



## Clyde Cottage Nursery Managers Report June 2023

### **July 2022/August 2022**

During the summer we enjoyed some nice warm weather and enjoyed some fun filled days down at the beach.

We also received an announced visit from Care Inspectorate to carry out an inspection. Day 1 had to be cut short due to hot temperature warnings and day 2 was postponed due to high temperatures being expected.

Day 2 and feedback were carried out at the beginning of August.

The inspection process left us all feeling broken. Our results were not what we were expecting and we received grades that we have not received before scoring 3-adequate across the 4 key areas that had been inspected:

How good is our care, play and learning?

How good is our setting?

How good is our leadership?

How good is our staff team?

There are many contributing factors that can justify and explain the drop in grades. Our own assessment of where we were sitting was level 4-good. We would normally be achieving grades of 5 and 6 and have never scored below these grades.

As a nursery and a community, we had been through the pandemic. Closing in March 2020 and re-opening to provide the Hub the same month.

During the same month we lost two senior management staff from our management team and partners in the local authority nursery... Frances to retirement and Maureen as a result of being identified as a high-risk person.

Staff were furloughed and we operated with a skeleton staff of very brave volunteers. The pandemic brought about a few lockdowns and closures due to outbreaks of covid. It had us operating as two separate staff teams, bringing all children back and operating in bubbles.

In August 2021, we were for the first time in over a year brought back to work as a joint staff team and all children were brought in to play together. Both teams had experienced significant changes to their staff teams, due to staff leaving for various personal reasons. New staff had been recruited and welcomed to our teams, bringing youth and enthusiasm.

As a management and staff team we were aware of the challenge that lay ahead, rebuilding our staff team, skills, knowledge, and experience.

As well as the pandemic and significant staff changes, we had also undergone a significant refurbishment inside and out, as the outside brick work was taken down and upgraded. This project also ran over causing a huge amount of disruption to our garden areas, parking and general maintenance and running of the setting.

Key strengths and messages from the inspection were:

Staff and management were committed to supporting children and families to ensure they were informed and involved in their child's care

- Staff were caring and worked well together
- Management and staff worked with professionals and in partnership with parents to support individual needs
- Children's needs were not met consistently as personal plans were not being reviewed and updated.
- Indoor and outdoor play spaces are required to be reviewed as the quality play and learning was inconsistent across the service
- Management was in the early stages of quality assuring aspects of the service and planning improvements. Quality assurance processes need to be embedded to secure sustained improvements across the service.
- The environment inside and outside requires attention to ensure children and staff can access a safe suitable environment.

An action plan addressing these key messages was submitted to Care Inspectorate and as a nursery we have been addressing these areas for improvement.

## **In August**

We welcomed our new children and all families back from the summer holidays.

Our August Inservice days provided opportunities for staff to receive feedback on our inspection report and for management to share the action plan.

We also welcomed a new member of staff to our Little Tikes team: Toni Gadd who replaced Sabrina.

## **August/September 2022**

The children started learning to share their experiences and feelings, learning to express them and to name them and to deal with them. They were also learning about the importance of friendships and how to be a good friend, learning what it means to care and to share and to make and learn the rules of the nursery in order to keep safe.

Staff and children continued to work with the Developmental Milestones and SHANARRI indicators. Looking closely at Nurture.

## **October 2022**

We welcomed Ashley Reynolds to the Little Tikes team as we sadly said goodbye to Cara Blythe as she left us to join Cairndow nursery, a nursery closer to home.

We also welcomed Jackie Cooper to our lunch staff team and now to our team of practioners.

The children became curious about the changing of colours around them and we began to explore the seasons watching the leaves change colour and the days grow shorter.

The children and staff then got ready for Halloween. The children enjoyed exploring the " Clyde Cottage pumpkin patch"

There was a lot to explore and to be curious about, pumpkins of different colour, acorns and pine cones of various sizes.

Lots of autumn walks looking at nature and collecting leaves to paint, make displays and discuss.

At the end of October, the children and staff dressed up for our annual Halloween party and enjoyed party games and dooking for apples.

## November 2022

The children moved on to learning about weather, day, and night, how routines and events in the world link with times and seasons their orders and events associated with them such as Guy Fawkes, St. Andrew's Day as well as Children in Need and Book Club week.

The children were also learning about Scotland and their place in their community.

To help support and develop the children's literacy skills the children learned new Scottish poems, rhymes and songs and were able to confidently recite them.

We also remembered our heroes of yesterday and celebrated Remembrance Day.

The staff and management team also did some valuable learning as part of our recovery and improvement journey.

Firstly, we as a management team and then the staff team, met with Mary Pat MacConnell (Argyll and Bute acting Education Officer) to engage in professional dialogue discussing our current Care Inspectorate report and progression of our action plan and to support us to become effective leaders, as we faced the challenges that lay ahead of us. We found this time very worth while as we received invaluable support, were sign posted to interesting reading materials, resources, and examples of current good practice. We became aware of the enormity of the challenges and tasks that lay ahead but we were able to see that we, as a team, were more than capable of meeting these challenges but it was going to take time, and a realistic amount of time (years) This was going to be an expedition of the Himalayas with lots of mountains to climb with lots of ups and downs.

The staff met with Mary Pat and had the opportunity to listen and engage in dialogue with Mary Pat as she discussed and explored the processes and tensions of change within the nursery environment.

Mary Pat's presentation was filled with many inspirational quotes and her own reflections of a mountain she had climbed with her own staff team. We were taken on the journey, starting at the beginning establishing the basecamp.

We were then invited to have our own pedagogical bonfire where we could burn the things that were holding us back our fears, worries, barriers to change.

We discussed what motivates us to climb, what it means to be an agent of change and deciding on the pathway.

What were the essential tools and kit we would need to pack for this expedition?

We discussed what we would need to pack in our rucksack

- Treats and humour
- Children and families
- Plan-do-study-act projects
- Learning from research
- Regular professional dialogue
- A mirror to encourage self-reflection
- Torches ... to help us feel our way in the dark

The ability to see, to listen and hear. To communicate well. To trust within our partnerships to collaborate, and to forward plan...

Enjoying the journey, setting personal goals, and taking small steps

***"It is not a question of conquering  
a summit previously unknown,  
But of tracing step by step  
A new pathway to it "***

- Gustav Mahler

It was during Mary Pat's presentation that we were first introduced to the work of Ewan MacIntosh (No tosh) ... who turned out to be an old school friend of Julie's, born and bred in Dunoon.

We had the greatest pleasure of meeting this passionate and inspirational man during our November In-service day.

Julie and I had a couple of online meetings with Ewan before this where we outlined our story and the challenges we faced. Within minutes of speaking with Ewan we instantly felt understood and full of hope.

Before Ewan met with staff, he had asked them to pick an artefact that sums up what they think is the most important thing about the learning experience in the nursery and prepare a 90 second story to share with their colleagues, sharing why it matters to them so much.

This exercise became one of the most emotionally transformational pieces of work that we have collaborated on.

During each of the 90 seconds we laughed and cried and beamed with pride as the staff proudly and emotionally shared their stories.

In those moments Clyde Cottage was reborn and re-energized. Our beating hearts and been given CPR and we could all finally breathe again.

Our stories became statements of intent and our Manifesto/Promises were born:

- We start with love and Care
- Team is everything
- Relationships matter
- If you build a tower...
- Imagination fuels everything
- You cannot teach the rules of life
- Our learners, lead learning...we push them
- Learning happens when you least expect it
- Ready for school, ready for the world
- It's called the great outdoors

We will be eternally grateful to Ewan for taking the time to listen to us and to look into our souls and to re kindle in us all why Clyde Cottage matters and why we are climbing this mountain.

A truly remarkable, inspirational, and motivational man (someone I would pack in my ruck sack!)

November was an extremely busy month for our staff team as the staff also took part in a staff exchange project with Dunoon ELC.

This was a 6-week project for staff to collaborate and learn from each other.

Staff from Clyde Cottage took it in turns to swap staff with Dunoon and each team turned up for work to their alternative settings.

These visits provided staff opportunities for professional dialogue, collaboration, to share and extend learning and practice. It also provided staff time to develop a networking group providing support, sharing of skills and knowledge.

Both teams were brought back to share and reflect on what they had experienced, what they had learned about their own practice and setting and to discuss the key messages/learning from their visits.

Both teams thought it was a worth while project and benefitted from them sharing and implementing ideas to improve their settings.

The senior management team was invited to take part in a 6-session block (running over 5 months) Care Inspectorate ELC Improvement programme run by the Care Inspectorate.

The programme was designed to support quality improvement within our service through virtual learning community sessions, project clinics and one-to-one support.

We were offered two places enabling us to take part as two management teams and to work on two areas of improvement.

The project helped us to look at the areas of improvement identified in our recent inspection report and to choose one to work on, to improve using the strategies and tools that would be shared and developed during the programme.

We looked at developing measurable aims, looking at tests of change and change ideas as well as looking at the improvement methodology and the improvement model PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

This again was a very worthwhile piece of learning enabling us more tools to put in our ruck sack.

Sadly, in the middle of this learning we had to say goodbye to Emily our Busy Bee practitioner as she moved house and the area.

The children were looked after by Susan Peter until Gemma, Emily's replacement, started in January '23.

We also provided many opportunities for learning and having fun with the children, and Staff and children dressed up for Children in Need and raised over £45.00. A huge Thank You to all.

In addition, we held a parents evening in November where we shared and updated care plans and children's learning.

## **December 2022**

Was no time to rest, the children were excited and getting ready for Christmas.

They were learning about sharing experiences and feelings. They were also learning to take part in a variety of singing games, rhymes and songs as well as learning that being active keeps them healthy and can be fun.

The children wrote letters to Father Christmas and went to the post office to send them on their journey to the North Pole.

They learned about the importance of caring for others. Developing an understanding of what is fair and unfair and the importance of caring for, and sharing with, others and how to support others at this time of year.

The children were involved in lots of fundraising activities such as Children in Need and Comic relief.

The management committee had organized Christmas Hampers as a fundraiser. The children and their families donated prizes for adult and children hampers. They all looked fabulous and 20 lucky winners benefited from some lovely prizes raising an amazing £425 for nursery funds. We bought spare defib pads for our recently purchased defibrillator.

Our aim is to develop the children's awareness of the importance of respecting each other and being responsible citizens.

The children enjoyed and took part in their own Christmas parties and received a present and a visit from Father Christmas.

Children and staff also took part in national Christmas jumper day which was a fun filled day.

With Covid restrictions lifted we were able to hold our Christmas concert, and invite our families in. It was lovely to share this experience and learning with you.

## **January 2023**

The Nursery re-opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> January

We welcomed everyone back from the Christmas break and continued our learning, this time with a focus on Robert Burns.

The children were learning to explore and play with the patterns and sounds of language.

Learning about the weather and being able to relate the weather to different seasons.

We welcomed Gemma Armstrong our Busy Bee team.



## **Open Day**

We held an Open Day on the 21<sup>st</sup> January in preparation for registration week in February.

It was also an opportunity for parents to have a look around the nursery, to look at recent improvements and to look at the plans to upgrade the outdoor area, meet and chat with the staff.

## **February-March 2023**

The children celebrated Valentine's Day, World Book Day, and Mother's Day.

The children enjoyed exploring characters in stories and other texts and they enjoyed inventing their own stories.

The children celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as their favourite character and bringing a book from home to share with their group.

During March we also held Bookbug sessions with our parents. Having Busy Bee and Little Tikes sessions.

We also took part in a sponsored silence raising essential funds for the families and victims of the Turkey earthquake disaster.

At the end of February, we had to say another sad farewell to Lauren Higgins as she left us to join Dunoon ELC. We all wished her well and continued success.

Lauren's group was left in the capable hands of Jacqui Wilson.

## **Buddy Groups**

All school leavers were grouped to their school. The buddy group allows the children to buddy up with the other children going to their school to support friendships and transitions.

## **Comic Relief March 2023**

All staff and children wore red and painted their noses red for a donation to Comic relief.

Raising £40.00, thank you to all who supported this cause.

### **March 2023 visit to Menstrie Nursery, near Stirling.**

Another step in our improvement journey was a two-day visit arranged by Mary Pat for Julie and myself to visit Menstrie nursery.

A setting similar in size to ours providing for over 90 children from ages 2-5 years with a large staff team.

This nursery has enjoyed a successful learning community of child and adult learners led by a highly skilled leader who has invested extensively in research alongside children, families, and communities.

Lorna continues to invest in the continuing cycle of adult learners, not just within her own community but plays host to many visitors to her nursery and through her work with HMIE.

During our visit we were able to observe, take part in professional dialogue, take photographs, talk to the children, ask many questions, look at paperwork and planning, observe lunch time practice and to reflect.

We were made to feel very welcome by Lorna, her staff team, and the children. We thoroughly enjoyed our learning experience and have been inspired and motivated to make changes to enhance our learning environment and practice, ensuring improved positive outcomes on our children, families, and staff.

### **April 2023**

Easter was celebrated at the beginning of April and we all enjoyed Good Friday and Easter Monday holidays.

Some children and families enjoyed the first 2 weeks of April off. For the children and staff that remained at nursery, farm visits were arranged for the children and staff to see and feed the lambs.

This provided a vast amount of learning opportunities and first-time experiences for the children from going on the yellow bus and then travelling to the farm.

At the farm they were able to make up the bottles of milk for the lambs and go up to the sheds to look at the mummy sheep with their lambs still in their tummies and then to go into the byers to see the new mums with their lambs in the pens and to the pet lamb corner where they were able to hold, pat and feeds the lambs.

This was well received and opened vast and extensive conversations, questions, and curiosity.

It was truly humbling to see their wee faces come alive with excitement and wonder.

Once back at nursery the staff were able to provide learning opportunities to extend and support what the children had been learning, providing areas for farm animals and bottles for feeding as well as books for research and answering questions.

### **April -May 2023**

All children and staff were back, apart from Ashley as she unexpectedly left us to join Sandbank ELC on the 17<sup>th</sup> April, ready to start learning about Spring and getting ready for school.

They were learning about representing their class and wider community, encouraging self-worth and confidence, allowing them to contribute and to participate in society.

Learning about how friendships are formed and that likes, dislikes, special qualities and needs can influence relationships.

Susan Peter was redeployed to replace Ashley in the Little Tikes team and has settled in well.

We also had our second parents evening.

### **Transitions**

Our school leavers enjoyed their visits to their receiving primary schools and we have had some of the teachers visit us within the nursery, enabling staff the opportunity to pass on important information.

The children have enjoyed learning about their new schools and meeting their teachers.

We created a classroom setting, providing school uniforms, desks, writing materials and lots of resources to help develop their skills, confidence, play and learning, as they head to school. The children have enjoyed exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording experiences and feelings, ideas, and information.

The school leavers also took part in this year's transition project "The everywhere bear."

### **Leavers Trip**

The school leavers enjoyed their trip to the Sea-life Centre which took place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 23. Great fun was had by all.

### **King's Coronation 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

The nursery closed and we all enjoyed a lovely day in sun. The children enjoyed taking part in a coronation party on the Friday. There were lots of flags and bunting and activities to take part in.

### **Graduation**

We had our graduation for our school leavers on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June. This was a lovely evening of entertainment and presentation of certificates and awards.

### **Sports Day**

We had our Sports Day on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023  
Well done to all our competitors.

### **Reminders**

The nursery will close on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 1pm, and re-open on Monday 3 July for 48 weeks children and Little Tikes.

The Nursery closes for **ALL** children from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023 to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The nursery will re-open Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 for 48-week provision children and Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August for 38-week children.

### **Staff Achievements and Nursery Developments and Improvements**

Staff achieved a few milestones of their own during the past year:  
Shirley turned 60 in October, Joanna 40 in November, Lorraine 60, and Hazel 40, both in May followed by Sheila turning 60 in June '23.

Staff enjoyed joining in on the birthday celebrations.

Lauren left in the middle of June to start her maternity leave as we all wait eagerly for the arrival of their third beautiful girl. We wish Lauren and Liam all the very best.

Ciorstaidh Dornan joined our lunch time staff team in October 2022

Stephanie Siegerson joined our lunch time staff team in November 2022.

Tom Edgar joined our bank staff April 2023.

Ciorstaidh achieved her level 7 qualification in Social Care in a remarkable 5 months - a huge achievement and well done to Ciorstaidh. Jackie also achieved her level 7 in Social Care - well done Jackie. Both girls will graduate in June 23.

We are delighted to welcome Emma McKeown back to our Little Tikes team after a year on maternity. Emma will come back part-time working two days Wednesday and Thursday.

Her first day was Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### **Nursery Developments and Improvements**

Our Gardens are in the process of being completely renewed (as a result of our recent inspection)

Our gardens have been designed by specialised landscape architects and the work is being carried out by John Brown Strone Ltd.

We are delighted with the progress so far and can't wait for their completion. Unfortunately, this date will be delayed due to the new roof that has been agreed for the school and nursery.

The garden work will need to stop to allow for the scaffolding to be put in place as we do not want the new garden to be damaged by scaffolding.

The roof should take a month to complete starting at the beginning of July.

Once our stage of the roof is completed Brown's will come back on site to finish the garden.

We are hoping for the handover on 14<sup>th</sup> August just before our new term starts.

Our inside environment has also benefitted from new blinds in the main playroom.

We have also received a couple of grants from Argyll and Bute Council to improve the environment, and we have purchased small tents and cozy baskets to create quiet zones and areas where children can take themselves away to self-regulate or calm down.

There have also been new rugs and cushions bought to add softness and comfort to our areas.

The addition of fairy lights has helped create a calm atmosphere as we no longer need to have full ceiling lights on, all the time. This has certainly help reduce noise levels and has created a sense of calm.

Our Honey Pot room where we serve lunches and snacks boasts new floor and wall units, which children can access easily for helping at lunch time.

We also received an outdoor grant which we used to help purchase new waterproofs, high vis vests, hats, and gloves as well as some new staff outdoor clothing which was required.

### **Staff Training /Development**

Staff have been very busy taking part in various virtual training courses as well as some face-to-face training throughout the year, as well as In-service days.

They have accessed training in First Aid, Behaviour training/ Self-Regulation, Trauma, Nurture training, UNCR rights of the child, curriculum cafes, Out in the Open outdoor training, Enabling Environments, Bookbug training and many more. We are very excited to see this training in action and look forward to the benefits and positive impact on children's learning.

### **1140 Hours**

We will continue to offer 1140 hours

Clyde Cottage Nursery Voluntary Sector 1140 funded hours:

- 23.75 hours per week over 48 weeks
- 4 hours and 45 minutes per session
- Morning sessions 8:30am to 1:15pm
- Afternoon sessions 12:45 to 5:30
- Various models of full day provision.
- Opening hours will be from 8:30am to 5:30
- 30 hours per week over 38 weeks 8:45-2:45

### **Improvements and Future plans**

During the summer months we will be looking at the nursery layout in all our playrooms and will be looking at ways to improve how they are set out, how children access and engage with spaces and resources.

We will be looking at planning and recording children's progress and how we share this information with you.

We will be reviewing and updating our learning journals/personal learning plans (currently Seesaw)

We have been informed that our lunches will now come from St. Mun's school from August and not the hostel as they do currently.

We don't have much more information than this at the moment as we are waiting for a meeting to take place.

Please see our quality improvement plan summary for our priorities for session 2023/2024

## **Staff**

Staff will continue to update their training and knowledge ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge to prepare children for life in the 21st century and that we have a learning environment for lifelong learning and an establishment that strives towards excellence.

Staff will be guided by, and supported by 'Building the Ambition' (National Practice Guidance on ELCC) and the latest guidance issued by Scottish Government "Realising the Ambition, Being Me" and 'Our Children Their Future' (the education vision strategy) to ensure that children at Clyde Cottage experience a holistic and seamless learning journey.

## **Thank you**

I would like to thank all committee members for their continued support, time and hard work.

Thanks to Rona MC Gillivray, our chairperson, who will finally resign tonight after doing an additional year to help us through this difficult and challenging time of change. It really has been much appreciated especially by me and I will miss you... Thank you once again Rona... It doesn't quite seem enough to convey the gratitude that has been felt.

And a huge thank you to all staff - catering, clerical and all the staff on the floor, for their continued support, enthusiasm, dedication, hard work and commitment, you are Clyde Cottage!

Thank you for putting on your hiking boots and rucksacks.

Thank you and here's to the climb and another fun filled, exciting and challenging year ahead.