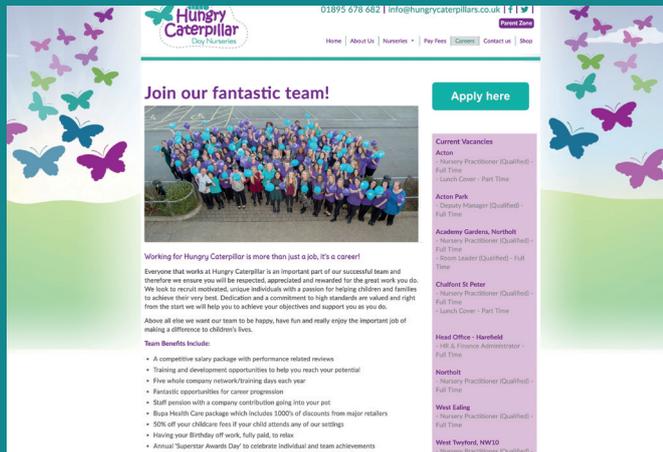


## Online and Social Media Award

### Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries West London



“  
Monthly marketing schedule in place with real success with recruitment and parent engagement. Impressive  
— judge

A recent revamp of Hungry Caterpillar’s website has increased traffic, as well as new parent enquiries and led to a drop in late payments.

Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries’ updated website includes an online shop for parents and staff to purchase essential items and uniform, a live chat system that allows prospective parents and staff to ask questions while browsing, a parent zone for existing parents with useful information and parent guides, and a careers page that prospective staff can use to apply for job vacancies across the nursery group. Through the ‘apply now’ function, it receives an average of 15 job applications a week.

The website also has a payment portal that parents can use to pay their registration, deposit and monthly fees quickly and securely. Currently more than 15 per cent of nursery payments come through the site. Since online payment has been introduced, the group has seen a 28 per cent decrease in late payments.

Along with being optimised for mobiles, both the careers page and homepage of the website feature videos through Vimeo. One video is a Doodle Ad of Hungry Caterpillar demonstrating how the nursery can support parents.

It has enjoyed equal success using social media. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are all used to engage parents and for recruitment purposes.

Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries says when it first started using social media, it was ‘a bit scary’. There were concerns about negative posts that could impact the group’s reputation. However, it says in reality that the positives far outweigh any negatives because if issues are dealt with properly, they can have a positive outcome.

Hungry Caterpillar advertises through Facebook with links to the careers page of its website. Advertising a recruitment evening solely on Facebook yielded a fantastic return in what it acknowledges as an increasingly difficult recruitment market. A total of 20 potential employees

attended the evening, eight of whom now work for the group’s nurseries.

It also uses social media to advertise open days, show parents what activities children have been taking part in and share its blogs. For parents of one of the nurseries, there is a closed Facebook group, which they use to share ideas, photos and to keep updated.

LinkedIn is primarily used to stay connected with the early years community and for recruitment.

Hungry Caterpillar plans on continuing to improve its website, including its parent zone, taking on board suggestions from parents submitted through a recent survey. It will also be looking at adding features to its payment portal, including a function for parents to see whether they have any unpaid fees outstanding. Additionally, there are plans to set up closed Facebook pages for each nursery in the group.



#### HIGHLY COMMENDED Koru Kids, London

The success of out-of-school provider Koru Kids has been aided by its website. Its service, recruiting, vetting, training and managing specialist after-school nannies, has taken off in a big way thanks to its site. It has received more than 17,000 applications to become a Koru Kids nanny. Of these,

1,500 were selected to complete the course and become nannies. The out-of-school providers now deliver over 16,000 hours of care each month, and it is still growing. The number of employees has grown from four last year to 16 full-time equivalents now.

Social media is also very important to the business. Koru Kids mainly uses Facebook and Instagram.

#### FINALISTS

**Cherubs Nurseries**, East Midlands  
**Early Years Nutrition Partnership**  
**Kiddi Caru Day Nurseries Group**, central and southern England  
**Tommies Childcare**, West Midlands  
**Tops Day Nurseries**, southern England

#### CRITERION

Open to early years providers (nurseries, schools, pre-schools and childminders) and services whose website and use of social media is informative, accessible and innovative