

1. The Inspection

Carousel Nursery was inspected in June 2009 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. In September 2009, the nursery prepared an action plan in agreement with West Dunbartonshire Council. The action plan indicated how they would address the main points for action in the HMIE report, within a two year period.

West Dunbartonshire Quality Improvement Service assessed the extent to which the nursery was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the original report.

2. Continuous Improvement

The owner, manager, team leaders and staff had worked extremely hard to take forward the recommendations contained in the report. The staff team used observations to assess and plan next steps in learning which had led to very good improvements in the quality of children's learning experiences. Activities for children extended and challenged children in their learning and expectations of achievement were very high. Observations and assessments were used to plan next steps and to ensure a better pace of learning. The environment for babies was calm, relaxing and homely. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) had been embedded across the curriculum, improving learning and meeting the needs of all children from the very early age groups onwards.

The nursery was very well placed to sustain and build on the improvements they had achieved.

3. Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in August 2009 identified three main recommendations for improvement. This section evaluates progress made with each of the recommendations and the resulting improvements for children and stakeholders.

3.1 Continue to develop the quality of the environment and experiences for children under three.

The nursery had made good progress towards meeting this point for action.

The staff provided a warm and welcoming environment. Children had opportunities to learn about the seasons. The outdoor learning environment was rich in opportunities and facilitated children's understanding of changes in weather and planting and growing. They were able to measure rainfall and investigate the flow of water using drain pipes etc. Children had some opportunities indoors to explore and discover natural materials staff should continue to develop the discovery areas. Children made good use of the resources within the home corner; staff should continue to develop this area. Children who attend full day require a range of home like experiences to allow for greater diversity in their daily routine.

3.2 Staff should make more effective use of observations and assessments to ensure they meet the learning needs of all children.

The nursery had made very good progress towards meeting this action point.

The manager, team leaders and staff had worked closely together to improve the use of observations and assessments to meet the learning needs of all age ranges within the nursery. The staff who were working with children in their pre-school year were using observations and assessments confidently to plan next steps in children's learning. Staff recorded children's progress in their learning and were beginning to involve them in deciding on next learning steps. Most staff working with the three to five years age range were sure of learning intentions and success criteria when

planning for children's experiences. They used questions appropriately to extend learning and to add depth to the children's experiences. The learning opportunities for almost all children were very good. High-quality activities were appropriate to the age and interests of almost all age groups. There were some very exciting, innovative activities for the pre-school age group e.g. 'living art' in which children demonstrated a depth of knowledge, creativity and imagination. Staff working with the ante pre-school children provided learning experiences which were appropriate to their age and stage. The children were excited by a bug hunt and were encouraged to record their findings. They talked confidently and knowledgeably about the price of plants in their shop. The staff working with children in their ante pre-school year should now focus their observations and assessments to plan for individual learning and next steps. They should continue to develop appropriate experiences for children aged two to three years. Staff generally observed children in this age group well in relation to their physical and emotional development. Staff working with this age group should focus their observations on individual children's learning.

3.3 Further develop ICT across the nursery.

The nursery had made very good progress towards meeting this action point.

Staff development in ICT for all staff has increased confidence in using ICT as a tool for learning. The nursery had identified gaps in their resources and addressed this very well to ensure that all age groups had access to appropriate technology. For example, the internet has now been installed in both pre-school playrooms and the children use this daily to access information. With the help of supportive adults children emailed within the nursery, to other nurseries and to parents. The range of resources to support ICT for children aged three to five is now very good. Children had use of a range of exciting resources including remote controlled Lego, Bee Bots, computers, cameras, dicta phone, cash registers, microwave, binoculars, magnifying glasses etc. Children accessed most equipment independently or were guided when necessary by an adult. The children enjoyed emailing their art work to parents, they played independently with the remote controlled Lego for a substantial amount of time and were extended and challenged to learn about directionality with an adult using bee bots. Various ICT

resources such as phones, cash registers, talking books and cause and effect toys were available for children under three years. Staff working with this age group also interacted appropriately to support children's knowledge and understanding.

4. Capacity for Improvement

The nursery had made very good progress with their action plan. The owner, manager and team had worked together to develop a shared vision for the nursery. They were all highly committed to the continuous improvement of the nursery. The owner provided high-quality leadership and was a very good role model; resulting in motivated and confident staff with high expectations of children's learning. The manager actively promoted distributed leadership, with team leaders and staff members having a lead role in developing initiatives within the nursery. The team leaders and staff were highly committed to these responsibilities and worked hard to ensure their input had a positive impact on children's learning.

5. Conclusion

With support from West Dunbartonshire Council Quality Improvement Service, Carousel Nursery had worked enthusiastically to meet the recommendations of the HMIE report. Staff had improved the quality of children's learning experiences. All staff had been fully involved in the implementation of the action plan and had worked hard to support the manager and team leaders to undertake the recommendations within the agreed timescale. The nursery was very well placed to continue the improvements achieved to date.

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