



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres - Service Manager

Grade: MG2

DIVISION/SECTION: Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Service

Location: Civic Centre

Responsible to: Head of Education

Responsible for: Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Service, X 2 Deputy Service Manager (MGB), Business Manager (PO4) and Childcare Policy Manager (PO5)

Post number: A2425

Date: 23rd January 2008

1. MAIN PURPOSE

- To lead on the development and implementation of the Early Year's and Childcare Strategy for Merton and ensuring a close alignment with the Merton Children and Young People Plan.
- To lead and deliver the Children's Centre expansion and development programme in Merton.
- To discharge the responsibilities of the local authority that will be required in the forthcoming Childcare Act (2006).
- To oversee all funding that supports Early Childhood Services, totalling approximately £6,000,000.00 per annum.
- To lead on the development and implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy for Merton – ensuring a close alignment with the Merton Children and Young People Plan.

2. MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Be the designated Local Authority Lead Officer for early years and childcare matters – providing strategic leadership in this area.
2. Lead and manage the Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Service (including Quality & Standards Teams, Family Information Service and Business/Finance functions) and the Children's Centre Teams (including nursery provision staff and Multi-Agency Teams) - focusing on improving outcomes for children and young people.
3. Monitor achievements of under 5s, and advise and brief the Director of Children, Schools & Families on nursery and early years issues.
4. Represent the local authority to agencies such as Ofsted, the DCSF and key stakeholders.
5. Work closely with the Extended Schools Manager to integrate the work of after-school and breakfast clubs in line with the core offer of extended schools.
6. Work in close partnership with internal and external partners and agencies to ensure a creative and consistent approach to Early Years and Childcare provision. Ensure that this provides an inclusive policy for all children; takes full account of equal opportunities and ensures coherence between Early Years and Childcare Strategy and initiatives, the Children & Young People Plan and other strategic plans.
7. Oversee work with partner agencies, to ensure accessibility of services relevant to children and their parents.
8. Set up systems to identify parents who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services, and to encourage them to take advantage of such services.
9. Work closely with the early year's inclusion team to ensure that effective support is given to the non-maintained early year's sector in offering an inclusive Foundation Stage environment across all settings in Merton.
10. Chair and / or participate actively (as appropriate) in an agreed range of partnership and Officer meetings related to the Early Years and Childcare area and the corporate working of the authority. To promote the Council's vision and values in such meetings.
11. Ensure that robust plans are developed and implemented that deliver the expansion programme associated with children's centres through strong leadership and effective communication with stakeholders.
12. Work effectively with Headteachers / schools and extended schools clusters in:

- the development of children's centres
 - the raising of standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - the further development and sustainability of extended services in and around schools
13. Lead the process of market management with regard to childcare provision in the borough through effective partnership working.
 14. Provide strategic leadership to improve outcomes for all under-fives related to the 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes and to meet targets relating to narrowing the gaps in achievement.
 15. Ensure that early childhood services are delivered in an integrated way that facilitates access to services and maximises the benefits to children, parents and prospective parents.
 16. Secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for those up to 14 (or 16 if disabled), to meet the requirements of parents in Merton who require childcare to in order to work or to undertake training or education to prepare for work.
 17. Support and promote the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage for its launch in 2008
 18. Manage the budget for nursery education (previously NEG) within the authority (currently in the region of £1.2 million per year).
 19. Manage the budget for Early Years and Childcare Grant in Merton (currently in the region of £4.6 million per year).
 20. Co-ordinate bids and submissions in order to ensure maximum funding for the local authority and its partners; monitor all budgets and grants relating to the early years and childcare; be responsible for the management and oversight of all invitations to tender for works, contracts, specifications, reporting arrangements, monitoring and evaluation, working at all times within Council Standing Orders.

3. GENERAL

1. To lead in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Service Plan in accordance with the Choice for Parents: best start for children, a 10 year childcare strategy, the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance and local requirements for services for children under 5 and their families.
2. To strategically lead on specific service development priorities in line with the Childcare Act 2006.
3. To ensure all services are delivered within the parameters and desired outcomes for the Council's Comprehensive Area Review (new JAR/APA).

4. To contribute to Cabinet & Scrutiny reports and meetings as required and advise elected members as directed by the Head of Division. Work effectively with elected members to support them in their leadership role ensuring that they have timely and good quality information.
5. Lead and develop strong, forward thinking partnership arrangements with external bodies from the public and private sector locally, regionally and nationally (e.g. Ofsted, GOL, CWDC) to engage others in supporting, improving and sustaining quality early years and childcare practice which impacts positively for young children and families.
6. Lead, support and inspire staff to reflect on and develop their own understanding, knowledge and skills to ensure effective leadership at all levels, strong succession planning and a workforce committed to the improvement of learning and care opportunities for all young children.
7. To line manage staff including overseeing recruitment, induction support and supervision and appraisal.
8. To manage budgets and monitor in line with LB Merton finance policies and procedures.
9. Line-manage team leaders in the Quality and Standards Team including support and supervision/appraisal/teacher appraisal (working in partnership with those providing professional supervision for management of SEN).
10. Develop effective working relationships with CSF – School Quality and Standards, Commissioning, Strategy and Performance, Social Care etc to ensure that EYFS data, policy and practice inform the work of the directorate and contribute to Children and Young peoples Plan, Annual Performance Assessment, Joint Area Review.
11. To undertake all duties and interactions with employees, partner providers and customers fairly, without unlawful discrimination and with due regard to the Council's Diversity and Equality in Employment and Service Delivery policies.
12. To carry out duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Council's Core Values, Equal Opportunities Policy, Health and Safety Policy and all other borough and departmental policies and procedures, in particular the non-smoking policy and confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act.
13. To maintain a working environment in which diversity is respected and responded to and equality of opportunity is promoted.
14. To ensure complaints are responded to in accordance with the Customer Complaints Procedure.
15. To use computers and other ICT in the normal performance of the duties of the post. To champion data quality in the Department, proactively appraising data produced by the Department for

robustness, ensuring that data quality issues are addressed and corporate requirements are met, as set out in the council's Data Quality Strategy.

16. To be a full member of the team and work in collaboration with all other agencies to ensure co-ordination of services and best use of resources.
17. To brief line manager on all matters which are likely to be subject to publicity whether positive or negative.
18. To contribute to the development of effective teamwork establishing good communication systems, including team training and regular team meetings.
19. To keep up to date with new developments in appropriate fields, attend training and supervision sessions and contribute to workshops, seminars and conferences.
20. To work flexibly and to undertake any other duties commensurate with the post as required by the Head of Division and or Director of Children, Schools and Families.
21. Ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory responsibilities as a local authority insofar as they relate to the duties of the post holder
22. Represent the Head of Division as required at meetings, conferences, working groups etc, promoting the council's vision and values.
23. Work pro-actively and effectively as a member of the Divisional Leadership Team and wider Children, Schools and Families Management Forum.

FUNCTIONAL LINKS

- Children's Centres, schools & settings
- FIS
- Operational staff
- Divisional Leadership Team
- The local community
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Statutory organisations
- DCSF

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS

The Officer appointed might be required to work during some evenings and weekends for which time off in lieu will be negotiated.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Experience / Qualifications / Skills / Knowledge:

1. Significant and effective experience either as a teacher with responsibility for the Early Years or in an appropriate field that will provide the credibility to fulfil the demands of this role.
2. A degree or comparable level of educational achievement, and evidence of continuous professional development at postgraduate level. Good understanding of the teaching and learning process.
3. A thorough understanding and grounding in the foundation stage, early years practice and development, coupled with significant experience as a senior manager, advisory teacher or inspector with responsibility for Early Years Education/Childcare; a thorough understanding of Early Years issues, recent legislation and experience as a provider of in-service training.
4. Experience of promoting, leading and delivering strategies to secure value for money, continuous service improvement and the development of quality customer focused services.
5. Strong leadership qualities to motivate and enthuse both your own team and colleagues, and that facilitate the strategic alignment of partner agencies activities.

6. Ability to analyse complex issues, summarise key concepts and present a balanced and clear opinion
7. Good interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively as an individual and as part of a team in an environment of competing priorities and deadlines. Ability to manage a team, workloads, organise work schedules and prioritise in order to meet tight deadlines. Ability to liaise successfully and promote the work of the Early Years and Childcare Teams with other agencies, senior officers and departments within the Council and elected Members.
8. Evidence of good financial management abilities, including setting and managing a complex budget, preparing bids and tenders, developing contracts and specifications, monitoring and evaluation of spend and its impact to achieve specific objectives and experience of making applications for external funding
9. Comprehensive and thorough knowledge of the Government's agenda relating to Every Child Matters and Early Years and Childcare, combined with a thorough knowledge of the school curriculum and the impact of education reforms particularly in the area of primary and Early Years Education.
10. High order communication skills, both oral and written, for and with a range of audiences, and ability to organise work in order to meet tight deadlines.
11. Proven advanced leadership and collaboration skills.
12. Excellent understanding of DDA and SEN Code of Practice and a clear understanding of the main issues regarding disabled children, children with SEN and their families.
13. Ability to lead, support and inspire staff to reflect on and develop their own understanding, knowledge and skills to ensure effective leadership at all levels and strong succession planning.
14. Excellent knowledge of child development and child protection and a clear understanding of the main issues around work with children, families, child protection.
15. Understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunities policies, social inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice.
16. Proven advanced project management skills (involving an ability to plan services, deliver services and closely relate finance to planned outcomes).
17. Practical experience of using ICT for word processing, e-mail and to support office administration and the development of training materials.
18. Ability to travel around the borough.

January 2008