

# The **'hidden'** benefits and true value of our local authority-maintained nursery schools.



THIS PACK WAS CREATED DURING THE SUMMER OF 2018 BY SEVEN LOCAL AUTHORITY-MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS ACROSS YORKSHIRE AND LINCOLNSHIRE TO DEMONSTRATE:

- The true impact of the maintained nursery sector, including the genuine cost savings and the 'hidden' work that it delivers.
- The need to maintain this high quality provision for the immediate and long-term well-being of children, their families and society as a whole.

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report has been prepared by the governing bodies of seven local authority-maintained nursery schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire as a collaborative project in response to the All Party Parliamentary Group recent discussions on nursery schools, nursery and Reception classes.
- 1.2 Its purpose is to provide the Department for Education, government ministers, members of parliament, local authorities and councillors with detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative benefits of the maintained nursery school sector, termed ‘incredible work’ by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, Nadhim Zahawi.
- 1.3 Analysis from our seven maintained nursery schools forms the basis of this report, but it also draws upon national and international research to clearly illustrate the long-term consequences of the maintained nursery sector ceasing to exist.
- 1.4 In recent years, there has been much reference to the ‘immeasurable’ or hidden value of the maintained nursery school sector. In April 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Nursery Schools, Nursery and reception Classes discussed the need for nursery schools to proactively demonstrate what makes them outstanding, with specific regard to:
- **The ‘hidden’ work that benefits families beginning their educational journey with a maintained nursery school and the genuine cost savings that this delivers by easing the pressure on other public sector services.**
  - **Demonstrating the impact of the maintained nursery sector upon systems leadership, such as training students providing services to others.**
  - **‘Diminishing the difference’ between progress outcomes for vulnerable groups and all children, as well as narrowing the attainment gap.**
- 1.5 Maintained nursery schools do not yet have legal opportunity to consider academy status.
- 1.6 Her Majesty’s Treasury and the Department for Education committed that there would be a no funding ‘cliff edge’ before 2020.
- 1.7 Government has not confirmed whether supplementary funding for nursery schools will continue after 2019/20. This means that the funding available for nursery schools will be significantly reduced. For the majority of maintained nursery schools, this will result in staffing reductions, further changes to provision and, in some cases, closure. This will increase the risk of them losing well-qualified staff.
- 1.8 If funding is reduced, it’s feared that opportunities for early interventions to protect children from harm will be missed. Research conducted between 2013 and 2015 estimated that there were 140,000 children on the fringes of social care without support, who had been referred because someone was worried about them. These children did not meet local authority children’s service thresholds for statutory support and were not signposted to other organisations for help. This ‘revolving door’ concept has previously been highlighted by Action For Children, which suggested that children at risk of neglect

and abuse are being failed. Maintained nursery schools **are not** missing these children - we estimate that during the last academic year each of our nursery schools contributed a 'hidden' average of staff time worth £30,000 to keep them safe.

1.9 The reduction in supplementary funding would create unemployment; lead to the dilution of services; and put greater demand and additional costs on other cash-poor services.

1.10 Without our seven maintained nursery schools, the annual cost to public sector services for the following could be as much as:

Social care safeguarding	£256,068
Health and well-being	£216,000
Special educational needs and disability	£278,550
Supplementing extended entitlement	£480,016

(These figures are based upon real-life case studies from our nurseries.)

1.11 What makes maintained nursery schools special and why will the loss of the sector have a huge impact on the well-being of children, their families and on society as a whole? *'The maintained nursery sector is increasingly accommodating children with complex, life affecting conditions, who would usually have their needs met in a specialist setting with specialist resources. The private sector cannot meet these types of need.'* Lucy Powell, MP.

Without our seven nursery schools, we can expect the displacement of children with the following:

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND):	125 children
Educational Health Care Plans:	12 children
Pre-threshold child protection:	63 children
Child Protection Plan:	23 children
Early help assessment:	34 children
Early Years Pupil Premium:	104 children
Looked after children:	11 children
Two year old funded:	107 children
Previously two year old funded:	140 children
Extended entitlement (30 hours childcare):	304 children

1.12 Echoing the views of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception Classes and the National Association of Head Teachers, we recommend:

- **That a long-term commitment to additional funding for maintained nursery school provision is secured - beyond the April 2020 'cliff edge'.**
- **That the Department for Education develops national funding formulae for maintained nursery schools, recognising that they are schools, securing their long-term viability and providing greater consistency of funding nationally.**

## **Section 2:**

### **2.1: An open letter to Members of Parliament and Councillors, from the governing bodies of seven local authority-maintained nursery schools in East Yorkshire, Hull and North East Lincolnshire:**

*We urge you to ensure that there is sufficient funding for all maintained nursery schools nationwide to remain in existence.*

*There is excellent and robust evidence for the consistent, high quality work done by our maintained nursery sector, which enables children and families to have the very best start to lifelong education.*

*We are deeply concerned that the majority of maintained nursery schools will either close or cease to exist in their current form by the end of 2019. We ask you to thoughtfully consider what the absence of this sector would mean. We have brought together examples of the 'hidden' cost benefits that would otherwise fall upon services already greatly reduced as a result of year-on-year austerity cuts. These examples are supported by real-life case studies. We have also brought together shining examples of early years best practice to give you a powerful glimpse of why our sector is so successful.*

*Nursery schools have already disappeared across many regions due to cuts to local authority budgets.*

*There is less and less early years expertise in the public sector and, as a direct consequence, the voices of the governing bodies and staff of nursery schools are often not heard.*

*We are keen to share the successes of maintained nursery schools so that examples of outstanding practice and expertise can readily be adopted by other providers, enabling many more children to benefit. To this end, we ask local authorities and teaching schools to consider more carefully how they use the powerful potential within the maintained nursery school sector.*

*As a group of governing bodies working together, our voice is loud and clear on the value of our nursery schools and this alone should encourage you to take forward our cause.*

*Please read on and support our youngest children, who need you to speak up for them right now.*

**From the governing bodies of Beverley Manor Nursery, Bridlington Nursery, Hornsea Nursery and Hedon Nursery in the East Riding of Yorkshire; Great Coates Village Nursery School and Scartho Nursery School in North East Lincolnshire and McMillan Nursery School in Hull**

### **2.2: Terms of reference for this collaborative project**

For some time now, the governing bodies of seven local authority maintained nursery schools in East Yorkshire, Hull and North East Lincolnshire have been working together in an informal collaboration, holding regular networking meetings and inviting relevant guest speakers to attend. All governors are equal participants in the project and our shared goal is to create a platform for governing bodies to inform others about the cost of losing the maintained nursery sector.

All seven of our nurseries are, or have committed to become, members of the National Governors' Association (NGA) at Gold Standard so that they have access to national information, training and conferences; can share and discuss current themes and concerns at a national level; and can access legal advice.

Our shared objective is to achieve the two recommendations set out in the Executive Summary.

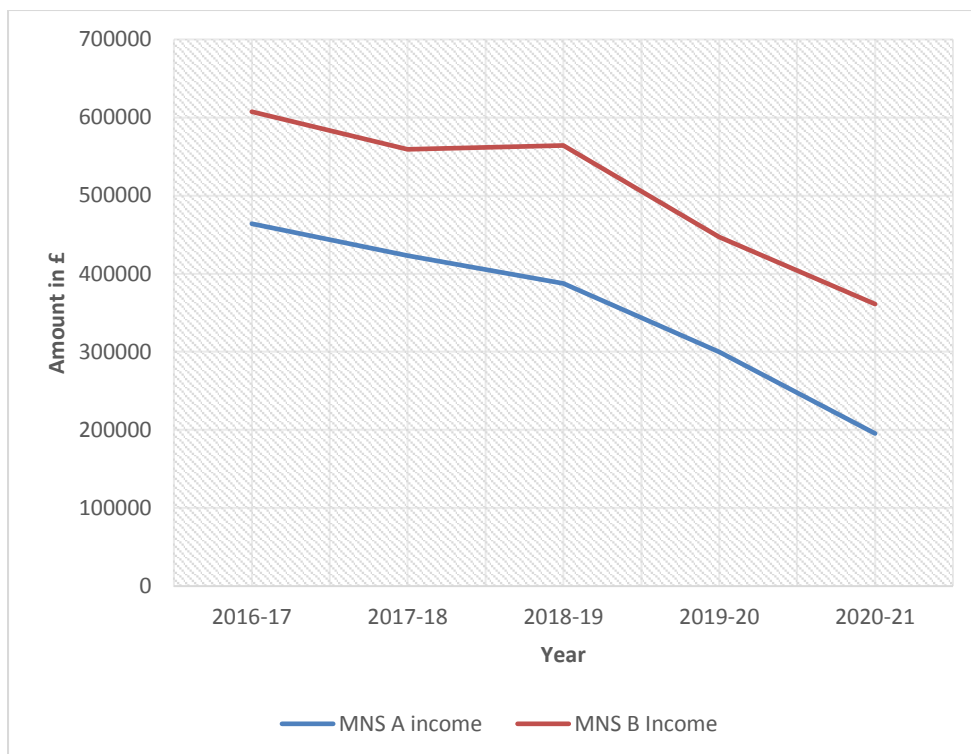
### Section 3: Context and factors shaping the future

#### Regional context:

Our seven maintained nursery schools cater for 896 children and more than 1,200 families. They are all rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and are all considered 'Outstanding' by their respective local authorities. Ofsted's Framework for Schools provides benchmarking with significantly higher standards than those used to assess private, voluntary and independent settings. Maintained nursery schools' governors and head teachers continue to challenge government to continue state funding.

#### Regional financial context:

All of our maintained nursery schools expect to experience significant budget cuts by April 2019, ranging from £30,000 to £60,000.



Real-life data from two of our nurseries (MNS A, which is in a rural coastal location, and MNS B, which is located in a city) demonstrates this point:

Maintained nursery A's predicted loss equates to £268,500.

Maintained nursery B's predicted loss equates to £246,000.

The 'hidden' work of maintained nursery schools continues, with 33 per cent of annual income serving multiple purposes and reducing costs to other services (as listed at 1.12 in the Executive Summary). None of our maintained nursery schools will be financially viable in their current form from as early as April 2019, when it's anticipated that they will each lose at least 1/3 of their services. Beyond that, the situation will only become even more grave. All of our maintained nursery schools expect to lose graduate qualified teachers and are swimming upstream against the tide of closure.

#### Regional political context:

The vision of local authorities for the future of the maintained nursery sector is unclear.

Nadhim Zahawi, Minister for Children, Young People and Families, recognises the value that maintained nursery schools play in social mobility, stating:

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Recommendations of the governing bodies of seven local authority-maintained nursery schools across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, October 2018.

*“I would urge councils not to make premature decisions on the future of these nurseries as this work continues.”*

*“Decisions on future funding will be taken as part of the next spending review.”*

As nursery governors, we are urging local authorities not to make premature decisions. We believe that short-term savings will create long-term financial burden and social harm.

When voicing our concerns, we have received mixed responses from those with decision-making powers, including:

- Cost-related responses.
- A willingness to consider the advantages that the sector can bring, but with little understanding of what that may look like.
- General openness for schools to make wise choices for strategically suitable models of school governance
- Inferences that more community-based nursery schools have more likelihood of being financially supported.
- Survival during local authority restructuring due to strong governance.
- The threat of closure.

As governors and head teachers from seven nursery schools, we have worked collaboratively on this document, which includes evidence-based costings that unequivocally demonstrate why this outstanding sector should continue. We ask you to seriously consider:

**The immediate and long-term social cost savings, by committing resources to ensure the sustainability of the maintained nursery sector, and the precious foundations for life long learning.**

#### **Section 4: Analysis**

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#### **4.1: What effect would losing the maintained nursery sector have upon children's social care?**

##### **Summary findings of nursery school case study:**

The cost (per annum) to a local authority children's social care budget of losing just one maintained nursery school due to closure would be £28,452 (see Case Study 7.1) - that's approximately the salary of one additional full-time social worker. Losing four maintained nursery schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire could mean that four additional social workers or children's centre staff would need to be recruited to provide the equivalent preventative work and crisis interventions at child protection/child in need stages. Arguably, without preventative actions of maintained nursery schools, we anticipate an additional three to five children per year could become 'looked after'.

##### **Additional evidence of impact:**

In 2017, the NSPCC estimated the average cost of non-fatal child maltreatment (neglect and abuse) by a primary care giver as £89,390 (with a 95 per cent certainty that the costs will fall between £44,896 & £145,508).

*Dr. Clyde Hertzman gathered wide scientific evidence to support the idea that what happens to children during their early years is important to lifelong health and well-being; demonstrating that environment trumps genetics. Research illustrates the negative impact of hidden harm through the decades of life; indicating that hidden harm in the early years leads to increased risk of school failure, teenage pregnancy and criminality in their second decade followed by obesity, high blood pressure, depression & addiction in their third decade.*

*One lifetime affected by hidden harm in the early years has an associated cost of a death estimated at £940k.*

*Reference: The significance of early childhood adversity (2013).*

#### **4.2: What effect would losing the maintained nursery sector have on the health of children under five?**

The private, voluntary and independent sector is not bound to take children with complex, life-limiting or life threatening conditions. The maintained nursery sector is increasingly accommodating children with complex, life affecting conditions, who would usually have their needs met in a specialist setting with specialist resources. These include heart conditions; diabetes (insulin monitoring and administering/automated pump insulin dispensers); epilepsy, cerebral palsy, genetic or chromosomal disorders, oesophageal conditions increasing risk of choking, and conditions requiring resuscitation. This suggests that the consequences facing children and families requiring specialist services are masked. On average, each nursery school session supports two to four children requiring Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) due to their health needs. This means that the additional costs to schools are growing. In some areas, the minimum demand from their budget share can be as much as £24,000 each year. During 2017-18, some local authorities have not met their duty for establishing EHCPs within the statutory timescale, leaving schools to continue to provide support, despite poor staffing ratios and without additional funding.

Childhood obesity and child hunger are also being addressed in areas of high deprivation. Nursery schools engage with families to teach food nutrition and cooking, and also provide access to high quality food through projects such as Fare Share Pantry. Partnership work with health co-ordinators ensures access for all.

Currently, at just one nursery school we have 45 families from the community accessing an 'Eco & Ethical Food Pantry' on a weekly basis. During a seven-week half term, one 'Make, Bake & Take' group made 576 healthy meals. In addition to this, the nursery school provided food to be taken home for at least a further 1,152 meals. In seven weeks, more than 1,700 meals were made. During one year this equates to 3,000 meals, with food ingredients provided for an additional 6,200 healthy meals. The children's centre has regularly attended the session to complement the advice and support given and give people access to other services, but this is a diminishing commitment.



### **A case study based on a child with epilepsy and sleep apnoea illustrates this point:**

*Each time I have a seizure this affects my brain. As a consequence I have developmental delay. When I started at nursery school I couldn't walk, I had no verbal language and my main form of communication was a scream. I regularly get respiratory chest infections which cause me to be hospitalised. I live in a damp flat and my two older brothers are in the care of the local authority. My dad has died, so it's just my mum and me.*

*In the eight months I have been attending the nursery school I have learnt to walk, I am much more active which has helped my immunity to grow. My cognitive development has significantly improved because I have a targeted programme of support. I understand many words and signs now and I am starting to learn to sign for myself. I can now say some key words 'hiya' and 'mum'. Because the staff are aware and can manage my epilepsy I have been able to attend as regularly as possible. I will go to a specialist school in September because of the complexity of my needs.*

### **Research supports this finding: Trussell Trust**

*April 2017 to September 2017*

*586,907 three-day emergency food supplies given to people in crisis in first half of this year, a 13 per cent increase on the same period last year. **208,956 of these were given to children.***

*1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018*

*The Trussell Trust's food bank network distributed 1,332,952 three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis, a 13per cent increase on the previous year. **484,026 of these went to children.** This is a higher increase than the previous financial year, when food bank use was up by 6 per cent.*

*77,411 of these were in Yorkshire & Humber (the third highest number in the North of England).*

### **4.3: What effect would losing the maintained nursery sector have upon accessibility, inclusion and outcomes for children?**

Both achievement and progress data from the maintained nursery school sector shows that children with complex special educational needs and disability make exceptional progress from their start to exit points. Their transition to primary settings is bespoke - on every occasion over and above that for most children, contributing to a smooth transfer between schools.

40 to 60 per cent of our three year olds start school with extremely low social and communication skills, but more than 80 per cent of them leave with age appropriate skills in both.

10 to 15 per cent of our families have English as an additional language, yet our bespoke curriculum offer ensures there is no gap between them and the other children as they leave the setting.

'Diminishing the difference' outcomes are rarely matched in private, voluntary and independent settings, or in the primary sector, where outcomes are well below those of the maintained nursery sector. If differences are not diminished early on, then progress and attainment gaps accelerate, becoming increasingly difficult to eradicate.

Private, voluntary and independent settings are not bound to take children with complex Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Increasingly, we observe a trend that many are not doing, or are unable to do so and, indeed, may not be equipped to deal with complex needs.

Additional costs to schools are growing as a direct consequence of rapidly declining local authority commissioning of specialist services. Special Educational Needs & Disability panel cost decisions outweigh reducing barriers to learning. During 2017-18, some local authorities did not meet their duty for establishing EHCPs within the statutory timescale, requiring schools to continue providing support despite poor staffing ratios and without additional funding.

In some areas, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) costs from their budget share (in some areas) can be £30,950 per school each year. On average, each nursery school session supports as many as 15 children with SEND; many requiring Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

Capital funding allowances for the maintained nursery school sector ensure that environments have been significantly adapted for inclusive accessibility suitable for a 21<sup>st</sup> century educational aspiration.

One nursery school's annual SEND financial audit illustrates the investment in our children (excluding those made by other agencies) over and above budget share:

Local authority budget allocation*	£28,700	*NB: This is not given in many schools
School Special Educational Needs & Disability spend:		
SENCO management time	£3,500	
SENCO time to support others	£2,700	
Teaching Assistant hours	£15,100	
Other staff supporting children	£1,560	
Resource costs	£4,250	
Specialist equipment costs	£700	
Staff training	£2,450	
Behavioural Support	£8,970	
Adaptations for school trips	£500	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£39,730</b>	

The school had to find an additional £11,030 to ensure excellent educational outcomes.

To put this into perspective, in one year £39,730 supported:

- Eight children under five years of age with individual support plans.
- General training, resources and interventions to reduce barriers to learning.
- The monitoring of blood sugar levels and administering of medicine so that insulin-dependent diabetic children can access learning inclusively.
- Daily physiotherapy exercises for children with cerebral palsy.
- All staff teaching British sign language/Makaton so that non-verbal children can learn and socially interact with their friends.
- Specific communication programmes for children with social difficulties and autism.
- Life-saving interventions/resuscitation for those with life-threatening conditions, such as anaphylactic allergic reaction, heart conditions or chronic illness.
- One-to-one support for children with complex disability due to genetic chromosome conditions.

This trend is set to continue, with government funding only supporting the first 15 hours, regardless of 30-hour entitlement. This leaves Local Authorities having to find additional funds from other unsustainable budgets.

**4.4: What effect would losing the maintained nursery sector have upon families in work, returning to work or accessing training in readiness to work?**

Local authority teams presume that the private, voluntary and independent sector has the potential to cater for all extended entitlement (30 hours) placements. Sufficiency survey evidence contradicts this, especially for high deprivation areas, such as Bridlington, Goole, and Hull.

At the July 2018 meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nursery Schools, Robert Halfon MP proposed that a partial solution to this might be to reduce the threshold of eligibility for the 30 hours to £60,000, which would raise approximately £150 million, which could be used to fund maintained nursery schools and support more disadvantaged families to access the 30 hours. Mr Halfon also raised concerns about the impact of 30 hours placements on places for disadvantaged two-year-olds, noting the National

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Recommendations of the governing bodies of seven local authority-maintained nursery schools across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, October 2018.

Audit Office's concerns about this.

**Research contradicts both these points of view:**

**Thomas Coram Research Unit [2015]:** *Provision and use of preschool childcare in Britain is relevant in terms of the shrinking childcare workforce and the low pay throughout the PVI sector, jeopardising quality and limiting choice for parents.*

**Nuffield Foundation (2014)** considered quality and inequality, asking 'do three and four year olds in deprived areas experience lower quality early years provision?', and concluded that:

- *Government maintained schools [including nursery schools] located in disadvantaged areas and serving disadvantaged children offered quality for three and four year olds that was comparable (and in some cases higher) than schools serving the more advantaged*
- *While nursery schools offer comparable provision in all areas, primary schools located in disadvantaged areas tend to receive lower grades than those located in more advantaged areas*
- *Most worrying is the fact that the quality gap between PVI settings serving the least and most disadvantaged was largest in relation to the quality of support for communication, language and literacy. A clear gradient was evident, with quality decreasing as deprivation increases*
- *Thus better practitioner qualifications are associated with better outcomes for all children...non graduate settings are not well equipped to maintain quality standards when faced with the challenge of catering for children at greater risk of language and behavioural problems...given that all government maintained provision is graduate led, this is likely to play a significant part in the ability of schools to maintain quality standards when catering for disadvantaged children*

Our nursery schools consistently do what the private sector cannot do and their work cannot continue to go unrecognised.

Due to their inclusive access to a broad, responsive, age-related Early Years Framework led by graduate staff, maintained nursery schools demonstrate outstanding outcomes for 15-hour placements, extended entitlement children (30 hour placements), and all vulnerable groups.

We provide a considerable 'hidden' subsidy to the provision of extended entitlement places across the academic year, with the indicative funding income per child receiving 30 hours entitlement over 39 weeks of the year at £4,528 and the actual cost of providing extended 30-hour entitlement per child over 39 weeks of the year at £6,107.

Collectively, our nursery schools have successfully accommodated 304 extended entitlement places in 2017-18. This could compromise supplementary funding in future years.

Government (national and local) aims to expand families' capacity to work. This first year of entitlement has set a precedent for working parents, whose voices will certainly be heard should maintained schools be forced to reduce services or close due to lack of funding.

Contrary to predictions, demand for extended entitlement places has been high in some areas where deprivation indicators would suggest transience and inconsistency. One coastal school had more than 30 extended entitlement places taken up across three terms. Only one family became ineligible and 75 per cent of families have taken in excess of 30 hours per week.

Stretched offers across 50 weeks of the year have been less popular as they do not give sufficient child care to cover working hours each week.

Indicative review shows these families taking maximum eligibility for 39 weeks of the year and choose family child-care options during school holidays.

Aspirations have risen, with 30% of 2017-18 extended entitlement places having been previously vulnerable or college-funded.

Nationally, there has been a major focus on ‘diminishing the difference’. In all our maintained nursery schools, early years pupil premium children achieve at least as well as their peers, with few discernible gaps between vulnerable groups.

However, after one year of the government extended entitlement scheme, we are identifying that this is creating a future learning gap in terms of progress between those children accessing 30 hours and those accessing 15 hours. Indications lead us to believe that this situation may yet worsen because:

- Availability for 15-hour free education places was adversely affected during the spring and summer terms. In one instance, 23 families accepting were displaced from 15-hour places, having accepted interim places to remain in their day-care setting for a term beyond their third birthday.
- Demand for extended entitlement continues to be high for September 2018. Inevitably, this will impact on three term entry, once again.

#### **Supporting research:**

*“Teachers have a particular impact on children’s experiences and outcomes in vital areas of child development such as literacy and social development. The evidence shows that teachers improve mathematical and scientific knowledge and understanding. Teachers understand the need to balance curriculum so that all aspects of learning – aesthetic and scientific – are part of babies’ and young children’s early experience.”*

(Cathy Nutbrown review ‘Foundations for Quality’).

Positive outcome 3 (Section 7, Case studies) shows that our graduate disadvantage champions effectively lead practice to empower all children and eradicate gaps in learning.

We believe that losing the maintained nursery school sector will mean that local authorities:

- Will be less able to meet the expectations of parents for school places.
- Will be less able to meet the needs of children and families with complex needs with long-term effects, especially as many local authorities are currently failing to support children with statutory Educational Health Care Plans beyond 15 hours, negating parental entitlement to extended 30-hour child care.
- Will need to support the training and recruitment of additional child-minders; reduce the business rates they pay and offer them support with premises. For example, some local authority areas have already reduced rates by 50% for child care providers.
- Will need to ensure quality assurance.

#### **4.5: What effect would the continuation of the maintained nursery sector have upon future systems leadership and value for money?**

Current government early education and childcare statutory guidance, and guidance which comes into force in September 2018, recognises the value of nursery schools, stating that local authorities should:

*‘...ensure that the early years expertise and experience of their maintained nursery schools, if they have them, are used to benefit the whole local area. Maintained nursery schools (MNS) are almost exclusively good or outstanding, the majority are located in disadvantaged areas and local authorities should ensure that they have a role in the pedagogical leadership for the local early years system. What this means in practice will depend on local need, but it might include for example: commissioning nursery schools to develop and deliver a quality improvement strategy for the area; having nursery schools work with other providers to share their experience and expertise to raise the overall quality of provision across the area;*

*helping nursery schools to work in partnership with other providers to offer parents who choose a MNS the 30 hours entitlement.'*

(A2.17)

Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi, said:

*"...local councils should not make premature decisions while the government works out future funding for state-run nurseries."*

*"Maintained nursery schools make a valuable contribution to improving the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children – that's why we are providing £60 million a year up until 2020. We also support low-income families with access to high quality early years through our 15 hours free childcare for all three-and-four-year-olds, with 30 hours available for working families, in addition to the 15 hours a week for the most deprived two-year-olds, which almost 750,000 children are already benefiting from."*

(Tuesday 3 July, 2018 on BBC Radio 4).

Why are maintained nursery schools so important? It's a question that's often asked. It is often accompanied by a misplaced assumption that they are no different from private, voluntary and independent settings. At a meeting in January 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception Classes heard it acknowledged **'that although maintained schools and private, voluntary and independent settings all work under the same EYFS framework 'good' is not the same everywhere.'**

In July 2018, Beatrice Merrick, Chief Executive of Early Education, summarised:

*"Maintained nursery schools are the highest performing part of our education system. With the majority of nursery schools serving some of the most deprived communities they achieve outstanding results. 98% of nursery schools are judged outstanding or good by Ofsted. Indeed, 63% of nursery schools are rated outstanding by Ofsted and 35% are good. 65% of nursery school places are located in the 30 per-cent most deprived parts of England."*

The Ofsted inspection process and benchmarking is significantly different with respect to Early Years private, voluntary and independent settings. Here is one comparison:

#### **School Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, Sept 2018.**

School outstanding teaching & learning:

*'Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected.'*

#### **Early Years Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, April 2018**

Early Years outstanding teaching & learning:

*'All practitioners have very high expectations of what each child can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged.'*

98 per cent of the East Riding of Yorkshire's private, voluntary and independent settings were listed as 'good' or 'outstanding' in April 2018. Whilst admirable, expectations from a largely non-graduate workforce receiving low pay are not comparable to those in the maintained nursery sector.

A further risky assumption is that, if maintained nursery schools close, then Children's Centres could fill the gap. Children's Centres have been protected well in the East Riding of Yorkshire, but not so elsewhere. Their role is increasingly around providing social care intervention and contact services. Arguably, the very significant reduction in preventative, play-based sessions has led to more families falling into crisis.

Ofsted's inspection framework for Children's Centres has been suspended since 2015. In January 2018, the charity Action for Children stated that nearly 1,000 children's centres across England have not been inspected for more than five years.

Chief Executive of Action for Children, Sir Tony Hawkhead, said:

*"Without evidence from Ofsted about how centres can improve, central government has left local authorities with no clear national standards or framework for these vital services. How are we to know how well families are being supported, or the impact of the £1bn of public money spent on children's centres since 2015? Would we allow all schools and hospitals to go uninspected for so long?"*

Tracy Brabin, Shadow Early Years Minister, said:

*"Allowing centres to go uninspected by Ofsted for years leaves us with no idea of whether children's centres are reaching the parents and children who need them most or if quality is being maintained."*

HOWEVER, our nursery schools have successfully taken on ever greater roles in:

- supporting wider family stability;
- encouraging the development of skills for life and work; and
- developing active home-school learning links.

The net impact of this is fewer families needing referrals to other services and more families consistently working with our schools, contributing to higher outcomes for children who have been through maintained nursery school, rather than comparable settings.

### **Research supports this finding:**

Sylva et.al (Department for Education, revised 2011) EPPSE (3-16) analyses the effects of quality versus low quality nursery provision all the way through to GCSE. Quality early years provision is proven to create lasting effects, including promoting pro-social behaviours, self-regulation and reduced hyperactivity: *"The importance of teachers in supporting and encouraging 'vulnerable' children and avoiding negative expectations and stereotypes has implications for recruiting the best teachers into schools in disadvantaged communities."*

In January 2018, maintained nursery school leaders were asked how the remaining 397 maintained nursery schools in England touch the population of two, three and four year olds, and how do they touch the rest? Our schools:

- offer training via three teaching schools;
- regularly share best practice; and
- hold 'inspiration sessions' for other settings and for families.

They also co-host at least one full-day in-service training event annually. Every member of school staff is expected to attend this high quality professional development opportunity, which is delivered by current, nationally and internationally-recognised early years expert speakers. The cost of the venue and presentations averages £4,000 per full day and up to 120 practitioners attend, with priority given to maintained nursery school teachers, practitioners, students and costs averaging £20 to £25 per person (at least 75 per cent less than the average local authority brokered alternative). Additional places are sold to primary school settings and private, voluntary and independent settings at competitive rates, still substantially less (at least 40%) than local authority offering. The quality of these training opportunities is evaluated as 'outstanding' and the impact upon teaching, learning outcomes and environments is significant because entire teams engage in moving practice forward.

Our nursery schools can, indeed, deliver cost-effective systems leadership as this model can be replicated by economy of scale. They can also deliver bespoke, high quality teaching and learning experiences for early years practitioners from all types of settings in their outstanding environments. Unlike most professional development opportunities, systems leadership of this kind:

- can be developed and led by teachers for teachers;
- can quickly become self-sustaining;
- can be mobile and reach across geographical borders;
- contributes significantly towards meaningful school-to-school improvement partnership and addresses pedagogical understanding;
- can empower and motivate practitioners because they observe and interact with children as part of the training;
- can easily gain accreditation.

Our head teachers support other head teachers across local authority areas by:

- meeting at least six times a year to complete moderated peer assessment around the quality of learning environments;
- analysing best practice alongside governors, thus developing the capacity to self-evaluate schools;
- implementing creative initiatives and alternative options to give families the best start;
- consistently challenging themselves and others to be outstanding leaders;
- supplementing the diminishing local authority school improvement offering;
- delivering conferences and training;
- contributing to pedagogical exchange;
- actively promoting early years as members of nationally-recognised educational associations;
- representing the maintained nursery sector in many forums, including Schools Forum; 0-8 Strategy Board; Early Support Panels; the All Party Parliamentary Group; and Early Excellence national networking.

***Research adds weight to the fear that many more maintained nursery schools will close over the next two years:***

According to a survey by Early Education in May 2018:

- *Three in ten maintained nursery schools (MNS) are unsure about their immediate future, due to significant concerns about finances past 2020, when supplementary funding ends.*
- *Three in ten nursery schools said their future is on a 'knife edge', with some in discussions with local authorities regarding closure.*
- *Two-thirds are operating on a lower budget to 2016-17 and 60 per cent say their budget will be lower in the next financial year.*
- *By 2019-20, the number of MNSs with budget deficits is set to triple. More than 60 per cent of heads think their budget will be in deficit by 2020, when transitional funding runs out.*
- *Nursery schools' budgets are being impacted by a lower lump sum, fluctuations in the number of children, increased costs and transitional funding only being provided for the universal 15 hours and not the 30 hours.*

## Section 5: Our key findings.

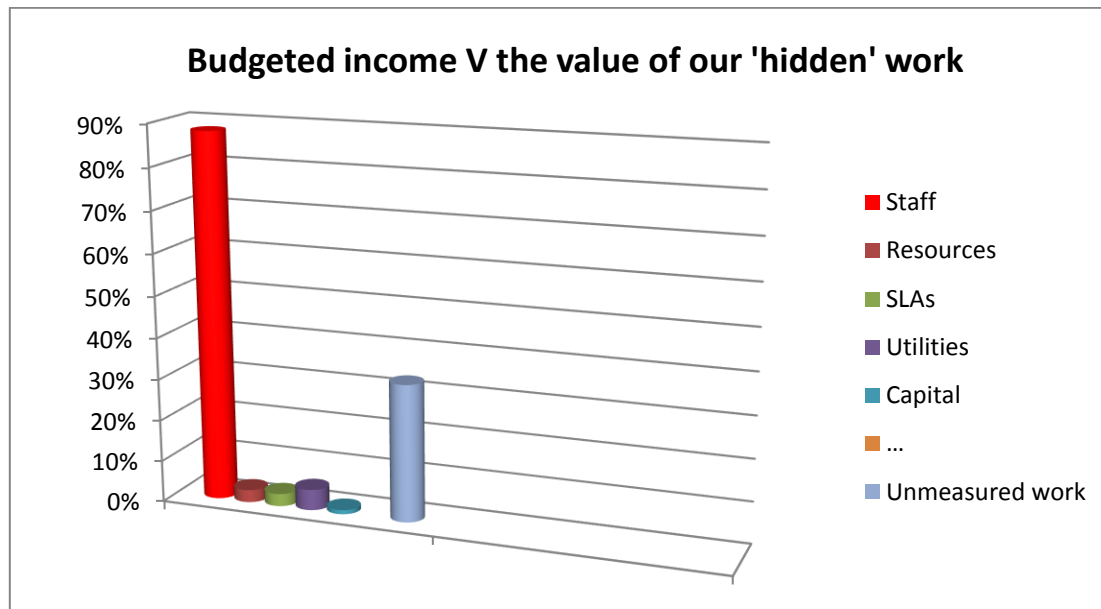
### 5.1: A summary of our findings.

The consequences explored in Section 4 demonstrate that the loss of maintained nursery schools would:

- Leave a gaping void in children’s social care provision, piling even greater pressure onto other public sector services.
- Mean that the needs of children with complex, life-threatening or life-limiting conditions can’t easily be met in early years settings, creating even greater demand for specialist services.
- Leave thousands of families without the support of cooking, nutritional guidance and food banks, putting children at greater risk of obesity or hunger and storing up health problems for the future.
- Leave some children with SEND without a suitable nursery place, but will also impact upon the ability of those who do attend nursery to progress at the same rate as other children.
- Make it impossible for some families with extended entitlement placements to access their 30 hours of provision.
- Lead to the loss of the wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise within the sector, and the training and development opportunities that this creates.

### 5.2 Financial findings summary: How far do we make our budgets go?

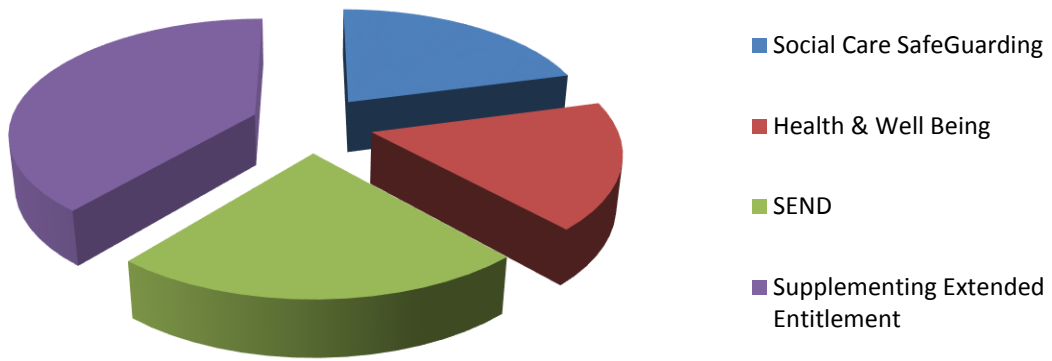
Our annual income is divided between staff, resources, service level agreements (SLAs), utilities (gas, electricity, water) and capital funding allowance. In simple terms, maintained nursery school staffing is our biggest resource.



It is estimated that this ‘hidden’ work by maintained nursery schools equates to 33 per cent of our total budget. This work is multi-faceted and represents a genuine cost saving to other services, as set out below:

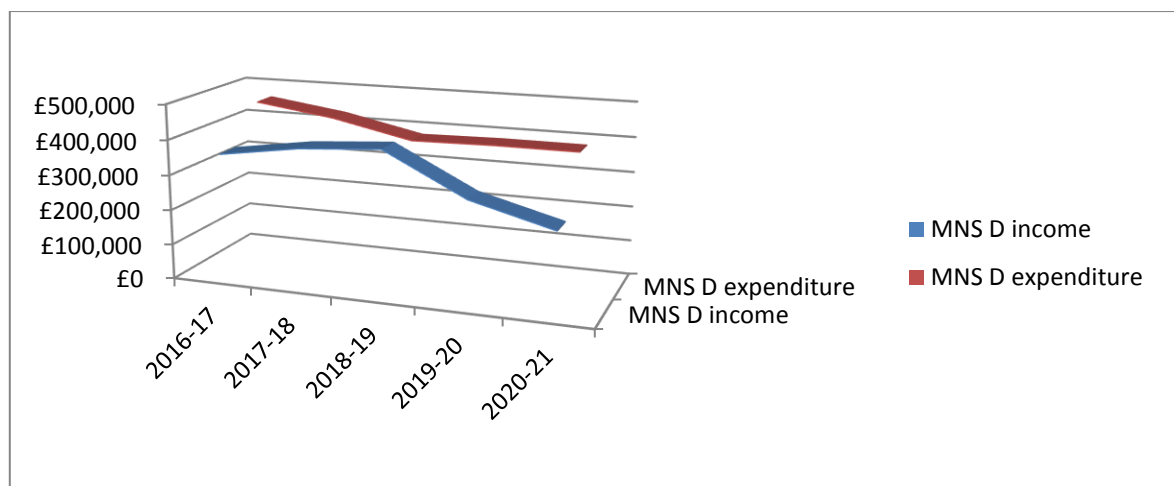
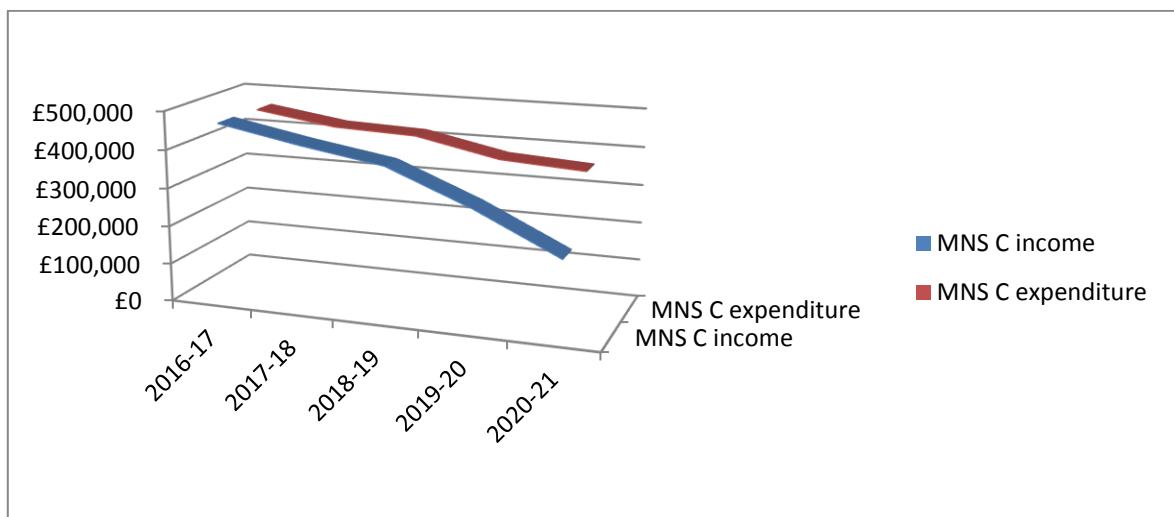


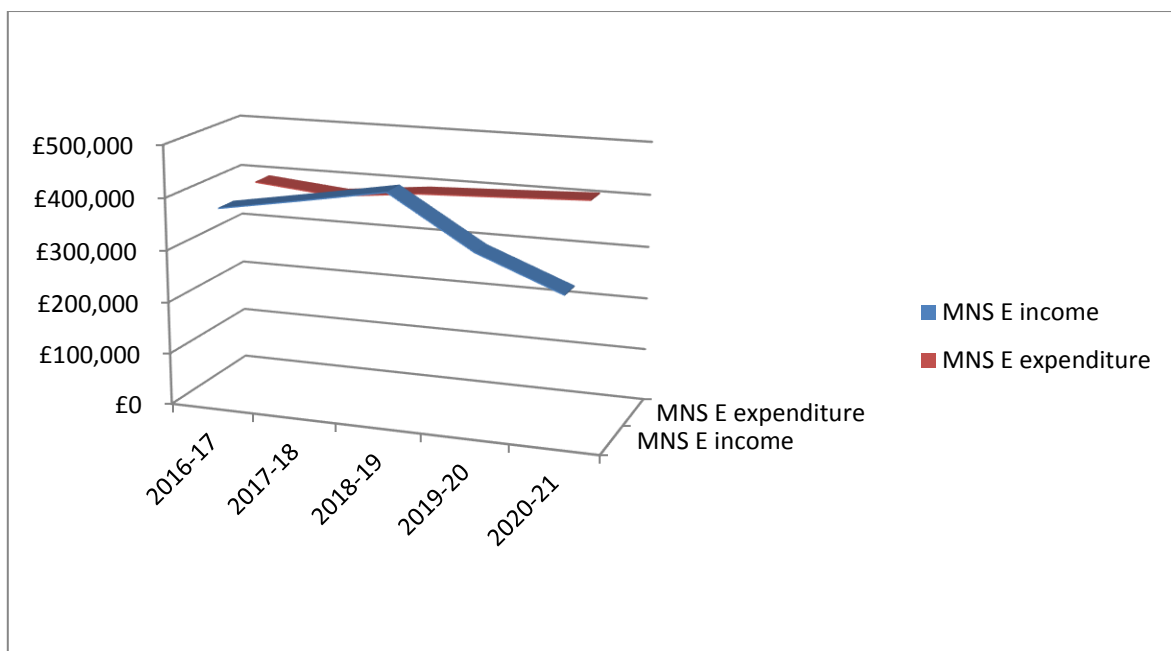
### Value of 'hidden' work currently delivered by maintained nursery schools



The decline in funding for maintained nursery schools has led us to believe that the consequences predicted in this document are already starting to become a reality. The chart in Section 1 dramatically illustrates this.

Examples below go further. Actual income and expenditure for 2016-2018, as well as three-year forecast predictions for 2018-21, clearly show that there is already a 'cliff edge'.





Our nursery schools urge you to make your influence felt before the gap between income and expenditure becomes an unsustainable deficit, with immeasurable consequences to children, families and society, who will no longer benefit from the 397 maintained nursery schools that have - so far - survived nationwide.

### Section 6: Our recommendations.

The recommendations of our governing bodies mirror that of the All Party Parliamentary Group and National Association of Head Teachers. We want:

**To secure a long-term commitment to additional funding for maintained nursery school provision, beyond the April 2020 'cliff edge'.**

**The Department for Education to develop national funding formulae for maintained nursery schools that will recognise that they are schools, secure their long-term viability and provide greater consistency of funding nationally.**

## Section 7: Real-life case studies from our local authority-maintained nursery schools demonstrating positive outcomes, the 'hidden' work that we do and the value we add.

### 7.1: Our impact on safety and life chances for children.

#### Overview

Data has been collated at one of our maintained nursery schools during one typical month to show the financial value of the 'unmeasured' costs of keeping safe those families already involved in safeguarding procedures and pre-emptive, preventative support to help families avoid crisis. This invaluable work improves the life chances for children and is undertaken daily, although it does not appear in the budget.

#### Summary

The unmeasured safe-guarding costs for one maintained nursery school for one year were **£28,452**.

Firstly, costs relating directly to our statutory duty of care for child protection at one maintained nursery school annually were **£12,474**. In any given month of the year, this school had:

- 10 per cent of children on roll already in safeguarding crisis;
- An average of thirteen two, three and four-year-olds on Child Protection (CP) or Child in Need (CiN) plans.

The above figure was made up as follows:

a) On average:

- Each CP or CiN meeting took a minimum of four hours.
- Eight meetings per month were required for multi-agency working, conferences or core groups, and planning or liaising with parents before meetings.
- The average cost per staff attendee was £14 per hour.
- The average staff cost for 32 hours a month was £448.
- Therefore, the average staff cost per academic year was **£5,376**.

b) Outcome support to impact upon wellbeing, support for parents and carers ensuring school readiness for children presented additional hidden costs calculated below:

- An average of one hour per child per week.
- An average of 13 hours per week.
- An average staff cost of £14 per hour.
- This totals **£7,098** to provide term-time support.

Secondly, costs relating to required, but non-statutory, duty of care preventative work for one maintained nursery school annually were **£15,978**.

Prevention prior to family crisis is where specific early years expertise can contribute hugely to various types of work that often go unmeasured. Examples include:

- Targeted intervention work.
- Age-related achievement and closing learning gaps due to vulnerabilities.
- Resilience of the child.
- Empowerment of the family.

On average, this school supports 17 families deemed at risk, who need proactive intervention to prevent them from sliding into greater difficulty.

Key workers have recorded that, in a typical month, 27 hours have been spent on one-to-one work for, or with, individual families, supporting them with:

- Issues around family reluctance to approach or engage with Children's Centres – *'it is the view of many families based upon anecdotal memories of poor previous experience and repetitive offers that children's centres only want them to complete the same courses over and over that don't work' (evidenced from parental questionnaires, Bridlington)*.
- Essential care for their child, including behaviour and toilet training, healthy eating, finance, sign-posting, education and access services, mental health and general health issues.

The average cost of this support equates to **£3,650** per year.

Positive intervention groups average three hours per day, costing **£7,915** per year.

One community nursery nurse provides eight hours per week of targeted intervention. Their salary of **£4,422** per year is currently paid with grant funding (the school sources the grant funding from local charities and this is the only external funding source available to them).

## **7.2: Our impact on improved health and wellbeing.**

### Overview

The 'Make, Bake & Take' group was originally put into place as it became evident a number of children were arriving at school with either having no breakfast, or eating bakery goods (cheese straws). This was replicated at lunch time. Discussions with families revealed that many were living on microwave convenience meals. Families gave the following reasons:

- Easy access to low cost microwave meals.
- Limited funds to buy food.
- Speed and ease of convenience food
- Unsure how to prepare fresh vegetables and meat.
- Generally low confidence, low mood, poor housing conditions, lack of motivation.

20 families regularly attend. These families are made up of 86 people living in the households with a range of demographics/ages.

### Summary

Each week a variety of meat, fish, dairy and fresh produce is delivered by the Fare-Share charity. The food is presented to the group in a Ready, Steady, Cook-style format. They discuss what they could make, look up recipes and decide what they can collectively make to take home. A qualified chef supports this group, ensuring that nutrition is a priority. Families then take the meal home for that evening, as well as enough ingredients to make two more meals. They can also access the Food Pantry, making an average donation of £2 for seven items.

Feedback from a recent questionnaire shows that this group is helping with healthy eating, mental health and financial difficulties, therefore having a positive impact upon wellbeing and school readiness.

Comments from families show it is a lifeline that impacts upon their social, financial and emotional wellbeing. These families do not lack the aspiration to be fabulous parents, but do need the peer support network to make this a reality in a pressured world. Their comments include:

*"The community group made a massive difference to me especially when my daughter was a new-born. It is continuing to make an impact 10 months later as a new first-time mum with a partner away and post-natal depression it was and still is a wonderfully comfortable, welcoming group to make me feel supported. At last I have a chance to socialise."*

*"This group has had a great positive impact on myself & my family the social aspect is lovely and it's really encouraged me to try my cooking with my two-year-old at home which previously I haven't been brave enough to do."*

*"It has saved us money financially with which is a great help. Giving us fresh, healthy meals also frees up time on a Tuesday evening so I get to play with the children because dinner is already done."*

*"As a family this group has made a massive difference to us it will save us a great deal of money on a monthly food shop which is not only a help financially but has helped lower stress levels caused by money issues. It really makes organising Tuesday nights in much easier, and we have a freezer stock with many other meals."*

*"It's hard to believe but I was once too scared to attend the group. I suffered very severe postnatal depression & try to attend some in the past but I found them un-inviting or felt very uncomfortable. I braved attending this group and was instantly greeted by welcoming faces and made to feel right at home."*

*"I feel this group is helping me with meal ideas but more importantly is helping me as a person. I don't go to many groups and as a stay at home parent with no other houses around I don't get a great deal of adult interaction."*

*"Coming to the group has given me so much confidence to talk to other mums."*

*"I really enjoy coming to the group as everyone mucks in and helps one another with the children, preparing the meals or dishing out."*

*"Thank you to all the people who run it. It may help some of us more than you know."*

### **7.3i: Our impact upon inclusive learning - Special Educational Needs and Disability**

#### Overview

Some maintained nursery schools do get, or can access, local authority 'top up' budget for high needs or special educational needs (SEND) or a 'deprivation area' supplement. Others do not. In this section, we are sharing responses to a questionnaire sent out to parents whose children attend our nursery schools to demonstrate the importance of the highest quality early education for children under five years of age with complex additional needs.

#### Summary

The maintained nursery sector is increasingly accommodating children with complex, life-affecting conditions, who would usually have their needs met in a specialist setting with specialist resources. The private sector cannot meet these types of need. We ask you to walk a mile in the shoes of a parent whose child has an additional need and consider where those needs are best met.

#### Parent perspective one:

Do you feel that being at this maintained nursery school has benefited your child?

Yes.

If yes, in what way/s?

*By having specific 1:1 care full time it enables my child to access and experience the full curriculum. It has also enabled staff members to deliver specific intervention programmes regularly, ensuring consistency.*

Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery school and not another early years setting?

- *Staff members with qualified teacher status.*
- *Offered 30 hours funding.*
- *Outstanding Ofsted report.*

#### Parent perspective two:

Do you feel that being at this nursery school has benefited your child?

Yes.

If yes, in what way/s?

*His confidence has improved so much, as has his speech and overall ability to try to be like other boys and girls his age. Having a one to one has been really important to us and beneficial to him as that person can get to know him and then recognise signs of when he isn't having a good day so will consequently require a little more help or supervision. It is clear just how much quality time he has with some of the staff members. He is encouraged to be as independent as possible, and to use his right hand and to improve his fine motor ability in that side.*

Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery school and not another early years setting?

*The Nursery School has always had such a great name in the area. My husband, his sisters and our niece and nephew all attended the Nursery too – there was never another option in our eyes.*

#### Parent perspective three:

Do you feel that being at this nursery school has benefited your child?

*As a family that has put three boys through the nursery from baby room to pre-school we have benefitted greatly.*

If yes, in what way/s?

*As parents of two disabled children whose needs are polar opposites we feel their needs were always met and this applies to our non-disabled child too. Thanks to the nursery staff we discovered and got a diagnosis for autism. You have monitored closely our current son's development and brought him on so much. After all the transition opportunities we are confident he is ready for school.*

*The nursery school helped encourage our children to excel in areas such as words, reading, singing, coordination skills and confidence. Home learning links and craft club and trips have brought child and parent experiences together. Nursery has taught our family to do messy creative things at home as they provide it in the classroom and give us resources for at home.*

*Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery school and not another early years setting? It has a fantastic reputation and we have seen children do well. Children have chance to become independent in their own right and make new friends as they grow up.*

### **7.3ii: Positive outcomes: Impact upon inclusive learning – communication.**

#### Overview

A particular maintained nursery school in an area of low socio-economic disadvantage has a wide catchment area, so has a broad demographic of children that attend. The nursery school can take 130 full-time equivalent children. The percentage of children eligible for Pupil Premium is low, on average around four per cent of the cohort. The school identified that, over time, more children were entering:

- with poor basic skills in communication and language;
- with specific speech problems or unclear pronunciation;
- with an under-developed range of vocabulary;
- without having had a two-year health check by a health visitor;
- without having had speech and language delays being picked up at an early stage by health;
- without receiving interventions or support programmes when they could have had the most impact.

This was having a detrimental impact on children's development across all areas of learning, particularly in their social skills as they found it difficult to express their needs or build positive relationships with adults and other children. The school was frustrated as referrals they made to the NHS Speech and Language Service were frequently turned down. Staff felt they were 'letting children down' as they had successfully identified individuals with speech and language problems through careful assessment, but saw them moving on to primary school with the same issues still evident because they did not have the skills or referral mechanisms to support them. They were also conscious of research showing that a child's life chances can be detrimentally affected if poor oracy is not addressed as early as possible.

#### Summary

Communication and language development became a School Development Priority. The small amount of money available had to be spent creatively in order to have as much impact as possible because:

- The vast majority of school budget is spent on staffing costs.
- Transitional funding from the local authority has reduced for two years running.
- Schools can apply for additional SEND funding from the local authority, but not for those with speech and language delays.

Funding allocated by the school paid for:

- A private speech and language therapist to assess and provide targeted support programmes for children identified as having delays.
- Training for as many staff as possible on phonological awareness and language in colour (programmes devised and delivered by speech and language therapists), so that they have skills to screen and support all children, now and in the future.

Phonological awareness and language in colour training is still in its infancy but the impact so far is positive. This year, the school's speech and language therapist assessed five children. Four are being provided targeted support programmes, carried out on a one-to-one basis by staff. Parents meet with the speech and language therapist who outlines the approach. The school then provides resources so that it can be reinforced at home. Parents say:

*"I feel really happy about it. C's speech has really improved from it. She is a lot easier to understand and is more confident in her speech so she is talking more and being able to express herself."*

*"I feel that any additional support for speech and language is beneficial for my child. The NHS generic speech and language support that has been delivered to my child in the past had no impact; in fact we saw a decrease in his ability to talk. The private support programme was beneficial to my child as the therapist was able to spend time with my child to gain accurate assessments that could be used to progress his language skills. These were built upon at a rapid rate. Although we haven't seen any progress in my child's speech it has enabled practitioners to assess my child's understanding accurately and build upon his knowledge and skills because of it."*

#### Our findings are echoed by national research

Priorities from the national *Every Child a Talker* programme, which are now the current priorities of the Secretary of State, have already demonstrated rapid impact over a short period. Research shows that intervention needs to be early and work with parents is vital because:

- Progress in language among three to five year olds was most affected by factors in the home environment.
- Progress in problem-solving was affected by external factors, such as the type of early education attended.
- Progress in language among three to five year olds could be accurately predicted by their skills at the age of two.
- Among children whose parents had poor qualifications, poor early communication skills were highly likely to persist.

*"Any strategies for improving school readiness via the pre-school setting need to include, for more disadvantaged children, strategies which seek to influence the child's home environment and parenting experiences at the same time to ensure that children's cognitive ability is maximised...such strategies should focus on the quality of the parent-child relationship & frequency of home learning activities."*

*(Growing up in Scotland, 2011).*

Further research into the negative impact of poor language development highlights all too clearly the long term cost to individuals and society:

#### Poor language predicts poor literacy skills:

*"At the age of six there is a gap of a few months between the reading age of children who had good oral language skills at 5, and those with poor oral language skills at five. By the time they are 14, this gap has widened to **five years'** difference in reading age."*

*(Hirsch, 1996).*

#### Poor language predicts behaviour problems:

*"Two thirds of 7-14 year olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment."*

*(Cohen et al, 1998).*

*"65% of young offenders have speech, language and communication difficulties, but in only 5% of cases were they identified before the offending began."*

*(Bryan et al, 2008).*

Poor language and communication skills reduce employability in school leavers:

*“Employers now rate communication skills as their highest priority, above even qualifications. 47% of employers in England report difficulty in finding employees with an appropriate level of oral communication skills.”*

(UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2009)

Jean Gross, a former government communication champion, stated in September 2011 that there is good evidence that co-ordinated, community-wide, interagency strategies to upskill the children’s workforce and get key messages across to parents of young children can improve language skills across the community, with a particular impact on disadvantaged children.

*“It is never too late. Re-conviction rates for offenders who studied the English Speaking Board’s oral communication course fell to 21% (compared to the national average of 44%) - greater than the fall to 28% for offenders who followed a general education course.”*

(Moseley et al, 2006).

**7.3iii: Our impact upon inclusive learning - learning outcomes.**

**Overview**

Maintained nursery schools are experts in resourcing imaginative, creative, engaging environments where children thrive and achieve amazing things. For example, at one of our city nursery schools, we try to create a place where children can find what they need to develop and learn, but we also know that what parents do at home has a massive impact on how children learn and progress, so we want to work together with them to get the best for all our children. We have seven per cent of the 178 children funded by the Special Educational Needs panel across the city (Summer 2018) – a disproportionately high number since we accommodate approximately one per cent of the total early years population in the city. This is often due to referrals or recommendations from professionals supporting these families. Of the 147 children on roll:

- All two-year-olds (54) are ‘two-year-old funded’ to access 15 hours per week of early childcare and their parents chose for them to do so in a maintained nursery school.
- 17% of our 93 three and four-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours extended entitlement, reflecting the high proportion of workless households.
- 39% of our 93 three and four-year-olds get Early Years Pupil Premium to ‘diminish difference’. Previous eligibility for pupil premium peaked at 69%, so this decrease means that we have a significant number of families who are ineligible but borderline.
- 45 (31%) of our 147 children have Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND). Of these, 15 receive involvement from other agencies and 12 receive funding for additional support due to the level of their needs.
- 28 children (19%) speak 10 different languages, with English as an addition.
- 34 children (27%) have social care involvement, whilst a significant number of additional families are being supported by the school but fall below the threshold for social care involvement.

**Outcomes for two to three-year-old children - key messages:**

Data shows that, on entry as two-year-olds, more than 90% of children are below or well-below what is considered typical for their age (the majority are well below).

Percentage %	Well Below	Below	At	Above
Autumn starters	56	35	9	0
Spring starters	49	47	3	0
Summer starters	80	11	9	0



Many of these children are non-verbal or have extremely limited language development. Many also frequently display very poor social skills and lack self-help skills.

On transition to primary school, children who previously attended our two-year-old provision are performing significantly better than those who had no previous experience:

39% of children with maintained nursery school experience as two year olds achieve 'at' or 'above' age-related expectations, compared to only 4% of those without any two-year-old early years' experience.

88% of all those who attended from age two were 'at' or 'above' typical age related expectations when they moved into primary school, compared to 71% of those who did not attend as two-year-olds.

### **Outcomes for three to four year old children – key messages:**

In September, 68% of all children were either below or well-below what is considered typical for their age. Three terms later, by July, 84% were 'at' or 'above' typical, with 27% assessed as 'above'.

In September, 73% of multi-lingual children were either below or well-below what is considered typical for their age. Three terms later, by July, 72% were at or above typical, with 24% assessed as 'above'.

In September, 82% of children with SEND were either below or well-below what is considered typical for their age. Three terms later, by July, 70% were at or above typical, with 17% assessed as 'above'.

### **Further evidence**

Progress for all vulnerable groups is just as impressive at a coastal maintained nursery school, as the average steps of progress across all seven areas of learning after three terms shows (three steps of progress is defined as good progress in three terms):

- All children averaged 4.1.
- Children with Early Years Pupil Premium averaged 4.2.
- Children with two-year-old funding averaged 4.0.
- Children in the 0-10% most deprived post code areas averaged 4.4.
- Children who had previously been involved with a Children's Centre averaged 3.9.

### **7.3iv: Our impact upon inclusive learning - overcoming disadvantage.**

#### Summary

One particular 'outstanding' maintained nursery school takes up to 120 children, as well as offering additional day care. Most children who attend come from a wide geographical area across the town and outlying villages. Up to 60% of children come from areas of deprivation; many from workless households and multiple-occupancy houses. Eligibility checking shows that 37% receive Early Years Pupil Premium. The school works with Riding Forward Teaching Alliance & Hull & York University to actively support students studying for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. We strongly believe that just as no child is labelled 'disadvantaged', no individual member of staff is solely responsible for improving outcomes for any vulnerable group. As a fully inclusive nursery, where every member of the team is committed to child-centred practice, we demonstrate a strong ability to 'diminish difference'.

#### Overview

Following the interests of a child, and responding immediately, has:

- Resulted in huge boosts of confidence for the children.
- Given children ownership of their learning, including giving a voice to children who found speaking within a large setting overwhelming.
- Motivated and engaged children, reducing behaviour issues.
- Increased mark-making opportunities for children who have never before shown an interest in putting pen to paper.

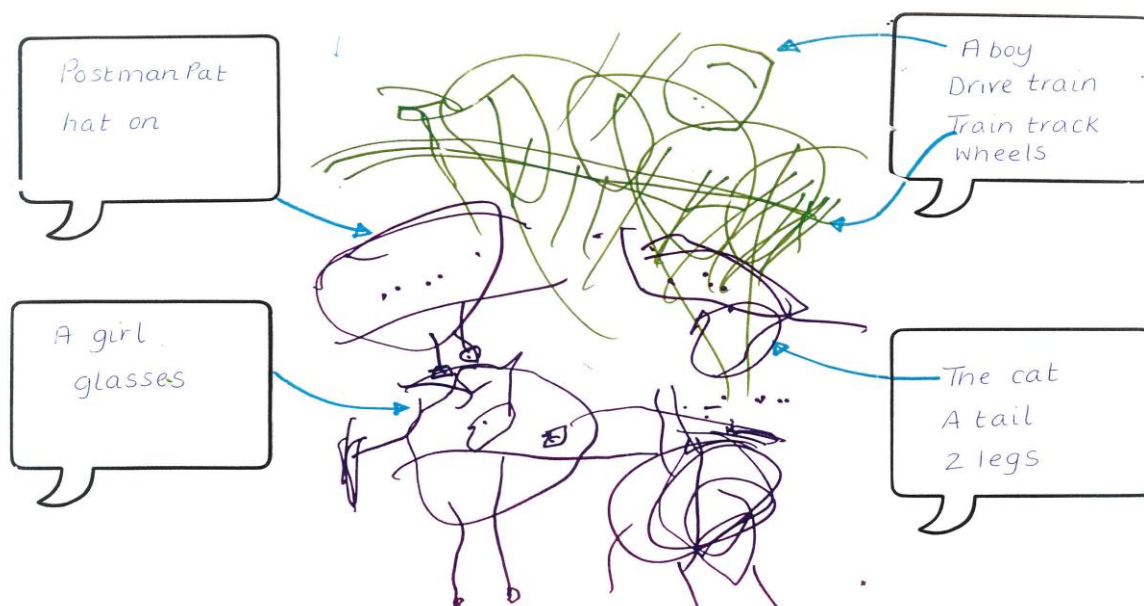
### How effective was this at diminishing difference?

The vast majority of the 55 children starting in September were well below age-appropriate levels in literacy. More than 85 per cent of the same group were at or above age appropriate levels three terms later – 20 per cent more than national average. 12 children exceeded age-related expectations, achieving aspects of early learning goals (usually reception class outcomes) in many areas of learning. This has a direct impact upon school readiness and positive transitions.

### Case study one: Building self-esteem:

Using funding to buy resources that follow children's interests resulted in a dramatic and sudden revelation. One child playing with *Postman Pat* figures whilst listening to the tune on CD suddenly spoke – a first after three terms of being electively mute in nursery. The child's drawing shows the things they described:

### Case study two:



### Mathematical challenge:

Focused weekly maths challenges skilfully delivered by the nursery's 'disadvantaged champion' have shown excellent outcomes. Children have investigated and explored mathematical concepts that have been planned to encompass all the mathematical developmental concepts appropriate from ages two to six years. Activities and timings are open-ended to allow children to lead their own learning. For example, one three year old, whose first language is not English, played with jewel blocks, using them like dominoes. The child showed exceptional patience, repeatedly choosing the colour of the jewels, naming the colour and carefully placing the blocks so that they matched. Patterning was complex as it even aligned in corners where there was an overlap and patterns ran vertically and horizontally. From a baseline well below age-related expectation in September, this child entered primary school having made progress well above her peers and fluent in mathematical vocabulary.

## **7.4 Our impact upon families returning to work.**

### Overview

In two 'outstanding' maintained nursery schools in the same local authority area 58 and 59 extended entitlement places were taken, with demand ranging from 18.5 to 38.75 hours. Common factors at both schools were:

- A number of parents who had children on waiting lists were seeking employment and, as a result of extended entitlement, were able to gain employment.
- None of the families lost their entitlement throughout the year and, indeed, increased the number of hours taken.

### Summary

Both maintained nursery schools were able to increase the number of extended entitlement places available because of a fall in the birth rate and by extending the square footage available, with the acquisition of an additional building at one school. This was done despite there being no capital funding to help with extended entitlement places. In addition to this, 76 part-time places were taken. Although this uptake has increased the funding on an hourly basis for both schools and helped one school to emerge from a deficit budget, any future plans to cut funding to maintained nursery schools would mean that both of these schools would no longer be financially sustainable.

It is clear from the number of children attending these nursery schools (and a similar pattern is emerging for the next academic year) that 183 families would be seeking alternative provision should these two maintained nursery schools close due to financial unsustainability. A recent Ofsted inspection at one of the schools found that it continues to be outstanding – the fourth time in a row.

Both maintained nursery schools offered parents advice on their children's eligibility for extended entitlement, helping them with the initial eligibility criteria, and advising and supporting them with their online application. Well-qualified administrative staff, who are employed by both schools, offer this type of support on a daily basis. The recent Ofsted Inspection noted:

*"As one parent said: 'Everyone gives all they can, and if they could give more they would!', while another talked of the support she and her family had received during a particularly challenging time for them."*

## **7.5: Our impact upon distributive leadership.**

### Overview

We are the last surviving maintained nursery school in the city. As one of only three maintained nursery schools in England with 'School of Creativity' status, we provide exceptional experiences and education for generations of children and families. Promoting learning partnerships between the educational and creative sectors offered us inspirational opportunities to develop our practice and had a significant impact upon the school culture.

### Summary

Creative partnerships resulted in long-term embedded impact. Employing from a range of disciplines and working with artists in residence gave the children, staff, families and community empowering experiences of visual arts, music, dance, engineering, acting and film making.

Visiting Reggio Emilia pre-schools in Italy fundamentally changed practice. Working exceptionally hard, we shared our learning by leading Continuing Professional Development sessions aimed at new practitioners entering the workforce. Accessible twilight sessions delivered by our practitioners covered practical issues such as documentation of learning, creative movement, storytelling, drawing, outdoor learning and risk-related play.

At the time, these were relatively innovative ideas in our region but are now widespread and mainstream. Initially funded at minimal cost from our school budget, they were picked up on and subsidised by the local authority to promote access. We presented to private, voluntary and independent settings that lacked the resources to pay; primary and secondary schools; and at local, national and international conferences.

During our years of offering Continuing Professional Development, thousands of practitioners have benefited.

City of Culture status created opportunity for our maintained nursery school to champion the involvement of early years children and their families. We met with key leaders of the programme to share our experience of planning and leading early years creativity that we knew to be relevant and achievable.

The Sixteen Thousand was a huge project led by our nursery school, which took place in every school and private, voluntary and independent setting in the city, offering an opportunity for every child in the city under five years of age to be involved and represented. It involved the largest producer of bricks in the world (based near the city), which supported the project by providing and delivering tonnes of clay needed for children to make 16,000 bricks, and then by firing them in their industrial kilns. Dr. Alex Hallows, our chair of governors and also a local artist, led workshops for practitioners from every school and setting in the city, funded by the local authority, to teach the methods used to create the bricks.

City of Culture volunteers and staff took over a huge warehouse in the city centre to facilitate the delivery, collection and drying of the bricks.

The final installation took place during October 2017 in a building overlooking The Deep and the rivers Hull and Humber. It attracted hundreds of visitors and was, reportedly, one of the most popular installations of the year.



## **Section 8: Summary impact**

### **8.1: What do professionals say about the value added by local authority-maintained nursery schools?**

*“Children receive an amazing education by stealth – exposure to a wider culture gives them a better world view.”*

*“Children make exceptional progress from a very low base.”*

*“Governors and leaders evaluate and incorporate the best research-based practice, giving equal opportunity to all staff to access nationally accredited courses and CPD.”*

*“Cross Area Nursery Head Teacher Cluster Group all demonstrate passion, vision, strong leadership and strong pedagogy, which continually drives up standards through innovation, creativity and resourcefulness against the odds.”*

*“Early support improves children’s speech and language - extremely important when health services are increasingly under pressure.”*

*“Nursery schools provide a safe communal environment where the child develops social interaction skills with their peers; additional needs are not regarded as a barrier to achieving potential.”*

*“Communication & language acquisition underpins every aspect of the child’s learning in Nursery School. Early Support improves children’s speech and language; extremely important when commissioned health services, such as SALT, are increasingly under pressure.”*

*“MNS give time to develop important areas of learning without pressure, building resilience, self-confidence, independence, social skills; vital with an increasingly noticeable trend of mental health issues affecting younger and younger children and slow government response.”*

*“With not enough places in specialist schools for children with SEN, early intervention starts at Nursery School.”*

*“Large numbers of children with SEND are supported daily by Maintained Nursery Schools putting added strain on finance and resource.”*

*“SENCOs are well trained and coordinate appropriately inclusive yet challenging access to learning.”*

*“Our nursery schools fight for our children’s entitlement.”*

*“Nursery schools play a critical role in replacement and refurbishment of anti-authority attitudes often generational in families. Employability revolves around self-confidence which our children develop in spades so the whole family regain trust and self-worth.”*

*“Nursery schools gain the trust of parents who are often averse to authority and school, thereby increasing chances to thrive and remain engaged throughout primary school.”*

*“Nursery schools are a source of non-invasive nurturing support for vulnerable children and families, particularly very young parents; a target group notoriously difficult to consistently engage with other services.”*

*“Nursery schools give life-changing opportunity to 2YOF children that still need to learn basics how to feed themselves, such as how to talk and how to play.”*

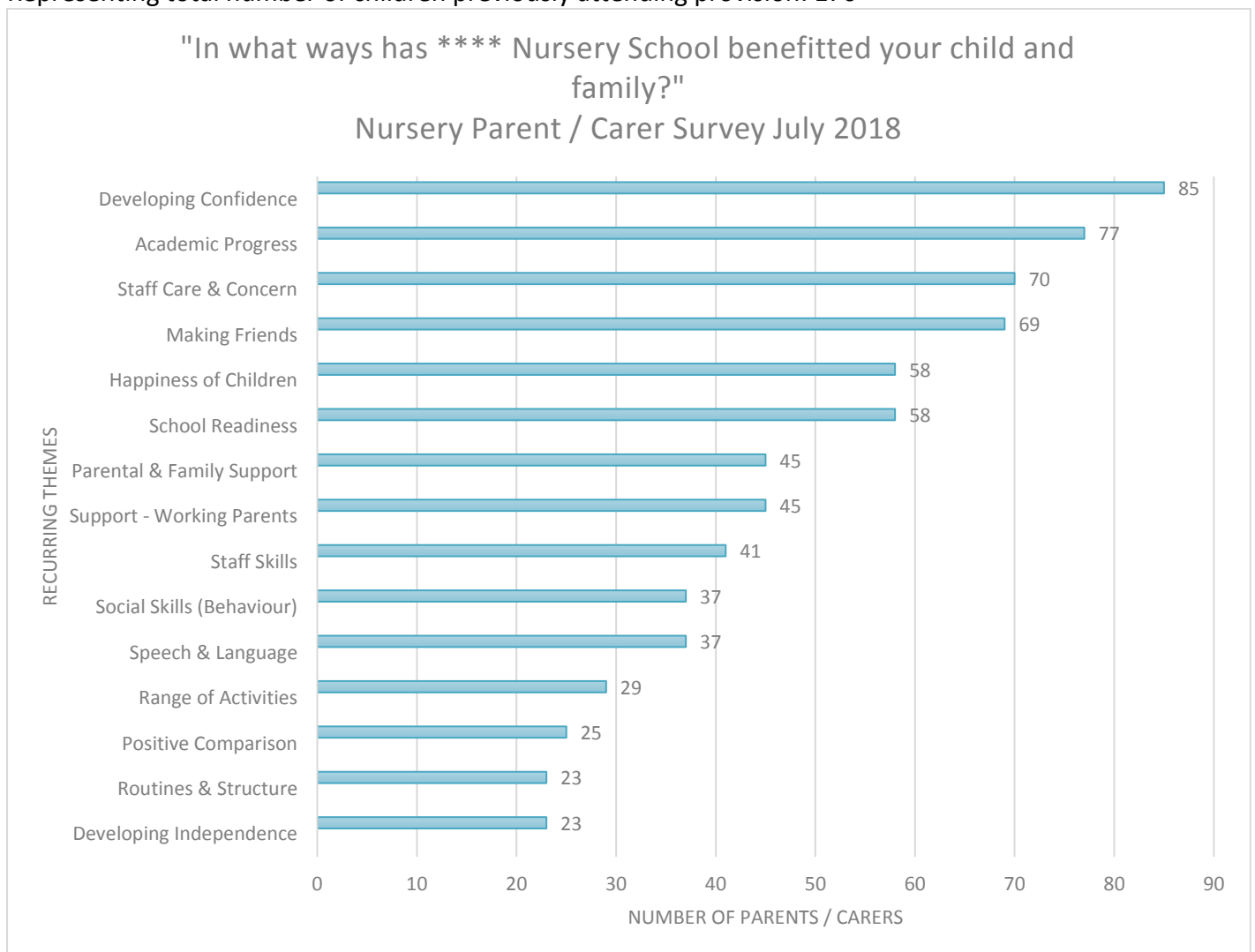
*“Nursery schools seek out funding to employ dedicated family workers support with safeguarding, health and family issues.”*

*“Highly-qualified and dedicated teachers ensure a holistic approach to creative child-led learning, giving our children the best start for lifelong learning. Well established settings are trusted by families.”*

## 8.2: Single question questionnaire research findings.

In direct response to the discussions of the All Party Parliamentary Group in July 2018, we asked parents and carers 'In what ways has \*\*\*\* Nursery School benefitted your children and family?'. Families were made aware that this information would help us to show the government how important maintained nursery schools are. Responses have been collated below. It is worth noting that many families from diverse backgrounds have responded. Many wrote about the 'impact for children in families over many years/expected futures', 'difference made to child and to family life', 'readiness for school' and 'reassurance'.

A questionnaire was provided to parents / carers with children attending Total number of returns: 178  
 Representing total number of children currently attending provision: 192  
 Representing total number of children previously attending provision: 176



## **Section 9: Contributors and acknowledgements**

Beverley Manor Maintained Nursery School (HU17 7BT):

[www.beverleymanornursery.co.uk/public/manor111.html.nc](http://www.beverleymanornursery.co.uk/public/manor111.html.nc)

Bridlington Maintained Nursery School (YO16 7BS): [www.bridlingtonnurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.bridlingtonnurseryschool.co.uk)

Great Coates Maintained Nursery School (DN37 9NN): [www.greatcoatesnursery.com](http://www.greatcoatesnursery.com)

Hedon Maintained Nursery School (HU12 8JB): [www.schoolswire.co.uk/public/hedon456.html](http://www.schoolswire.co.uk/public/hedon456.html)

Hornsea Maintained Nursery School (HU18 1PB): [www.hornseanurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.hornseanurseryschool.co.uk)

McMillan Maintained Nursery School (HU6 8HT): [www.mcmillannurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.mcmillannurseryschool.co.uk)

Scartha Maintained Nursery School (DN33 2EW): [www.scarthonursery.co.uk](http://www.scarthonursery.co.uk)

### Also associated:

St Paul's Maintained Nursery School (YO24 4BD) [www.stpaulsnurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.stpaulsnurseryschool.co.uk)

Childhaven Community Nursery School (YO11 1UB): [www.childhaven.n-yorks.sch.uk](http://www.childhaven.n-yorks.sch.uk)

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