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<b>Report To:</b> Learning	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 January 2011</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education &amp; Communities</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUC/01/11/AH</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>HMIe report on Hillend Children's Centre</b>		

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## **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 Hillend Children's Centre.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Hillend Children's Centre has received a good report from HMIe and the Care Commission. The report was produced on 24 November 2010. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect well on the nursery with three indicators of quality evaluated as 'very good' and two as 'good'.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on Hillend Children's Centre.

**Albert Henderson**  
**Corporate Director Education & Communities**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Hillend Children's Centre was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and the Care Commission in October 2010. 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 – 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 24 November 2010. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.
- 4.4 Hillend Children's 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 three aspects of the work of the Centre to be 'very good' and two to be 'good'. The evaluations of the indicators for quality can be found on page 7 of the report.
- 4.6 A school improvement plan will be put in place to address the following points for action:
- Provide more challenging opportunities for children to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy through play, and in learning outdoors
  - Involve children more in making choices and decisions about the life and work of the centre
  - Use self-evaluation to improve learning opportunities and children's progress further

**Hillend Children's Centre  
Greenock  
Inverclyde Council  
24 November 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects centres in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, 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](http://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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

Hillend Children's Centre was inspected in October 2010 by HMIE on behalf of both HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The centre is an Integrated Specialist Service which caters for pre-school children aged from birth to five years. It is registered for 50 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 46 at the time of the inspection.

## **2. Particular strengths of the centre**

- Children who enjoy their experiences and are motivated to learn.
- Relationships between parents, children and staff.
- Teamwork to meet the needs of children and families.
- Staff commitment to improving children's experiences.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the centre, children are settled and secure. They enjoy a wide range of play and learning experiences. Children are relaxed, happy to be in the centre and actively involved in their learning. Almost all are familiar with their daily routines and have very good relationships with staff. They make choices, express their feelings and preferences with growing skill and confidence. Children take part in activities with enthusiasm, using their senses to explore and enjoy the world. In the Bluebell room, children play well together, take turns and cooperate in their chosen activities. They take their shared responsibility for the good care of the centre's family of snails very seriously.

All children play an active part in the centre's celebrations of sports days, concerts, and special events. They are developing independence in caring for themselves and managing their routines.

Children are making good progress in all aspects of their learning. They are becoming skilled in using a range of strategies to make themselves understood and to communicate with others. Most children enjoy sharing stories, songs and rhymes and are developing good listening skills. They are becoming aware of signs and print and

use their skills for a range of purposes, for example making choices and recording their feelings. Most children are exploring mark making and a few children write their own names. Most children are developing appropriate mathematical skills, using colour, pattern, number, shape and measure in their play.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff provide a wide range of play and learning experiences that take good account of children's interests and needs. They make good use of *Birth to Three* and local guidance when planning experiences for children under three years of age. Staff have made a positive start in using *Curriculum for Excellence* to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for children aged from three to five years. Across the centre staff provide a good range of sensory experiences that engage and stimulate learners. Children enjoy well-planned opportunities to develop their social and communication skills. They are learning to care for living things and are becoming aware of their own feeling and the feelings of others. Staff make skilled use of a range of methods of engaging children in their learning opportunities. They now need to continue to develop their use of the outdoor area to provide more challenging physical experiences and a wider range of learning opportunities across the curriculum.

Staff know children and families well and meet their care needs very well. Experiences and activities are well matched to the learning and development needs of most children and provide the right amount of support. Children in the Bluebell room would benefit by being further supported and challenged to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Very good arrangements are in place for children who need additional support with their learning. Staff work closely with parents and a wide range of agencies to provide the support that children need in all aspects of their learning and development.

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

The centre provides a caring and supportive environment for children and families. Parents have positive relationships with staff and value the individual support they provide. Staff share information with parents on a daily basis and keep them informed about the life and work of the centre using newsletters and notice boards. They make very effective use of partnerships with other agencies, including health specialists, educational psychologists, and social work, to support children's learning. Well-managed transitions ensure that children and families are supported on entry and throughout their time with the centre. Strong links with local schools support children well as they move to primary school.

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

Children are involved in designing their new eco garden, recycling and planning expeditions into the community. There is scope for them to make more choices and decisions about their learning and about the life and work of the centre. Staff value the training and advice they receive from partner agencies and are keen to share and develop good practice. The head of centre ensures that agencies who contribute to meeting children's needs are fully involved in evaluating the quality of the service and agreeing improvements. As a result, children and families benefit from well-coordinated support and care. The head of centre now needs to support staff in using self-evaluation to improve further the curriculum and children's progress.

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

The centre has a very positive ethos. Children, families and visitors are warmly welcomed. Children are treated with respect and fairness and are included in the centre community. Their achievements are



recognised and celebrated across the centre. Staff and children celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year. This is helping to broaden children's awareness of the world around them. Staff interactions with children are caring and supportive and this results in children feeling valued and secure. All staff are aware of their responsibilities in protecting children and have attended appropriate training.

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

The head of centre together with the management team has a clear vision for future improvement. Staff, parents and a number of agencies have been actively involved in developing this vision. Staff are motivated and welcome opportunities to take responsibility for developments. The head of centre has developed a strong ethos of shared responsibility and team working within the centre and with a number of agencies. As a result, the centre is well placed to build on its strengths and to address the areas for improvement.

## **8. What happens next?**

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

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

- Provide more challenging opportunities for children to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy through play, and in learning outdoors.
- Involve children more in making choices and decisions about the life and work of the centre.
- Use self-evaluation to improve learning opportunities and children's progress further.

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 Hillend Children's Centre.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation very</b>	<b>good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Gerard McKernan  
24 November 2010

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 find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact 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.

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