



Wellgreen Nursery, in Stirling, is a local authority integrated setting and offers extended day, extended year, flexible provision for children and families. It makes provision for children aged 2 to 5 years of age and operates an open-plan, free-flow format where staff have a responsibility for specific age groups.

The staff's strong commitment to the rights of the child has influenced the pedagogical approach used throughout the nursery. This approach provides high quality learning experiences for all children.

Over an extended period of time, through close monitoring, observation and consultation with stakeholders, it emerged that children naturally wanted to explore the nursery environment alongside their peers or siblings and not be confined to particular rooms designed for their specific age group.

As an early learning and childcare community, Wellgreen Nursery firmly believes it is important to really listen to and value the rights of the child and that it is their responsibility to ensure children are not restricted in their learning. They value each child as a unique individual, rich and resourceful regardless of their age and stage of development. To make this visible they decided to open up their two playrooms, which had partitioned doors, to be as one.

They introduced a communal snack area and re-designed the environment to support children in their learning across the 2-5 age range. Staff were committed to embrace this new development and respectful of the pace in which this change was introduced. As the change occurred, they ensured that the space was developed in a meaningful way, consulting with all stakeholders and in particular the children.



It was important for the whole staff team to collaborate on the way forward when developing the nursery environment. Mind mapping exercises were carried out to explore areas for reflection on the impact of removing the partitioned doors. Staff shared research, observations and moderation sheets, which were used throughout the process for analysis. The process of removing the doors to where the setting is now took two years.

They incorporated a new floor throughout the nursery, removed the kitchen, created an office area and redecorated the whole setting. A communal eating area for snack and lunch was created which is also used as a learning area for a key group of children.



Periods of reflection throughout this journey took place at regular intervals and the staff team worked in partnership with the management team to move the process forward. These reflective periods allowed for information to be shared and for the development of practice. To support this moderation sheets were used which provided evidence for further analysis of the areas and resources within the environment.

Consideration was given to all the areas within the setting and in particular to the differentiation made to accommodate the ages and stages of the children who were accessing them. Regular support was offered to staff throughout this process.

As the project progressed, staff naturally moved the development forward and responded to any issues with a solution focused approach. Staff initially remained in what used to be their age group responsibility area, however, they now recognise the importance of a whole room approach and move around to experience every area of the open-plan room. This has supported the children greatly, with children accessing a much wider learning space and becoming more independent. The open plan environment has removed both children's and families' anxieties around transitions and built a greater resilience for all.



The positive impact of this development can be seen in many ways. The children demonstrate their independence and confidence by moving across both play rooms to access areas of interest or to support plan, do and review opportunities. Children know all members of the staff team and are no longer separated from peers or siblings. The environment is a rich and resourceful learning environment. It supports a wide range of learning opportunities

and this is evident in the way children take their own learning forward. Educators are able to respond in a responsive way to children's learning and individual interests, with breadth, depth and challenge opportunities available in every area.

Documentation of children's learning around the setting highlights the high level of collaborative learning that takes place when children share their specialised skills

with each other. Role modelling of positive behaviour and partnership working is celebrated and documented for all to see.

Embarking on this process has had a huge impact on the way the staff team work together. Staff have ownership of taking change forward, continually striving to improve practice and to build a community of collaboration. In addition to this by developing knowledge and understanding of Pre-birth to Three and Curriculum for Excellence they have been able to develop a more coherent approach when documenting children's learning. Another positive impact is that families have commented on the increased capabilities of their younger children through learning and having fun alongside the older children. It has also provided further opportunities for children to widen their friendships.

Children's learning and interests are documented in a responsive and reflective format, whereby educator's record children's learning as it takes place and opportunities for dialogue and reflection occur regularly. Previously this was separated by taking account of both sets of curriculum guidance with each room recording in accordance with the guidance for their age group. This has recently changed with the introduction of one format reflecting both. Since this is still in its infancy the staff team will continue to refine this process. They will also continue to evaluate and assess the changed environment so that when changes and improvements become necessary they will be implemented in consultation with children, families and staff.