



“Business Link is keeping us on track. Their advice has been really helpful and they’ve put us in touch with other really helpful people too.”

Laura O’Neill, Bede Pre-school

Business Link brings nursery’s wish list into focus

Bede Pre-School and Nursery began as a mother and toddler group, grew into a pre-school and nursery and now has plans to develop a teacher training centre – with the help of Business Link Yorkshire.

The social enterprise in Maltby, near Rotherham provides day child care for children between the ages of two and four. Recognised as a leader in the sector, the business sustained a blow when its former premises were condemned and it was given four weeks to leave.

Six families moved with the group in 2006 to rooms within the town council’s head quarters. Two years later children from 74 families were on Bede’s books. Many of them come from challenging backgrounds so the group also supports their parents, arranging guidance on jobs, benefits and more. “If the parents are happy then the kids are happy,” says manager Laura O’Neill.

Bede Pre-School and Nursery became a company limited by guarantee in 2002. Business Link Yorkshire has guided the enterprise through each stage of its development.

Bede has a staff of eight and an annual turnover of £80,000 but Laura has ambitious plans to grow the business. She wants to extend care for children from birth to five years old, provide after school care complete with a walking bus from the primary school, open a sensory room for children with special educational needs and introduce family learning where the parents can work with their children.

Other items on the wish list include establishing Bede as a training centre for nursery teachers and creating a youth café for older children. All this requires a move to new premises – and relies on continued support from Business Link. It has helped the social enterprise to find professional advice for the development of a business plan which Laura says will prove beneficial in a number of different ways.

Could you benefit from Business Link’s free, independent and impartial advice?
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“As manager and curriculum leader it felt to me to say this is what we need, this is what we want, and if we’re being cheeky can we also have this? With advisers talking me through the business plan I’ve been able to get things into focus, go to the trustees and say here’s what we’d like to see happen.

“Many of the major funders want to see a business plan as well so it’s saving a lot of groundwork when it comes to applications.

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NB: A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose rather than being driven by the need to deliver profit to shareholders or owners. (DTI, Social Enterprise Strategy 2002)

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