

# No Vicky Pollards here.

We've been really annoyed to read newspaper articles over the past couple of weeks quoting the Chair of the Professional Teachers Association who, in a conference speech, suggested that poor nursery staff are providing a bad example to the children in their care and are in danger of promoting a future generation of Vicky Pollards.

Well let us assure you Mrs Chairperson that this is certainly NOT the case at any Asquith nursery. If you would care to actually come and have a look you could see for yourself.

It was also suggested that this is a trend amongst nurseries and that growing numbers of staff do not have a good grasp of language or spelling and wear inappropriate clothing.

Wrong again. On behalf of our staff we take exception to such ill informed, sweeping statements.

Of course nursery staff are role models for the children. That is why we only employ the best.

They're educated, intelligent, hard working and dedicated to the job and to the children in their care.

It's a very special person who can work so hard for the needs of others and do so with such enthusiasm and in such good humour for such long hours.

We totally agree with the Department of Education and Skills which said, "This completely ignores the true picture of what is happening and is profoundly insulting to those working hard in our early years and childcare sector."

We agree, and take this opportunity to thank all our staff for being as good as they are.

**Andy Morris, Commercial Director**

## We're in it for the long-haul

A quick overview of our training plans for the next 3 years:

- 2006 We have trained 1800 people on Birth to Three matters and varying business development courses.
- 2007 Dedicated hands-on tailor-made training courses plus many basic business courses including Health & Safety
- 2008+ Ongoing training for all of our staff



*"The training is having a real impact on our people both from a quality and a morale point of view. Our staff feel better supported and able to do their jobs."*

Steve Fairway – Regional Director London



## Involving you Keeping you in the picture

In addition to the Open University, Birth to Three Matters and Foundation Stage training for all staff, we're also focusing on developing the skills and talents of our nursery managers, their deputies and our supervisors.



To achieve this we're providing in-depth leadership skills and team-building training to help build better-led teams at each of our settings.

One of the other areas we have specifically focused upon is communications.

We want all our staff to place greater importance on their communications with you.

Developing strong relationships with you is now a central part of the ethos of Asquith.

From ensuring that you are fully aware of how your children are developing as individuals and the care that they are receiving, through to newsletters such as this one, we're going to ensure you are kept fully in the picture!



*"Everyone thinks it's great. The training is providing my staff with an insight into the development of children and opening their eyes to the importance of play and how this relates to our resources and rooms."*

Angela Gallagher – Nursery Manager, Reigate

part of the *Asquith* family together since 1989

**And finally...** If you want more information about items in this newsletter, please talk to your Nursery Manager and if you would like to find out more about Asquith in general please visit our website [www.asquithnurseries.co.uk](http://www.asquithnurseries.co.uk). For recruitment opportunities please e-mail: [recruitment@asquithcourt.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@asquithcourt.co.uk).

# my nursery

asquith day nurseries

## Training Special!



## Long-term staff training. The best way forward.



Giving your children the best possible care is, pretty obviously, our top priority.

However, to achieve this, not only do we need to make sure our staff do the right things but that they are also totally happy in what they do and how they do it. Good staff are the backbone of any nursery, as I'm sure you will agree.

So we asked our people to tell us ten things we could improve on to make working for Asquith more enjoyable and more rewarding. Top of the list, which may come as a surprise, was the request for opportunities to develop themselves within the childcare profession.

I was delighted to hear this. We were already working on a new training programme and this very clear message provided us with the increased incentive to really go to town. We immediately set

about putting together the best training programme in the nursery industry. And that's what we've now got.

What's more, it covers all levels of staff and, I'm pleased to say, it's been very enthusiastically received.

This newsletter – the second in the series – is to tell you about our long term commitment to developing our staff which will, in turn, improve even further the quality of care we give to your children. At the end of the day, this is what it's all about.

If you want more detailed information, please speak to your nursery manager.

I'm sure you'll find this newsletter interesting.

**Russell Ford, Chief Executive**





## University Challenge



We've teamed up with the Open University to give all our staff the opportunity to study for a Certificate in Early Years Practice – an NVQ Level 4 equivalent qualification.

We fully fund this two-year vocational course that can lead on to a Foundation degree.

It's a fantastic opportunity for our people to have access to training that they may not have been able to afford on their own and which provides them with qualifications necessary to build a solid career in childcare.

Over 260 of our staff have already signed up and started this course which focuses on a number of childcare issues.

Study topics include subjects such as 'Parents as Partners' and 'Observing and Listening to Young Children'. It all helps to give staff the opportunity to develop their skills and become better practitioners.

Asquith is the only nursery group that offers all its staff training to such a high level. That's good news for them and good news for your children.



# Developing confidence and care



**We're pleased to report that over 85% of our staff have now undergone at least one training course in the past six months.**

Most of this has been focused on ensuring a good understanding and a consistent delivery of our childcare and education philosophy (to be covered more fully in a future newsletter).

*"Staff now see a clear progression plan for their careers. They can see a route from nursery carer through to nursery manager and that makes them more likely to stay with Asquith. This brings the experience of our teams up to a better standard which, in turn, improves the care we provide."*

Doug Grout – Regional Director South



The training entitled *Birth to Three Matters* and *Foundation Stage* is particularly important as it lays the groundwork for everything we do – providing all our staff with the support, information and guidance needed for the care and education of babies and children.

It's been very well received and everyone who has taken part has said how good and how helpful it's been. General feedback has been excellent.

The benefit of this training is that our people feel better supported and happier in undertaking the job they have to do. Everyone now knows the standards that we have set and what we expect them to achieve.

It's given staff more confidence in themselves and this is clearly reflected in the care they provide to your children.

*The whole experience has been very positive. It really makes everyone think about how they do their jobs and as a result the quality of interaction between staff and children has reached a higher level."*

Suzanne Harper -  
Childcare & Education Manager

## Special training to help develop your children!

In order to bring the training right into the work place we've taken on ten additional trainers to work with staff in all our nurseries. Each new childcare specialist will be responsible for ten specific nurseries.

Their task will be to train staff in how best to develop the individual skills of every child in our care.

This is part of the children's development programme being managed by our Childcare and Education Director, Liz Richardson.

We'll be telling you more about this programme in one of the future editions.

*"The training has been very effective in that my staff now have a solid underpinning knowledge of our childcare philosophy. They have a clear idea of where children are in their development and can relate this to both me and parents"*

Yvonne Bryant – Nursery Manager, Balham

*"The training has been really beneficial in helping me to understand my weaknesses in a constructive way. It really opens your eyes. Even though I have worked with children for 13 years I have become more child-focused since."*

Rachel Mitchell – Deputy Manager, The Centre MK

