

# Twechar Early Years Centre



## Standards and Quality Report 2023/24

## Context of the Centre

Twechar Early Years Centre is situated in the grounds of Twechar Primary School in the small rural, former mining village of Twechar, East Dunbartonshire. Children attend from the village and surrounding areas. Almost all children who attend the early years centre live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1-4. Twechar Early Years Centre is registered for children aged two to five years old and our current roll is 38. The Centre offers extended day and extended year provision for children and families. Children attend the setting between the hours of 8am and 6pm on different attendance patterns. Our early years team includes a headteacher, a depute head of centre (DHOC), a senior early years worker, an early years teacher, thirteen early years workers, a clerical assistant and housekeeper.

The children have access to a motivating, well-resourced two-to five-year-old playroom and an outdoor learning space known as the 'Quad'. We make good use of local woodlands and have established strong partnerships with 'The Healthy Living Centre' and other key stakeholders. Our learning spaces, whether it be indoors or outdoors, provide a broad and balanced curriculum, offering depth, challenge, and application of learning, and supports the developmental needs of our learners. Our curriculum takes into consideration our unique position in the rural village of Twechar and the learning opportunities which exist by having the Primary School onsite.

At Twechar Early Years Centre, we work closely with families and key stakeholders to provide a safe and inclusive environment where children can grow under a nurturing ethos. To ensure our children grow in self-esteem and emotional resilience, we strive to meet their emotional and social needs in a meaningful and supportive way. Our learners are supported to develop the skills and dispositions they will need to grow and develop in all developmental capacities.

## Our Vision

At Twechar Early Years Centre, we aim to provide education and care in an inclusive community where we will nurture everyone to be unique and ambitious. Our environment will empower everyone to trust in themselves, their abilities, and others, developing a sense of belonging in their Centre, community and beyond.

## Our Aims:

- We aim to nurture each child to believe in themselves to be the best they can be.
- We promote an inclusive ethos for all children, families and staff within the early years centre and the wider community.
- We encourage children to be ambitious in their play and learning through a wide range of experiences at the early years centre, home, and their community.
- We aim to build positive and trusting relationships by actively listening and respecting the voice of all children, families, staff, and our local community.
- We elicit and encourage children, families, staff, and the community to celebrate successes together to build a better future for all.

## Our Values:

Fun

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Respect

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Belonging

*Omnes pro uno/All for one*

Throughout each academic year, we undertake continuous self-evaluation which informs our areas for improvement. We consult with key stakeholders to collect data and make decisions on the service delivery. Our Improvement Plan takes account of the Education Service Plan and the Early Years Strategic Plan, alongside priorities from The National Improvement Framework (NIF).

## Progress in Centre Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities

<b>Centre Priority 1:</b> Continue to embed our curriculum design with a clear focus on play pedagogy and improving attainment across early level literacy and numeracy.	
<b>Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs</b> 1.3 play and learning 2.1 Quality of the setting for play and learning 3.2 Leadership of play and learning	
<b>NIF Priority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in achievement, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy.</li> <li>• Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;</li> </ul> <b>NIF Driver</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and ELC leadership</li> <li>• Curriculum and assessment</li> <li>• Teacher and Practitioner professionalism</li> </ul>	<b>HGIOELC QIs</b> QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment QI 3.2 Ensuring children's progress QI 3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning
<p><b>Progress and impact:</b>            The Depute Head of Centre (DHoC) and Early Years Teacher attended Moderation Training delivered by the West Partnership. The DHoC cascaded this training to all practitioners at the Inservice Day in August with a view to enhancing capacity on moderation and learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>During the previous session (2022-23) a new planning process was implemented which placed a high value on child voice and focused on the initial 'spark' to develop, consolidate and extend learning. At the beginning of 2023-24, almost all practitioners felt the planning process introduced during the previous session, was working well but there was an element of duplication of information within the planning document itself. Monitoring of planning and coverage of the curriculum also highlighted that the same Experiences &amp; Outcomes were being used when Practitioners were planning learning experiences, potentially leading to a lack of breadth.</p> <p>The planning documentation was amended as a result of practitioner feedback, the monitoring process and to incorporate elements of the moderation training. The revised planning document was rolled out at the August Inservice Day, and staff were provided with exemplars and planning guidance to support its completion. The planning document now reflects key elements contained within the Moderation Cycle, and practitioners plan using Experiences &amp; Outcomes, Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. Gaps in learning are identified and next steps highlighted which help inform future learning experiences with a view to closing these gaps.</p> <p>The Early Years Teacher has supported practitioners throughout the year to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Early Level Curriculum and to gain confidence in completing the planning documentation. The revised planning process was evaluated at the May Inservice Day and the majority of staff felt confident or very confident about it and felt that their knowledge and understanding had increased.</p> <p>A new environmental audit document covering Numeracy and Maths throughout the Nursery was created and introduced. The purpose of this was to promote a wider range of Numeracy and Maths</p>	

resources and support learning experiences in all areas of the Nursery. Monitoring of these documents shows that the level and variety of resources has increased. Also, as a result of the revised planning process, there has been an increase in the breadth and depth of planned learning experiences relating to Numeracy and Maths. All staff feel that the audit and planning documents have helped to promote an increase in Numeracy based learning experiences across different areas within the Nursery.

At three in-service days, all practitioners received in house training on different aspects of the Numeracy and Maths Curriculum, namely Number & Number Processes, Shape Position & Movement and Information Handling. All staff agreed or strongly agreed that the training had improved their understanding of the Numeracy & Maths curriculum at Early Level.

A variety of resources have been introduced to enhance Numeracy & Maths learning experiences - STEM a story boxes have been created by the STEM champion, a range of Maths through Story books with associated activity sheets have been rolled out, specific resources as identified through the new environmental audit process have been purchased e.g. different types of timers, measurement resources and Numicon.

Numeracy trackers were created and implemented in term 1, and training provided to practitioners by the Teacher and DHoC. The tracking document breaks down each benchmark into specific progressive skills and allows staff to identify where each child is in their learning. Most practitioners agreed that the tracker has been beneficial as they can monitor children's progress, identify gaps, plan next steps and enhance the learning environment accordingly.

Tracking meetings have been introduced this session between practitioners, the DHoC and teacher. These provide an opportunity for assessment and tracking information to be shared for every child thereby providing a robust process for showing progress over time. Since the start of the session, the majority of our learners are making good progress across early level numeracy.

Next steps:

- provide further training on the moderation cycle in order to continue to improve knowledge and understanding of the Early Level Curriculum amongst all practitioners
- complete the EDC Early Years Numeracy audit to identify further areas for development
- develop and roll out reading and writing trackers
- tracking meetings to take place three times a session

## Centre priority 2: Embed our approaches to improve the Health and Wellbeing of our learners, parents and staff.

<b>NIF Priority</b> • Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; Choose an item. <b>NIF Driver</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and Practitioner professionalism</li> <li>• School and ELC leadership</li> <li>• School and ELC improvement</li> </ul>	<b>HGIOELC QIs</b> QI 1.3 Leadership of Change QI 2.7 Partnerships QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion
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## 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Choose an item.

### Progress and impact:

Learning is celebrated within the Nursery. Achievements from home are displayed using "The Proud Cloud". This was created with children and is displayed within the cloakroom area. Parents, children and staff all contribute to children's success by posting an achievement on the cloud. This was launched by one of our HWB Champions, who spoke to parents in the foyer and introduced it. This was also included within a newsletter. It is working well and contributions are added on a regular basis.



Children and staff have a greater understanding of the Centre's vision, values and aims, and their rights in a meaningful way. The Nursery teddy, Fraser Bear, has been helping the children to understand the Nursery values of respect, belonging and fun. He has been a frequent visitor at Welcome Time and teaching time, where he has helped the children to take part in different activities to reinforce the values and what they mean. The majority of children have gained a better understanding of the Nursery Values and how to respect each other, our nursery and our resources. We have child friendly displays throughout the room highlighting the values of respect, belonging and fun. All of the children understand that they belong to a key group and are aware who their keyworker is.

We have also introduced Veronica Bear which is a home link teddy to teach our parents and carers about our vision, values and aims. Veronica goes home with a child on a regular basis and the parents and carers document experiences within their home life that link to these, focusing on our values which are Belonging, Respect and Fun. They take photos and write in Veronica Bear's diary about the adventures they have taken her on. This has allowed parents and families to gain a better understanding of our Nursery Visions, Values and Aims and creates consistency for the children to support their understanding of this. So far a few children have taken part in this new initiative and all those who have taken part have gained a better understanding and have been confident in sharing their experiences with their families and their nursery peers using this child friendly approach.



This session we have a member of staff who has taken on a UNCRC leadership role and is beginning to promote this across the Centre. A display has been created within the cloakroom, with photographic examples of how children's rights are embedded in our daily practice, linking to the corresponding Article. The children have been developing their knowledge of their rights whilst exploring books such as "Let's Explore Our Rights" and learning songs about Children's Rights such as "We've all got rights" which is a song produced by UNICEF UK highlighting Children's rights in a more child friendly way.

The PATHS programme has been delivered to all pre-school children on a weekly basis throughout the session. The purpose of the programme is to promote self-esteem and emotional literacy skills. The staff who delivered the programme feel that almost all children have engaged well with the programme and can explain different emotions they might be feeling and how to manage them. A PATHS poster displayed in the playroom has given children a focal point and reminder of some of the strategies we can use when we are feeling upset and need to calm down. A few children have found this particularly useful if they are beginning to feel overwhelmed and are supported to self-regulate using the PATHS Turtle Approach. The majority of children are able to discuss what a compliment is and the way in



which the person receiving the compliment feels as well as how it makes them feel to give the compliment. This has helped the children to develop positive feelings about themselves and their abilities. The display board within the nursery corridor has kept parents up to date with what has been going on during our PAtHs sessions and regular home learning packs have allowed parents to discuss the strategies we have been learning with their children at home.

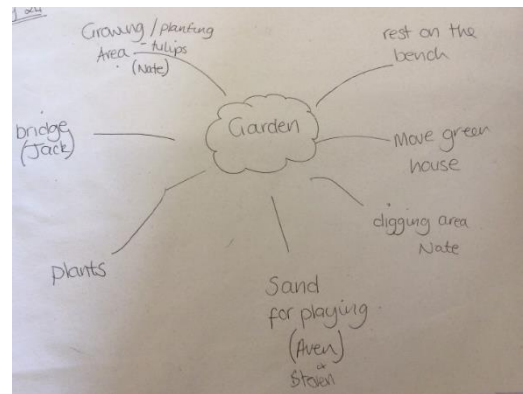
We have introduced 'The Colour Monster' to all ante pre and pre-school children. The purpose of this was to build upon and develop children's emotional literacy skills. An interactive display with the different Colour Monster emotions was created within the playroom and children have the freedom to post a personalised lollipop stick showing how they are feeling throughout their session. Children also take part in daily emotional check ins at Group Times, using a Colour Monster emotions mat. Almost all children are able to express how they are feeling by pointing to the relevant colour monster picture. Most pre-school and a few ante pre-school children are able to explain why they are feeling a particular way. Staff also take part in this emotional check in. Staff refer to the Colour Monster feelings throughout the day and it has become part of our daily terminology.

A new Nursery to School Transition programme was developed and introduced to support a smooth transition into Primary 1. This involved visits to the playground, P1 Classroom and dining hall. All pre school children have engaged in and participated in this programme. The children were also given a Primary 6 buddy to support them during this time of change. They will continue this role as they move into Primary 7. Parents have been invited to attend several information sessions including Early Literacy, Come Dine With Me and Meet the Teacher. Children have received Homelink bags which contain a variety of resources such as magnetic letters & alphabet boards, whiteboards and numberlines. Seesaw accounts were created for all children in order to familiarise themselves and their families with this communication app used by the Primary school. Weekly activities have been posted for children and families to engage with

Staff have been providing regular planned opportunities to explore baking, cooking and creating their own snacks. They have been making a wide range of foods for snack including soup, pizzas, pancakes, jelly and fruit kebabs. Children's voices have been heard as they were given the choice of ingredients aligning with the Setting the Table document to make their own snack and this has made snack a more enjoyable experience for the children to enjoy foods they are familiar with, as well as trying new foods. Our free flow snack routine allows children to be independent, make choices, try new foods and extends their language as they communicate throughout this time. Our snack routine is child friendly as it is visible on the wall in the form of photographs, children have a visual of what is available for snack and how much of each item to take. Staff have noticed that almost all children are following the snack routine and their self-help skills have increased.

The Outdoor Quad has been developed significantly during this session. Children's views were sought regarding what they would like within their outdoor space. This was recorded via pictures and children's voices in an outdoor floor book. Children were also involved in creating garden rules which have been displayed in the garden and beside the door to the garden.





As a result of children

and adult views, the Quad now contains more defined areas e.g. mud kitchen, construction, numeracy/loose parts area, physical play, imaginative and role play, sensory, and a garden area for planting and growing.

The nursery purchased new storage units containing a wide range of natural numeracy and literacy resources, and the newly developed Environment Audit checklists have ensured that Literacy and Numeracy



resources are now available in most areas around the Quad. Children are free to access and self-select from the storage units. Over the past year practitioners have observed that almost all children are more engaged in their learning as a result of the defined areas. They have noticed that a few children feel calmer outdoors particularly when engaging in sensory experiences for example digging, planting and exploring the sand.



We have created a more nurturing space in the pergola with books, flowers, drapes and lights. This has been beneficial for children requiring a calmer, quiet space when outdoors and is accessed regularly by the majority of children.

Practitioners introduced a sign in station in our outdoor space. This allows children to recognise their names and take ownership of signing themselves in and out of the garden. The children now recognise this as part of our outdoor routine and often remind their peers to sign in or out.

We have received a wide range of donated resources from the local Lodge. These resources were used to further develop the garden area and included a variety of plants, hose, soil, canopy for the sandpit, children's gazebo, crates and planters. This area has now been fenced off and the children have been involved in caring for the area for example weeding, watering, planting shrubs, and growing a variety of plants and vegetables from seed. The children have also been learning about seasons and the life cycle of plants.



A practitioner attended three outdoor learning training sessions at Mugdock Country Park covering a variety of themes centred around the seasons. This training has been put into practice through our outdoor learning sessions with a focus on teaching the children about birds and how to care for them during the winter months by making bird feeders.

As a result of this training we have enhanced our range of natural resources, learning how to use the environment and natural resources that are available to us as practitioners. Information taken from these training sessions have been shared with other practitioners through professional dialogue and cascading the training to other practitioners.

#### Next Steps:

- Continue to support children and families understanding of the Centre's Vision, Values and Aims and UNCRC, in a meaningful and appropriate way
- Continue to develop self-esteem and emotional resilience of our learners through our health and wellbeing programme delivery, namely PATHS and The Colour Monster
- Continue to embed the new Transition programme and evaluate its impact
- Review and audit our outdoor learning opportunities within the EYC and local community to develop high quality, relevant outdoor learning



**Centre priority 3: Develop family learning within our Centre, promoting learning at home.**

**NIF Priority**

- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;

**NIF Driver**

- Parent/carer engagement and family learning School and ELC leadership
- Teacher and Practitioner professionalism

**HGIOELC QIs**

- QI 1.2 Leadership of Learning
- QI 2.5 Family Learning
- QI 2.7 Partnerships

**Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs**

- 1.1 nurturing care and support
- 1.4 Family engagement
- 3.2 leadership of play and learning

**Progress and impact:**

There have been blocks of Outdoor family learning where children took part in a variety of different outdoor learning experiences. The families have been provided with a range of different outdoors based experiences including trips to the Secret Garden, Den Building in the Glen and Transient Art in the Quad. We have also invited families in to spend time with their children within the nursery environment, making fruit kebabs and junk modelling. This has benefited the children and parents as practitioners have shared their professional knowledge of how to enhance interaction and communication with their children at home. We have provided simple activity ideas that the families can re-create with their children at home too. We have handed out evaluation sheets to the families who have participated in our family learning experiences and all feedback has been positive. Almost all of the children have had a family member attend at least one session.

We have had a big focus on Health and Wellbeing this session and worked collaboratively with the School staff and children as we participated in the Wellbeing Week. During this week, we explored well-being in terms of physical and mental well-being through a variety of experiences and activities. We involved parents in this as we invited them to join us for a Sponsored Walk to raise funds for nursery resources. Parents were also invited to join us for a music and movement dance session hosted by one of our practitioners in the Quad. The children took pride in sharing these experiences with their families and almost all children had an adult attend the sponsored walk.

We put some of the funds raised towards our Nursery Graduation e.g. gifts including a school tie, photos, decorations and treats. We have also used some of the funds to purchase storage for the playroom in order to promote self-selection of resources by children.

A member of staff from the William Patrick Library has visited the school and Nursery once a month to read a story to a small group of children before allowing them explore a range of books. A box of books was then left for the Nursery children to use between library visits. This led to 2 interactive Book Bug sessions with children and their families. These sessions were well attended.

We have successfully delivered the Families Connect programme and liaised with our Family Champion and Family Learning Assistant to provide strategies for parents to support their children's wellbeing. The programme has had a positive impact on the children and parents who participated. All parents found the sessions worthwhile and beneficial to their families.



We have organised 2 "Stay and Plays". During these, parents were invited in for part of their child's session to participate in their daily routines and activities. All parents found these beneficial and looked forward to returning and repeating the experience.

East Dunbartonshire Council's Count Me In team delivered a 4-week block of family numeracy sessions for Nursery and Primary 1 families. At the start of each session the team provided information about different early counting strategies, and how understanding of these could be supported at home through the use of Storytime Maths bags. The children then joined for the rest of the session and worked with their parent/carer to explore the bags which contained a story book, game and related maths activities. The bags were sent home and brought back for a different bag the following week. The Nursery is due to be given a set of the Storytime Maths bags and this programme will continue next session. The majority of Nursery parents who attended found the sessions beneficial and provided positive feedback about them. "Great sessions to support parents in helping children with maths".

Six themed Literacy Bags with a range of fiction and non-fiction books, soft toy and game, were purchased with a view to promoting literacy at home. The bags were launched at a Come Read with Me session held within the Nursery playroom where the Teacher explained the benefits of reading stories at home and how to use the contents of the bag. The parents then worked with their children to investigate and explore the bags, and over the course of 6 weeks were given the opportunity to take home a different bag every week. All parents who were invited to take part in the initial session attended. Most parents have engaged well with the programme and received a new bag on a regular basis. This programme will be rolled out again next session.

Upon discussion with the staff team almost all practitioners were keen to move from Learning Journals to individual scrap books for their key children and area floor-books, to document learning and assessment. The main reason for this was lack of parental engagement, with only a minority of parents regularly logging on and commenting on posts. One possible reason for lack of engagement was due to poor internet coverage. Parents were consulted on this change and almost all were in favour of this move to scrapbooks. The contract with Learning Journals expired at the end of September and the scrap books were introduced the following month. Due to adaptations in how the scrap books have been used, it has not yet been possible to evaluate this new method of recording children's learning.

A number of nursery policies have reached their review date. Nursery staff have started to review these, and implement new policies and procedures.

Next Steps:

- Continue to increase home links to support learning at home
- Continue establishing strong family and community engagement

- All staff, and a group of parents, will be involved in the evaluation of various policies and procedures over the coming year.

## Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

Insert a brief description of progress and achievements in the following national priorities:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education; Our quality assurance processes have shown we listen skillfully to children, making them feel valued and respected. All children actively lead their own learning through a range of play experiences.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; Our nurturing and inclusive ethos, as well as our clear, shared focus on wellbeing has secured improved wellbeing for the majority of our children and families. Almost all our children are developing confidence, resilience and independence.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people; Through our robust holistic tracking systems, we identify gaps in learning and development, providing support to develop and consolidate skills across literacy and health and wellbeing.
- Improvement in achievement, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy. Most of our learners are making good progress across early level literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

## Self-evaluations of How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare

Quality indicator	Centre self-evaluation	Inspection/ Authority evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good	Choose an item.
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Choose an item.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	Choose an item.
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Good	Choose an item.

## Summary of Centre Improvement priorities for Session 2024/2025

1. To review assessment and tracking procedures to ensure all our learners are making good progress across early level literacy and numeracy to increase achievement.
2. Review and audit our outdoor learning opportunities within the EYC and local community to develop high quality, relevant outdoor learning.
3. Ensure our family engagement and learning is sustained and improves outcomes in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for leadership.

## What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

At Twechar Early Years Centre we are committed to delivering high standards and improving outcomes for all children. We aspire to create a culture where children and adults can grow and learn together. All stakeholders are actively involved in ongoing self-evaluation and collaborative working across the setting, throughout the year,

informs current progress and future improvement needs. We are confident that the settings self-evaluation processes are leading to continued improvement.

Standards and Quality report should be emailed to the link Early Years Quality Improvement Officer by **Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**