

**Carousel Nursery  
Alexandria  
West Dunbartonshire  
12 August 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the centre. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the centre is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the centre does this. We describe how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including parents<sup>1</sup> and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the centre.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the centre. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the centre, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of centre life. Finally, we comment on the centre’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high-quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the centre’s success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Where applicable, the website contains analyses of questionnaire returns and descriptions of good practice in the centre.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

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### **1. The centre**

Carousel Nursery was inspected in June 2009 by HMIE on behalf of both HMIE and the Care commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The centre caters for pre-school children aged from birth to five years. It is registered for 69 children attending at any one session. Within this number, the service provides before- and after-school care for 12 primary school age children at any one session. The total roll at the time of the inspection was 124, including 21 primary school age children.

## **2. Particular strengths of the centre**

- Confident, motivated, independent children who enjoy their learning.
- Teamwork of staff in taking forward initiatives to improve learning experiences for children, and their commitment to improving the nursery.
- The commitment and vision of the owner in striving for quality provision for children.
- Flexible care arrangements to help support families.

## **3. Example of good practice**

- Discovery Science programme for pre-school children.

## **4. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

In all play rooms, children are happy and enjoy the range of activities on offer. Babies and toddlers under three are settled and content. They explore their environment and resources with interest. They enjoy looking at themselves in the mirrored wall and at pictures displayed. Children aged three to five years are becoming confident, independent learners. They are busy and actively learning through play. Children are forming friendships and are able to share,

cooperate and take turns when playing. Children are consulted about their interests and staff use floor books and mind mapping to involve children in talking and thinking about their learning.

Children aged three to five are making good progress in their learning and development. They listen well to adults and one another. They talk confidently about what they like to do and learn in nursery. Almost all children are able to read their name. They enjoy listening to stories and will choose to look at books independently and with friends. Children are confident when counting to ten and a few will count beyond. They enjoy playing in the 'beach shop', buying and selling items for summer. Children are encouraged to learn through discovery and problem solving. They have benefited from several visits to various museums for science workshops. They use a range of skills when trying to solve problems and discover new things, for example absorbency of materials, light and dark. Children are able to use the computer independently and enjoy using it to play games and have their comments recorded using 'comic life' software.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff provide a good curriculum with activities appropriate to the age and interests of the children. Staff plan experiences for young children based on their increasing knowledge and understanding of national guidance, *Birth to Three*. Staff are developing their knowledge of *Curriculum for Excellence* and this has influenced changes and developments in their planning. All children enjoy physical activity and discovery play in the large garden areas. Babies and children under three have formed close relationships with staff who are caring, sensitive and responsive to personal care needs. Staff explain to children what they are going to do and what they will learn. Staff interact well with children and use questions skilfully to help promote thinking and problem solving. They listen sensitively and encourage children to express their opinions and views. Children's early literacy and numeracy skills are well developed through play. Staff have worked hard to improve learning opportunities outdoors. They have

identified that information and communications technology (ICT) could be better developed across the nursery. Staff need to develop further a calm, relaxing and homely environment for babies.

Staff know children well as individuals and learners. They observe children's progress and recognise they now need to use this information more effectively to identify individual next steps in learning. There is a clear procedure for identifying and supporting children with additional support needs. Staff work with other agencies, as required, to help support children. They now need to develop their knowledge and understanding of additional supports needs legislation.

## **5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

Parents are welcomed in the nursery. Home routines will be followed with the youngest children. Parents like the daily diaries that go home for children under two years. There is helpful communication with parents thorough a notice board, a detailed handbook and regular monthly newsletters. Parents are invited to visit the nursery and talk to staff about their child's progress at two open evenings. A parent forum helps raise funds for charities and plans are in place to provide opportunities for parents to talk about how children learn. Staff send home an 'adventure teddy' for children aged three to five which encourages children to share learning with parents. Staff are keen to increase the range of home learning activities. Staff work closely with local authority early intervention teachers to help support children's learning. The nursery has links with nine primary schools and passes on useful information with children entering P1. They support children who are moving on to primary school well.

## **6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?**

As a result of good self-evaluation, appropriate aspects for development have been identified and taken forward. Staff have participated in audits of the service. Questionnaires have gathered parents' views on areas for improvement. A parents' forum has been introduced to increase parent participation and enable parents to meet others and share views. The work of the eco committee is supported by a parent representative. The staff work together well as a team and take on responsibilities in planning for improvement. They are enthusiastic and have begun to take forward new initiatives to improve children's experiences. They have filmed episodes of learning and used this to reflect on and improve practice. The newly appointed manager now needs to re-establish playroom monitoring to ensure continued progress.

## **7. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?**

Overall, staff have high expectations of children. Children are well behaved. Staff act as good role models and guide children with simple rules. Children's achievements are celebrated in wall displays. The children attending out-of-school care are very proud of achieving the John Muir Award for their work in improving the outdoor environment. They and the nursery children have achieved an Eco-Schools Scotland bronze award and are now working towards the silver award. The nursery supports children to learn about healthy eating and encourages them to care for their teeth by participating in 'Smile Too'. Staff have received training in keeping children safe and are aware of their responsibilities. They implement an effective security policy.

## **8. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?**

The owner demonstrates a strong commitment to providing good quality childcare and education. Clear aims and well-considered

policies support staff in their work. The management structure distributes leadership and supports staff to gain confidence and experience. Staff work very well as a team and will share good practice. They are willing to embrace new initiatives aimed at improving the learning experiences and outcomes for children. The manager, who is newly appointed, and the depute manager, recently returned from maternity leave, are being well supported by the owner to take on their new roles. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined to support a strong management team approach and monitor the improvements.

## **9. What happens next?**

We are confident that the centre will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits following this inspection. The centre and the education authority will inform parents about the centre's progress in improving the quality of education.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the centre and education authority.

- Continue to develop the quality of the environment and experiences for children under three.
- Staff should make more effective use of observations and assessments to ensure they meet the learning needs of all children.
- Further develop ICT across the nursery.



Quality indicators help centres, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a centre. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each centre, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish centres are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Carousel Nursery.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the centre.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Mary Ann Hagan

12 August 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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