

Bexley Childcare Sufficiency Assessment



February 2020

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Introduction to our childcare sufficiency assessment

The London Borough of Bexley has a strong track record of supporting the development and quality improvement of early education and childcare provision. Giving children the best possible early learning experiences coupled with a comprehensive range of early help support is a high priority. Our commitment to training and developing the workforce, improving practice and supporting the development of new provision is a reflection of this.

This childcare sufficiency assessment sets out how the excellent Early Years Foundation Stage profile outcomes will be sustained, the impact of high quality childcare provision further explored and how additional places and capacity will be delivered.

1.1 The role of the LA

The Local Authority has a duty of care under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure there is sufficient good quality childcare for parents. It is essential that the Local Authority understands the demand for capacity across the borough and what our parents need. We also have a number of statutory requirements in relation to childcare sufficiency that include:

- Providing information, advice and guidance to parents seeking childcare.
- Providing information, advice, guidance and access to training for childcare providers.
- Ensuring there are sufficient early education places for all 3 and 4 years olds if their parents want to access funded childcare. As well as securing enough high quality childcare places for disadvantaged 2 year olds accessing the 2 Year Offer.
- Meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 when securing early learning places.

Bexley has a team of Support Officers and Early Years Advisers available to support providers in delivering high quality childcare by supporting them to meet all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All providers are regulated by Ofsted but the Local Authority monitors providers and helps them to maintain and improve their quality of provision.

It is our aim to always meet the needs of parents where possible and to have the tools in place that enable them to source the childcare that best suits their needs. We also have a duty to ensure there is adequate SEND provision in the borough and that parents can access this for their children.

In this report, we have assessed sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available, and feedback from local parents about how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare.

1.2 Main Achievements

In 2019 a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage was achieved by 76.7% of children, which is a very slight decrease to the figure last year in 2018 of 77.1%.

In 2018 our 2 Year Offer take up figure was at 67%. This year, our take up figure has increased to 71%, which is a huge achievement due to publicity and promotion.

96% of our preschools and nurseries have an Ofsted rating good or outstanding (or equivalent). In total, 92% of settings with an early years registration (including out of school provision) are rated good or outstanding.

We were successful in rolling out the 30 hours funded childcare in September 2017 and have secured sufficient places to deliver the funding across the borough moving forward. Currently we have 94% of 3 & 4 year olds accessing the extended 30 hours entitlement.

1.3 Key Priorities for the coming year

During the year Bexley's priorities are going to be:

Early Help - In partnership with Children and Family Centres and Family Wellbeing, supporting families to find solutions to their difficulties so that their well-being improves and the need for specialist services is avoided this will be achieved by ensuring a shared multi-agency approach to supporting families and children in Bexley.

Exclusions - Support settings to reduce permanent exclusions and those at risk of exclusion

SEND - Making sure that education, health and care are considered together for children by developing and implementing a new process for addressing complex needs, developing explicit and transparent criteria for decision-making.

Ensuring there is sufficient good quality SEND provision in the borough to allow parents an appropriate choice when choosing their childcare. This will ensure that children with SEND have their needs met while receiving appropriate childcare.

Education - To have an education system that will thrive in a collaborative and strategic partnership between the local authority and local education leaders. We aim to achieve this by ensuring there are adequate places in the borough for children of all ages.

We aim to reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers by maintaining a good number of funded 2 year olds in childcare by continuing to promote the 2 Year Offer and reaching potentially eligible families.

In order to do this, we will support all of Bexley's education providers to maintain or achieve good or outstanding Ofsted outcomes, and provide strong early years and childcare provision that meets the borough's needs.

We will establish strategic partnerships so that the Local education system is confident, challenging and focused on the achievement of all children.

Funded Childcare Offer - We will continue to publicise the Play2Learn offer for 2 year olds, Tax Free Childcare, and the 30 hours free childcare as widely as possible to engage working parents.

1.4 Do we have sufficient Childcare?

Bexley currently has sufficient childcare and parents have access to a wide and varied range of childcare providers. Since September 2018 there have been 5 new Private/Voluntary/Independent settings registered with Ofsted and 20 new childminders. This has created a significant number of childcare places in Bexley that will benefit parents in finding childcare.

Bexley does not offer any dedicated specialist SEND provision in PVI Early Years Settings. However many settings are highly skilled and experienced in supporting children with SEND. Regular training opportunities are offered to address staff development needs in relation to SEND skills and knowledge. There is also a process in place that childcare providers must follow before offering a place to a child with complex needs. Once parents have chosen their childcare setting they will begin the process of completing a 'funding request' form. This outlines the type of childcare they would like and collates information from all professionals that are working with the family/child. This might include, for example, information regarding the specialist equipment he may need and how to use it, correct procedures for moving and handling, feeding, medication etc. This ensures that the setting has everything in place before a child starts and enables the setting to meet their needs, care for the child and keep them safe. Bexley aims to ensure that the settings parents choose are well equipped and supported to ensure the child is able to attend. There are generally sufficient childcare places available but these may not always reflect a parents' first choice and may not always suitable for children with very complex needs.

Bexley also has sufficient places for families wishing to access funded childcare places. Several more providers have signed up to offer funded childcare in the past year; this has created more places available for children.

1.5 Feedback from local parents and carers

We have consulted with parents through two promotional events within the borough to find out if they are accessing funded childcare and which type of childcare they use. The results show that of all the responses 49% were accessing childcare, of which 58% of these accessed Play 2 Learn funding. 42% were accessing the universal 15 hours funding and 68% accessed 30 hours funding entitlement. 51% of the responses are not accessing childcare. Reasons include not being eligible, or some parents felt their child was too young. There were a small number of parents who accessed preschool provision even if their child was not eligible for funding. Over 90% of parent's access other activities aimed at under- fives. These activities are mainly offered in Children and Family Centres; they include Stay and Play sessions, music, gymnastics, soft play, swimming classes and library activities.

Promotional activities for Play 2 Learn continue on a termly basis at the Children and Family Centres and associated hubs in the community. Links have been established and are maintained with our health partners, children's social care and Job Centre teams, to raise awareness amongst staff so that they can signpost parents to appropriate forms of childcare to meet their needs.

Anecdotal evidence from speaking to parents during Play2Learn promotional events suggests that there is more work be done to raise awareness of the variety of childcare options with parents in considering childminding as a childcare option. The Funded Childminder Leaflet and Childminder #notababysitter postcard are been used to reinforce this message.

2. Borough Context

2.1 Structure of Early Learning and Childcare Provision

Bexley has a range of childcare provision across the borough offering a variety of flexible childcare options to parents. New providers continue to register. At the time of publication Bexley has:

61 primary schools of which 38 have nursery classes

94 Day Nurseries and Pre schools

387 Childminders

36 Out of School Clubs

Figures correct as of December 2019

Information on the above can be found on the [Family Information Service Directory](#)

2.2 Children and Family Centres

Bexley also has a number of Children and Family Centre's across the borough as well as Children Wellbeing Centres and Children's Childcare Centres. These centres provide support and activities for children under the age of five and their families. In May 2018 the ward parameters in Bexley changed and the Children and Family Centre Localities were aligned to the Family Well Being Localities. We are in a transitional period of working towards the new ward boundaries that are shown on the map below:



KEY:

Green is the Central Locality (St Augustine's Children and Family Centre)

Yellow is the North Locality (West Street Children and Family Centre)

Purple is the South Locality (Danson Children's Centre)

2.3 Planning Areas – Early Years Services

Bexley is split into three Localities which align to the wards covered by the three main Children and Family Centres. The table below shows a breakdown of population by age in each locality it also shows the number of childcare settings and schools in each locality. You can see that Central locality has the highest number of children across all 3 age groups. Although the Central locality has fewer childcare providers than the South, some of the settings are larger and we know there are sufficient places to meet the need of the population. Central locality has the highest number of primary and secondary schools which should ensure sufficiency of places for school age children.

Population	North	South	Central
Age 0-4	3,952	5,016	7,021
Age 5-9	4,026	5,052	7,387
Age 10-14	3,758	4,850	7,060
Headline Characteristics	<p>The North Locality consists of 4 wards (Erith, Slade Green & Northend, Barnehurst and Crayford)</p> <p>The north locality has a high proportion of lone parent households, with the exception of Barnehurst ward. There are also a number of households where adults are unemployed (except in Barnehurst ward). The level of social housing is above the Bexley average. The North has seen a large increase in population.</p>	<p>The South Locality consists of 6 wards (East Wickham, Falconwood & Welling, Blackfen & Lamorbey, Longlands, Sidcup and St Mary's & St James')</p> <p>South is a diverse locality with both affluent and less affluent areas, East Wickham is the least affluent area. The ward of St Mary's and St James is also a less affluent area and has a high number of pre- school children. Several of the wards in the South Locality contain the highest number of working households and the lowest number of pre- school children.</p>	<p>The Central Locality consists of 7 wards (Thamesmead East, Belvedere, West Heath, Northumberland Heath, Crook Log, Bexleyheath and Blendon & Penhill) and stretches the length of the borough. The wards in the north of this locality are highly diverse culturally and shares characteristics with many inner London areas. Central locality has seen the second highest population increase in the borough with a significant number of lone parents, households where adults are unemployed and social housing. The wards towards the south of the borough differ slightly in that they have seen some of the lowest population growth and the population is less ethnically diverse. There is also a higher number of households where adults are employed in the south of the locality.</p>
Number of childcare settings	<p>3 Special Schools 21 PVI's 3 Children and Family/ Wellbeing Centres 79 Childminders 10 Primary Schools 2 Secondary Schools</p>	<p>1 Special School 31 PVI's 3 Children and Family Centres 122 Childminders 20 Primary Schools 5 Secondary Schools 1 Stand Alone Sixth Form</p>	<p>3 Special Schools 41 PVI's 3 Children and Family/ Wellbeing Centres 186 Childminders 30 Primary Schools 9 Secondary Schools</p>

2.4 Population and Projection

As a Local Authority we use information on birth rates and trends so that we can determine sufficiency in the borough. We have looked at the live birth rates from 2013 onwards and can see that the overall number has remained fairly consistent over the years. Looking at the table below you can see there are trends within the wards: Brampton for example usually has a lower rate compared to Thamesmead. This could be to do with the demographic in the area or the size of the ward. The wards with the most significant changes are Colyers & Crayford which both saw the largest increases in live births since 2017 compared to the other wards. Thamesmead East saw the biggest fall in live births, with 47 less than 2017.

Live births by ward (August 2018)

2017 Ward	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
LB Bexley Total	2,959	3,036	3,162	3,091	3,095	3,030
Barnehurst	129	103	137	136	131	117
Belvedere	224	195	188	217	214	208
Blackfen	91	121	123	95	129	110
Blendon	133	105	116	106	104	121
Brampton	99	82	98	96	88	97
Christchurch	140	131	144	124	133	139
Colyers	121	131	147	166	120	147
Cray Meadows	143	156	164	157	160	140
Crayford	175	194	192	169	164	187
Danson Park	127	136	159	166	150	118
East Wickham	104	145	105	127	142	136
Erith	227	247	210	215	229	225
Falconwood	95	129	121	122	128	127
Lesnes Abbey	129	146	159	150	151	131
Longlands	113	116	137	125	111	107
North End	215	220	236	222	235	209
Northumberland Heath	119	121	130	134	119	139
Sidcup	115	111	111	99	115	121
St Mary's	96	96	113	123	114	134
St Michael's	116	127	132	101	136	142
Thamesmead East	248	224	240	241	222	175

Data source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 November 2019]

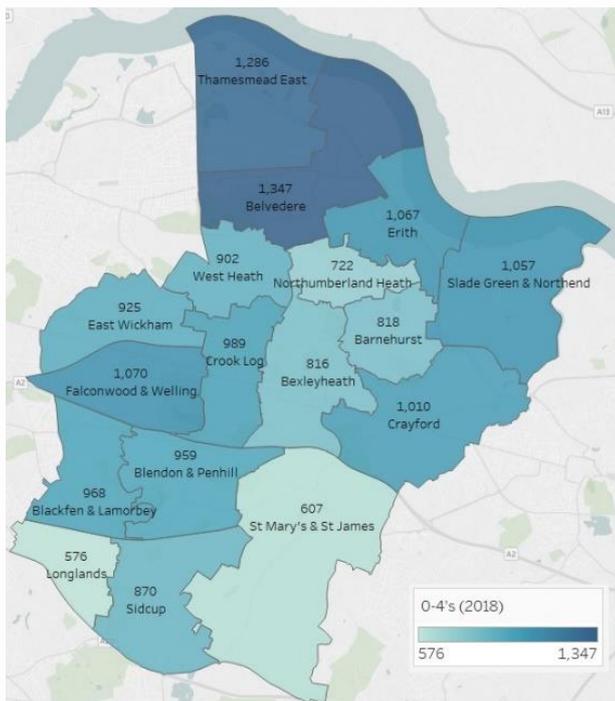
The table below looks at the number of children and their ages by ward. Similar to the table above this will give an indication of sufficiency and need in the borough. As it is broken down by ward we are able to advise potential childcare providers of which wards could benefit from more childcare.

2018 Wards	All Ages	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 0-5	Total
Bexley Total	247,258	3,133	3,119	3,189	3,210	3,338	3,185	19,174	-
Belvedere	17,866	300	266	265	248	268	263	1,610	Central Locality 16,862
Bexleyheath	15,205	175	171	147	147	176	172	988	
Blendon & Penhill	15,972	201	165	206	174	213	206	1,165	
Crook Log	15,608	169	191	193	218	218	208	1,197	
Northumberland Heath	10,999	137	141	147	155	142	135	857	
Thamesmead East	17,485	237	266	248	248	287	270	1,556	
West Heath	16,045	187	169	175	202	169	156	1,058	
Barnehurst	12,195	151	169	153	178	167	159	977	
Crayford	16,292	203	196	211	201	199	238	1,248	
Erith	11,614	203	197	217	232	218	175	1,242	
Slade Green & Northend	12,889	202	219	220	191	225	241	1,298	
Blackfen & Lamorbey	16,457	187	188	174	205	214	189	1,157	South Locality 11,956
East Wickham	15,977	202	165	183	185	190	170	1,095	
Falconwood & Welling	16,694	183	218	224	210	235	204	1,274	
Longlands	10,139	103	104	121	131	117	104	680	
Sidcup	15,168	171	170	174	174	181	180	1,050	
St Mary's & St James	10,653	122	124	131	111	119	115	722	

Data source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 November 2019]

2.5 Ward Population Map

The map below takes the information from the previous table and shows the number of children aged under 5 by ward in pictorial form. This makes it easier to see the variations in the number of children. The Northern part of Central locality clearly has more under 5s as shown by the dark blue, compared to Longlands and St Mary's & St James Wards in the South locality and Northumberland Heath in the Central locality, which are shown in light blue.



Data source: GLA 2016-based ward population projections, released November 2017, with conversion from old ward to new wards <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/projections/> *Ward boundaries changed at the May 2018 local election

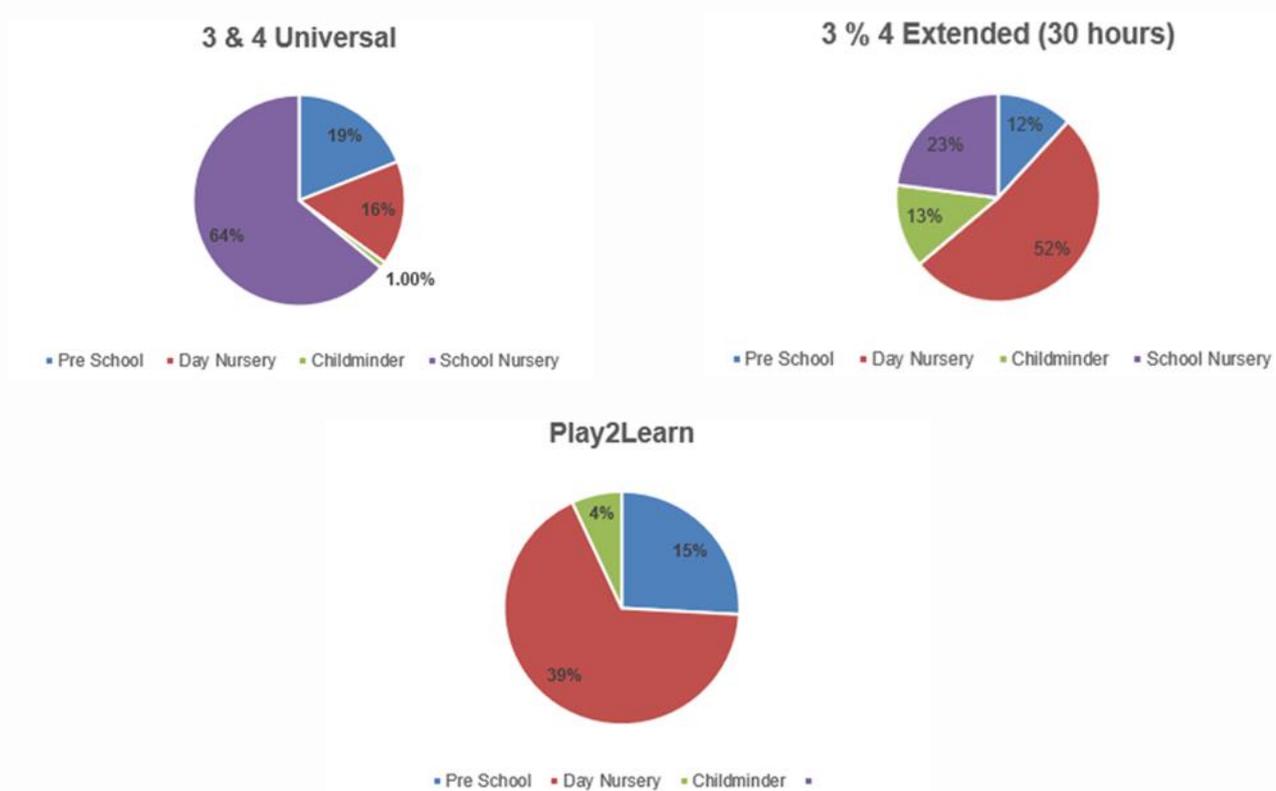
3. Bexley Borough Childcare Context

3.1 Childcare for Under 5's

In Bexley we currently have approximately 15,989 children aged under 5. Of these children we know that 3711 are attending some form of funded childcare. We are unable to calculate how many children are in childcare that are not receiving funding as we have no access to the records of this.

Children receiving either the universal or extended hours funding can take a place at a nursery, preschool, childminder or school nursery. We have included graphs below that show where these children are currently taking up their funded place. You can see that take up of the universal hours is spread evenly between preschools, day nurseries and school nurseries with a smaller proportion using childminders. Day nurseries are providing the most extended hours with preschools and childminders having a fairly even take up. The smallest percentage of take up is at school nurseries, this is because currently only 5 schools are offering the extended hours although a few more are looking to start offering the extended hours in 2020.

Children receiving the Play 2 Learn funding can access their funding at a preschool, childminder or nursery. The largest proportion of Play 2 Learn funded places are being taken at day nurseries. The lowest percentage of take up is with childminders. This is likely to be due to the limit on the number of 2 year olds a childminder can have at one time. In addition, there may be limited awareness of childminding as a childcare option.



Vacancies

Vacancy rates are hard to ascertain and whilst we ask providers to keep us updated, many providers choose not to notify us. Therefore, the information we have is a snapshot at best, and often changes rapidly. In some cases, providers may have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part time arrangement. In general, vacancy rates are higher in the autumn, when children move to school. Ofsted data tells us that in Bexley, childcare providers on the Early Years Register have a total of 6,861 potential places. We also have approximately 181 providers (Out of school settings and childminders) on other registers (CCR/VCR) with a total of approximately 650 potential places.

3.2 Childcare for 5-14 year olds

Childcare for 5-14 year olds is mostly provided in the form of wrap around provision before and after school. Bexley has 36 before and after school clubs, which are privately run (PVI) as well as school run provision. These may offer childcare or activity provision.

It is difficult to ascertain whether there are sufficient before and after school places as data is limited. Therefore, it is not possible to say with accuracy whether or not we have sufficient at this time. Parents who completed our survey did report that they would like more after school clubs to be available as they weren't always easy to find or in the area they wanted.

3.3 Quality of Childcare

Ofsted inspection data shows that Bexley Early Years settings are providing a good standard of care. As of the Autumn term 2019, 96% of Day Nurseries / Pre Schools and 94% of Childminders were judged Good / Outstanding.

Bexley has a strong commitment to ensuring that no childcare provision is less than Good across the borough. We recently invested in the development of our quality development toolkit (Bexley 50Qq) which will support our endeavours towards this goal.

Bexley 50Qq

Bexley 50Qq (Bexley 50 Quality Questions) is a tool which has been designed for use as an evaluation aid to raise quality and assess the provision, care and standards for the young children in the borough. It is being delivered across Bexley's PVI settings and is part of an offer under Bexley's Traded Services.

When delivering the Bexley 50Qq programme it is used alongside other statutory and non-statutory guidance, in particular 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, 'The Early year's inspection handbook', The Education Inspection Framework, 'Development matters' and 'Working together to safeguard children'.

Aims and Objectives of 50Qq:

- To enable leaders to raise the quality of their provision in line with all guidance including the common inspection framework.
- Provide settings with support to self-evaluate their setting in preparation for future inspections.
- To help settings who have already been recognised by Ofsted as at least 'Good' to reflect on what they could do to maintain and further enhance their current practice
- To give specific settings with a strong commitment to improve their grading the opportunity to be endorsed by Bexley as a 'Good' setting

A successful pilot of the programme it was launched in April 2018. Since then we have had 21 providers engage with the 50Qq. Two settings have completed the entire programme and have been awarded their certificate of completion. Two more settings are in the final stages of 50Qq and will be achieve the full award by the end of January 2020. Feedback from providers has been very positive with them saying, 'the precision and detail of each section is so thorough, it's invaluable' and that it 'gave confidence and reassurance in the service we are providing.' Providers responding in this way can only be beneficial to the children as it will allow them to improve and develop their day to day practice. A number of settings are due to start 50Qq in the New Year and will undertake an improved version aligned to the Education Inspection Framework September 2019.

Support visits

The London Borough of Bexley has 95 PVI settings, (nurseries, pre-schools and out of school clubs) each setting is allocated an Early Years Support Officer or Adviser who are their first point of contact for advice and guidance. Every PVI setting receives a visit and/or contact during the year, according to their level of need. During a visit officers provide advice and guidance as well as challenge to managers and SENCO's around the quality of provision, inclusive practice and the welfare requirements. To give the officer an insight into the holistic needs of the setting, every visit includes a tour of the premises and a learning walk. It is an opportunity to observe good practice, interactions between staff and children and identify concerns or areas of weakness. Additional support, training and visits may be required to address any issues. Dependent on the needs of the setting, this may take the form of targeted or intensive support. A similar approach to support is taken with Childminders where the allocation of officers is organised based according to the ward in which the Childminder lives.

Intensive support for new childcare provision

To ensure new childcare provision is of high quality the Support Officers and Advisors carry out Welcome to Bexley Visits. These visits provide the foundation to building a strong working relationship with providers. The advice and guidance given during these visits encourages all new providers who establish childcare provision in the borough to have a good starting point, by receiving robust and high quality support.

Traded services

In order to maintain high quality provision in Bexley, during all visits, officers & advisers record the requests that settings make for engagement in the 50Qq programme or Professional Development (training) Program. Settings are then signposted to the training opportunities that are available to book via the Bexley Services Network website facility. The training currently made available is well attended and helps us to ensure that settings have access to the support they need to maintain good practice in regards to Safeguarding and Learning and Development. We are in the process of analysing inspection trends and will be further developing our training offer based on the needs of settings.

Moderation and transition support

Through an upcoming project to further develop our offer of support to settings and schools, we are working to ensure that transition is well supported with our moderation offer.

Early years monitoring of progress and assessment will be better aligned with primary school monitoring systems within the borough to help ensure gaps are identified early and closed.

Big School Bear Transition Programme is now in place, over one-third of PVI settings have accessed the initial training with further training being planned for the Spring term 2020. The aim of the programme is to help Early Years settings and families support children more effectively as they move onto school.

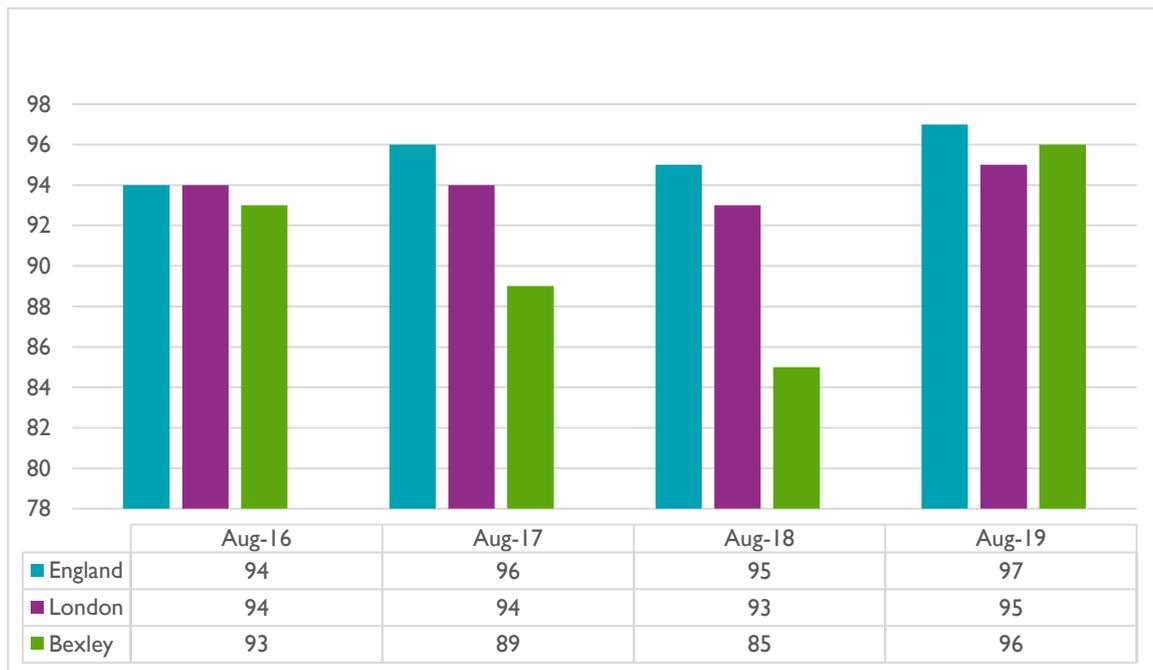
Ofsted Registration and Grading

All childcare providers must register with, and be inspected by Ofsted who award them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. Childminders and private and voluntary providers (nurseries and preschools) are on the Early Years Register, and schools and stand alone maintained nursery schools are on the Schools register. The grades for both registers are equivalent. Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection grade for the whole school and most also have a separate early years grade reported.

Both schools and early years providers have four possible Ofsted grades: ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘requires improvement’, and ‘inadequate’. Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection.

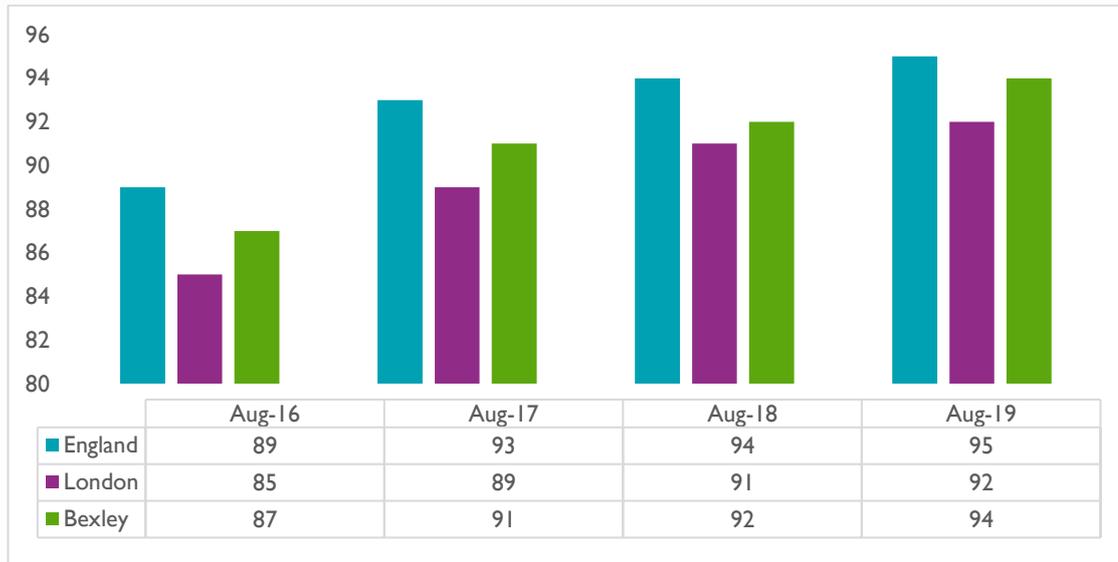
Percentage of Pre Schools and Nurseries judged good or outstanding

The graph below shows the percentage of preschools and nurseries that are currently judged good or outstanding in Bexley compared to London and England. As you can see Bexley has had a huge increase of 96%, compared to 85% last year. This increase is due to the systems that Bexley had put in place, including the Professional Development Programme and the Bexley 50Qq, which ensures quality in the future, along with regular advice and guidance from the Early Years Support Officers or Advisors.



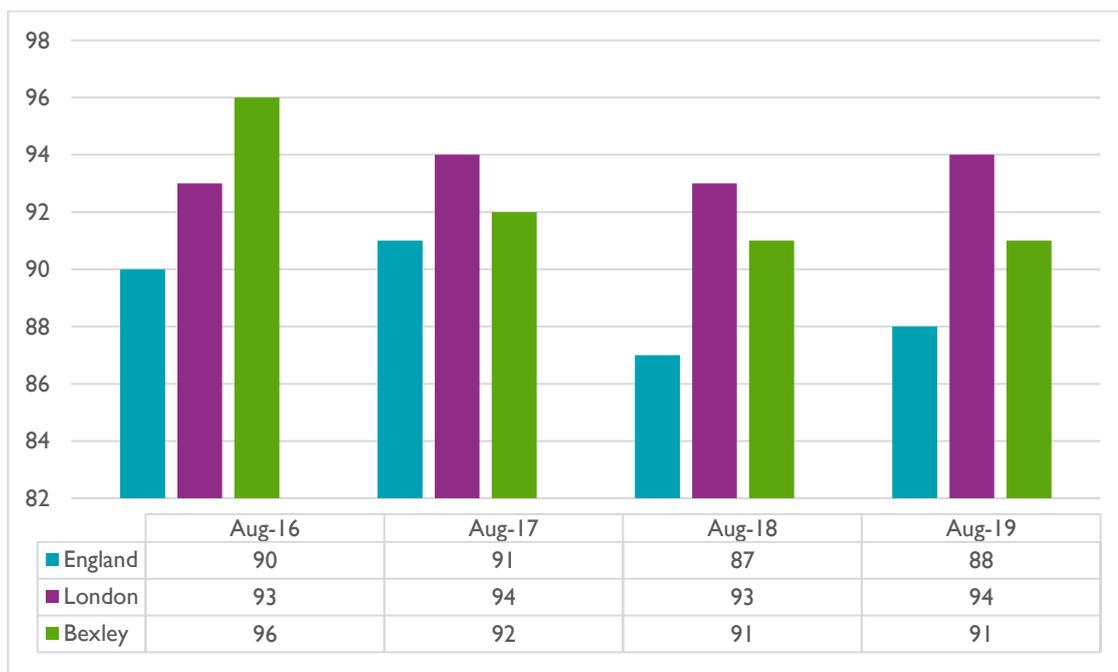
Percentage of Childminders judged good or outstanding

The graph below shows the percentage of childminders that are currently judged good or outstanding in Bexley compared to London and England. As you can see all areas have improved since 2019. Currently Bexley has reached a four-year high increasing from 87% to 94% since 2016.



Percentage of Primary Schools judged good or outstanding

The graph below shows the percentage of Primary Schools that are currently judged good or outstanding in Bexley compared to London and England. You can see that the percentage has dropped slightly since 2016 but Bexley is at a good 91% currently.



3.4 Flexibility of Childcare

Bexley has a number of childcare settings offering parents a variety of options for their childcare needs. The majority of providers are open all year round with just a short break at Christmas. Childminders are often able to offer a greater flexibility to parents than a nursery or pre-school as they are not restricted by opening hours. That being said, Bexley nurseries and pre-schools are able to offer a range of hours or sessions to meet the requirements of the parents where possible. Details of opening hours and sessions are provided by individual providers which are listed on the [Family Information Directory](#)

All funded childcare can be used flexibly either during term time or all year round as a stretched offer. Parents can also use their funded childcare hours across different settings to ensure they are able to get the most out of their funded hours if one provider can't offer what they need.

Childcare is most commonly delivered during the typical working day – between 8am and 6pm on weekdays. Some parents require childcare outside these times in order to fit with their work or other responsibilities. The results from our parent survey did show that parents feel there isn't enough provision offering extended opening hours to meet parents working needs.

The majority of Day Nurseries and childminders offer services year round, with a significant number opening before 8am and after 6pm. Several childminders offer atypical hours and overnight care and there is currently one group provision that operates on Saturday.

3.5 Cost of childcare and affordability

The table below represents a comparison between the average hourly rate for Nurseries, PreSchools and Childminders in Bexley. We are reporting on average prices per hour, as notified to us by settings. There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be also additional payments for lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices.

Bexley

Average Price per hour	Day Nurseries	Pre Schools	Childminders
2 years old and under	£6.00	£5.50	£5.25
3 and 4 year olds	£5.50	£5.00	£5.25

Figures correct as of August 2019

The table shows that Pre-Schools generally have a lower hourly rate than Day Nurseries. This is largely because they are sessional, offering 3 hours AM and/or PM. This wouldn't generally fit in with a working family unless they were using a Pre-School as part of a shared childcare package with another setting.

Day Nurseries have the higher hourly rate and this is reflective across London and the UK as well. The table below shows the average hourly rate of Day Nurseries and Childminders across London and the UK. We were unable to find accurate data on the hourly rate of Pre – Schools other than to say they charge between £12.00 and £15.00 per session.

By comparing the two tables you can see that average childcare costs in London are higher than in Bexley and the UK as a whole. Bexley sits in between the two and has a higher cost on average than the UK but this is to be expected as we are a London Borough.

UK and London

Average Price per hour	Day Nurseries	Childminders
2's and under UK	£5.10	£4.39
2's and under London	£6.95	£6.40
3 and 4 year olds UK	£4.90	£4.37
3 and 4 year olds UK London	£6.61	£5.77

Data from Family and Childcare Trust Parent Survey 2019

Nationally, childcare costs have increased since the previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2018.

After School Provision

The following table compares the costs of after school provision in Bexley, London and the UK. These are usually 3 hour sessions and there would be variation in price depending on a number of factors, such as siblings attending the same provision. Cost in Bexley is slightly higher than the London and UK average. -

Average Price per session	After School
Bexley	£13.00
London	£11.55
UK	£11.50

3.6 Accessing childcare and Support

Parents and carers can access support and find information about childcare on the [Bexley website](#) and can search for childcare by proximity, type, or funded service by visiting the [Family Information Directory](#)

Parents of children with additional needs can find support services and information by visiting [Bexley Local Offer](#)

Parents can also contact the council directly by calling 0208 303 7777 and requesting to speak to the relevant team or person.

4. Childcare for children with SEND

Local authorities and settings should promote equality and inclusion for all children with disabilities or SEN. Inclusive practice addresses and supports the individual needs of each child. In doing so, it will benefit each child in the setting and will create an environment in which all children, including those with SEND, have the opportunity to flourish. This includes removing barriers that prevent children accessing early education and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

4.1 Inclusion Funding

Bexley can provide short term Early Years inclusion funding to settings for children 2, 3 & 4 years old with an identified special need/disability, an emerging need or involved in a family crisis e.g. a family bereavement, terminal illness. Early Years Advisors and Support Officers offer information and guidance to settings to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs in accordance with the terms of the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Funding is allocated by a multi-agency panel who use band descriptors to agree the amount to be received by the setting based on the child's presenting needs.

4.2 Additional Support funding for children with an EHCP or receiving DLA

There are currently 15989 children under 5 living in Bexley. As of November 2019, 41 children have an EHC Plan and a further small number are presently being funded without an EHCP. Of those with EHCP 71% were identified with Speech, Language and Communications Needs as their primary need type and 17% were identified with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

During the period of 1st April – 30th June 2019 the Educational Psychology Service received 36 referrals. Of these, 70% Speech, language and communication (SLCN) needs as primary concern, 21% complex developmental needs, 6% Social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) needs and 3% complex medical needs. Looking at this year's figures, they are stable in comparison.

Below is a table that shows the number of preschool children that currently have an Educational Health Care Plan in place, as well as the different diagnosed need types. As you can see, there has been an increase of 14 EHCP for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs since 2017.

Diagnosed need types of preschool children with EHCP in place	2017	2018	2019
Speech, Language and Communications Needs	15	26	29
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	12	4	6
Other Difficulty/Disability	8	5	3
Hearing Impairment	6	0	0
Severe Learning Difficulty	6	2	2
Visual Impairment	3	0	0
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1	0	1
Physical Disability	1	1	0
Total	52	38	41

Figures correct as of [September 2019](#)

4.3 Bexley Local Offer

The Local Offer provides information about the services available to children and young people with SEND and their families across Education, Health and Social Care. Knowing what is out there and having the right information in one place gives parents more choice and therefore more control over the services they use. Our [Local Offer](#) is published as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act 2014 and will be developed over time. The [Local Offer](#) holds all the information in one place making it easier for parents to find out what they need to know. It enables them to find the nearest and most suitable services for their children and makes provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations.

5 Funded childcare

Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government. These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year or equivalent (e.g. the setting offers a 'stretched offer' of less hours over more weeks of the year).

All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours per week (570 hours a year) from the term after their third birthday until they are eligible to start school

Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, could be eligible to receive an additional 15 hours per week (30 Hour entitlement)

Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits could be eligible to receive 15 hours per week (570 hours per year). This also applies where the child has a disability (is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance), is looked after by the local authority or has been adopted. Nationally, about 40% of 2 year olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area.

Children aged 2 may also access free childcare if parents are receiving support under the Immigration and Asylum Act and have either claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6') or have been a refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')

A 2-year-old may also access funded childcare if the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and parents have either leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds, or the right to live in the UK because they are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a 'Zambrano Carer')

Information on all funding and support with childcare costs is on the [Childcare Choices](#) website.

5.1 2 year olds - Play 2 Learn

The Play 2 Learn funding provides funded childcare for the boroughs most deprived 2 year olds, this is for low income families and based on an economic eligibility criteria, unless the child has a disability or is a looked after child. Play 2 Learn funding is usually taken as 15 hours a week over 38 weeks a year but can be stretched over more weeks with fewer hours taken per week. This may help parents who intend to use the hours to work or study.

Parents can check eligibility and apply for the funding by going to the [Bexley website](#) and completing the application via the [citizen portal](#). Parents will then have their eligibility checked and will be issued a reference number to take to their chosen childcare provider. Funding can then start the term after the child turns 2.

Most Play 2 Learn places are taken at PVI settings however after promoting our funded childminders we do have a number of children placed with childminders as well. Currently Bexley has sufficient places for 2 year olds wishing to access a funded place, in highly populated areas parents may not always get their first choice but there are other options available. We have found that most parents prefer a place close to home and are often unwilling to travel far for a place.

Take up of Play 2 Learn places (as a % of number eligible according to the Department of Works and Pensions)

	Spring	Summer	Autumn
2016	63%	66%	72%
2017	71%	65%	75%
2018	64%	63%	67%
2019	65%	59%	71%

5.2 Funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to receive 570 hours of funded childcare a year. This is usually taken as 15 hours over 38 weeks but can be stretched to meet parent's needs and accommodate working hours. At the time of writing the number of 3 and 4 year olds accessing a 15 hour funded place is just over 4000.

According to past trends the summer term is when the highest number of places are taken so we would expect to see a peak in places then. Parents do not need to apply for this, just find a childcare setting then the funding is claimed directly from us.

Table showing number of 15 hour take up by term

	Spring	Summer	Autumn
2016	4153	4775	3458
2017	4104	4582	3275
2018	4024	4628	3220
2019	4022	4612	4031

5.3 30 hours funded childcare

From September 2017 eligible families have been able to access an additional 570 hours funded childcare a year to use flexibly, so 1140 in total, usually taken as 30 hours a week.

In a two parent family both parents must each expect to earn (on average) at least £120 a week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage) and up to £100,000 a year each. If either parent is on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or they are unable to work because they are disabled or have caring responsibilities, they could still be eligible. If in a lone parent family the same criteria applies.

In Bexley we have worked hard to engage providers to offer the 30 hours. We have held a series of information briefings for schools, PVI's and childminders as well visiting interested settings if requested. Childminders in particular have been keen to engage. This has worked well to engage providers and currently we have: 38 schools, 26 pre-schools, 72 nurseries and 189 childminders offering places

(Figures correct as of December 2019).

Bexley launched publicity campaigns to engage parents and make them aware of the 30 hours. We will continue to publicise and promote the funding to ensure we reach the maximum number of parents possible.

Take up of extended hours places

	Spring	Summer	Autumn
2016	NA	NA	NA
2017	NA	NA	678
2018	1130	1113	945
2019	1267	1471	1226

5.4 Assessment of impact

So far we have seen some evidence that the 30 hours has caused places to reduce for families wanting to access a Play 2 Learn place the or universal 15 hours. This has resulted in a bottleneck of places for 2 year olds, where they are held on waiting lists at some pre-schools or nurseries. However, a number of new settings have opened, more childminders are delivering funded places and settings have extended their opening hours. We are also continuing to receive enquiries from schools looking to extend their provision to offer the 30 hours.