# Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment name:</th>
<th>Little Me Cluster</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating schools:</td>
<td>Rosegrove Nursery, Basnett Street Nursery, Rockwood Nursery School, Taywood Nursery School</td>
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<td>Project title:</td>
<td>Little Me Cluster</td>
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## Project summary

- The cluster formed a small working party of local Nursery Schools to look at how to address equalities and community cohesion with Nursery age children. With support from the EMA/GRT achievement service, they chose to use a simple figure 'Little Me' to support their work.
- Each child made their own, self-representation 'Little Me' figure and used them in all areas of continuous provision within the different nurseries. They were used in transition and as a way of developing parental engagement through a home/school 'Little Me Adventure Book' or through discussions or conversations.
- It was evident that through the use of 'Little Me', children's personal, social and emotional development was supported and communication between home and school was enhanced.

## Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

- The use of a collaborative approach to develop strategies to enhance community cohesion alongside raising standards across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## What were you hoping to achieve?

- To develop the children's sense of identity.
- To develop the children's self confidence and self-esteem.
- To develop the children's awareness of feelings and to be able to articulate them through the figures.
- To provide opportunities for children to express themselves through the figures.
- To provide the children with opportunities to use the 'Little Me' to explore the wider world.
- To develop the children's speech and communication.
How did you identify the need for this practice?

- Whilst working towards our OFSTED targets and Lancashire's Race Equality Mark, a group of Nursery Headteachers alongside Jane Richmond (Teacher Advisor) identified concerns in delivering some aspects of school linking and community cohesion to Nursery aged children. As a group we wanted to find ways of developing parental involvement and celebrating the different cultures and diversity surrounding our Nursery Schools.
- All the Headteachers had identified communication, speech and language as an area for development. Baseline assessments in all schools indicated that a large percentage of children were entering Nursery below, or well below, their age related expectations in Communication, Language and Literacy and Personal and Social Development.

Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school

**Rosegrove Nursery School:**

74 children on roll. (36 girls and 38 boys). 9.4% of pupils are on the SEN register. The nursery admits a new cohort of children each term, this results in some children spending four or five terms in the setting. Rosegrove Nursery also offers extended services to families, 'Pippins'. This service offers parents the opportunity to access full day care throughout the year. Rosegrove Nursery School is part of the Rosegrove and Lowerhouse ward. SED indicates 29.41% of pupils live in E* and a further 54.41% live in E. Most of our pupils are from White/ British backgrounds. Currently one Nursery School pupil has English as an additional language. Each year Language and Communication remains a focus for our Nursery. In 2013 a high percentage of our pupils started Nursery working in 0-36 month age bands of development matters. 63% Listening and Attention, 33% Understanding and 61% Speaking.

**Rockwood Nursery School**

Rockwood caters for a maximum of 120 children (60 children per session). However, the school is generally only half full in September which means the school has to cater for inclusion of younger children in January and April. Approximately a third of the children attend 3 terms, the rest attend over 4 or 5 terms and commence the term after they turn 3 years old. In 2012-13 41.7% of the children were summer born. Children come from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. Rockwood is situated in Burnley Wood. In 2012-13 75.7% of our children were classified as living in the most deprived wards. WE currently have 34% Pakistani, 29% White British, 15% Bangladeshi, 5% Filipino, 5% White and any other Asian Background, 1% White and Black African, 1% White and Black Caribbean, 1% Chinese. The ethnic heritage of the nursery staff is 78% White British, 5.5% British Asian, 5.5% Bangladeshi, 5.5% British Pakistani, 5.5% White Anglo Egyptian.

**Basnett Street Nursery School**

We currently have 34% Pakistani, 29% White British, 15% Bangladeshi, 5% Filipino, 5% White and any other Asian Background, 1% White and Black African, 1% White and Black Caribbean, 1% Chinese. The ethnic heritage of the nursery staff is 78% White British, 5.5% British Asian, 5.5% Bangladeshi, 5.5% British Pakistani, 5.5% White Anglo Egyptian.

**Taywood Nursery School**

Taywood Nursery School is 40 FTE. The majority of our children attend for 3 terms although we have some children who attend for 5 terms or 4 terms. Taywood is situated in a dense urban area of Burnley in the lowest 5% of deprivation and in the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation the nursery's ward is identified as being in the lowest 0.75%. In 2012-13 81.5% of our children lived in an E or E* ranking ward. We currently have 92.6% White British, the remaining children being Eastern European, White European or Indian/ mixed Asian heritage. The ethnic heritage of the nursery staff is 100% White British.

We currently have 34% Pakistani, 29% White British, 15% Bangladeshi, 5% Filipino, 5% White and any other Asian Background, 1% White and Black African, 1% White and Black Caribbean, 1% Chinese. The ethnic heritage of the nursery staff is 78% White British, 5.5% British Asian, 5.5% Bangladeshi, 5.5% British Pakistani, 5.5% White Anglo Egyptian.

In this academic year 30% of our children are identified as Early Years Action or Action Plus; 47% of our boys have additional speech and language needs. Taywood Nursery School achieved an outstanding Ofsted grade in January 2013, the Race Equality Mark in July 2012 and the Lancashire 'Step into Quality' Award in June 2011. While the children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, attainment remains low due to their low attainment on entry. On entry in September 2012, an average of 31% of children were achieving 0-36 months in all Personal, Social and...
due to their low attainment on entry. On entry in September 2012, 92% of children were achieving 0-36 months in all Personal, Social and Emotional Development and 86% in Communication and Language aspects.

### What did you do?

- **Summer term 2012** – initial meeting highlighted a shared aim for all the Nursery Schools (to develop children's self-confidence and self-esteem, to develop the children's speech and communication.)
- It was agreed that each child would make their own 'Little Me' and this would initially be used to settle the children in their own nursery. Once we had negotiated the price, the Little Me figures were ordered and distributed to the Nursery Schools. Children, families and Governors responded well to the initiative. Families dressed their children's 'Little Me' in amazing outfits and the children developed their language and PSED skills through the continuous provision in Nursery school.
- Children became very attached to their 'Little Me'. In one Nursery a child took their 'Little Me' into hospital and down to theatre with them, providing comfort and support through a very stressful time in the child’s life.
- **October 2012** – The cluster of Head Teacher's then introduced the use of home/school Little Me books. This resulted in not only greater volumes of communications between home and nursery but also many parents who had been 'hard to reach' in some instances have communicated through the books. In one particular setting a parent whose first language is not English communicated to the Nursery using written home language. The book was then shared in Nursery and responded to by staff that are literate in the parents' languages.
- **March 2013** – The Little Me book was used successfully in all the settings and was also used to develop specific areas of the curriculum. It became an essential tool in linking the Little Me figure with home and enabled parents to share experiences. It was particularly successful with parents who communicated in their home language and those parents, who due to work commitments have very little contact with the staff in Nursery School. One Nursery set a 'Little Me Challenge' for World Book Day when children were asked to share stories at home with their 'Little Me'.
- Evaluation of the home/school books did indicate that some families were not returning the 'Little Me' book as frequently as others. To overcome this staff in Nursery ensures that time was allocated to allow them and the child to add in Nursery adventures.
- The shared project has been discussed outside the Nursery by extended families who have children in different Nursery Schools and 'Little Me' also followed one child as they transferred to another Nursery within our Cluster.
- **June 2013** – As the year progressed the Little Me began to be part of the transition from Nursery to Primary School. One School formed such good links with two of their Primary Schools that one Reception Classes are now using 'Little Me's' with their children.
- September 2013 – The successful collaboration between the Nursery Schools have developed further. The cluster has successfully bid for funding from LCC to develop a creativity project and is planning to arrange visits to theatres and other Nursery Schools this academic year.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

- **Staff** – Planning and developing the project, using the 'Little Me' with the children.
- **Parents** – Supported the project, became more aware of emotional needs during transition, more aware of how to encourage children to use their own interests, more willing to share information with Nursery.
- **Governors** – Supported the Nursery, some Governors have even made their own Little Me.
- **Jane Richmond** – Offered support and guidance throughout the project.

How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?

- The Nursery Head Teachers met every half term to evaluate and review the project.
- Jane Richmond regularly met with the cluster to monitor progress and support the group.
- Nursery staff and leadership teams monitored children's assessments.
- Governors monitored the project and received regular updates from the Head Teachers.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

- Finding time for all the staff to meet was initially an issue; however after the initial meetings it became clear that the discussions and professional development which was taking place was beneficial to all and the time spent meeting was valuable and worthwhile.
- The Little Me figures were expensive to buy, we clustered together and placed a large order, rather than ordering separately. This resulted in the Nurseries being able to negotiate the price and achieve better value for money.
- We felt that some parents initially did not understand why we were taking part in the project. This year we have included the Little Me as part of our 'home visit'. Sharing the aims of the project and spending time talking to the families about the value of the Little Me and its purpose has developed an even better understanding and response. Part of the original long term plan was for the children to visit the other Nursery Schools within the cluster. Problems organising transport and finding available dates for the visits proved to be a problem. The visits have now been planned as part of our cluster project in 2013/14.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

PSED – self-confidence and self-esteem scores were higher overall. Children's communication and language skills were enhanced.
All the schools in the cluster achieved the Lancashire Race Equality Mark in 2012-13, evidence that children were developing a greater awareness of people and communities.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

- The successful collaboration between the Nursery Schools has developed further. The cluster has been successful in achieving money to develop a creativity project and is planning to arrange visits to theatres and other Nursery Schools this academic year.
- The new intake of pupils have already made their 'Little Me'. Many of the Nursery Schools have used the Little Me during their home visit, prior to the children starting school. The Little Me has then been used in the nursery to aid a smooth transition for the pupils.
- The project will be shared during the LCC Early Years Conference in November 2013.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

- Start the project at the beginning of the school year in order to use the figures throughout the transition progress.
- Develop open and transparent community learning groups that can benefit from collaborative working.
- Give the children and families ownership over the 'Little Me'.