

27 June 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

**ABC Nursery Ecclefechan
Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway**

In March 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's early learning and childcare setting. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the setting and Dumfries and Galloway Council. We returned to the setting to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in October 2014. We returned to the setting to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in October 2015. Recently, as you may know, we visited the setting again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the manager and practitioners. We heard from the manager and other practitioners about the steps the setting has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the setting has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found. The Care Inspectorate inspected the setting at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com.

Staff need to increase their knowledge and understanding of Curriculum for Excellence to ensure that children make appropriate progress in their learning

A number of important improvements have taken place since the original inspection by Education Scotland. Practitioners have continued to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Curriculum for Excellence and other national guidance relevant to their practice. This has enabled them to identify strengths within the setting and what needs to improve to ensure children continue to make progress in their learning. Overall, practitioners are providing learning experiences that reflect the needs and interests of children. It will be important for practitioners to continue to ensure learning experiences and resources provide the right level of challenge for children. There is scope to increase the range of natural, open ended and real-life objects to ensure children's curiosity and creativity is supported more effectively. This is particularly important for the babies and toddlers. Practitioners' observations of children are becoming more focused on learning. There is still inconsistency across the team. Consideration needs to be given to the individual developmental stages of children. This will help practitioners to identify relevant next steps to support children's learning and development.

The provider and staff need to have a greater focus on developing higher quality learning experiences for all children

Relationships between children and practitioners continue to be positive, warm and caring. Practitioners have worked hard to develop their questioning techniques to support children's thinking skills and deepen their learning. During the visit, practitioners were observed to be extending children's learning and supporting them to problem solve through effective use of questions. The quality of children's learning experiences both indoors and outdoors has improved. Children are using different types of equipment outdoors that provides them with appropriate challenge and enables them to develop a range of physical skills. We have asked practitioners to ensure children are outdoors more often. The setting continues to make good use of the community and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. Increasingly, children have the opportunity to use a range of digital technology to support their learning. This includes using the computer to do online shopping for snack food. There are more opportunities for children to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills in different areas of the playroom and outdoors. Practitioners are now ready to take on additional responsibility for key areas of learning such as early literacy and numeracy to ensure these experiences become firmly embedded across learning.

The provider needs to develop and implement a rigorous, robust and systematic approach to monitoring the work of the nursery

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery continue to improve. The manager and provider are now monitoring learning and teaching in each of the playrooms. Helpful feedback is provided to practitioners to enable them to continue to improve their practice. We have asked the manager to monitor children's progress more closely to identify where children would benefit from additional challenge and where they require further support with their learning. The setting has continued to use the action points from the original inspection and return visits by Education Scotland to help them focus on what needs to improve. The increased confidence of practitioners has led to important improvements being made. The process for monitoring and evaluating the work of the setting now needs to become more focused. As this develops, it will be important for the setting to demonstrate clearly the impact on improving outcomes for children.

Involve children more in planning and developing their learning

Children are becoming more involved in planning their learning from their interests and ideas. Along with practitioners, children are now setting their own learning targets which they display proudly on the 'reach for the stars' display. The majority of children are clear about their individual target and can talk about what they need to do to achieve it. Individual learning journeys demonstrate that children continue to make progress in their learning.

What happens next?

The setting has continued to make progress since the original inspection. More time is required to undertake robust monitoring and self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement of the setting. The area lead officer will maintain contact with Dumfries and Galloway Council to monitor progress and will ask for a report from the authority within one year of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by Education Scotland regarding continuing engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the setting has made and outlining any further action, agreed with Dumfries and Galloway Council that we intend to take.

Sandra Kehoe
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter 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 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.