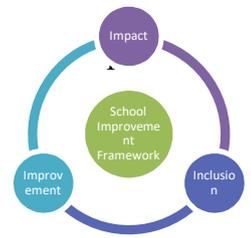




## Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services



### Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Humpty Dumpty Community Nursery 27 and 30 November 2017

#### BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit, which was conducted by two Officers from Education and Children's Services, was to support the centre in the process of self-evaluation. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' (HGIOELC) and in relation to latest advice from Education Scotland on the implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

Perth and Kinross Education and Children's Services (ECS) is in partnership with Humpty Dumpty Community Nursery, to provide Early Learning and Childcare for children aged three to five years old. At the time of the visit Humpty Dumpty Community Nursery had 18 children registered of which 3 children were aged 2-3 years and 15 children were aged 3 to 5 years. Some of the children aged 3-5 have a split placement and attend Humpty Dumpty for one or two sessions only.

The well-established nursery is accommodated in the village hall in Scone. Staff are required to set up and clear the hall a few days a week and work very hard to create a nurturing and attractive learning environment with well organised spaces for the children to engage in a range of stimulating activities. Children have daily access to the garden area which contains well established trees and bushes with a variety of areas to support different types of play.

The nursery has a parent committee which provides good support and is active in fund raising activities. The nursery manager provides good leadership for the small team of a practitioner and support worker. An ECS Early Years Support Teacher regularly visits the nursery to support staff in developing learning and teaching. An ECS Early Years Inclusion Teacher supports staff to provide appropriate provision for children with identified additional support needs.

Information was gathered from playroom visits, scrutiny of data and children's learning journals, discussions with children, parents/carers, all staff and displays of children's work around the setting.

#### Achievement

Almost all children are making good progress in their learning and development and are being supported to work towards their developmental milestones at nursery. Almost all children opt to access their pre-school year at the local authority nursery class and so staff should ensure that information on children's progress with developmental milestones is shared at points of transition. Staff have high aspirations for children's achievements and work collaboratively with parents and children to identify appropriate next steps to ensure progress in learning.

Children's learning journals contain detailed observations and record significant individual learning. Parents spoken to during the visit reported that the learning journals are readily accessible and children regularly use them with pride to share their learning with parents.

The story corner contains a range of books to foster a love of reading. Good use is made of 'Story of the Week' to promote children's engagement in stories and to develop children's early reading skills. The provision across the nursery environment contains a range of materials and opportunities to encourage the children to make marks and engage in early writing. During the visit children were observed spontaneously using clipboards in their imaginative role play to record the ingredients they had used to make cakes.

All staff make time for quality interactions with children and use a range of strategies to support children's talking and listening skills including asking open ended questions and wondering aloud. 'Sparkle words', related to ongoing interests, are used to enhance children's vocabulary.

Children are developing an awareness of number and are encouraged to count and recognise numbers in their play throughout the session. The provision of rich open ended materials allows children to explore shapes, weight and length and to develop associated vocabulary. Children have opportunities to buy snack ingredients from the local shops to develop an awareness of money.

All children participate in the Childsmile tooth brushing programme which encourages children to form good dental health practices. Healthy snacks are provided and snack time is a nurturing and relaxed experience where children have the opportunity to have conversations with staff, to develop independence and to learn about healthy eating and hygiene rules. Snack times also provide opportunity to taste the vegetables and fruit children have grown in the nursery garden. All children take part in daily outdoor activities and have access to an exciting outdoor environment which provides opportunity to be physically active and allows the children space to run and climb.

Very warm and loving relationships are evident throughout the nursery to support children to feel safe and secure. Child protection policy and procedures are in place which reflect the most recent legislation and are reviewed on a regular basis. All staff have a full understanding of child protection procedures. Risk assessments are in place to ensure children are safe and secure whilst at nursery. Each child is treated with respect and children were observed to be respectful of each other in their play. Staff are skilled at knowing when to intervene to support children to resolve conflict and when to stand back and allow the children to do this independently.

Children's wider achievements are celebrated and this is linked to the Wellbeing Indicators.

## **Learning**

Staff are developing their understanding of underpinning theory of effective practice to better support the delivery of an appropriate curriculum for all children. The impact of this was evidenced in the attractive and stimulating learning environment containing exciting, natural and real life resources such as the keyboard and guitar in

the music area, the collection of materials for children to create their own small worlds to promote high quality imaginative play and the pipes and guttering used with a selection of cars and ramps to explore forces and movement in the garden area. There is a shared understanding of the importance of providing opportunities for children to be curious and creative and to solve problems. The room is organised to enable the children to be independent and to self-select the resources that they need.

The children are motivated and sustain high levels of interest in their chosen learning activities. The structure of the day allows extended periods of time for children to develop knowledge, explore the world around them and consolidate skills in their play.

Planning is responsive to children's interests and is relevant to the community the children live in. Staff ensure planning builds on children's prior knowledge and takes account of children's next steps in learning. The wellbeing indicators are used effectively with parents and children and this is impacting positively on the children's learning and development. The children benefit from the high staff: child ratios and parents reported that staff know the children very well and this enables them to cater for their individual needs. A Child's Plan is in place for children with additional support needs and further support and advice is given by the Early Years Inclusion teacher in order to ensure appropriate provision is in place.

Very good use is made of opportunity in the local community to enhance children's learning experiences and children benefit from tennis activities at the local tennis club, football activities through Scone Thistle Football Club, planting and growing activities at Scone Palace and activities at the local library.

Well established links exist with the local primary school to support all children with their transition to primary one.

## **Leadership**

The manager provides very good leadership for the small staff team and strong guidance for the newly recruited team member. Staff are committed to providing a high quality service and regularly reflect on their practice to consider changes for improvement. Staff take part in appropriate professional learning activities and the impact of attendance at recent 'Loose Parts' and 'Pre Birth to Three' training was evident. The manager undertakes regular professional reviews to enable staff to reflect on their own professional skills and knowledge and to identify areas for development. The committee should now put in place an effective review process for the manager. Weekly staff meetings are held to share information, allow for professional dialogue and to discuss planning and children's progress. The supportive and respectful ethos of the team encourages positive communication.

Staff have some leadership responsibilities and there is scope to extend this to further improve staff confidence in their roles and to share responsibilities across the team. Children's leadership is encouraged through helper roles such as snack helper and tidy up time.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be fully involved in their children's learning. Those spoken with at the time of the visit commended the nursery on the opportunities for

their involvement in their child's learning. They value the range of ways that learning and care information is shared, for example through daily pick up and drop off times, the closed facebook page, newsletters and notice boards

### **Key Strengths**

- The quality of the staff interactions and the warm, responsive relationships which promote an ethos of respect and a positive climate for learning.
- The leadership and commitment of staff to self-evaluation which results in well-judged, relevant improvement outcomes for the children and families.
- The quality of the stimulating, welcoming learning environment which provides interesting and real life resources to support children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- The meaningful use of the wellbeing indicators to support children's learning and development.

### **Main areas for Improvement**

- On receipt of this report the committee should identify a date to undertake an employee review meeting with the manager.
- By August 2018 review the tracking of children's progress using the developmental milestones assessment tool to better record children's progress over time and share information at points of transition.
- During session 2017-18 continue to develop staff knowledge of current good practice through opportunities for professional dialogue to further develop a shared understanding of underpinning theory and to develop staff confidence.

### **Conclusion**

Humpty Dumpty Community Nursery is a well-established nursery which is greatly valued by the community which it serves for the high quality relationships it has established with children and parents. Staff work well in partnership with ECS and readily take account of advice, support and training and demonstrate a desire to secure improved outcomes for children and their families. The children are very well cared for and are making good progress in their learning across the curriculum. As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS officers will return within a year to evaluate progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

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[HMIE Report April 2010](#)