and leaders committed to highlighting and taking action on the gender-specific issues that affect men and boys. David is supporting the coalition on developing resources to support boys in Early Years and Primary education.

## Beyond Paint Pots

David, Anna & Joseph are involved with various activities / organisations -

Chair of trustees New Life Home Trust UK CIO (baby rescue in Kenya)

Early Years representative to Southampton Schools Forum

Safeguarding lead for Southampton Family Trust

Respite Carers for Safe Families for Children

Government advisor for Men in Early Years

Early Years advisor to NAHT

Judge for national nursery awards

Chair of trustees Families First Southampton (supporting families in our city)

UK representative to World Forum on Early Childhood Education

Contributor to national Early Years publications

TV / Radio Broadcaster

Conference speaker

Author

Ofsted Big Conversation South East steering group members

Ofsted complaints panel members

Early Years Level 2 apprenticeship standards trailblazer group member

## A Fresh Look

Drop in to any local car boot sale and you will often find Paint Pots team members rummaging for treasure, seeking out those items that are going to spark children's interests - empty picture frames, weighing scales, sugar shakers, pots, pans, fire cones and shells. We have started to add larger items to our list of finds, including dressers, tables, chairs, a piano! and other pieces of furniture that can be repurposed for use in our



preschools / nurseries, such as this 'paint station'. What an inviting way to store and display craft materials. Our children have responded enthusiastically to the new items and the opportunities to create using 'open-ended' resources, with renewed interest in transient art, sustained concentration, more use of imagination and some great



conversations. We are not throwing out all our plastic and we're not buying second hand bargains to save money! We're constantly looking at how we can challenge and support our children with environments and resources that encourage and enable them to develop their own creativity.

## In, Out & About

David has had a busy schedule of speaking engagements this year including -

Childcare Expo Coventry, National Association of Headteachers Birmingham, Foundation Stage Forum Lewes, BrewEdEY Worthing, St Maud's College Trondheim, Norway, Children's Centre Gosport, World Forum on Early Childhood Education Macau, Southampton Early Years conference, Hampshire County Council Winchester, Ofsted London, Westminster Briefings London, Ofsted Big Conversation Brighton, National Men in Early Years conference London.

We have welcomed visitors from Lancaster University, University College London, a delegation from China, University College Birmingham, local providers, trainers and consultants who have all been interested in seeing Paint Pots in action.

David has attended sessions of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Early Years at the House of Commons to contribute to discussions with Ministers on the challenges facing our sector.

# Training

Every year we bring all our teams together for an annual professional development day. This year we decided to use the expertise within our teams, to share best practice. To do so required significant logistics planning to ensure everyone moved between various Paint Pots locations across the city in a timely fashion. In various practical and workshop style sessions, groups discussed and learned more about -

A new Ofsted inspection framework, our curriculum and pedagogy; outdoor play and 'tough trays'; environment and provocations; parental engagement, building on children's interests and English as an Additional Language; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; Paint Pots values; Boosting Language Auditory Skills and Talking (BLAST); and narrowing the language development attainment gap.

Paint Pots House continues to play host to monthly Paediatric First Aid courses, held on 2 consecutive Saturdays. Not only does this enable us to refresh training for every single member of our teams working with your children but we also make spaces available for other childcare providers in the area, particularly childminders who are grateful for the availability of reasonably priced training at a weekend when they are not working.

Paint Pots House training room is busier these days with various different organisations using it to deliver training sessions, including the Early Years Alliance, the National Day Nurseries Association, Early Excellence, other local childcare providers and Boogie Mites who continue to provide music and training for our active sessions with the children.

We have access to a wide range of online training and development resources. Our teams are encouraged and supported to complete various online training modules.

Our successful apprenticeship programme run in conjunction with our training partner Lifetime Training has really helped us to recruit for character—those men and women who have the best interests of children at heart. They are taught the fundamentals of child development, good care practice and the statutory requirements of their job role. They do so 'on the job' which means they learn Paint Pots values with the support of an experienced team. Our experience shows that here are many advantages to 'growing your own'.

**FAMILIESFirst** Our charity works across the city helping families in need with a focus on supporting dads and 'kinship carers' (mostly grandparents) with their children and grandchildren. For such a small enterprise, it continues to deliver remarkable results.

S O U T H A M P T O N

In the last month -

- 7 dads have taken on sole care of their children and secured housing
- 1 grandmother has completed considerable work to keep her granddaughter safe in her care
- 9 grandparent carers have stated they have received the best support from our Carers Café
- 14 dads have achieved contact with their children.

And over the last year -

- 197 Special Guardianship Order grandparents have attended our support groups and events run together with Southampton City Partnership Team.
- 25 new referrals for dad's outreach have been received.
- 469 dads outreach sessions (some grandparents) have been achieved.
- 468 children and 419 dads, carers and grandparents have attended our groups.

We are delighted to have secured funding from the national lottery for a further year.



## MEN IN EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

BUILDING A MIXED GENDER  
WORKFORCE

David Wright and Simon Brownhill

"Childhood is not preparation for anything. Childhood just is and they only get one. It's up to us to protect it." - Lester Laminack

## Award Winner

David was thrilled to learn that his co-authored book *Men in Early Years Settings* (featuring our very own Dan on the cover!) has received a Silver medal in the Professional Books category in the annual national Nursery World Awards for 2019. Judges praised the 'accessible style', 'inspiring quotes from interviews', the 'excellent referencing' and the fact that 'they have not preached but offered some excellent evidence on why a gender mixed workforce is beneficial'. To be recognised in this way by professional colleagues is a true accolade.



## Congratulations

To Becky and Lizzie on their graduation in their respective Early Years qualifications, earlier this year. We are so pleased to see our team members continuing their professional development and achieving their ambitions.



## No Toys Week??

There is a well-known saying in Early Years: 'The more the toy does the less the child does.' We bear this in mind when providing a range of resources for your children. Occasionally we put away all the 'toys' in preparation for a week of activities based around simple open-ended resources such as sand, boxes, paint etc.

The children usually express their surprise on arrival - 'Where have all our toys gone?!' but they quickly embrace the opportunity to use their imagination, creativity, design and problem solving skills to explore and use whatever is available. Adults are on hand to co-create and to provide additional tools and resources as needed.

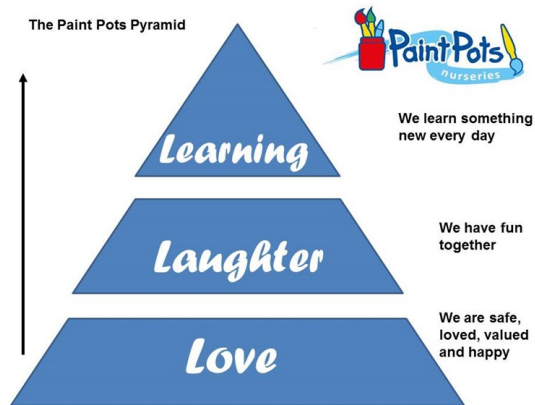
This tray originally contained pink and green sand before the children decided to mix the colours. Look at the concentration as he makes marks in the sand. What wonderful pre-writing practice! The sand was subsequently recycled and used in flour trays for more magical mark making (as fairy dust)!

# Well-Being

To celebrate World Mental Health Day on 10th October, Paint Pots will be holding events at all of our settings. We will also be signing our Time to Change Employer Pledge – a commitment to changing the way we think and act about mental health in the workplace.

This commitment is supported by a 12-month employer action plan which supports Paint Pots putting in place best-practice interventions and policy to help our team work in ways that promote a positive mental wellbeing.

It is our intention to ensure that our motto of 'Love, Laughter and Learning' applies equally to our team members as it does to our children, with Love and Laughter occupying the 2 lowest and largest segments of our pyramid –



Our action plan includes -

- Management commitment to Time to Change
- Management attendance at well-being for managers course.
- Review of our policies
- Review return to work procedure following mental health illness.
- Signposting services to support mental health and well-being.
- Encouraging employees to openly talk about their well-being.
- Wellness Action Plans to be offered to all employees.
- Appoint well-being champions in each Paint Pots setting.
- Signing the pledge on World Mental Health Day
- Well-being champions to run events in their settings.
- Stress awareness as part of our mandatory training programme.
- Introduce well-being champions at induction.

- Employees to share coping strategies, stress awareness and relaxation techniques at staff meetings.
- Encourage normalisation of discussions on well-being matters.
- Case studies to be shared (with permission) with the wider team.
- Further training for managers – return to work meetings following illness, guidance following a disclosure.
- Team newsletters and website area to have new well-being sections.

## Young and Old

We love bringing the young and older generations together. Many of our preschools and nurseries arrange visits to their local care homes at different points of the year. A recent example was a visit to a monthly lunch club organized by Communicare. Our children had a great time joining in with their musical instruments to a local ukulele group. They were treated to apple pie and custard afterwards. It seems common sense that children and the elderly benefit from spending time with each other. It is sad that children and older people are often isolated from one another these days. We hope to develop more relationships by inviting older friends in to help us with gardening, reading stories and to share other hobbies and interests with us. Music is definitely a great way of allowing everyone to join in together. We are hoping to partner with Boogie Mites to share their particular repertoire of songs that our children already familiar with, with our elderly friends.



## All Change

Southampton council told us at Easter of the plans to redevelop the St Marks school site in Shirley. At the same time they announced that we would have to move out by the end of July—not long to find a new location and organise a move. Very fortunately, Shirley Baptist Church in Freemantle had previously hosted a preschool and was looking for a new tenant. Our amazing PP7 team packed, loaded, unpacked and stored everything in just 2 days. Fast forward to September 9th and our preschool opened its doors to all our families at the new site. We also welcomed a whole new group of families and their children. Several weeks later and it is as if we have always been there—happy children, happy families and happy team. Thank you Shirley Baptist Church for making us so welcome.

*Oh whoa, hold up,  
wait a minute...  
you mean to tell me  
when we play peek-a-  
boo you really don't  
go anywhere?*





Everyone wants to have a go at drawing / writing when we stick the paper to the floor under the table!!



The telephone engineers are in again



Loving Life—enjoying the rain!



Audition for The Joker or just enjoying paint?



Rescuing our toys from the spider's web



Fun with a colander and spaghetti - building fine motor skills



Very excited about my new Paint Pots bag!



Delivering donated food items