

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 AUGUST 2010

**REPORT ON: WHITFIELD COMMUNITY EARLY YEARS CENTRE
HMIE FOLLOW- THROUGH INSPECTION**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 388- 2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission from a follow through inspection at Whitfield Community Early Years Centre in March 2010. The report was published in May 2010.
- 1.2 This report was deferred to this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to allow all Committee members time to read the report and relevant papers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
 - i. notes the contents of this report; and
 - ii. instructs the Director of Education to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for continuing improvement contained in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 Whitfield Community Early Years Centre had originally received an announced integrated inspection conducted by HMIE and the Care Commission in February 2009, and had published their findings in April 2009. The report was placed before the Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2009 (report no. 380-2009 refers).
- 4.2 The findings from the 2009 integrated inspection report indicated that a follow through inspection should be undertaken within one year. This would allow the regulators an opportunity to see how the nursery addressed those areas for improvement which had been identified.
- 4.3 The follow through inspection was undertaken by an inspector from HMIE in March 2010. At the time of the follow through inspection 59 children aged between two and five years were being offered a service on both a part-time and full day basis.

4.4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 HMIE uses a six-point scale for reporting performance:

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

4.5 The 2009 inspection

4.5.1 The 2009 inspection had identified the following strengths of the nursery:

- happy children who are enthusiastic about their learning
- the effective teamwork of staff in creating a very caring, friendly and welcoming ethos for children and parents
- transition arrangements at all stages
- partnership with parents

4.5.2 The following areas for improvement had been agreed with the nursery school and education authority:

- improve the quality of learning experiences for all children to provide a greater level of challenge
- provide opportunities for children to develop early skills in literacy and numeracy in appropriate play situations
- make better use of observations and recording of children's learning to plan what children learn next
- introduce a rigorous and systematic programme of self-evaluation involving all staff to improve the work of the centre

4.5.3 The following quality evaluations were given at the 2009 integrated inspection:

Quality Indicator	Grade
Improvements in performance	Weak
Children's experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	Satisfactory
The curriculum	Weak
Improvement through self-evaluation	Weak

4.5.4 Following the inspection in 2009 staff in the centre and the centre manager worked collaboratively with local authority personnel to make appropriate changes which ensured that all children in the centre would receive an improved level of educational experience at Whitfield Community Early Years Centre.

4.6 The 2010 follow through inspection

- 4.6.1 The March 2010 follow through inspection found that the centre had the following key strengths:
- children who are happy and enjoying their learning
 - improved environment for learning
 - improved arrangements for evaluating the work of the centre
- 4.6.2 HMIE do not report their findings using the six-point scale at follow through inspections. However, key text in the report demonstrates improvements achieved by the centre since the 2009 integrated inspection. These include:
- The children now have more suitably challenging play activities in the well organised playrooms.
 - The children are making a more appropriate rate of progress in developing early literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Children are now more confident and keen to plan their own learning.
 - Staff have improved the curriculum and provide children with more relevant learning experiences.
 - The staff team now monitor learning and teaching in a planned, positive and constructive way.
 - The head of centre has successfully improved approaches for evaluating the quality of the centre's work.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty and equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The following Background Paper was relied upon in preparation of this report:

- A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and The Care Commission
- (Inspection of Pre-School Provision - Follow Through)
- Whitfield Community Early Years Centre, Dundee City Council
- 19 May 2010

Jim Collins
Director of Education

9 JULY 2010

Whitfield Community Early Years Centre Dundee City Council

19 May 2010

We published a report on Whitfield Community Early Years Centre in April 2009. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in March 2010. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹. Our report also describes developments in the ‘ethos’ of the school, by which we mean how well children are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, you will also find analyses of questionnaire returns.

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1. The school

Whitfield Community Early Years Centre serves the Whitfield area of Dundee. There have been some changes to staffing since the original inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- Children who are happy and enjoying their learning.
- Improved environment for learning.
- Improved arrangements for evaluating the work of the centre.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Children are happy and enjoy learning. They benefit from the improvements to the learning environment. They now have more suitably challenging play activities in the well organised playrooms. Children are able to make better choices about their play and to develop their interests. They are making a more appropriate rate of progress in developing early literacy and numeracy skills. They are getting better at working together in play activities. Children are now more confident and keen to plan their own learning. They regularly use their ‘profile folder’ to talk about what they have learned and what they want to learn next.

Staff now involve children in thinking about how they learn best. Staff and children are making better use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enrich and support learning. Staff have improved the curriculum. They are taking good account of the experiences and outcomes in *Curriculum for Excellence* when planning activities for children. Staff provide children with more relevant learning experiences. They are now more focused on developing children’s literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is scope to make better use of the outdoor area for learning.

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

The centre has strengthened further its partnership working with parents. Parents continue to provide strong support for the work of the centre. The centre communicates regularly with parents and provides them with a range of information. Staff make very effective use of parents’ skills to lead learning in the playroom. A very successful science project extended children’s knowledge of floating and sinking.

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

The head of centre has focused well on involving children and staff in identifying and bringing about improvements to centre life. Children have helped to improve the arrangements for serving snack. The head of centre has successfully improved approaches for evaluating the quality of the centre’s work. She has involved children, staff, parents and others in evaluating the work of the centre. Staff now reflect on their own practice. They are keen to improve their practice and have benefited from visiting other centres. The head of centre observes learning in the playrooms and involves staff in discussing children’s progress. The staff team now monitor learning

and teaching in a planned, positive and constructive way. Staff are making good use of the information gathered to make positive changes to children's learning.

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

The centre now has a much stronger sense of community. Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Staff now make effective use of praise to motivate children. They have higher and more appropriate expectations of children's achievements. Most children are confident about what they can do. This is contributing to their positive attitudes and motivation for learning. They participate eagerly in play activities. Children are very well behaved. They show kindness to each other during play sessions. Staff promote children's personal and social development very well across all aspects of the centre's work.

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

The head of centre has provided effective leadership to bring about noticeable improvements to the quality of children's experience. The recently appointed nursery teacher and the depute use their wide range of skills well to motivate and support staff. Staff have responded positively to opportunities to take on responsibility for leading developments. The centre is now well placed to improve further.

8. What happens next?

With support from the education authority, the centre has made good progress overall since the original inspection in March 2009. The centre has the capacity to continue to improve. As a result, HMIE will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

HM Inspector: Marion Burns

19 May 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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Footnotes

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