

13 June 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Blairmore Nursery School
Inverclyde Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague and I visited and inspected your child's pre-school centre. Throughout our visit, we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the pre-school centre, including the Early Years Language Centre (EYLC) supported children to do their best. The acting headteacher shared with us the pre-school centre's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the pre-school centre's recent work, including the way nursery staff involve parents in their child's learning and develop children's skills in listening and talking. As a result, we were able to find out how good the pre-school centre was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children in the nursery, including the EYLC, learn and achieve very well. They are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy learning in a very caring and supportive environment. Children's learning is enhanced through the high quality interaction they receive from staff. For most of the time, children choose what they want to play with from the wide range of interesting activities. Children talk confidently to staff about their learning. They are becoming increasingly involved in planning their learning with staff. They know what they want to learn and show pleasure when staff respond positively to their suggestions. Involving children in their learning is less well developed in the EYLC. In the nursery, children use their imaginations very well. For example, a few used junk models to transform themselves into 'superheroes'. This created an exciting role play situation which staff used to extend children's learning. They play very well together and concentrate on activities for long periods of time. Children are very knowledgeable about recycling through the Eco-Schools Scotland work. This helps them develop responsibility and understand ways of how to care for their environment.

Children make very good progress in their early language and mathematics. They listen very well and, at times, use words when they talk which are advanced for their age and stage of development. They sequence stories and act them out confidently using puppets. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They are

developing their early writing skills well through, for example, writing recipes in the home corner and the literacy bags they take home. They need to continue to build on this with more opportunities to develop their early skills in writing. Most children count to ten and can recognise numbers in the nursery and the environment. They can order shapes by size. They are beginning to develop their numeracy skills across more areas of their learning. Children's understanding of how to keep themselves healthy is developing well. In the EYLC, children are developing their confidence very well. They are beginning to apply their learning in real life situations.

How well does the pre-school centre support children to develop and learn?

Overall, the nursery supports children to develop and learn very well. Staff use Curriculum for Excellence to plan children's learning. They are developing approaches to consult with children about their learning through mindmaps. This helps respond to children's interests. The very well-planned use of the local woodland and beach provides stimulating learning opportunities to enrich the curriculum. As a result, children deepen their understanding through activities which challenge their learning. Staff are planning increased use to the outdoor area at the nursery. They are looking at how they can provide more opportunities for children to problem solve across their learning. In the EYLC, staff plan opportunities for children to develop their communication and language skills well. They need to link more closely with children's mainstream nurseries to enable the skills children learn to be used more effectively in both settings and at home.

Staff know children and their families very well and provide high levels of support. Together they make a very positive difference and involve parents meaningfully in their child's learning. Parents and staff think very highly of the family support worker and the difference she makes. She is viewed as a main point of contact for parents requiring support and advice. Across the nursery, activities are well planned and meet the needs of almost all children. Transitions from home to the nursery and nursery to primary school are very well organised. EYLC staff are looking at ways to improve further links through outreach work with the children's mainstream nurseries.

How well does the pre-school centre improve the quality of its work?

Staff work well together and are all highly committed to providing experiences for children of a high quality. They plan together and think carefully about how well children are learning. They make changes to activities from watching how children learn and by listening to their views. As they continue to develop this, children's roles in determining how the nursery is developed to reflect their interests will increase. Approaches to self-evaluation are very well organised. As they continue to develop there is a need to review how the individual progress of children is monitored and tracked. The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection. In a very short time in post, the acting headteacher has built on the high quality work established by the headteacher. She works very closely with an effective team, and her leadership is maintaining the positive learning experiences already in place. Staff know the strengths and next steps of the nursery. They are well placed to continue to improve.

Our inspection of your pre-school centre found the following key strengths.

- Happy, confident children and the quality of care shown by staff.
- The progress children make in both the nursery and EYLC in developing early language skills.
- The motivational learning of a high quality which takes place in the local woodland.
- The welcoming ethos and the quality of interactions between staff and children.
- The additional support for families from the family support worker.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the pre-school centre. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to develop monitoring and self-evaluation to ensure children make very good progress in their learning.
- Develop EYLC outreach work with more meaningful learning for children and their mainstream nurseries.
- Increase the use of the outdoors.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the pre-school centre's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The head of centre and local authority will inform parents about the pre-school centre's progress as part of the arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the pre-school centre.

Elizabeth C Montgomery
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/BlairmoreNurserySchoolGreenockInverclyde.asp>

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