

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	03 November 2009
Report By:	Acting Director of Education	Report No:	EDUC/86/09/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	HMIe report on Bluebird Family Centre		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an HMIe and Care Commission joint report on Bluebird Family Centre.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Bluebird Family Centre has received a good report from HMIe and the Care Commission. The report was produced on 12 August 2009. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect well on the nursery with two indicators of quality evaluated as 'good' and three as 'satisfactory'.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on Bluebird Family Centre.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Bluebird Family Centre was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission in June 2009. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the centre at all stages, identified key strengths and main points for action using the following six-point scale:
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|---|---|--|
| 6 | - | Excellent – excellent |
| 5 | - | Very Good – major strengths |
| 4 | - | Good – important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| 3 | - | Satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| 2 | - | Weak – important weaknesses |
| 1 | - | Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses |
- 4.2 HMIE and the Care Commission assessed and reported on the views of parents, pupils and staff, the quality of learning in teaching, how well the centre was raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the centre's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, the centre's capacity for improvement.
- 4.3 The report was published on the 12 August 2009. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.
- 4.4 Bluebird Family Centre is inspected under the evaluation framework "The Child at the Centre 2".
- 4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIE and the Care Commission found two aspects of the work of the centre to be 'good' and three to be 'satisfactory'. The evaluations of the indicators for quality can be found on page 8 of the report.
- 4.6 A school improvement plan will be put in place to address the following points for action:
- Develop the curriculum to ensure it builds on the skills of all children and meets their needs
 - Develop leadership of learning across the centre to improve learning and teaching
 - Further develop self-evaluation to ensure all staff identify and share responsibility for taking forward improvements

**Bluebird Family Centre
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
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 parents¹ 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. Where applicable, the website contains analyses of questionnaire returns and descriptions of good practice in the centre.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

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7. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The centre

Bluebird Family Centre 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 six weeks to five years. It is registered for 59 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 112 at the time of the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- Happy children throughout the nursery who are gaining in confidence.
- Regular outings in the community which extend children's learning.
- The quality of work with families and the centre's approach to providing flexible placements to meet the needs of families.
- Joint work of the management team, the family worker and staff in improving the centre.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children under three are content within their playrooms. They happily make their needs known and are becoming aware of each other. Babies are learning to communicate and make choices. They like to explore paint, listen to rhymes while they play on the see-saw and develop coordination as they play outdoors. Older toddlers are very good at exploring their environment using their senses. They have clear preferences and concentrate well on their chosen activity. Children aged three to five are enthusiastic and happy in the centre. They make choices and most can concentrate well. Overall, children are motivated by their activities. They are learning to cooperate with each other through their play and like to work alongside their friends. A few children are gaining confidence in planning their own learning activities. All children are responsible and follow instructions confidently when they go on visits in the local area. They participated, and were successful in gaining awards, in local cultural festivals. Children have registered with Eco-Schools Scotland and have made a positive start to recycling projects.

Children aged three to five are making satisfactory progress in their learning and achievement. Most listen well to stories and older children are learning to sequence a traditional story they know well. Children are beginning to take part in longer conversations with staff and each other more confidently. A few have not yet developed all the words they need to describe what they want to say. Older children can read their own names and the majority of them can write it successfully. They are not yet confident in using their language skills purposefully in all areas of their play. Children are good at counting, particularly when playing games. They can sort and match objects and know when something is big or small. They do not yet use the language of mathematics independently in all areas of their play.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff make good use of local and national guidance when organising stimulating learning experiences for children under three. They ensure children have regular access to the outdoors for investigative and energetic play. Staff have introduced an exciting 'rhyme time' programme which incorporates turn-taking games, nursery rhymes and story times. Staff throughout the centre ensure a varied and interesting programme of outings in the local area. These support children well in learning about the work of others in the local community and the natural environment at the park and beach. Staff working with children aged three to five provide a satisfactory curriculum which includes activities indoors and out. Staff organise learning opportunities which are inspiring and exciting, for example making rockets and drawing special imaginative books. However, the range of experiences provided daily are not of a consistent high quality. Staff recognise that they need to ensure that they build on and develop children's skills in all areas of their learning particularly in literacy and numeracy. Staff have made a positive start to introducing the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff interact positively with children and respond to their interests. They now need to ask children questions about their activities in a way that will develop children's thinking and help children initiate activities which reflect their own interests in more depth.

Staff working with children under three plan activities which overall, challenge most children well. They now need to develop how they link children's individual plans to the daily programme they provide. Staff working with children aged three to five know them well as individuals. They observe them at play but do not use this important information to plan effectively what children need to learn next. As a result, activities do not consistently offer the right amount of challenge for all children. The management team and staff have worked very well to ensure appropriate levels of intervention when children need extra help in their learning. Individualised plans have been written with parents and appropriate outside agencies. These plans are reviewed regularly but need to be linked more effectively to the programme of activity which staff provide.

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Staff have very close relationships with families in the centre and offer a range of placements to suit their needs. Parents are very pleased with the sensitive support and guidance they receive from all staff in the centre. They feel they can speak openly to staff about all of their concerns and their child's progress. Parents like the photograph books, detailing children's experiences, and appreciate the helpful guidance about how to help their child at home. The management team and staff have formed effective links with a significant number of outside professionals to support children's learning, care and welfare. They make good use of all the advice provided to support children and their families sensitively on a daily basis. The family worker is highly skilled and provides valuable workshop and drop-in services for local families. Staff have formed effective links with the campus primary school and other local schools to provide positive experiences for children as they move toward starting P1.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?

Parents, children and staff are developing a shared view of what they want Bluebird Family Centre to be like. Parents have highlighted the importance of support for themselves and for their children. Children are becoming more confident in describing what they like best. Overall, most staff have clear ideas about what needs to be improved. They recognise the early positive impact of new initiatives such as book making and 'rhyme time' on children's literacy skills and plan to develop these areas further. Staff are confident that, through working closely and sharing good practice, they can improve their approaches to meeting children's learning needs. The management team know the centre very well. They have recently reviewed the centre's aims and values to better reflect the work of all the staff, children and parents.

6. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?

Staff have created a warm, family atmosphere in the centre where all are welcome. They actively encourage all families to discuss valuable information about their child's routines with them each day. Staff have positive expectations of children's health and well-being in the centre. They now need to raise their expectations of children's learning to ensure that all children make the progress they can. Staff encourage children to develop a caring attitude toward each other and most children demonstrate these skills well. Children are learning about their own culture and the cultures of others. Staff are confident in their knowledge of policies and procedures to protect children from harm. They liaise closely with agencies as appropriate to ensure the well being of all children.

7. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?

The head of centre and depute have been in post for less than two years. They work very closely together and are highly committed to enhancing all aspects of the centre. They have a very clear and realistic vision of what needs to be improved. They have successfully prioritised necessary improvements to the work of the centre. They now need to focus in more depth on leadership of learning and teaching which will support all children in making greater progress in their learning. In doing so, they need to ensure all staff build on the training opportunities provided by management, and work together to take forward all of the agreed priorities. The management team recognise the highly effective contribution made by the skilled family worker. Her skills can continue to enhance learning and teaching throughout the centre as well as develop innovative practice within the community.

8. 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.

- Develop the curriculum to ensure it builds on the skills of all children and meets their needs.
- Develop leadership of learning across the centre to improve learning and teaching.
- Further develop self-evaluation to ensure all staff identify and share responsibility for taking forward improvements.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the centre there was one recommendation which has since been addressed.

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 Bluebird Family Centre.

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

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

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

Managing Inspector: Shona E S Taylor
12 August 2009

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If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259. You can also contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

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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HMIE Action Plan for: Bluebird Family Centre
Greenock

Head of Establishment: Gillian MacDougall

As the timing of the preparation of this plan coincided with the preparation of the School Improvement Plan, the HMIE Action plan has been incorporated into the School Plan.

The following pages are taken from the School Improvement Plan, but constitute the Action Plan.

Action Plan

Priority	Improvements in performance	No: 1
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Further develop self evaluation to ensure all staff identify and share responsibility for taking forward improvements.

What action will be taken?	Who will be involved ?	What is the timescale ?	What resources are required ?	What CPD is required?
<p>All staff will be made familiar with Self Evaluation documents CAC 2, How Good is Our school and Journey to Excellence.</p> <p>Evidence for self evaluation will be gathered in a systematic manner. All staff will be involved in self evaluation.</p> <p>Regular self-evaluation meetings will be arranged with parents and Health visitor and the outcomes of these meetings will lead to improvements in the experiences and outcomes for children.</p> <p>Children will be consulted and encouraged to express their views through use of ' Big Books'</p> <p>Parent comments board will be set up and comments collated and responded to.</p>	<p>Jennifer (Teacher) Linda T (EYECO) Susan C (Health visitor) Gillian (Head) Dawn (Parent)</p>	<p>Oct 09</p> <p>Sept 09</p> <p>Sept 09</p> <p>May 10</p>	<p>Time for meetings Accommodation Children's large planning books</p>	<p>Child at the Centre 2 Consultation with children Self – evaluation A Curriculum for Excellence</p>

<p>What is the intended impact? Staff, parent, child and other agency involvement in self evaluation ensures improvements in the educational experiences and outcomes for children.</p>	<p>How will you monitor and evaluate the impact? Impact monitored through records of discussions, meetings, monitoring sheets, and brought together to evaluate progress using CAC 2 and Journey to Excellence 4, Inspection reports, Standards and Quality report.</p>
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Action Plan

Priority	Develop A Curriculum For Excellence	No: 3
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To develop leadership of learning across the centre to improve learning and teaching

To develop a curriculum that enables all children and young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

What action will be taken?	Who will be involved ?	What is the timescale ?	What resources are required ?	What CPD is required?
Staff will be involved in robust training to enhance their skills in Learning and teaching.	Gillian MacDougall (HoE) Anne McArthur (Depute) Jennifer Sinclair(teacher) Joanne Clark (EYECO)	Aug 09 – September 09	CPD Time. Time for working groups. Time for discussion.	Observation methodology, including Next Steps for learning
An information evening on A Curriculum for Excellence for parents will take place.	Laura Gallagher/IreneMcCallum (EYECO)	Aug 09 – September 09		A Curriculum for Excellence Working with parents.
Parents will be invited to participate in the evaluation of the curriculum through organised events and comments.		October 09		Learning and Teaching Policy
		October 09 – June 10		

<p>What is the intended impact?</p> <p>Leadership styles meet the needs of the establishment. A culture of distributive leadership, allowing staff to take initiative and lead roles, is fostered. Staff are more knowledgeable in using of A Curriculum for Excellence. Parents are more knowledgeable about A Curriculum for Excellence and more knowledgeable about their children's progress and achievements.</p>	<p>How will you monitor and evaluate the impact?</p> <p>Progress on improvement plan will be monitored in October, February and May. Children's progress monitored termly. Parents evaluations and comments.</p>
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