

# Wellington School Nursery Standards and Quality Report 2010

## Standards and Quality Reporting



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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an answer to the question, How good was our centre in 2009-2010? This report tells you about the quality of education in the centre and how the children benefit from learning here.

### 2. Introduction

Wellington Nursery is part of the 3 - 18 independent Wellington School situated in Ayr and is operating at its full capacity of 60 children. Pupils come from a wide area throughout Ayrshire, although the majority live in Ayr. The nursery operates during the school term, thirty-eight weeks a year, Monday to Friday. The Nursery operates extended opening hours from 8.15 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. This gives Parents a greater choice and flexibility and assists working Parents immensely. In the summer term there is the opportunity for pre-school children who normally attend in the morning only to remain in nursery until 3p.m. on a Monday and Wednesday. This gives pre-school children the opportunity to experience a longer day prior to starting school. The Nursery has a stable staff complement consisting of Head of Nursery, 6 full time Early Years Practitioners, 4 part time Early Years Practitioners and 1 part time Nursery Support Assistant. During session 2009-2010 one member of staff has been on maternity leave and this post has been covered by able supply staff. The nursery operates in partnership with South Ayrshire Council.

### 3. In Wellington School Nursery it is our vision to:

Provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment to meet the needs of every child.

#### 4. Our Nursery Values

Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity

#### 5. And we aim to:

- Provide a coherent pre school learning experience based within a play context, for children in their pre school and ante pre school years which will enable them to progress to Primary 1 with confidence and ease.
- Develop the individual potential of each child working carefully with Parents.
- Provide a stimulating, supportive, secure and well resourced learning environment.
- Promote at all times the self-confidence and self-esteem of the child.
- Assist children to become more independent and to think for themselves.
- Teach children to care for their environment and to be aware of the needs of others.

#### 6. How Was Evidence Gathered?

- Staff - regular weekly meetings with the staff group, one to one meetings with individual staff members as part of the PRD programme and staff questionnaire.
- Parents - focus group meetings, Parents workshop events, Eco Parents group, regular questionnaires

- Children - circle time, children's audit and questionnaire, Talking and Thinking Floor books, peer and self assessment
- Others - Care Commission Report, HMIe Report, South Ayrshire Council Self Evaluation visits and reports
- SMT - A planned programme of monitoring and self evaluation covering Care Standards and Quality Indicators is in place. Monitoring and self evaluation is documented on forms systematically recorded and stored in a folder. This is the primary mechanism by which evidence from a range of stakeholders is utilised to identify strengths and areas for improvement and hence formulate actions for improvement.

## **7. What Outcomes Has The Centre Achieved?**

Overall the children are making very good progress in all aspects of their development and learning, in particular a focus on outdoors development has seen better integration and balance between the indoor and outdoor learning environments, providing an effective interdisciplinary experience for the children. Learning opportunities are now well aligned with the intentions of A Curriculum for Excellence and children's profiles clearly demonstrate achievement in the 'four capacities' is strong. An achievement of note is our work on the Comenius International School Project which provided opportunities for collaborative learning and sharing outcomes on the international stage. The Nursery believes, through alignment of its vision, values and aims with Scotland's Vision for Children - 'that they should be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible' - and as evidenced below, it makes a significant contribution to the realisation of this Vision.

Our Improvement Plan included:-

### **A Curriculum for Excellence**

Very good progress has been made towards this priority.

Our curriculum takes full account of local and national advice and enables all children to make progress in key aspects of their learning and development. Very good planning has been developed enabling full implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence commencing August 2009 with a review of planning taking place in May 2010 to ensure this was effective in underpinning objectives and to identify refinements. We provide clear information to parents on our developing curriculum to promote their impact on the children's learning and progress. Several parents' workshop events have been held during session 2009-2010 focussing on ongoing developments within A Curriculum for Excellence. In particular a very successful 'Health and Wellbeing Fair' was held in February involving many local partnership organisations. Additionally in May Parents' were invited to attend a workshop entitled 'Outdoors Learning Within A Curriculum for Excellence'. Both events were very well attended and Parents' enjoyed the opportunity to work in partnership with the Nursery to aid implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence. We have a clear and well-supported framework of CPD for staff which leads to recognisable improvements in the arrangements for supporting children's learning. We have effective partnership working which makes a difference to the quality of support for children.

### **Assessment**

Very good progress has been made towards this priority.

Children's learning experiences are enhanced by staff making effective use of assessment information. AiFL strategies are embedded in Nursery practice and a very effective system of gathering observations of children's learning has been established. Staff collect and store data in order to improve children's learning and raise achievement. Children's profiles have been updated to reflect the progress made with this priority and a new skills record has been introduced. This data is used and shared with children, parents and staff to improve outcomes for the children. The children in our centre enjoy looking at and contributing to the learning stories in their

profiles and are more involved in their own learning as a result. Parents comment favourably on the profiles. Staff work alongside children to contribute effectively to their learning and development leading to recognisable improvements for children. Our Talking and Thinking Floorbooks record depth of learning and show the development of children's ideas. Children are fully involved in evaluating their own and others learning through the use of the floorbooks.

### **Self Evaluation**

Very good progress has been made towards this priority.

The Nursery team, led by the Head of Nursery, work together to systematically evaluate provision in order to secure continuous improvement. All staff contribute to the self evaluation process through a managed programme of monthly meetings to undertake a focused review of scheduled indicators. Our self evaluation draws on a wide range of evidence and is rigorous and systematic and a summary file of supporting evidence has been developed. It focuses on key aspects of our children's successes, achievements and well-being. The self evaluation has enabled the identification of areas for further development such as, improving the effectiveness of peer and self assessment methods as a learning tool.

### **Outdoor Learning**

Excellent progress has been made in meeting this outcome.

Children, staff and parents have worked together to review the use of our outdoor spaces and in particular the nursery garden. All stakeholders were given opportunities to contribute to planning for greater use of outdoors learning. A group of parents have been working with staff and children to re-design the garden. Staff have participated in significant CPD opportunities and have looked at a range of international literature to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of outdoors learning. One member of staff travelled to Denmark for a week to study 'Nature Kindergartens'. A

substantial budget was set aside to facilitate this project and we have sourced some natural resources from our local re-cycling centre. Our children have responded well to the new opportunities on offer and are actively involved in learning through outdoors play. They are fully engaged, highly motivated and interact well during outdoor activities.

### **Health Promoting Nursery**

Excellent progress has been made in meeting this outcome.

The Nursery has continued to build strong links with key partners such as NHS agencies; Breast Feeding Network, Fresh Air-shire Project and Parents in order to take forward our Health Promoting Nursery. Through these partnerships the children's health and wellbeing is very effectively promoted. The children's health is enhanced through our participation in the NHS accreditation scheme and the Nursery is actively working towards gaining "commended level". In particular our centre is eagerly taking forward a national Government priority to improve breast feeding rates. We are registered with the 'Breast Feed Happily Here' scheme and have received training, carried out an audit of resources and purchased additional resources and hope to achieve full accreditation as a 'Breast Feeding Friendly Nursery'. We have disseminated our excellent practice to Parents and Partners by holding a very successful Health and Wellbeing Fair. LTS has published our work in this area in 'Early Years Matters' and we worked in collaboration with Dr. John Lynn from Glasgow Caledonian University to produce a DVD in order to disseminate our work to others.

### **8. How well does the centre meet the needs of the centre community?**

The children have enjoyed participating in many local and wider community events. We have raised money for West Sound Radio's Cash for Kids 'Build a Dream' appeal, filled shoeboxes for Blythewood Care and the children and Parents participated in a "Toddle Waddle" around Rozelle Park to raise the

magnificent sum of £975.50 for the Meningitis Trust. The children's musical talents were celebrated during our nativity play and musical concert which Parents enjoyed immensely. Each year, in June, the children and their Parents thoroughly enjoy participating in our sports event. Our Parents are fully involved in the life of the Nursery. We held an extremely successful Health and Wellbeing Fair in February and our keynote speaker, Ged Quirk, Children's Services Officer, South Ayrshire Council gave a presentation to Parents, representatives from South Ayrshire Partnership establishments and West of Scotland Independent Schools on 'Early Years Framework'. The children participated in an enterprise project and produced a 'Healthy Recipes Book' which was sold at the fair. The Parents Focus Group and Eco Group regularly meet to help staff and children with ongoing projects, for example the development of our Nursery garden. The Nursery has achieved Bronze and Silver awards from the Eco Schools programme and will shortly be assessed for our first Green Flag. The children have enjoyed many visits into the community, for example, Whitelees Wind Farm, Dunaskin Railway Preservation Group, RSNO Monster Music, and the local re-cycling centre at Prestwick as well as local parks and the beach all which integrated well with intended learning outcomes. A member of staff recently organised a visit to a local fishing boat and fish factory to enhance our 'fish theme'. We have frequent visits from our local Fire and Rescue Service, a local vet, lollipop man and a paramedic.

The Nursery staff, children and Parents are very proud of this establishment and comments such as:

*"We are delighted with our son's progress at nursery. It is excellent that the nursery constantly seem to be evaluating and developing new ideas in tandem with both parents and children".*

*"The staff are wonderful and we feel that they really know our child".*

*"The Nursery staff are very professional and proactive"*

have confirmed to us that the positive actions we are taking are improving the learning experience for the children. A questionnaire was issued to the children asking them about life in the Nursery which they happily completed and comments included:

*"I like everything! I like reading, music and playing with dinosaur toys"*

*"I like dressing up and going outside"*

*"There's nothing I don't like! It's all good"*

*"I make gorgeous pictures for my papa"*

## **9. How good is the education the centre provides?**

Our curriculum is firmly based on active play and incorporates an inter-disciplinary approach across all areas including the outdoors. All staff have become very familiar with the 'outcomes and experiences and 4 capacities' and have been pro-active in familiarising themselves with Building the Curriculum 3 and in taking forward assessment strategies using AiFL and Building the Curriculum 5. As a result the nursery makes greater use of formative assessment, as a means of assessing children's progress. Staff are proactive in identifying opportunities for them to discuss learning points with the children and also peer and self-assessment is strongly encouraged and supported by staff. Staff have worked together to produce a reference manual for each area of the curriculum which identifies possible activities for children relating to each outcome and experience. In recent months using national and local advice and guidance the nursery has completely reviewed its approaches to planning and sections for consulting with children, outcomes and experiences, skills, PLODS, evaluations, next steps and reference to the attributes of the 4 capacities are now included. We have introduced dedicated group times focussed on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. Staff have been fully involved in a range of training opportunities both externally and in-house. The nursery was represented locally on the skills recording working party and has submitted work to the Early Years National Conference 2010.

An extensive range of learning opportunities and resources is provided to meet the needs of all children. A range of theme boxes has been purchased to align with the demands of A Curriculum for Excellence. All children are able to exercise choice over the activities that interest them. Children's previous experiences, individual learning styles and interests are sought from Parents in our pre-entry programme and these are built upon in Nursery. Our pre-entry programme has been augmented by the production of a DVD for children showing 'A Day in the Life of Wellington Nursery'. High quality staff:child interaction is a principal means by which the staff are successful in early identification of children's individual needs. More able children are identified and challenged and suitable resources provided and all staff are alert to factors which may hinder a child's development and learning and react quickly to involve Parents and partner agencies in order to identify and address individual needs. All children identified as having additional support needs have Individual Educational Programmes and staged intervention is now well established in the nursery.

The Nursery bases its approach to equality on the corresponding School policy. We welcome all children and families and strive to remove barriers to development and learning. The learning resources and teaching approaches promote equality and this is also underpinned by ensuring citizenship is encouraged. We develop relationships with our Parents to enable them to participate fully in the life of the centre recognising when communication approaches need to be adapted for inclusiveness. All children, Parents and staff are treated equally and with respect and fairness.

We have a very welcoming Nursery and actively encourage all Parents to become involved in Nursery life. We have a Parents focus group and an Eco group both of which are extremely well supported. Both groups meet regularly and are fully involved in decision making about ongoing and future developments. The Eco group have been very involved with staff and children to bring about changes to our nursery garden. We have clear complaints procedures and Parents fully understand how to use them. We report

formally to Parents twice per year, using a format which reflects an emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing, and numerous opportunities are afforded Parents to develop successful partnerships with staff. Regular questionnaires are issued to Parents and the results reported back to Parents with a note of the action taken.

Health promotion is an integral part of Nursery life including safety and emotional health. All staff are trained in child protection procedures and implement best practice guidelines. We have worked in partnership with many organisations including Ayrshire and Arran Primary Healthcare Trust, Breast Feeding Network and the Fresh Air-shire Project to bring about significant improvements in health promotion in Wellington School Nursery. Our children are encouraged to care for each other and are actively involved in decisions affecting our whole Nursery community. We have an effective system for continuity of care routines for children who access all day provision and home/Nursery link diaries support this. All children have daily, frequent access to fresh air and engage in energetic activities. Choice is encouraged throughout all aspects of Nursery life and children are well supported in making choices.

#### **10. How good is the management of the centre?**

We are at present developing new policies for Outdoors Learning and Breast Feeding Friendly Nursery which will impact on children's knowledge of healthy life styles for children. Several policies have undergone review including Child Protection to reflect current good practice.

Two staff members have returned from maternity leave and our staff team has been strengthened by the addition of another two part-time Early Years Practitioners. The Nursery benefits greatly from an extremely stable and consistent staff team. One member of staff is nearing completion of a B.A. Childhood Practice degree.

A wide range of CPD has been undertaken by all staff. As a result of further training our system of consulting with children using "Talking and Thinking Floorbooks" has been greatly enhanced. Members of staff have been trained in 'Taking Learning Outdoors' and this has resulted in a greater use of our outdoors spaces for inter-disciplinary learning.

We have very well developed partnership with South Ayrshire Council and appreciate the support of the Quality Improvement Team. Very good partnerships have developed with our link health visitor and school nurse, speech and language therapy and psychological services. The teacher access project continues to be extremely successful. We have established very successful partnerships with the University of the West of Scotland and the Head of Nursery in involved in delivering teaching on their B.A. Childhood Practice degree course. Recently we have been working collaboratively with Glasgow Caledonian University to produce two DVD's to promote the Nursery and further enhance communication with our stakeholders.

The "Free Fruit Initiative" has provided additional funding enabling us to provide an excellent range of fresh fruit to the children every day. Some additional funding became available from South Ayrshire enabling them to provide us with some additional "Mindstretchers" resources, books and stationary.

We have again greatly increased our inter-disciplinary resources for use in the garden for outdoors learning, our indoors and outdoors spaces are now used as an integrated environment with each area available to the children simultaneously thus greatly enhancing the children's experience. We have extended our range of Storysacks and purchased additional Minute Maths Bags to enhance home/Nursery links. Nursery staff have made a range of Nursery Rhyme Bags for use with the children in their ante pre school year.

## **11. How good is the leadership of the centre?**

The Nursery is led by the Head of Nursery and an approach which encourages ownership at individual level yet builds on team strengths, sharing and collaboration has been adopted. The overall philosophy of the Nursery as a learning environment with a distinct vision, values and aims permeates Nursery leadership.

Learning in the Nursery is firmly based on play and active learning and takes account fully of the curriculum. Staff have fully embraced 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and are enthusiastically implementing all aspects. We highly value our partnerships with Parents and strive to listen to Parents to inform and drive enhancement. We have a very effective staff team and we reinforce a culture where staff feel able and confident to accept the challenge of leading on aspects of the centre's work, for example, Health Promotion and Eco Nursery/ Outdoors Learning. Staff feel able to exercise initiative and take lead roles within and beyond the nursery. All members of staff have lead roles in specific areas and are members of whole school working parties for example, Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. All staff are fully committed to monitoring and we have successfully introduced a system of peer assessment. Staff are also fully committed to self evaluation as a means of reflecting on practice, identifying areas for improvement and confirming significant achievements.

## **12. What is the centre's capacity for improvement?**

Continuous improvement is very important to this Nursery. We have a committed and very enthusiastic staff team who are able to work in partnership with Parents and others in the community to provide a dynamic and stimulating learning environment which is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it remains at the forefront of best practice. We provide high quality of learning and teaching through play and the Nursery is highly valued by the School. It is central to the School's overall mission and this

has enabled the Nursery to secure appropriate resources to sustain and develop its excellent reputation.

Our extensive and varied resources including a dedicated nursery garden, courtyard and beautiful seaside location provide us with many excellent opportunities to extend the quality of learning. This ethos of striving for excellence together with a committed staff has enabled us to realise the benefits of self evaluation.

**13. What are the areas for improvement within the centre?**

- Further developments in Curriculum for Excellence including assessment is for learning, utilising the National Assessment Resource.
- To harness and fully exploit success in interdisciplinary learning to enhance achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- Seek further accreditation with Health Promoting Nursery scheme.
- Further developments in outdoor learning opportunities in line with 'Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning'.
- To build on successful innovations in communicating with parents to realise benefits through improved support for transitions and partnership working around new curriculum initiatives.