

6 January 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Mid Annandale Playcare
Lockerbie**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague and I visited and inspected your child's early learning and childcare setting. Throughout our visit we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the manager and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the early learning and childcare setting supported children to do their best. The manager shared with us the early learning and childcare setting's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the early learning and childcare setting's recent work including how well the setting used outdoor learning. We also looked at how well the setting encouraged children to take responsibility and develop independence. As a result, we were able to find out how good the early learning and childcare setting was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children learn and achieve very well in Mid Annandale Playcare. Across the setting, babies and children are happy and settled. They respond positively to the warm and nurturing ethos throughout. We have asked staff to review aspects of their approaches to nappy changing and how they complete the diaries for babies. In the early learning and childcare (ELC) room, children aged three and four years are able to play and learn on their own, with their peers and with the adults. Almost all concentrate well for their age and stage of development. For example, children in the outdoor mud kitchen played together for a sustained period of time. Children discuss their learning and the setting's provision with staff in the ELC room. Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are used well to record and track children's progress across all curriculum areas. Parents have easy access to the PLPs. You, as parents, could be encouraged more to share your children's wider achievements in their PLPs. Children in the ELC room enjoy using information and communications technology to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy

skills. They would benefit from access to more creative applications such as film-making or animation software.

The setting develops children as well-rounded learners. The setting has made highly effective links with its local and wider community. Almost all children in the ELC room are making appropriate progress in developing their early literacy and language skills. Children use these early literacy skills across the nursery, for example in the snack area. They enjoy offering opinions and sharing ideas and listen well to each other and to adults, including those they are not familiar with. They especially like listening to stories in their attractive book den. Parents are encouraged to join in by taking home CAPER (Children and Parents Enjoying Reading) book bags for reading together. Children in the ELC room are developing their early numeracy and mathematics skills well. They enjoy learning about numbers through counting when out on a walk or threading beads in their room. Children are applying their mathematical language by talking about 'full' and 'empty', for example when playing with the water tray. The setting could develop the outdoor area further to provide more activities that practise and develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Children are becoming aware of how they can keep themselves healthy through life by developing good hygiene habits. We have asked staff to review the snack menu. The setting is very good at promoting children's independence and ability to take on responsibility. They are often asked to make choices or express opinions.

How well does the early learning and childcare setting support children to develop and learn?

Across the setting, staff form warm and friendly relationships with all families. These strong relationships help the setting support children and their families very well. Children are appropriately challenged by what they are asked to do or invited to join in with. There is a commendable commitment to flexibility and responsiveness towards families and their individual needs. In the ELC room, children's learning is observed and recorded in PLPs. These could now be developed further to inform parents in more detail about progress and next steps in all curriculum areas. The setting works very well with external partners where children require additional support. Parents are involved closely with any individualised planning. The setting also hosts a range of groups such as baby massage which help support families.

Staff are confident in planning learning across the setting. In the ELC room, staff use Curriculum for Excellence well. Visits out of the setting are used to extend children's learning and often come from their suggestions. For example, a visit to Eskrigg Nature Reserve was stimulated by a child sharing a conker she found there on a weekend visit by her own family. Visitors into the setting, including parents, are used well to extend children's learning. Outdoor learning opportunities have improved to provide a wider range of experiences and resources. The setting could now build on these improvements by increasing the levels of challenge. Transition into the setting and from room to room is very sensitively managed and parents are kept well involved. Staff share practice across the settings to support transition. The strong links with Lockerbie Primary School provide a sound model for the setting working with the other local schools.

How well does the early learning and childcare setting improve the quality of its work?

The setting's manager and deputy manager provide strong and informed leadership. They have high expectations and staff have responded well to these expectations to take increasing responsibility for improving their own and their setting's practice and provision. We have asked the management team to look at ways of sharing feedback with staff which will help them improve their practice further. Parents are well involved in evaluating what the setting does well and how it may be improved further. The Management Committee plays a clear role in challenging and supporting the staff team. Children are consulted about what could make their room or their setting even better. They could now be given more opportunities, with support, to lead as well as contribute to such improvement.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one recommendation. This recommendation has been partially addressed. Outstanding issues relating to the provision of snack are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and four recommendations.

Our inspection of your early learning and childcare setting found the following key strengths.

- Warm, nurturing relationships across the centre.
- The quality of children's experiences across the centre.
- The flexibility and responsiveness shown by the setting towards families and their individual needs.
- The effective links with the local and wider community.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the early learning and childcare setting. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to develop children's profiles and personal learning plans covering all areas of learning and progress.
- Continue to develop opportunities for outdoor learning.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the early learning and childcare setting's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of the arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the early learning and childcare, Dumfries and Galloway Council will inform parents about the setting's progress.

Alasdair Eadie
HM Inspector

Allison Tyson
Care Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations for your setting can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/MidAnandalePlaycareLockerbieDumfriesandGalloway.asp>.

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or email: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Quality indicators help early learning and childcare settings, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the early learning and childcare setting. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *Child at the Centre(2)*¹. Following our inspection of each early learning and childcare setting, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish early learning and childcare settings are doing.

Here are the evaluations for **Mid Annandale Playcare**

Improvements in performance	very good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the early learning and childcare setting

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for **Mid Annandale Playcare**

Quality of care and support	good
Quality of environment	very good
Quality of staffing	very good
Quality of management and leadership	good

As a result of this inspection there are no requirements and four recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Management and staff should review the paperwork requirements on staff in the baby room so that there is a better balance between time spent on record-keeping and staff's ability to support children effectively.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12 – Confidence in Staff.

¹ *The Child at the Centre, Self-Evaluation in the early years*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/TheChildattheCentreSelfevaluationintheEarlyYears_tcm4-684267.pdf

- Management and staff should review the snack menu to ensure that children are offered a balanced and healthy snack which has adequate calories for their needs.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3 – Health and Wellbeing.
- Management and staff should review hand washing procedures in the nappy changing area so that staff and children are washing their hands immediately after nappy changes and so improve infection control within the playrooms.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2 – A Safe Environment.
- Management should develop their monitoring procedures to ensure that the quality of work of all staff is effectively monitored and regular feedback given.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 14 – Well-managed Service

A notification from the Care Inspectorate will be sent to the provider to complete an action plan to address the recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/MidAnandalePlaycareLockerbieDumfriesandGalloway.asp>