

Nursery manager of the year



Winner Cornelia Harrison, Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery School, Islington, London

Despite her busy role, Cornelia is always available to offer support, advice and her time to parents and staff and her care and affection to the children in her nursery. She is a source of stability to the whole setting.

Cornelia has been with Hopes and Dreams for 12 years, working her way up from nursery assistant, so she understands all levels of the business. She will still step in to anyone's position if necessary, from housekeeping to assisting in the rooms. Under her management, the setting has grown from a small overnight hotel for babies into a large daytime nursery school with 123 places.

The nursery's popularity, demonstrated by its long waiting-list for all age groups, is attributed to Cornelia's leadership. Parents appreciate how Cornelia tries to accommodate individual needs and takes into consideration special family circumstances. She has greatly improved the flexibility that the nursery can offer – not an easy task, especially with so many families – and has introduced *ad hoc* drop-in days. Effective communication between home

and nursery includes parents' memos, frequent email correspondence and questionnaires.

Cornelia also values staff training and development and puts great emphasis on exploring the best possible training programmes. She personally researches the courses available and selects the ones that suit staff members best. She holds regular team meetings, produces weekly staff memos and has introduced an anonymous suggestion box for staff ideas and concerns, which she addresses regularly.

'All the children are friendly with her and most of them insist on going to her office every evening to say goodbye'
Judge

Undoubtedly the best testimonials to her abilities are those from the children in Cornelia's care. All the children are friendly with her, and most of them insist on going to her office every evening to say goodbye.

Highly commended Louise Lloyd-Evans, Young Friends Nursery, Hove, East Sussex

A natural leader with a charisma that draws the attention of children and adults alike, Louise has a passion for the development of pre-school children and a determination to turn her vision of the ideal early years setting into a reality.

Julie Debanks, Willow Cottage Nurseries, Witney, Oxfordshire

Julie has made the effort to know all the children at both the settings she area-manages. The children love her visits and she is often found with a group of children surrounding her. She also takes a pastoral approach to the care of her staff and is a positive role model to all.

Finalist

Rachel Jones, Fit'n'Fun Kids, Falmouth, Cornwall

Criterion

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