

23 November 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

**V.I.P Childcare - Moray
Elgin**

Recently, as you may know, I visited and inspected your child's pre-school centre. Throughout my visit, I talked to parents, directors and children and I worked closely with the head of centre and staff. I wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the pre-school centre supported children to do their best. The head of centre shared with me the pre-school centre's successes and priorities for improvement. I looked at some particular aspects of the pre-school centre's recent work, including transitions between each of the playrooms; eco/sustainability work; partnership working, including with the Dundee nursery and University. As a result, I was able to find out how good the pre-school centre was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what I found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

We are confident that your children learn and achieve very well. Children enjoy their nursery experience and are happy and well settled in each of the three rooms. They are becoming increasingly independent. Babies and toddlers are sensitively comforted by staff if upset and are encouraged to engage with activities. Children aged two to three are confident choosing from a range of resources, including natural items. Almost all three and four year olds move independently between activities with minimal adult support. Children enjoy selecting their own play activities and are confident interacting with staff. They particularly enjoy the role-play activities in the house corner and their regular outdoor activities in the park or in the woods. A positive start has been made to asking children about their learning. Staff should now develop children's learning experiences further by talking to the children more about what they are learning and planning what they need to do next. A slight review of the layout of the room would also encourage further children's choice and increase opportunities for children to lead their own learning.

Children are making very good progress in early language. They are developing appropriate listening and talking skills. They talk enthusiastically about their work on transport, particularly enjoying their fire engine area. Most children access books independently and enjoy sharing favourite stories with adults. Almost all older children are showing an interest in early writing in their play activities, for example taking notes in their notebooks, writing at two areas in the playroom and writing their name in mud on a walk in the woods. Children take part in various mathematical activities, including sorting, matching, measuring and counting, for example counting the foods for snacks. Children are relating their numeracy skills to real life experiences, for example, measuring trees in their work outdoors. Staff now need to continue to develop opportunities for children to apply their early literacy and numeracy skills across a variety of relevant and meaningful contexts across the whole playroom. Children are developing an early understanding of healthy lifestyles, through activities such as

handwashing, what makes a healthy diet and exercise. They are developing the use of their bodies through their daily physical activity in the large games hall or outdoors. Through their eco and sustainable work children are learning to care for the environment and are working to achieve the bronze award from Eco-Schools Scotland.

How well does the pre-school centre support children to develop and learn?

We feel the nursery supports your children to develop and learn well. 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 children's learning and they try to incorporate children's interests, for example the life-cycle of a caterpillar, or work on transport. Staff meet with other nurseries and primary schools to share their developments in Curriculum for Excellence. They should now develop more problem-solving experiences to improve children's thinking skills. There is scope to offer further opportunities for children to develop their skills in information and communications technology. Staff make good use of the local community and visitors to further support and enrich children's learning.

Children's needs are identified at an early stage with the use of the 'All about me' information and their individual profiles and learning journals. Staff need to ensure all children experience appropriate levels of challenge and depth in their learning. Children requiring additional support 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 varied needs. They successfully incorporate advice provided by partners into their planning for individual children. Children are very well supported as they enter nursery and move between each room, with helpful arrangements for settling into the new rooms. Staff prepare children very well for their move to primary school.

How well does the pre-school centre improve the quality of its work?

We are confident that the nursery does and will continue to improve the quality of its work. The head of centre and whole team are highly committed to providing the high quality provision. They are reflective practitioners, who meet daily and weekly to evaluate and plan children's learning. Professional development opportunities for all staff and useful feedback from the head of centre and senior early years workers help staff to improve experiences for children. Staff have benefited from support from the education authority and partners, particularly with the development of the room for children aged three and four years old. The head of centre provides very strong leadership for learning. She has a clear vision with a focus on improving experiences for children. She is ably supported by three senior early years workers, who each lead teams within their own rooms effectively. The nursery is a Social Enterprise Establishment, with a board of directors who are effective within the nursery and keen to support continuous improvement. The centre is very well placed to improve.

Our inspection of your pre-school centre found the following key strengths.

- Confident, well-behaved and motivated children who enjoy high quality learning experiences throughout the nursery.
- The high standards of care and quality of experiences provided for all children in a nurturing and welcoming environment.
- Partnerships with parents, board of directors, the education authority and agencies to support improvement.
- Through strong leadership, the effective use of self-evaluation and commitment of all staff to continuous improvement.

I discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the pre-school centre. This is what I agreed with them.

- Continue to develop staff and parental understanding of Curriculum for Excellence, to plan and support continued improved outcomes for children.
- Continue to plan for increased levels of challenge for more able children to help them progress effectively in their learning.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?

We are very satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the pre-school centre's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The head of centre and board of directors will inform parents about the pre-school centre's progress as part of the arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the pre-school centre.

Sally Fulton
HM Inspector
23 November 2011

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at.

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=12176&type=1>

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