GIRFEC story of impact for project or programme

Getting it right for Wallacetown Early Years Centre 'Team with the Family' meetings

During my first year as Depute Centre Manager and Lead Professional for several children attending Wallacetown Early Years Centre, I quickly recognised that children's voices were not being effectively represented or recorded within Team with The Family (TWTF) meetings. As many of the children we support are pre-verbal, it became a priority for me to ensure that their views, interests, achievements, and individuality were meaningfully represented throughout the planning and review process.

Pilot for Canva Presentations

At Wallacetown Early Years Centre, we maximise the use of Learning Journals to support children's learning and development. This includes making children's STINT targets accessible for staff to assess, track, and gather evidence against. To enhance the representation of children's voices within TWTF meetings, I developed and trialled a new approach by creating individual Canva presentations for each child. This pilot was initially implemented across six Team with The Family meetings.

The presentations are visually engaging and attractive; however, most importantly, they capture each child as an individual, celebrating their unique personality, strengths, achievements, and areas for development.

Upon arrival at TWTF meetings, parents and professionals are welcomed by a warm and inviting presentation displayed on the Promethean screen. The welcoming statement starts with, "Welcome to [Child's Name]'s Team with The Family Meeting." This immediately sets a positive and child-centred tone for the discussion. The presentation highlights key strengths through photographs and short video clips showcasing the child's interests, achievements, and experiences.

Using information from previous meeting minutes and plans, I was able to demonstrate progress in areas previously identified as challenging, such as developing independence, through visual evidence and video recordings. The child's STINT targets were presented in a simplified and accessible format, supported by photographs and videos of the child actively engaging in the agreed multi-agency targets.

As the evidence of progress was visual and tangible, it enabled the team to review the child's plan collectively and make informed decisions regarding the achievement of outcomes during the meeting itself.

Benefits from the Pilot

As the pilot developed, I became increasingly aware of an additional benefit. Due to changes in professional caseloads, TWTF meetings were often the first opportunity for some professionals to meet the child and their family. While the initial aim of the project was to strengthen the representation of the child's voice, reflection highlighted that it had also become a powerful tool for professionals. Teachers were able to develop a deeper understanding of the child prior to transition, allowing them to plan more effectively for their entry to school. Health professionals could utilise the visual evidence as part of their assessment and planning process before undertaking home visits.

The impact on families was equally significant. Some parents had never previously attended a Team with The Family meeting, while others had experienced anxiety due to previous negative experiences within educational settings. Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. They reported that the presentation softened what could otherwise feel like a formal meeting and placed the emphasis firmly on their child and their progress. This helped them feel more comfortable, valued, and less anxious when participating in discussions.

The presentation itself is concise, lasting only 20 to 30 seconds, yet the impact has been substantial. I firmly believe that the enhanced inclusivity and improved quality of participation for children, families, and professionals far outweigh the small amount of additional preparation required. Following each meeting, I print the presentation slides and include them within the documentation distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

Evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot, I distributed questionnaires to both families and professionals. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, and as a result, we have committed to embedding this approach into our practice for the new academic year.

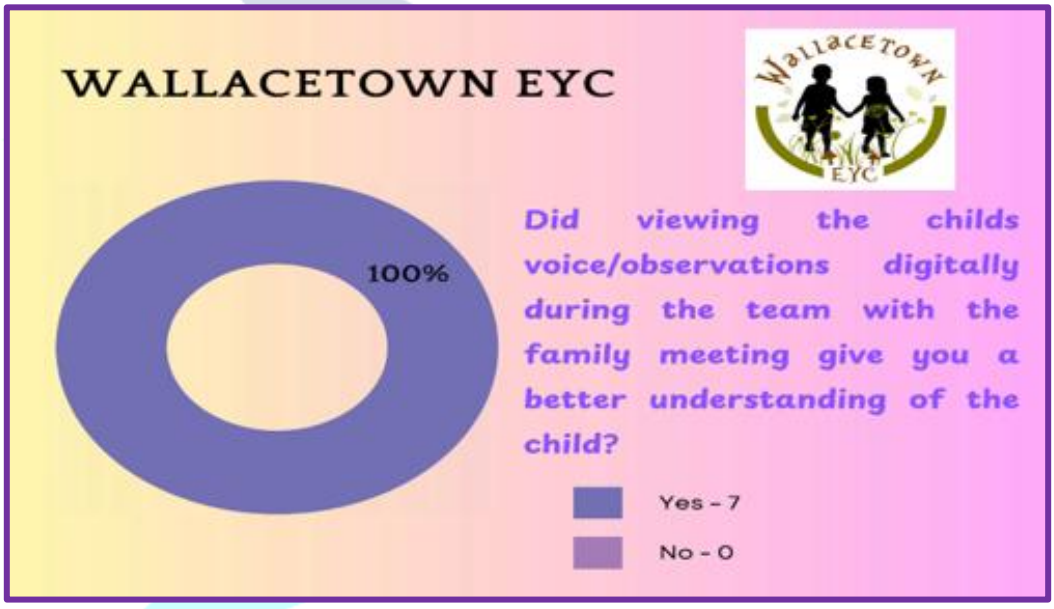
Care Inspectorate Inspection

Most recently, during our Care Inspectorate inspection on 15 July, Wallacetown Early Years Centre received an excellent evaluation for Nurturing Care and Support, with the Grade 6 award currently progressing through quality assurance processes. The TWTF presentation pilot was highlighted as an example of effective practice, with inspectors commending our creativity, ambition, and commitment to ensuring that we get it right for every child, family, and professional involved.

If you have any further questions, then please don't hesitate to contact myself. Emma Hart, Depute Centre Manager at Wallacetown EYC

Feedback

Please see the feedback below:



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WALLACETOWN EYC

As a partner agency, tell us about how the new approach supported the review of holistic targeted support?

-"It was useful for me to see a video of the child when eating lunch as this showed their difficulty with motor skills and the level of support required."

"The digital contributions ensured the child's interests, preferences, and emotional cues were visible throughout the meeting. This helped partner agencies anchor decisions in what genuinely matters to the child. Photos, videos, and observations provided concrete examples of how the child engages with targeted strategies. This made it easier to judge whether interventions were effective or needed adjustment. Seeing the child's voice presented visually helped all agencies develop a shared understanding of the child's strengths, needs, and motivations, reducing assumptions and improving alignment."

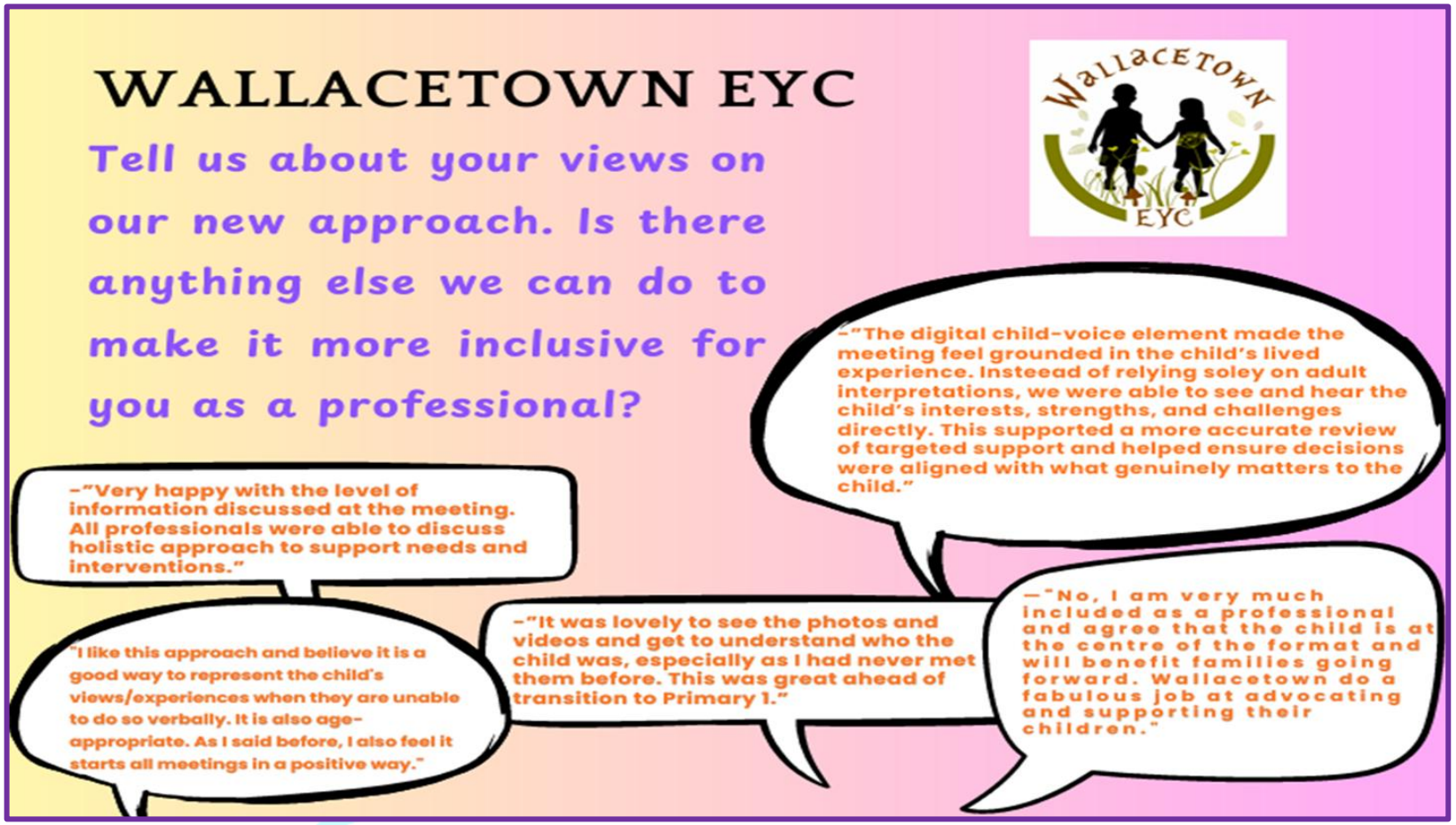
-"It helped keep the child at the centre of the discussion at all times. The meeting felt friendly and informal."

"It gives us all a chance to see the child within the EYC and what they enjoy doing while there. I get the impression parents enjoy seeing their child's experiences presented in this way, and I think it keeps the discussion positive and focused on the child."

-"Helpful to see the child's interests and have them included in a non obtrusive, developmentally appropriate fashion."

"It allowed for a richer conversation around the child's current and previous support."

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