

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	19 January 2010
Report By:	Acting Director of Education	Report No:	EDUC/05/10/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	HMle Report on Tree Tops Community Nursery		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an HMle and Care Commission joint report on Tree Tops Community Nursery.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Tree Tops Community Nursery has received a good report from HMle and the Care Commission. The report was produced on 11 November 2009. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect well on the nursery with two indicators of quality evaluated as 'very good' and three as 'good'.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on Tree Tops Community Nursery.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Tree Tops Community Nursery is a voluntary organisation which is in partnership with Inverclyde Council for the provision of pre-school education. Tree Tops Community Nursery was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and the Care Commission in September 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:
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6 | - | Excellent – outstanding, sector leading |
| 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 nursery was raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the centre's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, the nursery's capacity for improvement.
- 4.3 The report was published on the 11 November 2009. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.
- 4.4 Tree Tops Community Nursery 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 'very good' and three to be 'good'. The evaluations of the indicators for quality can be found on page 7 of the report.
- 4.6 Members should note that HMIe and the Care Commission comment on examples of good practice. The report indicated one example of good practice:
- Supporting children by sharing information with health visitors
- 4.7 The reports lists two areas for improvement:
- Improve aspects of the curriculum
 - Ensure that arrangements for self-evaluation include a clearer focus on children's achievement across all areas of their learning
- 4.8 The report on Tree Tops Community Nursery should be set in the context of Inverclyde. This is a good report in the context of other reports on early years establishments and is a good report in terms of the school inspection regime.

**Tree Tops Community
Nursery
Port Glasgow
Inverclyde
11 November 2009**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects centres in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their centre provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with centre staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the head of centre and staff about the strengths of the centre, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into playrooms and join other activities which children are involved in. We also gather the views of parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the centre. We describe how well children are doing, how good the centre is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the centre. We also comment on how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the centre is led and how all staff help the centre achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find 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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1. The centre

Tree Tops Community Nursery was inspected in September 2009 by HMIE on behalf of both HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The community nursery caters for pre-school children aged six weeks to five years. It is registered for 50 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 69 at the time of the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- Children who are happy, confident and motivated.
- Support for children's individual needs and effective links with other agencies.
- Well-considered approaches to transition.
- The commitment of staff to providing a welcoming and positive ethos for children and their parents.

3. Example of good practice

- Supporting children by sharing information with health visitors.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children enjoy coming to the community nursery. Babies are content and settled. They use their senses well to explore their surroundings. Toddlers exercise their independence, for example by washing their hands and feeding themselves. Children aged three to five years are enthusiastic learners. Most interact well with adults and other children. They choose activities and select resources confidently. The majority of children have formed friendships and participate well in group activities. A few need more encouragement from staff to concentrate for longer periods on their tasks.

All children, including babies and toddlers, are learning how to brush their teeth. Children aged three to five years are developing an awareness of healthy food choices and can identify different vegetables. They can describe how to keep themselves safe when crossing the road. Children use their imagination purposefully throughout the playroom. They enjoy dressing up and confidently act out roles within the home corner. They use their own ideas when painting, making textured collages and junk models. Most children are curious and enjoy investigating using the microscope and magnifying glass. A stepped nature trail, and access to all-weather clothing, enables children to explore the natural world throughout the year.

Children aged three to five years are making good progress in their learning and development. Most speak with confidence and are able to express their ideas and recall experiences. Three-year-old children listen attentively to stories and are interested in books. Older children need more encouragement. The majority of children can recognise their own name in print. A few can identify letters in their name and are learning to write it. Children are progressing well in early numeracy skills. They can sort objects according to their type or colour. Most younger children use numbers confidently within five and older children within ten and beyond. A few children can write numbers.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum provides children with a broad range of relevant learning experiences. Staff working with babies and toddlers have developed a flexible pattern to the day which incorporates children's preferred routines in feeding, sleeping and playing. Babies and toddlers have regular access to a good range of natural materials which they explore using their senses. Staff working with children aged three to five years have taken positive steps to take forward *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are updating the system for planning the curriculum and take good account of children's interests and views. There is a need to ensure that plans contain clear direction about the outcomes of children's learning. Children have regular access to the

outdoors. Older children do not have enough opportunities for good quality physical activity. Older children need more planned opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different situations. Staff interact very well with children. They listen attentively to them and use questioning well to extend discussions.

Staff have a good knowledge of children's development needs. They match tasks and select resources well to meet learning and development needs of children. They work closely with parents to ensure that routines and requests from home are accommodated. They observe and record written observations about children's learning and use this to help their planning. They identify, at an early stage, children who require additional support. They work effectively with a range of other agencies such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and health workers. The nursery has developed an effective system for sharing written information about children with health visitors.

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

Staff have developed very good relationships with parents and provide a flexible service to meet the needs of families. They warmly welcome and encourage parents and exchange information about children's needs and development on a daily basis. They provide helpful advice to parents about toilet training, children's sleeping, and behaviour on a one-to-one basis, as required. They keep parents well informed of the work of the nursery through regular newsletters. Parents are very positive about the nursery. They appreciate the meetings with key workers which are held three times a year. Parents are actively involved in running the nursery through their involvement as members of the Board of Trustees. A group of parents assist in running the book and toy library for children. Transitions from home to nursery and between playrooms are well organised and based on children's

individual needs. Staff share helpful reports about children's progress with parents and staff from receiving nurseries and primary schools. They keep in touch with children's progress when they start P1.

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

The management team are committed to continuous improvement and encourage the hardworking staff to reflect on their practice. Staff have contributed effectively to identifying strengths and areas for development. They play an active part in taking forward the agreed priorities of the nursery. Children are learning responsibility for their environment, for example by helping to tidy the nursery. Questionnaires and discussion with parents are used well to evaluate and improve practice, such as the effectiveness of the key worker system. The assistant manager monitors practice in the playroom through regular visits. Further development of these approaches should now include a clearer focus on children's achievement across all areas of their learning.

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

There is a very positive ethos in the nursery. Relationships between staff and children and among staff are very good. Staff know what to do to keep children safe. They are sensitive to children's emotional and social needs and take steps to support vulnerable children. Staff use praise well to encourage children and build their confidence. There is scope to develop further a culture of achievement, for example by identifying and recognising children's special talents. Health promotion is a key feature and children are learning about how to keep healthy. Children are encouraged to respect each other and to develop a sense of fairness.

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

The director and manager have a clear vision for the nursery and have successfully shared the vision with staff and parents. The manager is well supported by the assistant manager who provides an effective role-model for staff in relation to playroom practice. Managers meet regularly with staff and actively encourage them to share in the work of the nursery. There is a culture where staff are enabled to take on lead roles for aspects of improvement. Managers make productive use of staff performance and review to support staff and encourage their professional development. Staff are eager to improve and learn from each other, for example by observing each other's practice. The community nursery is well placed to continue to improve.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the community nursery, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the community nursery's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its community nursery.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the centre and education authority.

- Improve aspects of the curriculum as mentioned in this report.
- Ensure that arrangements for self-evaluation include a clearer focus on children's achievement across all areas of their learning.

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 Tree Tops Community Nursery.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Noreen Connaughton
11 November 2009

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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You can also contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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