



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Bowerdean Nursery School

School Address: Gordon Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 6HR

Head/Principal Mrs Zoe Staines

IQM Lead Mrs Zoe Staines

Assessment Date 9th June 2025

Assessor Mrs Kiranjeet Sokhi

This was Bowerdean Nursery School's first IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark) assessment. The Inclusion Coordinator submitted a comprehensive Centre of Excellence evaluation, accompanied by a detailed timetable. During the assessment, the assessor engaged in a wide range of meetings and reviewed extensive evidence aligned with eight IQM elements. The school's strong commitment to inclusion was evaluated through a variety of evidence sources, including:

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Centre of Excellence Action Plan
- Ofsted Report 2023
- School Website
- Planning Documents
- School learning Walk
- Progression evident in curriculum books
- Tour of school
- Visit to the playground during free-flow

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher
- Teachers
- Nursery Nurses
- Early Years practitioners
- Parents
- Governors
- Office staff



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Overall Evaluation

Bowerdean Nursery School stands as an outstanding model of early years education, offering a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where children are enabled to thrive both academically and emotionally. Situated in an area of considerable disadvantage, where many children begin their educational journey without access to enriching experiences or a wide cultural framework, Bowerdean defies the odds. The nursery ensures every child gains cultural, meaningful real-world learning opportunities, and a broad, balanced education that goes far beyond basic expectations. Through a carefully designed curriculum, highly individualised teaching strategies, deeply embedded parental involvement, and inspirational leadership, Bowerdean lays the essential groundwork for children to succeed not only in education, but in life.

The curriculum at Bowerdean is a testament to the school's ethos of inclusion and aspiration. Designed collaboratively by the Headteacher and an experienced class teacher, the curriculum is completely bespoke and evolves continually in response to the children's developing needs. It is rooted in curiosity, independence, and active learning. Children are not passive recipients of information; instead, they are encouraged to explore, question, and engage through play-based, practical experiences. The school rejects a one-size-fits-all model. Staff adapt their teaching in real time, recognising the ever-changing emotional states, sensory needs, and developmental stages of their pupils. This flexibility ensures that no child is left behind, and every child feels safe and supported.

Real-life experiences are not simply added to the curriculum, they are foundational. Staff integrate these opportunities purposefully to build confidence, independence, and connection to the wider world. One teacher described a weekly outing: "We take them to Lidl to buy their own snacks. It helps them learn to make choices and talk to people." Such trips serve multiple purposes: they reinforce communication, numeracy, decision-making, and real-world social skills. Visits to local parks, the duck pond, and an outdoor swimming pool promote physical health and a respect for nature. Children are also given responsibilities in caring for on-site animals. "We've got a chicken and two ducks. The kids love feeding them and checking their eggs," said a practitioner. These experiences teach empathy, responsibility, and an early understanding of the natural world—essential lessons for children who might not otherwise be exposed to them at home.

Teaching practice across the nursery is consistently exceptional. All staff engage in regular, high-quality training to maintain shared pedagogical approaches and deliver a consistent experience for every child. Bowerdean's use of Widget Cards ensures that language and routines are clearly communicated to all children and reinforcing structure. In addition, Makaton and sign language are seamlessly incorporated into daily interactions. One practitioner shared, "Using sign language helps all our children feel included, especially those who struggle with speech." This multimodal approach ensures that every child, regardless of ability, can communicate, participate, and connect.

Social-emotional learning is treated as equally important as academic development. Staff model and promote empathy, respect, and cooperative behaviour, placing great emphasis on turn-taking, emotional regulation, and positive interactions. Children are given space to express their thoughts and feelings. Their ideas are genuinely valued, with staff consistently listening, reflecting, and responding to children's interests. "We follow their lead," one staff member explained. "If



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they're curious about something, we adapt to explore it further." This approach not only fosters confidence and independence but also builds a strong sense of ownership over learning.

The physical environment is another standout feature of Bowerdean's provision. Classrooms are thoughtfully arranged to promote calm, safety, and exploration. Each area of learning is purposeful and stimulating, supporting both structured and free-flow activities. The playground provides enhanced provision for the children, with multiple activities to stimulate learning through curiosity.

The school offers children abundant opportunities to explore their own place in the world as well as that of others. Learning is thoughtfully connected to both the local environment and the diverse backgrounds represented in stories, including the origins of artists, musicians, and animals. The school ensures that children see their own lives and experiences reflected within the school community. This inclusive approach fosters a strong sense of belonging and broadens children's understanding of the wider world.

A key addition is The White Room, a dedicated sensory space designed to help children who need emotional regulation or a quiet, reflective environment. "All our staff step in to help any child who needs it. It's never left to just one person," said the Headteacher, highlighting the school's commitment to inclusive, whole team support rather than isolated interventions. Every corner of the nursery is used with intent, supporting the idea that every child matters, every moment counts. The Headteacher explained that the "White Room" is a white interior to help reduce sensory overstimulation. This calming environment provides essential support for children with sensory needs. The sensory room is thoughtfully designed and exceptionally well-equipped, offering a valuable space for regulation and focused support. The children thoroughly enjoy exploring the ball pit and are especially captivated by the variety of lights, which add to the sensory experience and create a soothing, engaging atmosphere.

Assessment at Bowerdean is robust and meaningful, acting not as a formality but as a driver of teaching and learning. Observations are frequent, systematic, and detailed. This proactive approach led to a complete redesign of the nursery layout and provision to better accommodate children with complex needs. Regular assessment allows staff to track progress closely, adjust targets in real time, and identify any emerging learning gaps. Feedback is promptly shared with parents, creating a seamless link between home and school. Early interventions are a strength; issues are never left to escalate. Instead, staff act quickly to support development and maximise outcomes.

Transitions are thoughtfully planned well in advance of children starting at the nursery. The school maintains strong communication with previous settings to ensure each child experiences as smooth a transition as possible. As part of this process, the class teacher also conducts home visits to begin building relationships with children and their families. For children with SEND or those who may benefit from additional support, especially with the 2 year olds, a staff member explained that, 'extra settling-in sessions are offered to help them become more familiar and comfortable with the environment. The school works closely with local primary schools to support a smooth transition from Reception to Year 1. This includes arranging visits and collaborative activities that help children become familiar with their new environment, easing the move and ensuring continuity in their learning and development.



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Parental partnership is at the heart of Bowerdean's approach. Communication is timely, transparent, and deeply valued by families. The use of Class Dojo as a communication platform has been particularly successful. "It's great, I can see what events are coming up and talk to the teacher straight away if necessary," said one parent. This open line of dialogue ensures parents remain fully involved in their children's progress. Beyond digital communication, Bowerdean invites families into the learning environment through parent workshops, strategy-sharing sessions, and nursery events. These opportunities not only empower parents with practical skills but also build trust and a shared sense of purpose.

Leadership at Bowerdean is exceptional. The Headteacher's vision is clear, inclusive, and ambitious. She leads by example, setting high expectations for staff and pupils alike, while nurturing a culture of care, reflection, and continuous improvement. The leadership team works in tandem with a highly engaged governing body. Governors visit regularly, review practice, and challenge the school to maintain its high standards. Their support and scrutiny contribute meaningfully to the ongoing development of the setting.

Bowerdean Nursery School excels across all aspects of early years education. From its responsive curriculum and skilled teaching to its inclusive practices and strong community partnerships, every element is finely tuned to support the holistic development of each child. The nursery provides children with the tools, confidence, and experiences they need to thrive—not just in school, but well beyond. Its dedication to innovation, and excellence places it firmly as a leader in the field.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in three years.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Mrs Kiranjeet Sokhi

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
CEO Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Bowerdean Nursery School exemplifies inclusive education at its best, creating a learning environment where every child is recognised, supported, and celebrated. Inclusion is not a bolt-on feature at Bowerdean, it is the foundation of everything they do. Regardless of background, ability, or need, every child is met with empathy, individualised care, and purposeful teaching. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion by welcoming children who have been excluded from other settings or placed on reduced timetables. With a nurturing and supportive approach, the school provides these children with a fresh start, working closely with families and professionals to reintegrate them into full-time education and meet their individual needs. The Headteacher explained that "A child transitioned to a different setting, but they were unable to meet her needs. We stayed in regular contact with her parents and subsequently welcomed her back for another year."

Most children come from homes where English is not their first language. Many are supported through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or are in the process of obtaining one. More than half of the children have specific needs, such as delays in speech and language, difficulties with processing information, or struggles with managing their emotions. Although funding has been reduced, the Headteacher is dedicated to prioritising the children's well-being and ensuring they receive the support they require.

Inclusion at Bowerdean is evident the moment you step into the setting. Teachers offer continuous supervision that supports both freedom and safety, allowing children to explore independently while knowing that support is always nearby. The physical environment is intentionally inclusive and engaging. "The sandpit is always a favourite, it's not just play, it's regulation," one practitioner explained. Children climb barrels, wear high-vis vests for construction play, and use open-ended materials that support sensory integration and imaginative learning. These elements are more than fun, they are carefully chosen tools to support communication, coordination, and social development.

Every child has an individual box with toys to support their individual learning need and a personal "passport", a folder that includes detailed information on their interests, preferred learning styles, communication needs, and speech and language targets. "When a new member of staff joins, they can immediately understand what each child needs, just by looking at their passport," a key worker noted. This level of documentation ensures consistency across staff, allowing everyone to offer informed, responsive support.

Bowerdean's real-time adaptability is one of its greatest strengths. Staff routinely adjust their approach based on each child's emotional state. "If a child's had a hard night, we might sing a different song, offer a puppet show, or give them extra sensory play. It's all about reading the room," explained a staff member. This dynamic approach creates a space where children are not just accommodated, they are understood.



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One standout moment of inclusion came when a child refused to have their nappy changed. Instead of escalating the situation, the Headteacher danced with the child, gently building trust through movement. "It's about meeting them where they are, not where we expect them to be," she said. This interaction didn't just resolve the immediate challenge; it exemplified the school's deep understanding of trauma-informed and emotionally responsive care.

The White Room, introduced in early 2024, has evolved into a cornerstone of Bowerdean's inclusive practice. Originally designed as a sensory space, it now functions as a flexible learning environment for children who benefit from smaller group work and tailored input. "It's not about isolation, it's about creating a space where they can succeed, then supporting them to rejoin the larger group when they're ready," a teacher shared. Children access personalised learning boxes, engage in outdoor sensory tasks, and self-register within designated classes while still enjoying flexible transitions between rooms. The room's success reflects the school's wider ethos: flexible, child-led, and always inclusive. The outstanding objects of reference, thoughtfully created by a member of staff, have played a significant role in supporting children to understand daily routines and enhance their communication. These tailored resources have proven highly effective in promoting independence and reducing anxiety, particularly for children with additional needs.

Communication is central to Bowerdean's inclusive values. The nursery implements a range of strategies to ensure every child can understand and be understood. Sign language and Makaton are used across the setting, while Widget Cards, visual schedules, and symbols support children who find verbal communication challenging. "We use signs all the time, it's second nature now," said one practitioner. "Even the verbal children use them." These visual tools are not only practical; they build a culture of empathy and cooperation. This aligns with the school's vision of encouraging children to confidently 'have a go' and embrace new challenges.

The school's emotional literacy programme, led by a trained ELSA practitioner, uses resources to help children name and regulate their emotions. "We check in every morning with feelings cards. It gives the children language for what they're going through," explained a key worker. Emotional coaching is woven into everyday interactions, supporting self-awareness and helping children manage conflict, transitions, and sensory overload.

One remarkable example of impact involved a child who was non-verbal and disengaged at the start of term. Through targeted interventions, particularly music sessions, emotional scaffolding, and sensory play, the child began to verbalise needs and participate in group turn-taking activities. "Just last week, he said 'my turn' during a drumming circle. We all cheered," said his key worker. This milestone, though small to some, was transformational, demonstrating the power of patient, responsive teaching. Initially, the children found it challenging to be near one another during an activity. However, with consistent support and positive reinforcement, they have made noticeable progress and are now much more comfortable and tolerant in each other's company.



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Parental partnership is another pillar of inclusion at Bowerdean. Families are not just welcomed, they are seen as vital co-educators. Stay-and-play sessions ease the transition process, allowing children to adjust with their caregiver present. Parents are offered regular feedback, strategy-sharing workshops, and open invitations to engage in nursery life. “We never turn a child away. Every family who comes here deserves our full commitment,” the Headteacher affirmed.

Inclusion at Bowerdean is not a one-off project or a response to policy, it is a deeply held value that informs every decision, every interaction, and every strategy. From responsive teaching and emotional coaching to personalised support and family engagement, the nursery offers a model of best practice that is both compassionate and effective. Through this unrelenting focus on meeting each child’s unique needs, Bowerdean Nursery School continues to set the benchmark for inclusive early years provision.

Next Steps:

As a next step, Bowerdean Nursery School is well-positioned to further enhance its impact by actively sharing its core values and exemplary approaches with a wider audience. By showcasing its inclusive ethos, reflective practice, and commitment to child-centred learning across local networks, training forums, and early years partnerships, the nursery can support the professional development of other settings. Sharing these values will not only celebrate the strengths of Bowerdean’s provision but also contribute to raising standards more broadly across the sector.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Bowerdean Nursery School exemplifies outstanding leadership, strategic governance, and a culture of rigorous accountability that drives excellence at every level of practice. These elements are not abstract values, they are embedded in the daily operations, relationships, and long-term vision of the school. Leadership at Bowerdean is purpose-driven and inclusive, with a relentless commitment to ensuring that every child, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), receives access to high-quality learning and care.

At the heart of this culture is the headteacher, whose leadership style blends professional expertise with deep emotional intelligence. She leads from the front, highly visible, hands-on, and consistently present in learning spaces. Staff describe her as “someone who doesn’t just manage, but mentors,” and “always makes time to support both staff and children.” She teaches a class herself, and her visibility enables her to model effective strategies and provide timely support, ensuring the school’s inclusive ethos is consistently enacted in classrooms and the playground.

Teachers and room leaders are empowered to take ownership of their practice, drive initiatives, and lead by example. Continuous professional development is embedded in the school’s culture, not treated as a one-off event. Training is tailored and often staff-led, meaning colleagues share expertise and reflect on real classroom dilemmas together. This reflective approach ensures high levels of consistency while encouraging innovation. Staff feel confident in taking risks and trialling new ideas because they know they are supported. “I feel supported by the teachers here and I have learnt a lot of new skills.”

The governing body plays an active and informed role in maintaining high standards of provision and accountability. Governors are not passive recipients of reports, they engage directly with the school community. The Chair of Governors reported that, “We make regular visits to observe practice, review data thoroughly, and participate in leadership meetings.” Their understanding of SEND provision is particularly strong, which enables them to challenge and support effectively. A governor explained, “We don’t just ask for data, we come into school to see what’s happening. We want to understand how each child is really doing, especially the most vulnerable.”

Governors provide valuable scrutiny on a range of areas, including outcomes for SEND pupils, the allocation of funding such as Early Years Pupil Premium, and the impact of professional development. They also ensure that the curriculum remains ambitious and inclusive by evaluating how effectively it meets the needs of all learners.

Accountability at Bowerdean is rooted in evidence and reflection. Data collection is purposeful and used dynamically to inform decisions. For example, children’s progress is tracked not only against developmental milestones but also in terms of personal goals related to communication, emotional regulation, and engagement. Formal tools such as the Oxfordshire Developmental Journal are used to support SEND tracking, while internal observations and narrative assessments help create a rich picture of each child’s progress. This balanced approach allows the leadership team to respond to both individual needs and cohort-level trends.



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The Headteacher and staff regularly review this data during planning and reflection meetings. For instance, a noticeable delay in expressive language among a group of children led to the creation of a new music and movement intervention, combining rhythm with vocabulary exposure. Within a few weeks, staff observed improved verbal participation and greater social interaction during group time. This kind of adaptive leadership, where analysis leads directly to action, is a hallmark of Bowerdean's effectiveness.

Another example of data-informed strategy involves the ongoing monitoring of children who may be at risk of developmental delay due to socio-economic disadvantage. Rather than waiting for gaps to widen, the school uses early observations to trigger additional support, ranging from home learning packs to targeted language groups. These strategies are evaluated not just on academic outcomes, but on wellbeing, confidence, and social development.

Leadership is equally focused on partnerships beyond the school gates. Bowerdean works closely with families, external professionals, and other local early years settings. Parent engagement is strong and strategic, with families regularly involved in planning, reviewing strategies, and attending stay-and-play sessions. These transition sessions are especially valuable for children who need extra time to settle, as they allow parents to model calm, trusting interactions with staff while their children adjust. "It was such a relief to be welcomed in," one parent shared. "They didn't rush my child. They really got to know us first."

The staff team at the school is impressively well-trained, with expertise in the Curiosity Approach, Attention Autism, and Makaton. This broad range of training equips them to effectively support children's needs and actively foster engagement. There is a clear emphasis on partnership with parents, who are encouraged to use consistent strategies at home to reinforce learning. This collaborative approach greatly benefits the children's development and continuity of support.

The leadership and management at Bowerdean Nursery School are defined by inclusivity, evidence-based practice, and unrelenting ambition for every child. The headteacher's hands-on, strategic leadership fosters a thriving, innovative culture where staff feel valued and children feel safe and inspired. Governors provide challenge and insight, while systems of accountability ensure that decisions are driven by data, reflection, and impact. Through strong leadership, responsive teaching, and a deep commitment to equity, Bowerdean ensures that no child is left behind, and every child is empowered to succeed.

Next Steps:

As a meaningful next step in its development, Bowerdean Nursery School would benefit from extending its collaboration to include nursery heads and leaders beyond its Federation. Engaging in cross-institutional partnerships will allow Bowerdean to share its outstanding practices, particularly around inclusive pedagogy, environment design, and responsive assessment, with a wider professional community. By initiating peer-learning opportunities, school visits, and joint training sessions, the nursery can



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contribute to broader system-wide improvement while also learning from other high-quality settings.

Working alongside leaders outside the Federation would provide valuable opportunities for reflection and innovation. It would allow Bowerdean to test its approaches in diverse contexts and gain fresh perspectives that may inform further refinements to its own practice. These relationships can also strengthen sector cohesion and create a supportive network of early years leaders committed to excellence, collaboration, and shared learning. In doing so, Bowerdean can further cement its role as a leader in early childhood education, not only within its own community but across the wider educational landscape.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

Bowerdean Nursery School delivers a rich, dynamic curriculum designed to meet every child's unique developmental needs. Co-created by the Headteacher and a senior teacher with deep classroom experience, the curriculum is rooted in children's curiosity and real-life experiences. It blends structure with flexibility, fostering independence, creativity, and inclusive participation at every stage.

Adaptation lies at the heart of Bowerdean's approach. The curriculum is not a fixed set of plans, it is a living, responsive framework shaped by each child's emotional state, level of engagement, and moment-by-moment needs. Teachers closely observe children and adjust their approach in real time. If a child struggles to concentrate, they may adapt by using sensory tools, offering movement breaks, or changing the delivery method to maintain focus and reduce anxiety. These micro-adaptations are embedded into the ethos of the nursery, ensuring that every learner is supported in a way that is both empathetic and effective. The White Room was created to support the children with significant needs to access a tailor approach to their needs. The children are integrated into free flow with the other children and receive targeted support when necessary to develop their needs and close the gap with their peers.

Clear, consistent communication is another key strength. Staff provide structured, reassuring instructions that guide children through activities and transitions. This consistency offers a sense of predictability, particularly important for children with SEND. Objects of reference, Makaton, and visual cues are used throughout the environment, ensuring that communication is accessible and inclusive. One parent commented, "My child was non-verbal when they started, and now they use signs, pictures, and even a few words. The progress is amazing."

Bowerdean's curriculum extends well beyond the classroom, embedding real-world experiences that bring learning to life. Children walk to Lidl to buy their own snack—a routine that builds decision-making skills, confidence, and social understanding. A teacher described how one child, initially shy and non-communicative, began confidently asking for their favourite fruit after several visits, a moment celebrated by the whole class. These experiences are not occasional field trips; they are integral to the curriculum, reinforcing learning in meaningful contexts. The children also take part in Forest School sessions held in a nearby woodland area. These sessions provide valuable opportunities for outdoor learning, where children can explore nature, build confidence, and develop teamwork and problem-solving skills in a natural environment.

Other activities include local visits promoting environmental awareness and early science concepts. Outdoor swimming sessions provide rich physical and sensory stimulation, and daily interaction with the nursery's own animals, a chicken and two ducks, offers ongoing lessons in care, empathy, and responsibility. These encounters develop not only cognitive and motor skills but also emotional intelligence and a sense of connection with the world around them.

Within the nursery setting, learning environments are designed to promote active exploration and curiosity. Outdoor areas are extensively resourced, with climbing equipment, natural materials, and sensory-rich zones that encourage physical



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development and imaginative play. Indoors, children engage with a wide variety of materials, from musical instruments to construction sets, to stimulate inquiry and creative thinking. Music and sensory experiences, such as turn-taking with drums or exploring different textures and sounds, are woven into daily routines to support language development, regulation, and collaboration. The art and music projects served as an excellent example of personalised, experiential learning. These bespoke initiatives captured the children's interest, offering them meaningful opportunities to engage, explore new concepts, and enjoy rich, hands-on experiences beyond the traditional curriculum.

It was a pleasure to observe the outdoor provision at Bowerdean, which offers a rich and inspiring multi-level environment that supports children's learning, development, and exploration through play. On the lower level, the range of resources, such as the sandpit, climbing frame, outdoor kitchen, a reading shed where a staff member was reading to a child and building blocks, are thoughtfully arranged to encourage imaginative play, social interaction, and physical development. These areas clearly invite children to follow their interests and build new skills in a hands-on, meaningful way.

A standout feature is the Bowerdean Outdoor Orchestra, a creative installation of frying pans attached to the wall. Children were visibly delighted to make music here, freely exploring sound and rhythm. This inventive use of everyday materials shows real innovation and a deep understanding of child-led learning.

It was also lovely to see staff supporting children in a minibeast hunt. One child, full of excitement, exclaimed, "He found an ant!" a moment that captured the joy of discovery and the strength of adult-child interactions.

The upper level continues the theme of learning through movement, with slides and rock-climbing equipment designed to develop physical confidence and strength. Every space in this environment has a clear purpose and offers opportunities for growth. At the top of the playground, children have access to trees, and animal pens housing a chicken and ducks an excellent way to teach responsibility, empathy, and an understanding of nature. Staff engagement was warm and purposeful, as shown when one adult said, "We looked for eggs this morning, didn't we?" highlighting ongoing dialogue and meaningful shared experiences.

The garden area is another highlight. Children are actively involved in growing vegetables such as tomatoes and broccoli, nurturing a connection to healthy living and environmental awareness. This space seamlessly flows into a car-themed area where children can ride vehicles, park them, and use a car wash, complete with road signs. This imaginative play area wonderfully introduces real-life contexts and promotes understanding of the world around them.

Overall, the outdoor provision at Bowerdean is a model of best practice. It combines creativity, intentional planning, and high-quality adult-child interactions to create a truly enriching environment. It was a delight to observe such a well-thought-out and vibrant space where children are clearly thriving.



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Targeted support is also central to the curriculum structure. Interventions are carefully planned and based on observation and assessment, whether for speech and language development, sensory integration, or emotional coaching. These are delivered consistently, with all staff trained to provide high-quality, individualised support. Staff collaborate closely, regularly reflecting on practice, sharing insights, and refining strategies to ensure that learning remains effective, inclusive, and deeply child centred. Bowerdean's approach recognises that pupil engagement is not just about delivering exciting activities, it's about listening deeply to what children need in each moment and responding with care and creativity. One practitioner explained, "You can have the best-planned activity, but if a child isn't ready, you must change course and that's okay. That's how we teach here." Staff from the other nursery within the Federation regularly support the team at Bowerdean, ensuring that practices are consistent and shared across the schools. This collaborative approach promotes a cohesive learning environment and enhances the quality of provision for all children.

This deep responsiveness ensures that children feel seen, heard, and valued. The nursery's ethos encourages every child to take risks, try new things, and recover from setbacks. Staff model patience, enthusiasm, and belief in every child's potential. Whether it's a child finally joining a group game after weeks of watching from the edge or another learning to take turns using Makaton signs, progress is recognised and celebrated with genuine joy.

The curriculum also supports the development of emotional resilience. Teachers build strong, trusting relationships with children, using emotional coaching strategies to help them name feelings, resolve conflicts, and build confidence. As one teacher reflected, "We don't expect children to be ready, we help them feel ready."

The entire team shares a collective responsibility for all learners. Staff consistency, both in expectations and in the way they communicate and support, provides a sense of security and belonging for every child. Staff are not just educators, they are co-regulators, facilitators, and champions of every child's journey. Bowerdean Nursery School's curriculum is grounded in responsiveness, curiosity, and compassion. The thoughtful balance of structured learning, real-world exploration, and tailored adaptation enables children to thrive in every sense academically, socially, and emotionally.

Next Steps:

As a valuable next step, Bowerdean Nursery School could enhance its already rich and adaptive curriculum by engaging in outreach with other early years settings and primary schools. By visiting a variety of schools, staff can gain new insights into how different environments support curriculum delivery, pupil engagement, and inclusive practice. These visits would offer fresh inspiration and practical ideas for enriching Bowerdean's provision particularly in relation to adapting curriculum content for pupils with high needs and varying learning profiles. Observing how other schools design learning experiences, structure transitions, and embed child-led engagement strategies would support continuous refinement of Bowerdean's own curriculum model. This outreach approach would also create opportunities for reflective dialogue and shared learning, allowing staff to compare how different approaches to curriculum



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planning and adaptation impact pupil motivation, independence, and progress. It could lead to the introduction of new topics, teaching strategies, or environmental enhancements that further strengthen pupil engagement. By actively seeking external perspectives and remaining open to innovation, Bowerdean can continue to evolve its curriculum to meet the changing needs of its pupils, ensuring that every child remains curious, involved, and supported in their learning journey. As Bowerdean has experienced difficulties in finding other schools willing to collaborate, the LA Early Years Advisor could provide valuable support in facilitating partnerships.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

Bowerdean Nursery School is widely recognised for its outstanding teaching and learning, underpinned by consistent practice, inclusive pedagogy, and carefully structured planning. The nursery's approach is both strategic and deeply responsive, ensuring that every child receives a high-quality educational experience shaped by skilled staff, thoughtfully designed environments, and evidence-informed methods.

At the heart of Bowerdean's success lies a learning environment that has been intentionally crafted to promote independence, curiosity, and emotional wellbeing. Each space, from the outdoor garden to the structured classroom areas, has a clear learning purpose. Visual displays and tactile resources invite exploration, while calm areas and sensory materials offer children the chance to regulate, reflect, and reset.

One of the most impactful spaces is the school's sensory room, which provides a calm and adaptive sanctuary for children who require support with emotional regulation or sensory processing. Unlike traditional SEND models that isolate specialist provision, Bowerdean ensures that all staff are trained to support all children. There are no assigned "SEND-only" adults; instead, the entire team shares ownership and responsibility. This inclusive model builds a culture of collective care and avoids any child being "othered" or excluded from wider learning opportunities.

Daily self-registration activities effectively promote early reading skills and help foster independence. The use of named drawers allows children to take responsibility for storing their artwork and belongings, further supporting their sense of ownership. Children are encouraged and supported to develop early writing skills by making marks to represent their names, with many confidently recognising their friends' names as well.

Books and reading are deeply embedded in the daily learning routine. Planning is thoughtfully linked to stories, with staff regularly reading to children, and books are readily accessible both indoors and outdoors every day. The learning environment is rich in written language, featuring labels, descriptions, and vibrant displays that surround and inspire the children's literacy development. Phonics is taught through the books.

Communication is central to Bowerdean's teaching ethos. Children are supported using a range of consistent and accessible communication tools. For instance, Widget Cards are used across all settings to reinforce language cues and visual structure, while sign language is routinely integrated alongside verbal communication. This multi-sensory strategy helps all children, particularly those with communication needs, to participate meaningfully in the learning process. Staff also use simple, repetitive phrasing to support understanding, reduce cognitive load, and build confidence in language use.

A strong example of the nursery's commitment to emotional development and staff expertise is its internal ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) training model. A trained SEN teacher who completed the ELSA programme now mentors and trains colleagues across the setting, ensuring strategies like emotional check-ins, naming feelings, and developing coping mechanisms are embedded throughout daily



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interactions. This ensures that emotional wellbeing is not a one-off intervention, but a consistent part of classroom life. One practitioner noted, "We don't wait for children to 'have a moment' we build emotional support into everything we do."

Teaching practices at the nursery are shared across partner settings, with regular staff observations and shared planning sessions. This ensures that the high standards set at Bowerdean are not isolated but influence early years practice across a wider community. Staff from other nurseries frequently visit to observe and implement effective strategies, and staff from Bowerdean visit the other nurseries. The pedagogical approach at Bowerdean is highly intentional yet flexible. Teachers plan sessions that are carefully aligned with developmental goals, but they adapt in real time according to children's needs. Staff continuously observe and respond to engagement levels, attention span, and emotional readiness. For example, if a child becomes dysregulated during a group task, they might be gently guided to a sensory space or offered a parallel activity that meets the same learning objective in a less stimulating format. This ensures that learning is never forced but facilitated.

The class teacher shared, "We do lots of music and teach through songs and rhymes," highlighting the important role that music plays in supporting children's learning and language development. Phonics is taught through engaging stories, making learning both meaningful and enjoyable. The Headteacher shared that the current story focuses on a caterpillar, with a particular emphasis on introducing the "c" sound. There are plenty of opportunities for mark-making, including the use of chalk in the playground, which encourages children to practice their early writing skills in a playful outdoor setting.

When misconceptions arise, they are addressed immediately and with sensitivity. Staff use scaffolding techniques, modelling, questioning, repeating, and rephrasing, to guide understanding without undermining confidence. These in-the-moment teaching decisions are supported by ongoing reflection among staff, who regularly meet to discuss what's working, what needs adjusting, and how individual children are progressing. This culture of reflective practice ensures that staff continually refine their methods and remain responsive to emerging needs.

Resources are also carefully selected to promote rich learning experiences. Natural materials, open-ended play items, musical instruments, and books are available in every area, supporting multiple types of learners. A child created rhythms on a drum while learning about turn-taking, coordination, and self-expression. In each case, the pedagogy is built on understanding the child as a whole learner, not just as a set of targets to be achieved.

The outdoor provision at Bowerdean is a model of best practice. It combines creativity, intentional planning, and high-quality adult-child interactions to create a truly enriching environment. It was a delight to observe such a well-thought-out and vibrant space where children are clearly thriving.

Planning at Bowerdean reflects a deep understanding of how young children learn. Long-term objectives are carefully mapped, but daily plans remain fluid to accommodate the unpredictable nature of early years development. Teachers make ongoing, formative



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assessments and adjust activities to ensure that every child, regardless of their starting point, continues to make progress. Planning is collaborative, with staff sharing observations and insights to ensure a cohesive and consistent approach.

Bowerdean's emphasis on family partnership is another vital component of its teaching and learning ethos. The school invests in helping families understand the approaches used at nursery so they can extend them at home. Workshops, stay-and-play sessions, and individual conversations provide parents with practical tools and language strategies. One parent shared, "The staff taught me how to use visual cues and sign at home. Now my child knows what to expect at bedtime, and it's changed our evenings." This partnership reinforces learning consistency and strengthens the child's sense of security.

Moreover, families are actively invited to participate in shaping their child's learning journey. Staff listen carefully to parental insights, share progress through visual learning journals, and co-create strategies for supporting development. The relationship is reciprocal. Families are not passive recipients of information, but valued collaborators. Teaching is a fluid, relational process rooted in trust, empathy, and high expectations. Whether through a simple shared story, an art project, a collaborative construction project, or a carefully scaffolded social interaction, every experience is designed to help children flourish.

Bowerdean places a strong emphasis on messy, hands-on learning, which the Headteacher describes as fun and engaging. Many parents have remarked on how their children come home with paint on their clothes, a clear sign of active creative exploration. Music and art-based projects are a prominent feature of the curriculum, allowing children to fully immerse themselves in the arts and express their creativity freely.

This commitment to excellence is not confined to the nursery itself; it radiates outward through Federation-wide professional development, shared pedagogy, and family engagement. Bowerdean stands as a model of how early years teaching, when grounded in empathy, collaboration, and curiosity, can lead to truly transformational outcomes.

Next Steps:

To further strengthen the already outstanding teaching and learning at Bowerdean Nursery School, a valuable next step would be to increase staff access to external training opportunities. While internal CPD is embedded and highly effective, building on the opportunities that Bowerdean gives to staff, accessing wider professional networks and external courses would expose staff to new methodologies, research-based strategies, and national developments in early years education. Targeted training in areas such as trauma-informed teaching, bilingual support, or innovative SEND practices could enhance staff confidence and widen their skillset. External professional development would also contribute to sustained staff motivation and consistent, pedagogical excellence.



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Alongside training, expanding collaboration beyond the current federation would support deeper professional learning and reflective practice. Staff could benefit from structured opportunities to observe peers in different settings, take part in joint planning sessions with other early years practitioners, or join regional networks focused on shared challenges and innovations. These collaborative partnerships would foster fresh thinking, inspire adaptive practice, and ensure that Bowerdean continues to lead with a reflective, outward-facing mindset, constantly seeking new ways to refine, improve, and inspire high-quality early learning experiences for every child.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Bowerdean Nursery School adopts a reflective, embedded approach to assessment that forms the backbone of its teaching, planning, and provision. Far from being a tick-box process or an isolated activity, assessment at Bowerdean is woven into daily practice and used to inform every aspect of the child's learning journey. This proactive use of assessment data ensures that children's developmental progress, emerging needs, and potential challenges are identified early and responded to with precision and creativity. The leadership team at Bowerdean has consistently used assessment not only to track progress but to drive systemic change.

Previously, through the careful analysis of assessment outcomes and observational data, it became evident that the existing classroom arrangements and teaching strategies did not adequately support children with high and complex needs. Traditional pedagogical approaches, while suitable for many, were not effectively engaging children who required more sensory-focused, regulated spaces to access learning. Rather than simply adding isolated interventions, the school acted decisively. They re-evaluated the entire learning model and restructured provision accordingly. This led to the creation of The White Room, an innovative, highly adaptive space designed to support emotional regulation, provide sensory input, and enable a calmer pace of learning. The decision to create such a room was rooted directly in what assessment had revealed: that a significant cohort of pupils needed a more responsive and individualised learning environment to thrive.

This commitment to evidence-based adaptation defines Bowerdean's approach. Assessment is conducted continuously through observation, focused learning reviews, speech and language screenings, and emotional development tracking. Staff do not simply collect data, they analyse it collaboratively, reflect on its implications, and adapt their strategies. Weekly staff discussions include reviews of pupil progress, which often result in subtle or significant changes to lesson delivery, environmental layout, or the pacing of activities.

Rather than relying solely on summative reports or termly reviews, Bowerdean prioritises real-time, formative assessment. Practitioners observe how children interact with materials, peers, and adults, noting levels of focus, independence, emotional regulation, and communication. These observations are not left unexamined. They are compiled, reviewed, and used to tailor interventions on a daily basis. For instance, if a child is repeatedly observed withdrawing from group activities, staff will explore the cause, whether sensory overload, lack of comprehension, or anxiety and make responsive adjustments to support engagement.

One powerful example of how assessment shapes provision is seen in how staff address communication needs. Speech and language assessments are not reserved for children with formal diagnoses. All pupils are observed and assessed in terms of expressive and receptive communication. When needs are identified, targeted interventions are put in place, such as one-to-one communication sessions using Makaton, or supported play scenarios designed to prompt language development. These interventions are tracked for effectiveness and adapted regularly, ensuring that no child is left behind or receives an unsuitable or stagnant intervention.



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Emotional development is another area where Bowerdean's assessment model excels. Staff use emotion check-ins, reflective journals, and structured observation to monitor pupils' emotional wellbeing. Patterns in behaviour, such as avoidance, frustration, or outbursts, are viewed not as problems to manage, but as messages to interpret. The data gathered here informs regulation strategies that are integrated into each child's learning plan. For example, if a child is assessed as needing more movement-based regulation, staff will offer opportunities for outdoor play, sensory circuits, or physical tasks before transitioning into quieter learning. During a music session, when a child became dysregulated, the teacher responded calmly and thoughtfully by gently removing him from the group. This allowed the child to select a calming activity, supporting his emotional regulation in a sensitive and effective manner.

Crucially, the school's assessment system is goal-driven but flexible. Each child has personalised learning goals based on prior assessments. However, these goals are regularly reviewed and adjusted according to new insights. Children are not forced through a rigid progression ladder; instead, they are supported through developmentally appropriate steps, with clear awareness of their individual trajectory. This approach supports children in making meaningful progress and ensures that expectations remain high but realistic.

Parental involvement is a key strength of Bowerdean's assessment approach. Families are not only informed of progress through termly reports but are also engaged in ongoing dialogue about their child's development. Staff hold regular meetings and informal conversations with parents, sharing observations, discussing emerging needs, and celebrating achievements. This openness builds trust and ensures that the insights from home and school are aligned. One parent commented, "I always feel like I'm part of the process. They don't just tell me what's going on they ask what I'm seeing at home too."

In addition to regular updates, families are provided with strategies they can use at home to mirror the support given at nursery. Whether it's using a visual schedule, implementing consistent routines, or supporting language development through specific games, parents are empowered to reinforce learning outside of the classroom. This shared responsibility strengthens continuity and reinforces key skills.

Assessment at Bowerdean also plays a vital role in transition planning. As children prepare to move on to primary school or into other provisions, detailed assessment records accompany them, providing receiving schools with a clear, holistic understanding of the child's learning style, strengths, and support needs. Transition meetings include discussions with families, staff, and external professionals where necessary, ensuring that no aspect of a child's profile is overlooked. This seamless handover contributes to smoother transitions and reduced anxiety for children and families alike.

The staff team works collectively to review trends in assessment data over time, not just at the individual level but across the cohort. This allows the leadership team to identify whole-setting priorities. For example, if assessments indicate that a specific group of children, such as by gender, SEN, or pupil premium status, are struggling, targeted



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provision is introduced. This responsive approach ensures that planning is consistently informed by the actual needs of the children.

Bowerdean Nursery School uses assessment in a practical and responsive way, regularly reviewing children's progress to inform planning and adapt provision where needed. Far from being a separate process or bureaucratic burden, assessment is an integral and dynamic part of daily life at the nursery. It informs decisions, drives innovation, and most importantly, enables every child to be seen, understood, and supported.

By embedding observation, data analysis, goal setting, and family collaboration into a seamless cycle, the school ensures that its provision is constantly evolving in line with children's real needs. Through this reflective and responsive model, Bowerdean offers an inclusive, adaptable, and forward-thinking approach to early years education, one where no child is left behind, and every child is given the opportunity to thrive.

Next Steps:

As a next step for strengthening assessment practices, particularly for pupils with SEND, Bowerdean Nursery School could explore the use of additional, specialist assessment tools and programs designed to capture nuanced developmental progress. While current observation-based assessments and individual goal setting are robust and effective, introducing alternative or supplementary assessment frameworks could help identify subtler aspects of need, particularly in areas such as communication, sensory integration, or cognitive readiness. Tools such as the Early Years Developmental Journal, the Engagement Model, or bespoke SEND profiling software could provide deeper insights, support targeted intervention planning, and ensure no aspect of a child's development is overlooked.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

Bowerdean Nursery School fosters a learning environment that is consistently calm, inclusive, and deeply responsive to each child's individual needs. The atmosphere throughout the nursery is one of warmth and safety, allowing children to feel relaxed and confident enough to fully engage in their learning. One parent commented, "Every time I collect my child, they're calm and happy, it's obvious the nursery prioritises emotional wellbeing." This calm environment is the product of highly skilled staff who understand the importance of emotional validation and nurture. Rather than relying on traditional disciplinary methods, the nursery focuses on helping children recognise and regulate their emotions. A practitioner explained, "We help children name their feelings and give them tools to manage those feelings, which supports their growing independence and self-control."

The staff's in-depth knowledge of each child ensures that behavioural challenges are addressed swiftly and compassionately. They adopt a proactive approach to behaviour management, focusing on emotional regulation rather than punishment, which encourages children to express their feelings safely. An Early Years Educator reflected, "It's so good to see a child who was upset, calm down and come back ready to learn and play." This approach nurtures resilience and self-awareness, helping children develop healthy emotional habits from an early age.

Bowerdean's commitment to providing cultural experiences enhances children's personal development by broadening their understanding of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. The curriculum is rich with real-life experiences that foster empathy, respect, and self-expression. This focus on diversity is closely linked with empowering children to make choices and express themselves freely, which builds their confidence and emotional intelligence. The nursery's philosophy is that emotional growth and academic learning go hand in hand; by embedding these values into daily routines, children develop the skills they need to navigate relationships and the wider world confidently.

Circle time is a key part of this personal development journey. It serves as a vital space where children can share their thoughts and feelings, enhancing their communication and self-awareness. Staff ensure that children's voices are heard and respected. One parent shared, "My child comes home talking about circle time and how they get to share their feelings and listen to friends. it's wonderful to see their confidence blossom." During these sessions, conversations focus on emotions, social skills, and problem-solving, helping children develop empathy and resilience. Staff use structured activities during circle time to encourage teamwork, turn-taking, and attentive listening, all of which are essential social skills. A teacher described circle time as "the moment where children learn to understand themselves and each other in a supportive environment," highlighting its importance in nurturing emotional growth.



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The nursery's approach to behaviour and personal development ensures that children learn in a calm, structured, and emotionally supportive setting. This positive environment allows children to feel safe and motivated, fostering a genuine love for learning. As one parent put it, "Bowerdean doesn't just teach letters and numbers; they teach kindness, patience, and how to be a good friend. That's what makes all the difference."

Next Steps:

As a next step, Bowerdean Nursery School should continue to embed and consolidate the excellent behaviour practices already in place, ensuring consistency across all staff and settings. This includes maintaining the focus on emotional regulation, modelling calm and empathetic interactions, and using reflective opportunities such as circle time to support children's personal growth. Ongoing professional dialogue and internal mentoring can help sustain these strengths, while reflective observations and staff feedback will ensure that good practice continues to evolve responsively to the needs of each cohort.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Bowerdean Nursery School is deeply committed to fostering a strong and effective partnership with parents, carers, and guardians. Recognising the essential role families play in a child's early development, the nursery places great emphasis on engaging, informing, and involving them actively in every stage of their child's educational journey. This collaboration is founded on open communication, shared learning strategies, and mutual respect, creating a robust network of support that benefits both children and their families.

Central to Bowerdean's success in this area is its dedication to clear, accessible, and timely communication. The school utilises the Class Dojo app as its primary digital platform to keep parents informed about their child's day-to-day progress, learning activities, and upcoming events. This app has been widely embraced by families for its convenience and immediacy, allowing parents to receive updates, photos, and messages in real-time. Many parents have expressed appreciation for this method, highlighting how it provides reassurance and a window into their child's nursery experience, even when they are unable to be physically present.

Beyond digital communication, Bowerdean nurtures personal relationships through daily face-to-face interactions. Staff members make themselves available at the school gate during drop-off and pick-up times, encouraging informal conversations where parents can share concerns, ask questions, or celebrate successes. These everyday moments foster a genuine sense of trust and partnership, making parents feel welcomed and valued as integral members of the nursery community. The approachable nature of staff ensures that families feel comfortable discussing any issues promptly and receiving immediate, empathetic support.

The nursery also actively promotes parental involvement through structured workshops and interactive sessions, often hosted in collaboration with the local Child Centre. Over the course of the year, six practical sessions were held, providing parents with hands-on experience of the teaching strategies used at nursery. These workshops cover essential areas such as supporting communication, managing behaviour, and fostering early learning at home. By equipping parents with these tools, Bowerdean empowers families to extend the nursery's approaches into their daily routines, ensuring consistency and reinforcing children's development.

In addition to these workshops, the school encourages parents to visit the classrooms, where they can observe teaching practices in action and participate in shared activities. This transparency not only deepens parents' understanding of the nursery curriculum but also strengthens the connection between home and school. It creates opportunities for parents to discuss individual learning plans and seek tailored advice on supporting their child's specific needs. This collaborative engagement underscores the nursery's belief that education is a shared responsibility between staff and families.

Music and sensory learning are key components of Bowerdean's curriculum, and the school actively encourages parents to incorporate these elements at home. Music, in particular, is recognised for its calming and creative benefits, supporting emotional regulation and social interaction. A memorable example of successful parental involvement occurred when a parent, inspired by the soothing music played regularly at nursery, chose to download the



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same tracks for use at home. This simple but effective gesture helped establish a consistent, comforting atmosphere that bridged the nursery and home environments, reinforcing emotional well-being and continuity for the child.

Similarly, sensory play is promoted extensively within the nursery setting, offering children opportunities to explore different textures, movements, and materials. Parents are encouraged to replicate these experiences at home through messy play, tactile activities, and creative exploration. This shared focus on sensory integration supports children's cognitive and physical development and also provides families with practical ways to engage meaningfully with their children's learning outside of school hours.

Bowerdean Nursery School continually creates opportunities for parents to become directly involved in their child's education. Whether through classroom visits, parent-child interactive sessions, or tailored advice on developmental support, the school fosters a sense of empowerment and confidence among families. Parents are not passive recipients but active partners in the learning process, contributing valuable insights and feedback that help shape individualised support for each child. This inclusive and participatory ethos is reflected in the nursery's ongoing commitment to accessibility, ensuring that all families, regardless of background or circumstances, feel welcome and equipped to engage fully.

The nursery's strong emphasis on partnership with families extends beyond academic support to include emotional and social development. Staff regularly communicate strategies for behaviour management and emotional regulation that parents can use at home, creating consistency that helps children feel secure and understood across settings. Workshops and informal discussions often focus on topics such as fostering independence, building routines, and managing transitions, which are crucial in the early years.

Bowerdean Nursery School demonstrated strong practice in engaging parents, carers, and guardians as vital contributors to children's early education. Through regular, meaningful communication, hands-on workshops, and genuine partnership, the nursery strengthens the bridge between home and school. This collaborative approach ensures that children receive consistent support, nurturing their growth both academically and emotionally. By prioritising inclusivity, transparency, and shared learning, Bowerdean sets a high standard for family engagement in early years settings, providing every child with the solid foundation they need to thrive.

Next Steps:

As a next step, Bowerdean Nursery School should consider offering more tailored sessions for parents that respond directly to the specific needs and interests of individual families. These could include targeted workshops on supporting speech and language at home, managing emotional regulation, or understanding specific strategies used in the nursery for SEND support. By consulting with parents about what topics would be most helpful and offering flexible formats, such as small group sessions, one-to-one support, or digital resources, the nursery can deepen its already strong home-school partnership and ensure that families feel even more empowered to support their children's development confidently and consistently.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Bowerdean Nursery School is deeply rooted in its commitment to fostering robust and meaningful connections with the local, wider, and global community. This commitment extends far beyond one off events or surface-level partnerships, it is embedded in the nursery's ethos, curriculum, and everyday practice. Through consistent collaboration across the Federation, dynamic local engagement, and a forward-looking global perspective, Bowerdean ensures that every child benefits from a rich and inclusive learning experience shaped by real-world context.

At the heart of Bowerdean's local engagement is its seamless collaboration with nearby schools, nurseries, and family centres. These partnerships are purposeful and strategic, designed to support transition, promote continuity in learning, and build a strong sense of community cohesion. Children from Bowerdean regularly visit local primary schools to become familiar with new settings, easing what can often be a challenging transition period. The Reception teacher noted that, "the partner schools notice that children from Bowerdean arrive with confidence and emotional readiness and staff feedback stating that it's clear their early years education has set a powerful foundation."

Equally, the school maintains strong ties with the local Family Centre, co-hosting workshops and community events that support the wider family unit. An example includes a six-week programme focusing on early communication skills, where both nursery practitioners and Family Centre staff offered parents practical guidance. In addition, the nursery builds relationships with local spaces such as parks, the library, and small businesses. The Headteacher proactively wrote letters seeking sponsorship to support the various projects the school was undertaking. This initiative helped secure valuable resources and funding to enhance the children's learning experiences.

Collaboration within the Federation is also central to Bowerdean's community model. Practitioners across nurseries regularly meet to review and refine teaching practices. The school often serves as a model site, with other settings sending staff to observe exemplary strategies. This shared learning ethos ensures continuity of high-quality provision across all settings, maintaining equality of experience for every child, regardless of which Federation nursery they attend.

Nationally, Bowerdean staff participate in sector-wide training, conferences, and professional networks. Leaders remain engaged with evolving policy, safeguarding requirements, and educational research. This ensures that the nursery is not only up to date but actively contributing to broader conversations around early years practice. The Headteacher presented at meetings their approach in the Early Years setting.

Parents, too, are included in global and environmental education. After observing how calm and focused the children were during nature walks and outdoor sensory play, one parent shared, "I've started taking my child to the woods more often, just like they do at nursery. It's helped us both slow down and enjoy being together."



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This culture of learning together, staff, families, and children, demonstrates how Bowerdean actively connects home, school, and the wider world. The nursery is not only a place of early education, but also a bridge between families and society, encouraging values of inclusion, responsibility, and compassion.

Bowerdean Nursery School offers a model of outstanding early years practice through its deeply embedded links with local communities. The school's ethos of collaboration, respect, and openness underpins every interaction, whether with a local librarian, a fellow nursery practitioner, or a child learning about faraway cultures. As one senior leader aptly summarised, "We're building not just learners, but everyday citizens, children who feel connected, confident, and ready for the world."

Next Steps:

As a next step, Bowerdean Nursery School could expand its engagement with the wider community by exploring additional local and national partnerships that offer fresh learning opportunities and resources for both staff and pupils. Through the Centre of Excellence Inclusion Cluster, the nursery can introduce new experiences that enrich the curriculum and broaden children's understanding of the world. Visiting other community-led early years initiatives or attending regional networking events would also allow staff to discover innovative practices and bring back fresh ideas that could further strengthen Bowerdean's already excellent provision.