

10 March 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Great Western Pre-School @ Portlethen 2
Aberdeenshire**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague and I visited and inspected your child's early learning and childcare setting. Throughout our visit we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the manager and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the early learning and childcare setting supported children to do their best. The manager shared with us the early learning and childcare setting's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the early learning and childcare setting's recent work including development and use of the outdoors; and transitions between rooms. As a result, we were able to find out how good the early learning and childcare setting was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children learn and achieve well in nursery. They enjoy their nursery experience and are happy and well settled in each of the rooms. They are becoming increasingly independent. Babies and toddlers are cared for with sensitivity and are encouraged to engage with activities. Children aged two to three are confident, choosing to play from a range of resources including natural materials. Almost all three and four year olds move independently between activities with minimal adult support. Children enjoy selecting their own play activities and are very confident when interacting with staff. Children are particularly motivated about outdoor experiences. They are very much engaged in the different creative and investigative learning activities in different weathers, for example building snowmen and investigating the properties of ice. There is now a need to expand children's skills and experiences in using information and communications technology to enrich their learning. Staff have made a positive start to asking children about their learning. Children are now ready to have even greater involvement through, for example discussing in more depth what they are learning and planning what they can do next. Activities and routines

support children in becoming increasingly independent, for example tidying the playroom and dressing for outdoor play.

Children aged three to five are making good progress in early language and mathematics. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in appropriately. They are able to talk enthusiastically about their work, for example in using play dough or construction areas, comparing properties of dinosaurs. The majority of children use their own drawings and written marks to express ideas and feelings. A few children are able to write their own names confidently. Children have a good grasp of early mathematics. They are developing skills in sorting, matching, measuring and counting. Children are beginning to relate numeracy to real life experiences, for example when outdoors, children played counting games along the fence. They now need to further develop early literacy and numeracy skills across their playroom activities.

How well does the early learning and childcare setting support children to develop and learn?

Children are well supported to develop and learn. Across the playrooms, staff are focused on helping children to become successful in their learning. For children aged three to five, staff use Curriculum for Excellence to plan for learning. They incorporate children's interests well. Staff are continuing to develop approaches to fully involving parents and children in planning programmes and experiences. This includes using the Puddlestomping website to widen access for all parents to share ideas for shaping and developing the curriculum. In order to enhance children's skills further, there is scope for staff to further develop approaches to planning and re-visiting learning to ensure depth and breadth in children's learning. Effective use is made of the outdoor area on a daily basis, providing quality learning and physical play in any weather. Outdoor learning is a key feature of the nursery. Through this children are also learning to take risks, cooperate with others and take responsibility for their environment. Staff could now make further use of the local community and visitors to the nursery to enrich children's learning.

In the short time that the nursery has been opened, staff have developed warm, caring and trusting relationships with children and parents. This has resulted in detailed knowledge of individual children and their needs. Staff use this to respond sensitively to individual children's circumstances. Children's learning and care needs are identified at an early stage through the use of the 'All about me' information. Staff need to ensure all children experience appropriate levels of challenge in their learning. Further development of learning journeys will help to involve children and parents even more in deciding what children learn next. Children who need additional help with their learning are identified and supported at an early stage. Staff work very well with parents and a range of partner agencies to support children's needs. Children are very well supported as they enter nursery and move between each room, with helpful arrangements for settling into the new rooms.

How well does the early learning and childcare setting improve the quality of its work?

We are confident that the nursery is improving the quality of its work. In setting up the new nursery the manager and staff have gained the trust and respect of children and parents. Through this they have created a positive and welcoming environment for children. The nursery manager and supervisors work very well together. Staff reflect on experiences offered to children each day and make changes to improve the quality of learning. The views of children, parents, Great Western managers and education authority staff are taken account of to help improve the work of the nursery. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the nursery. They support the nursery in various ways, for example in the recent fundraising events. Staff now need to develop a more formal approach to ensuring all areas of the work of the playgroup are evaluated over time, identifying the impact of improvement on children's learning.

Our inspection of your early learning and childcare setting found the following key strengths.

- Confident and friendly children who enjoy their experiences at nursery and make good progress in their learning.
- High standards of care and quality of experiences provided for all children in a nurturing, welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Very effective teamwork, positive relationships and caring ethos between staff, children and parents.
- Effective use of the outdoors to enhance children's learning experiences.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the early learning and childcare setting. This is what we agreed with them.

- Develop monitoring and self-evaluation in a more systematic way to help staff identify what they do well and what needs to improve.
- Involve children more in reflecting on and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Provide children with increased levels of choice and challenge to help them progress effectively in their learning.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the early learning and childcare setting's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

As part of the arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the early learning and childcare, the local authority will inform parents about the setting's progress.

Sally Stewart
HM Inspector

Fiona Thompson
Care Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations for your setting can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/GtWesternPreSchPortlethen2.asp>.

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Quality indicators help early learning and childcare settings, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the early learning and childcare setting. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *Child at the Centre(2)*¹. Following our inspection of each early learning and childcare setting, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish early learning and childcare settings are doing.

Here are the evaluations for **Great Western Pre-School @ Portlethen 2**

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the early learning and childcare setting

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for **Great Western Pre-School @ Portlethen 2**

Quality of care and support	good
Quality of environment	good
Quality of staffing	good
Quality of management and leadership	good

As a result of this inspection there are no requirements and three recommendations.

¹ *The Child at the Centre, Self-Evaluation in the early years*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/TheChildattheCentreSelfevaluationintheEarlyYears_tcm4-684267.pdf

Recommendations

- A review should be undertaken of the current sleep arrangements for children in the 2-5 room and improvements implemented. This should include ensuring the safety of sleeping children and improving the quality of experience for children that are sleeping.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.
- A review should be undertaken of lunch times and improvements implemented. This should include the length of time children need to wait for their lunch; staff interaction with children during lunchtimes and ensuring the lunches provided meet the nutritional needs of children.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.
- The infection prevention and control practices and procedures should be improved in the nursery. This should include updating the nappy changing procedure to reflect best practice; ensuring all staff are aware of and implement the new nappy changing procedure; ensuring areas where food is prepared or eaten are not open to aerosol contamination from flushing toilets and ensuring children can dispose of paper towels without lifting bin lids.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 2 - A safe environment.

A notification from the Care Inspectorate will be sent to the provider to complete an action plan to address the recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/GtWesternPreSchPortlethen2.asp>.

http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489