



West Lothian
Council

EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

PARTNER PROVIDER PERFORMANCE – SCHOOL SESSION 2010-2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel of Pre-school Partner Provider performance in school session 2010-2011

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the content of the report and that support will continue to be provided to the pre-school partner providers appointed through the procurement process from school session 2011-2012

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

Focusing on our customers' needs

Being honest, open and accountable

Providing equality of opportunities

Developing employees

Making best use of our resources

Working in partnership

II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

Partnership with Pre-School Providers Policy 2010

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

Guidance on Pre-school Education issued under Section 34 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000.

The Early Years Framework 2010

GIRFEC 2008
Curriculum for Excellence 2009

III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Measured against Child at the Centre Quality Indicators and the National Care Standards.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	To secure positive outcomes for children in the early years by providing a high quality pre school education service including the implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Within existing resources
VII Consideration at PDSP	Pre-school Partner Provider performance in school session 2010-2011
VIII Other consultations	Partner Providers, Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

1. Background

1.1 The Partnership with Pre-School Providers Policy sets out the Council's commitment to provide a high quality part-time pre-school education place for every eligible 3 and 4 year old. There are 11 partner providers, 9 who secured a 3 year contract and 2 who have a yearly contract (Wee Gems Livingston Ltd and Wee Gems Ltd). For partner providers who have a 3 year contract, evidence of partner provider performance is gathered during an annual quality assurance support visit undertaken by Council Officers. For partner providers who have a 1 year contract, evidence is gathered from ongoing support provided by the Education Support Officer and an annual review of the provision. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified from this. This report refers to school session 2010-2011.

1.2 This report summarises strengths and areas for improvement identified from support visits to the following 11 partner providers: Big Bird, Bright Horizons, Careshare, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, Donaldsons, First Adventures, First Class, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup, Rainbow, Wee Gems Livingston Ltd and Wee Gems Ltd. Support provided to the partners in relation to recommendations made is also outlined.

2. Key Strengths

2.1 Almost all establishments provided a safe, secure and pleasant environment for children. Staff were caring towards children and used praise effectively to acknowledge their achievements and promote positive behaviour. All staff are Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registered within the appropriate function as manager or practitioner.

2.2 Curriculum programmes within Big Bird, Bright Horizons, Donaldsons, First Adventures, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup, and Wee Gems Livingston Ltd provided breadth, balance, depth, challenge, enjoyment, personalisation, choice and relevance. They were stimulating, reflected children's interests and were based firmly on play indoors and outdoors.

- 2.3 Staff and children had access to a wide range of stimulating and challenging resources within Big Bird, Bright Horizons, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, Donaldsons, First Adventures, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup, Wee Gems Livingston Ltd and Wee Gems Ltd. These were clearly organised and used effectively to extend children's play within the nursery.
- 2.4 The quality of interaction between staff and children was a key strength of practice in Bright Horizons, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, Donaldsons, First Adventures, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup and Wee Gems Livingston Ltd. Staff interactions with children showed a comprehensive understanding of children's learning and development. They were sensitive, well judged and used effectively to increase the complexity of learning through play. Children were encouraged to express their views and their responses were valued.
- 2.5 Formal monitoring of playroom practice had been implemented effectively using Child at the Centre Quality Indicators and the National Care Standards at Big Bird, Bright Horizons, Donaldsons, First Adventures and Wee Gems Livingston Ltd. This was used to provide regular feedback to staff on playroom practice and to evidence their self-evaluation.

3. Key Areas for Improvement

- 3.1 Staff at Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup need to follow correct signing in procedures for visitors to their centre. The management at Wee Gems Livingston Ltd need to ensure that the health and safety recommendations from West Lothian Council are actioned within the agreed timescale.
- 3.2 All establishments used West Lothian pre-school planning guidelines to plan children's learning experiences. While the effectiveness of planning and assessment varied across establishments, some areas for improvement were identified in the majority of settings. These centred around the clear recording of learning experiences and outcomes, using success criteria, the identification of assessment opportunities and recording information of children's progress in their Learner's Journey.
- 3.3 The curriculum programmes provided within Careshare, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, First Class, Rainbow and Wee Gems Ltd did not always provide children with sufficient challenge, personalisation, choice and relevance. Opportunities for children to take forward their own learning were missed. More effective use should be made of the outdoor environment to stimulate and challenge children's thinking and learning.
- 3.4 A range of resources was available at Careshare, First Class and Rainbow but these were not effectively used to stimulate or support children's learning experiences. Opportunities to support and motivate children through the use of Information Communications Technology were limited.
- 3.5 While staff were caring towards children in Big Bird, Careshare, First Class, Rainbow and Wee Gems Ltd, opportunities to engage in discussion with children during play activities were missed. Staff did not always use questioning effectively to support the development of children's thinking.
- 3.6 Informal monitoring of playroom practice was in place in Careshare, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup, First Class, Rainbow and Wee Gems Ltd. Implementation of effective formal monitoring procedures is being supported by the Education Support Officer.

4. Support for Improvement

- 4.1 Visits to individual establishments to support the implementation of the planning process and the Learner's Journey have been made by the Education Support Officer during school session 2010-2011. Continued professional development (CPD) courses on the use of West Lothian planning guidelines, various aspects of Curriculum for Excellence, Active Learning, writing Standards and Quality Reports and School Improvement Plans, were also provided by the Education Support Officer. Staff from all partner provider centres attended these sessions. Follow up support was provided to First Adventures and Careshare post HMIE inspections. First Adventures were evaluated as 5 Very Goods and Careshare as 4 Goods and 1 Satisfactory. Network meetings for partner provider teachers were set up and led by the Education Support Officer and have resulted in further positive outcomes for early years practice. These support arrangements will continue under the new pre-school contract arrangements from school session 2011-2012.
- 4.2 Updates of relevant CPD courses are provided to partner providers. Additional courses to those scheduled on West Lothian's CPD calendar were also organised to specifically address issues identified through support visits. CPD on improving learning through observations, literacy, numeracy, child initiated planning, additional support needs and GIRFEC was provided. This improved the quality of observational information recorded in assessments and the content recorded in next steps to support and challenge children's learning. It also focused on encouraging staff to involve children in planning their own learning. This support will also be sustained in the new school session for partner providers.
- 4.3 All partner provider staff are now expected to keep a SSSC Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) log to record their CPD learning and the impact that it has had on their early years practice.
- 4.4 Best practice visits to local authority nursery schools were arranged to provide partners with the opportunity to see a range of curriculum programmes and playroom practice. This has also allowed information on appropriate resources and the effective organisation of these to be shared.
- 4.5 A nursery nurse with the remit of supporting active learning through ICT has been seconded to the Early Years Team. Visits to partner providers to support the use of ICT in the playroom, access and use of GLOW were carried out in session 2010-2011 and will be revisited on request in session 2011-2012.
- 4.6 Advice has been given to partner providers on the development of formal monitoring procedures. Exemplar proformas, monitoring calendars and Child at the Centre training have been provided by the Education Support Officer. Further training will be arranged for partner providers in school session 2011-2012.

E. CONCLUSION

In relation to school session 2010-2011, annual support visits of pre-school partner providers have highlighted key strengths and areas for improvement. A range of support has been provided to partner providers in response to highlighted issues in order to promote continued improvement and professional development. These arrangements will also be applied, as set out in the pre-school partner documentation for the pre-school partners contracted by the council, in school session 2011-2012

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCE

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Ann Doyle, Education Support Officer, Education and Cultural Services, West Lothian Council Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, EH 54 6FF. Telephone: 01506 281947,

email: Ann.Doyle@westlothian.gov.uk

Mary Rankine, Head of Education (Quality Assurance)

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