



## CASE STUDY: Nursery Services

# Microsoft Thames Valley Park Nursery

*“I am incredibly happy with the nursery. The management and staff are incredibly supportive and I can see for myself that my son is having a wonderful time and really enjoying himself. I am safe in the knowledge that he is being looked after well, and encouraged to grow and learn new things. A nursery others should strive to be like.”*

Microsoft Parent

### Microsoft

Microsoft are a company that needs little introduction – they are a familiar name in homes and workplaces around the world. Founded in 1975, Microsoft is a global leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential.

Microsoft are committed to their workforce – they pride themselves on being an innovative workplace which fosters a flexible working culture, focused on trust in its people, giving employees the freedom to manage their work through a new digital work style and providing them with the technology and a culture of openness and transparency to work in a self-determined manner. The company uses its technology to improve communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing in a dispersed virtual organisation that increases productivity, employee satisfaction, flexibility and innovation.

Microsoft’s dedication to their employees has been officially recognised on multiple occasions – The Great Place to Work® Institute has awarded Microsoft Corp. first place in the Multinational Category of Europe’s 2012 Best Workplaces awards.

### Why did Microsoft want an on-site nursery?

In 2002, as Microsoft UK approached their 20 year milestone in the UK their company demographic was changing, with increasing numbers of parents in the workforce.

Microsoft had recently moved to their new UK Campus at Thames Valley Park, and they identified a building with great potential for a nursery space. The government’s introduction of the HMRC Workplace Nursery Status scheme made the creation of a workplace nursery a particularly attractive one, with potential for National Insurance savings for both the company and employees.

Another key factor was uncapped tax savings for employees – the majority of the company’s workforce were in the higher 40% tax bracket.

### Why did Microsoft choose Bright Horizons as their Nursery Provider?

*“When we were looking for a nursery partner, Bright Horizons was ‘head and shoulders’ above the competition – a good cultural fit, and flexible in their approach, we really felt like the nursery was a joint enterprise.”*

#### Mary Giles, Compensation & Benefits Manager, Microsoft

Microsoft’s procurement process was driven by a desire to find a partner who not only possessed the required experience and expertise but who also demonstrated a clear understanding of Microsoft’s needs and the flexibility to meet them, and who represented a good cultural fit with Microsoft’s values and aspirations.

Bright Horizons’ offering met all of these criteria, and we were chosen to work with Microsoft to design, set up and operate the new nursery, which opened in January 2003.





*“The fact that my employer supports the nursery and that it is on site and available for longer hours than other nurseries has a major impact on the quality of my life and the life of my child.”*

Microsoft Parent

## Contact Us

Contact us today to learn more about how Bright Horizons can help your organisation.

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## Were there any challenges?

Eighteen months in, the nursery was proving very popular – so much so that it was almost becoming a ‘victim of its own success’. The potential downside of such a highly valued facility comes when demand is so high that families are disappointed if they are not able to secure a place for their child. Microsoft asked Bright Horizons if there was a way to meet the needs of all their families providing access to the same high quality care, convenient location and tax savings as the Thames Valley Park Nursery families were enjoying.

## How did Bright Horizons work with Microsoft to overcome this challenge?

Bright Horizons offered Microsoft the opportunity to purchase a number of places at our nearby 120 place Waterside Nursery, also on Thames Valley Park campus just a few minutes’ walk away.

The companies worked together to create a contract scenario fully compliant with HMRC’s Workplace Nursery criteria. Microsoft Families now have a choice of two trusted Bright Horizons nurseries, on-site or very close by, both made more affordable by the tax and NI savings resulting from the Workplace Nursery scheme.

## What do our clients at Microsoft say about Bright Horizons on-site nursery?

*“The nursery has helped with attracting candidates, but more especially has driven retention. Typically Microsoft see a risk point when an employee has their second child – our employees are high-earners and are taxed as such – the tax breaks which an on-site nursery brings really combat that exit point head-on.*

*The reassurance of knowing that their child is safe and happy – and close by – means the world to Microsoft families. They are welcome to visit their child for lunch or take part in a nursery activity, and for nursing mothers the proximity of the nursery helps them to manage feeding patterns and ease the return to work. The nursery runs like clockwork and our Bright Horizons Nursery Manager has made strong connections with parents – even emailing them pictures of their child from the nursery direct to their desks!”*

**Mary Giles, Compensation & Benefits Manager, Microsoft**

## Summary

Microsoft’s Thames Valley Park Children’s Centre continues to be a success story.

Now in its 10th year, the nursery is an integral part of the Thames Valley Park Campus – respondents to the latest Microsoft Parent Survey (2012) demonstrated the value of the on-site facility to their work and family lives, with 97% of parents saying that the nursery helped them to meet job expectations and to concentrate on their job and be more productive.

The nursery received an “Outstanding” at its Ofsted inspection in July 2011 and typically serves between 50 and 70 Microsoft families per year. Bright Horizons are proud to have assisted generations of Microsoft families and look forward to many more little ones graduating from Thames Valley Park confident, ready for school and equipped with a life-long love of learning.

