



# Follow-through Inspection Report

## Thirlstane Day Nursery

MAY 2011

### **1. The Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in Thirlstane Day Nursery in May 2009 following an inspection in March 2009. Working with the education authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original report.

This follow-through report details the progress that the school and education authority have made in addressing the main points for action in the original report.

### **2. Continuous Improvement**

The nursery is committed to continuous improvement. All staff continue to demonstrate a pride in the nursery and a willingness to review their practice, seek improvements and action changes that benefit children and families. There continues to be strong teamwork that supports sharing of practice within the establishment and across the wider community. The nursery in partnership with the local primary school is a finalist in the Scottish Education Awards in 2011 with their financial education programme.

Children and families continue to be well supported by the nursery. Activities to promote partnership are regularly offered with support for parents a strong feature. Staff have been trained in the Triple P parenting programme and work effectively with parents. There is an active parents' group and sound partnerships to promote employability through the Open Gates community action group. Parents are fully involved in reviewing the policies of the nursery. Good procedures are in place to encourage comment and feedback from parents on children's experiences and on the effectiveness of the nursery. Improvements in literacy and numeracy are ongoing with many children in the 3 to 5 room able to tell, with adult support, well constructed stories with clear characters, plot and suitable endings.

The nursery continues to offer a wide range of activities for children to achieve success. Curriculum for Excellence is developing well with changes made in line with the principles, and offering more challenge, personalisation and choice for children. The nursery has devised information leaflets to parents to support implementation of the changes to the curriculum. Increased opportunities for outdoor play have helped children to take part in more challenging activities and enable them to assess risks in their play. Learning through the local environment has also increased with regular excursions provided to help children explore their local area and compare and contrast different environments. Literacy and numeracy is improving with real life projects such as using the context of a local building site powerfully enhancing the children's understanding and progress in these areas.

### **3. Progress Towards the Main Points for Action**

#### **Main point for action 1**

*Increase opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning.*

*The nursery has made very good progress in meeting this point for action.*

Children are more involved in planning their learning. Staff regularly talk to individual children, and to groups of children, about their interests and opinions and they aim to build the curriculum around these. They successfully use mind maps with the children to chart what they want to learn. Staff employ effective questioning to help all children to participate and contribute. Planning ensures that children have access to a broad play based curriculum which includes provision for science, music, social studies and technology and all other aspects of the curriculum. Children have opportunities to work on their own, in small groups, and in larger groups in an atmosphere that promotes choice, enjoyment and confidence.

Staff are adopting more effective ways to engage children in the process of evaluating their learning and looking at next steps. Children are involved in reviewing how useful resources were. They also consider, in conversation with the child development officer, how they could set up the learning environment more effectively. This clearer focus on assessment and reviewing the learning more closely with children has resulted in clearer next steps being identified thus helping children progress better. 'Learning journey' folders have been introduced and are now well used across the nursery to chart learners' progress. Children select items for inclusions to their individual folder. These selections indicate their important successes. Staff scribe comments from children and help parents through shared dialogue to become involved in recognising the milestones and achievements of their child. The 'learning journeys' folders have been well received with children freely and independently using them to reflect what they can now do that they could not do before. Some parents are also more independently taking time to look at these with their child and contribute further comment. The folders are much valued by children, parents and staff.

#### **Main point for action 2**

*Involve children and parents more fully to further develop a learning partnership*

*The nursery has made very good progress in meeting this point for action.*

Across all age groups in the nursery, staff have increased the opportunities to share the learning successes of the children. Achievement walls are used in the 0 to 2 year olds' room that show developmental milestones. Photographic evidence and explanation help parents recognise the achievements of their child with simple and effective methods easily accessible for parents to add their comments. This is being well used by parents.

In the under 3 year olds' room and the 3 to 5 year olds room 'learning journey' folders are in use. Children are very much involved in identifying their own successes and that of their friends. Displays, photographs and celebration events are used to highlight and celebrate achievements across the variety of learning opportunities offered to the children. They are developing a growing awareness and pride in what they have learned and what they now know and can do. Staff meet regularly with parents to discuss children's progress and the 'learning journey' folders are used to support this dialogue. Parents are regularly engaged in reviewing their child's learning both informally and

formally. There are a variety of different means of communication offered to parents to engage with the nursery and this is helping to build partnerships in learning and ensuring equality and fairness in encouraging participation and contribution. Parents are responding well and gaining confidence to be more evaluative when consulted about their child's experiences in nursery.

The nursery continues to develop ways to help parents in supporting their child's learning. 'Hints and Tips' to support learning activities have been introduced. A 'Learning Wall' also helps parents to view the key learning taking place during or after planned activities. Parents are encouraged to contribute and a growing number are doing so. Big Books are now available to help parents review the planned learning that took place for their children. This was positively evaluated by the parents and informed policy development. There is an active parents' group that meets regularly with senior management to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of developments in the nursery around learning and teaching. The role of the parents' group continues to develop and is now becoming more creative and innovative offering new ideas and possibilities for meeting the needs of children and families. A lending library is available with literacy prompts to help parents support their child's development in language. Book reviews are successfully completed by the majority of children and parents. There is healthy competition among families in the number of books borrowed and read to gain a certificate of achievement. Further plans are in place to introduce similar prompts for other areas of the curriculum.

Children who have English as an additional language are well supported through the use of Talking Tubs with parents providing messages and encouragement in the language of the home for children to access on an independent basis when they are at nursery.

**Main point for  
action 3**

*Ensure continuous self evaluation focuses on improvement for learning and teaching*

*The nursery has made very good progress in meeting this point for action.*

Approaches to self evaluation have been strengthened. There are regular opportunities to gather information on the work of the nursery from all stakeholders. Parents are regularly involved in reviewing practice and provision through questionnaires, focus groups and direct conversations with staff. Interactive displays and good two-way communication encourages continuous comment that is valued and acted upon by the nursery.

Staff are working very well to share practice and come together regularly to review practice and evaluate the impact of changes they have put in place. They make visits to other establishments and reciprocal visits have also taken place. All staff have used these opportunities to enhance the daily practice of the nursery demonstrating their keen commitment to improvement.

The head of centre and deposes have further developed monitoring and evaluating procedures across the nursery and have engaged all staff in the process. Peer observations and more focused handover sessions for children from room to room are resulting in better progress being made by children with next steps and individual needs being clearly shared. Staff are now more focused on evaluating the quality of learning that has taken place and readily and openly share suggested improvements. The head of centre and deposes more effectively review and share the overall information from the quality assurance procedures of the nursery to inform areas for development and progress made in seeking improvement. This is resulting in a clearer understanding by all staff of their contribution to the process of improvement and further strengthening their commitment to seek quality feedback on their own and their colleagues' work.

There has been further partnership working with local primary schools to seek ways to ensure children's learning needs will be effectively met at transition with agreed standards and expectations shared.

#### **4. Conclusion and Next Steps**

Overall the nursery has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations of the HMIE report. The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership, vision and direction for the nursery and is well supported by a strong team of committed staff. There is a shared sense of purpose, relationships are good, and expectations are high (particularly in relation to wellbeing and behaviour). There is clear evidence of improvement in learning and teaching to promote independence and challenge. Staff are developing good strategies to make effective use of assessment information to take children's learning forward and to shape learning experiences. There is a strong commitment to self-evaluation and formal procedures are in place to involve staff and parents. Parents are increasingly engaged with the life and work of the centre and are making an increasingly positive contribution to developments.

Children and families enjoy a good quality of care and support from the nursery. Children make good progress, enjoy their learning and make friendships which sustain and support them throughout their time in the nursery and beyond.

The nursery is very well placed to continue to improve.

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