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**Nursery  
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AWARDS 2018 ▶ ORGANISATIONS

# Nursery Group of the Year

## Paint Pots Nurseries

### Southampton



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Excellent commitment to workforce development and community ethos

– judge

**T**his award-winning group's name symbolises the potential within each child to paint his or her 'picture'. The company's ethos is based on the three underlying values in the Paint Pots Pyramid: learning, laughter and love.

Paint Pots is 'much more than a business', say the owners Anna and David Wright, and their son Joseph. It is 'an extended family for all of us whose lives are intertwined through relationships that now extend across generations – thousands of children and carers, hundreds of team members over the years, all connected through our activities.'

As a small family business, the group's strategy is to operate in the Southampton area only, which enables the owners to be hands-on. The group's six day nurseries, three pre-schools and an after-school club are based in diverse areas, some in very deprived parts of the city, and have gained a strong local reputation.

All three owners are qualified Early Years Teachers and are involved in setting the strategy, ethos and the day-to-day operation of the settings. There is a strong focus on quality in staff development programmes, supervisions and appraisals. Every setting has a nominated physical and nutritional co-ordinator (PANCo) who is a physical activity and healthy-eating champion.

Paint Pots takes induction seriously, with all staff, volunteers and students undergoing

a mandatory induction day. A three-month induction programme covers all areas of operation, policy and procedure for new team members, who are assigned a mentor and are set personal development goals, which are subsequently reviewed.

Many team members have worked for Paint Pots for more than ten years – some have left and then returned because they miss the working environment so much. CPD for Paint Pots is viewed as 'Continuous Personal Development', a combination of training, practice networking and sharing good practice.

The owners research and connect with other organisations across the world, and have taken staff to experience early years practice in Spain, Belgium, Sweden and Austria. Currently team members are able to volunteer in orphanages in Kenya. Both David and Anna are trustees of New Life Home Trust UK, which supports abandoned babies in Kenya.

In 2016, Paint Pots widened its remit by setting up the charity Families First Southampton ([www.familiesfirstsouthampton.org](http://www.familiesfirstsouthampton.org)), which supports disadvantaged families, particularly fathers, and last year worked with more than 200 disadvantaged children and their carers.

David is an advisor to the NAHT Early Years sector council and a member of the leadership team of the World Forum – Men in Early Childhood Education working group.

He is recognised as an international advocate, author and speaker for men in early years, advising the Government on gender diversity, and is one of the founders of the Southampton branch of Men in Early Years.

The group's strengths are well-known in the early years community. A parent on a local Facebook group said, 'Absolutely love it there, my son has been there for two and a half years and my daughter will be starting soon.'

'The staff are so friendly and the kids love them. The management are so helpful and I really feel the company puts the kids before profit.'

#### FINALISTS

**Attimore Barn Pre-School,  
The Commons Pre-School,  
Breakfast and After School Club,  
Hardings Pre-School, Knightsfield  
Pre-Schoolers, Welwyn Garden City  
Fit 'N' Fun Kids, Cornwall  
Jack and Jill Day Nursery and  
Pre-School, Wirral  
Kangaroo Pouch, West Midlands  
KidzRus Nursery, Manchester  
South Hills School, Wiltshire**

#### CRITERION

Open to UK nursery groups with three or more settings