

Good practice: Donaldson's Interactive Learning at Nursery (Dilan)

The staff in the nursery class at Donaldson's School identified the need to develop ways for children to encourage children to use all areas of the nursery, and to become more independent and confident in their choice of activity. Most children who attend nursery are deaf, have a speech and language impairment, other additional support needs or have deaf parents.

Staff introduced a hand puppet called Dilan to the children. His name stands for Donaldson's Interactive Learning at Nursery.

Each morning Dilan joins the children at circle time and staff talk about where Dilan wants to sit on that day. Children are then encouraged to take Dilan to that area of the nursery at the end of circle time. The presence of Dilan in a particular area of the nursery motivates children to go there and take part in activities without staff intervention. Staff take photographs of children working with Dilan and use these to talk to children about what they enjoyed, remembered or learned during the activity.

Parents see a weekly timetable of where Dilan will be each day and what the staff and children will be doing/observing at this particular activity. This helps parents to talk to their child about what they have been doing at nursery. Staff further support this by sending home photographs of the activity.

Through working with Dilan children have begun make choices with less support and direction from staff. Children also enjoy showing their skills and independence by "helping" Dilan in small group activities with the speech and language therapist. Parents find that children are more motivated to tell them what they have done in school, because they want to talk about Dilan.