

Early Years Professional/ Early Years Teacher of the Year



Jessica Curbishley,
Deputy manager, Woodlands
Day Nursery, Timperley,
Cheshire

**'From student to deputy
manager – a personal
journey towards
excellence'**
Judge

Jessica Curbishley (Jess) joined Woodlands in 2008 as a 17-year-old student on work experience, and was quickly recognised as someone who would go far, displaying passion, enthusiasm, vision, hard work and dedication.

After college, she went to university full time, but worked for the nursery's supply team in her spare time, eventually joining on a permanent basis in August last year, having just qualified as an Early Years Teacher. In April, she was promoted to deputy manager.

Woodlands says Jess has been unstoppable, proving to everyone that there really is no end to her talents and coming up with wonderful ideas to build on practice from the start.

Jess has introduced strategies for promoting positive behaviour in the Squirrel Room (2.5 to 3

years) and supported other rooms with suitable strategies for different age groups.

She has engaged parents in the day-to-day life of the nursery, encouraging them to share their child's interests and achievements through 'Wow moments' and 'Interests' boards so that these can be incorporated into individual planning and learning.

To further build on parent partnerships, Jess has created Support Bags for Home on topics such as toilet training or a new baby, and Home Learning Bags with resources and activity ideas on areas including literacy, messy play and self-care.

As an Early Years Teacher, Jess carries out regular room observations and peer observations with individual team members, supporting the team with reflecting on their practice

and planning future developments.

After specialising in SEN during her degree, Jess is key worker to a three-year-old boy who is severely autistic and has put outstanding commitment into working with him, so that he has made extraordinary progress in a short time.

As SEND co-ordinator, Jess has been responsible for implementing changes stemming from the revised Code of Practice, working in close partnership with the SEND co-ordinators from the group's other settings to ensure consistency and information sharing.

In her new role as deputy manager, she has provided continuous support and guidance to all staff members, working with the setting manager on team-building and introducing new incentives such as competitions to keep morale high and make Woodlands a fun place to work.

Highly commended **Joy Homersham,** Early Years Teacher, Elmscot Day Nursery, Altrincham

Joy Homersham is a qualified teacher with 20 years' experience, who also has EYP Status. She works in Elmscot's pre-school room as a supernumerary so that she can give

individual time and attention to each child and her colleagues. Joy has been highly praised for her work in supporting children's transition to reception, making strong links with local schools. She is lead EYT for the Elmscot Group, mentors students on work placement, and is a very active member of Trafford's Early Years Teacher Group, helping to pilot ECERS in the area.

Finalist **Hannah Birchall,** Assistant deputy manager, Kids Planet Beamont, Warrington

Criterion

Nominees must have gained Early Years Professional Status or Early Years Teacher Status