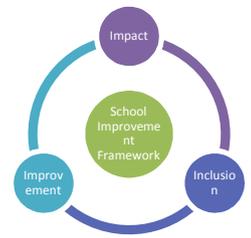




**Perth and Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services**



**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
City of Perth Early Childhood Centre (COPECC)
3 and 4 May 2017**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit, which was conducted by two officers from Education and Children's Services (ECS), 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 reflected the most recent advice note from Education Scotland which outlines raised expectations in relation to implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

City of Perth Early Childhood Centre (COPECC) is a stand-alone nursery provision which provides early learning and childcare for children aged 2-5. The centre provides full time places for children aged 3-5, eligible through 'Support for Children and Families' criteria, and is open across an extended year (48 weeks).

At the time of the visit, COPECC had 78 children registered of whom 20 were aged between 2 and 3 years and 58 were aged 3 to 5 years. The accommodation consists of the Acorn Playrooms for children aged 2-3 and the Oak playroom for children aged 3-5. The Rainbow and Quiet Rooms provide alternative quieter spaces which are accessed easily from the Oak Room. There is an extensive, well-resourced outdoor area which is used daily to provide a variety of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and to benefit from fresh air and exercise.

The Centre Leader is supported in the management of the setting by a Principal Teacher and a Senior Early Childhood Practitioner (ECP). An ECS Support Teacher (0-8 years) regularly visits the centre to support the leadership team and staff in further developing learning and teaching.

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

Achievement

Most children are making good progress in their learning and development and are being supported to work towards achieving their developmental milestones and progress is monitored using the Perth and Kinross Developmental Milestones Assessment Tool. All children aged 2-5 have a Strong Start Plan which is written collaboratively with parents to support children's next steps in learning and development. These may include targets to support behaviour and self-help skills at home and or at nursery. This ensures children are supported to work towards identified targets and staff and parents have a shared understanding of strategies that can be used effectively to achieve these.

The centre works closely with other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists and the Early Years Inclusion Team to identify interventions which will support children with additional support needs.

The playroom has dedicated and well-resourced areas to promote early literacy and numeracy skills. The children access a writing area that encourages children to draw and engage in early writing and some children can write their own name and other familiar letters and words independently. The story corner contains a selection of high quality books to promote reading for enjoyment and during the visit adults and children were observed sharing and enjoying books together. Over the past year the centre has been involved in the Perth and Kinross 'Closing the Communication Gap' project which upskills staff to support children's language and communication development and early reading skills. Staff now plan 'WOW' words (Words of the Week) to support the development of children's vocabulary and engage in high quality staff:child interactions which impact positively on children's literacy development. The numeracy area has been developed to provide a wide variety of resources that support children to measure, recognise shapes, to count and to recognise and order numerals.

All children participate in the Childsmile tooth brushing programme which encourages children to form good dental health practices. Healthy snacks are provided for all children and a cooked lunch is offered with a few children choosing to bring a packed lunch. Staff sit with the children at meal times to model and promote healthy eating and good table manners. This is a nurturing experience for children and gives quality time for staff and children to engage in social conversation. Staff should now review the organisation of lunch times to reduce waiting times and increase opportunities for children to take on leadership roles. All children take part in active daily outdoor activities in the well-equipped, spacious outdoor area where there are very good opportunities for children to run, climb, take risks and learn about benefits of physical exercise. The 'Play on Pedals' programme has impacted positively on children's ability to cycle two wheeled bikes confidently.

Very positive, warm and nurturing relationships are evident to further develop children's confidence, sense of self and all round wellbeing and staff know the children and families well. Almost all children know and enjoy the well-established routines which support them to develop a strong sense of security. Staff use a range of strategies and restorative approaches to support and reinforce positive behaviour. Children's wider achievements are recognised and celebrated and displayed on 'Star of the Week' display. Overall wall displays are attractive and relate to the ongoing interests of the children and careful thought has been given to the layout and use of colours to create a calming atmosphere. Consideration should now be given to the level of adult input in displays to ensure it is the children's own art work that is valued and displayed.

Staff should now review the next steps in learning that are recorded in children's folders to ensure these are personal to the children and will support children to better know themselves as learners.

Learning

Effective use is made of the space in the playroom which enables flexibility to take account of children's interests, and a range of resources is readily available to motivate and support children's learning. Most children interact and cooperate well with each other in their play. The nursery day is structured to ensure children have extended time to engage in self-selected tasks which promote deep learning whilst still having quality time with their key worker at the start and end of each day. Staff

should now ensure this key worker time is used to better support children to reflect on their learning rather than the activities they have engaged in. Most children engage and sustain interest in the rich active learning experiences and are supported sensitively by staff to be curious and to extend their thinking through skilled questioning. Some children benefit from opportunities to spend time in the 'Rainbow Room' which provides a smaller, more nurturing group experience which is different from learning ongoing within the large busy Oak Room. Staff, children and parents have worked closely with the Play Development Worker to develop play outdoors and to include a 'loose parts' approach where children have access to a range of open ended materials which can be manipulated and used in different ways and allows the children to explore and be curious and creative. Staff should now consider ways to ensure the learning in the outdoor area is detailed in nursery plans and shared with children to maximise the potential of learning in the outdoors. Staff make good use of experiences available in the local community to further enhance children's learning including visits from the fire service, walks along the lade and a trip to Auchingarrich Wildlife Centre. Children's learning is recorded in learning journals which include observations, photographs and samples of work. Children are happy to talk about their learning journals and the recorded activities they have taken part in. Staff should now review the journals to better capture children's progress across time and to enable the children to understand their next steps in learning. Very good use is made of the Blether Bag home link activities to support children and parents to play together at home and to further support children's communication skills.

Leadership

The newly formed management team, led by the Centre Leader, show strong leadership and commitment to delivering high quality early learning and childcare that will best meet the needs of the children and their families. Some staff have leadership roles and are 'champions' for particular areas of interest such as Blether Bags, Brunch and Blether sessions, Nurture and Restorative Approaches. There is a commitment to investment in staff training and collective professional reading to ensure a shared understanding of pedagogy to improve outcomes for children and their families. Management meet regularly with staff to provide opportunities for professional discussion and self-evaluation. All staff are involved in the centre's strong sense of community and there is a shared understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are encouraged to share good practice and provide peer support and challenge to take forward the improvement agenda. The staff access training opportunities through the ECS Learning Hub and the Childcare Strategy Team's programme appropriate to the Centre Improvement Plan and individual staff needs.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through Stay and Play sessions and Brunch and Blether sessions. Staff make time at the beginning and end of each session to speak with parents about their child's day and highlight any special moments that have taken place. Parents spoken with at the time of the visit were very pleased with the opportunities for their involvement in their child's learning as well as the range of ways that learning and care information is shared. Home visits have been introduced to welcome new children and families to the nursery and to share information that will support transition.

Key Strengths

The strong leadership provided by the Centre Leader supported by the Principal Teacher and Senior ECP to drive forward areas for improvement.

The children who present as happy, confident learners who are proud of their nursery.

The strength of relationships established with children and their families provides support and nurturing experiences helping to develop positive self-esteem and resilience.

The responsive interventions to support children with identified additional support needs.

Main areas for Improvement

By August 2017 review the planning and recording of children's learning to better capture children's progress across time and to enable the children to better know themselves as learners.

In session 2017-18 further develop the potential of the outdoor environment to better support rich learning across the curriculum.

In session 2017-18 shape the management team which will include the newly created Senior ECP post to maximise the established partnerships with other professionals and to further develop parental engagement to support family learning opportunities.

Conclusion

The Centre Leader, supported by the Principal Teacher and Senior ECP, is committed to securing improvements and has high aspirations for the centre, the children and their families. Children, staff and parents at COPECC evidence pride in the centre and value the quality of support and learning experiences that are provided.

As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS officers will return within a year to evaluate the centre's progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

[Inspection Report 2013](#)

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