

18 July 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Red Squirrel Children's Nursery Dundee**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's pre-school centre. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the head of centre and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the pre-school centre supports children to do their best. The head of centre shared with us the pre-school centre's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the pre-school centre's recent work, including planning, recording children's progress and achievements, eco developments and transitions. As a result, we were able to find out how good the pre-school centre is at improving children's education.

#### **How well do children learn and achieve?**

Children under the age of two years are settled into their daily routines, contented, and respond to adults very well. Children two to three years of age are very enthusiastic and inquisitive as they explore their learning environment, particularly outdoors. Older children are highly motivated and engaged in their learning, developing their creativity and physical skills extremely well as they play outdoors. Children are gaining confidence as they make choices in their learning, planning menus with the cook and taking responsibility looking after the nursery animals. They are involved in planting, growing and cooking their own vegetables. Their interaction with each other is very positive showing a high level of respect when sharing activities and playing games.

Children three to five years are making very good progress in their early literacy and numeracy skills across the nursery. They confidently talk about what they are doing with each other and adults. They are eager to mark make and write to pass on messages and record what they have been doing. Almost all children identify their name and also that of their friends. A few children are successful in identifying sounds and letter names in different play situations. Almost all children are confident in early number activities using them in their play for example sorting and matching a variety of materials, counting and identifying numbers up to ten. A few children are successful in counting and applying numbers up to twenty and beyond when playing. Children's understanding of measurement is developing well as they try to find out about the weight and length of a variety of objects. They are developing their investigative skills well through early science as they find out about plants and

minibeasts. They have a very good understanding of how to take care of themselves by eating healthily, taking exercise and playing outdoors. They are successfully developing their creativity as they absorb themselves in play, music and art activities.

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

All staff provide a very welcoming, nurturing and stimulating learning environment for children. They are very sensitive and respond extremely well to children's physical and emotional needs. They also provide a high level of support for parents when required. Staff support older children in their learning by providing them with high quality learning experiences which meet their individual needs. They have a good awareness of and use current legislation to support children who may require additional help with their learning.

Staff working with children under three years, make very good use of use Pre Birth to Three guidance to plan quality learning experiences. Staff working with older children, are more confident in developing the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Children's learning outdoors is developing well by making effective use of the natural environment. The acting management team need to continue to ensure progress for children which will further embed outdoor learning across the curriculum. To help children develop their health and wellbeing staff provide a variety of experiences of working with each other, how to express feelings and taking care of themselves. Staff provide good opportunities through play which allow children to develop and use their imagination to extend their creativity. They support children in making good use technology, for example using programmable toys to develop children's awareness of directions and use digital cameras to record their learning. However staff need to provide more opportunities to extend children's experiences in using a greater variety of technology.

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

Across the nursery staff are reflective and evaluate children's learning. They share their practice with each other and constantly explore ways to develop further stimulating learning environments. Staff have access to training and make effective use of the information gained to provide children with high quality learning experiences. The provider and acting management team provide very good leadership and are well respected by staff and parents. The continually evaluate the work of the nursery and have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. However they need to recognise what they have achieved in such a short period of time and now plan a more systematic monitoring programme focussing on developing further the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The nursery has very good links with the local authority, appreciating the quality of support that they receive.

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

- Quality of care for all children.
- Children who are extremely motivated, engaged and enthusiastic about learning.
- High quality learning experiences.
- Staff working together in providing a stimulating, welcoming and nurturing learning environment.
- Leadership of the provider and acting management team.

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

- Develop further the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence and outdoor learning opportunities.
- The acting management need to take a more systematic approach in monitoring the work of the nursery.

### **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are 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 local authority 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.

Gordon Buchanan  
Managing Inspector

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.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/eyc/RedSquareNurseryDundee.asp>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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