

Hi,

I am a nursery school teacher and I would like to share my views with you.

There seems to be an increasing number of children with SEN each year. There is always a lot of talk about early intervention for children with SEN and in reality, it is non-existent.

The majority of children who come into nursery have needs that either have not been identified or parents are concerned and the children are on (years long) waiting lists and have not been seen. Therefore, we have to support these children without any help or support from outside agencies for their year in school. This is also in a full class of 26 children and only 1 other member of staff. Quite often these children need 1:1 and often there is more than one child that require that extra support. This is extremely stressful for everyone involved and in my view the system is inadequate.

We now are also told that we must follow the provision map first then go through the process of two PLPs before moving a child to stage 2 and seeking help, guidance or support from an outside agency (or those with expertise in a certain area) and as my principal has said this is just another way of "kicking the can further down the road." It would be much better to deal with the issues present and for some children it is very obvious that they need a referral to Ed Psych now now two terms later.

When we do start the process, the children often go through their whole school year without being seen by an educational psychologist (this is now the only person we can refer to with the exception of the RISE team) that leaves us with no guidance or support or even hearing an outcome for that child as they leave nursery school and move onto primary. So essentially nothing changes despite all the hard (paper) work that we have done. We no longer have the means to reach out to the any one else.

There was once a scheme set up on a trial basis and we were never asked our feedback yet the scheme did not continue the following year. It was an early years intervention system whereby we contacted this team that had been set up if we had queries about SEN or wanted advice regarding a certain child. The people who worked on the team had lots of experience with SEN such as school principals, teachers and assistants.

There were on hand to give advice, provide resources specific to each child and also came and worked with certain children both within the class as well as 1:1 and in small groups. As a teacher that support was invaluable and everyone including all staff in school as well as those children benefited so much from this team. I have no idea why it never continued.

To sum up I feel that a lot needs to change

1. Lots of children come to nursery and parents have no idea there are needs - lots of children seem to be slipping through the net at HV stage (quite often parents report that they have not been seen since young babies or that the toddler slept when they called) surely someone should be seeing these children between newborn stage and age 3/4.
2. Whilst I understand and believe in the importance of paperwork, I don't believe that whole school provision and then 2 PLPs need to be filled out in every circumstance. In my opinion, any good teacher is already working through Whole School Provision automatically. There are also some children who obviously need referred right away rather than waiting until paperwork has been filled.
3. Waiting lists are far too long.
4. It is impossible for all children's needs to be met when ratios are still as high as 1:13 in 2025 with an ever-increasing number of needs. There have been times in the past number of years that I feel like I'm implementing crowd control rather than teaching. (I also know of many teachers who also feel like this and feel they have nowhere to turn to seek help).
5. Early intervention should mean early intervention. There should be a system in place whereby children, their parents and school staff have access to guidance and benefit from support from those that have the skills to give.

I hope that provides an insight into what it is like in the early years sector. If I can be of any more help then please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing the results from the inquiry and hope that any changes made will be positive ones that will make a difference to the people involved.

Thanks

██████████