

Auchinairn's Journey 2024-25

Our Path to the Stars

Celebrating Growth, Wonder and Shining Futures



Context of the Centre

Auchinairn Early Years Centre (EYC) is a local authority childcare facility located within Auchinairn Community Centre. Our purpose-built, modern centre is dedicated to providing high-quality care and education for children in the community. We have established effective partnerships with various community organisations, local businesses, and charities to support children and families in our care. We are registered with the Care Inspectorate, our EYC can accommodate up to 111 children, including 15 2-3-year-olds, 80 3-5-year-olds, and an additional 16 places for 2-5-year-olds in our outdoor play space. Children attend our provision for 50 weeks a year, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, with flexible attendance patterns available. Most of our learners come from areas of low deprivation, as indicated by data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Our dedicated staff includes a Head of Centre (HoC), a Depute Head of Centre (DHoC), Senior Early Years Workers (SEYW), Nursery teachers, Early Years Workers (EYW), Early Years Support Workers (EYSW), and a lunchtime housekeeper. Administration support is provided by our team of Admin Assistants. All our Early Years staff are highly qualified, ranging from HNC/SVQ3 to degree level, and are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. Additionally, all staff members have undergone enhanced Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) disclosure checks to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

Our EYC boasts vibrant and inviting play spaces that provide open access to a spacious garden. We strive to create a safe and secure environment where children are encouraged to build their confidence, self-esteem, and emotional resilience. In addition to our indoor facilities, children have the opportunity to utilise community centre rooms and halls for educational activities, sports events, and performances.

At Auchinairn EYC, our goal is to both support and challenge children as they progress through their developmental stages by offering an inclusive setting. Recognising the various obstacles to learning, we are dedicated to implementing tailored support, and well-being programmes to address the individual needs of each child.

Our Standards and Quality report has been written in collaboration with children, staff, and parents/carers. This report highlights the performance, accomplishments, and milestones of our EYC during the 2024/25 session, while also outlining our objectives for the upcoming year.

During the period from March 2024-May 2025, the EYC was under the leadership of an acting Head of Centre and Deputy Head of Centre

Our Vision

We aim to provide a safe, secure, nurturing, inclusive, fun learning environment in which children become capable, confident, resilient, and responsible individuals.

Our Values

Family friendly, safe, secure, and welcoming environment, in and outdoors.

Approachable, responsive, differentiated, open ended and challenging learning opportunities.

Motivated, highly skilled, and supportive staff. Inclusive Early Years Centre that treats all children and their families equally and with respect.

Inclusive Early Years Centre that treats all children and their families equally and with respect.

Listening and reflecting and continuously improving on our previous best.

Your nursery, your community, your positivity.

In addition to our **FAMILY** values, we aspire to improve the developmental and educational opportunities of children and families by creating a flexible, needs led EYC, accessible to all, and adopting a multi- agency approach in the community. Strong partnerships exist with several multi-agencies and our Educational Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapist, this approach supports individuals on a regular basis. We believe strong, supportive, and nurturing relationships are key to our EYC community thriving together. Relationships at all levels are based on our key values of kindness, honesty, respect, and fairness. At Auchinairn EYC we ensure that the children's wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. Staff have developed a strong nurturing approach and are committed to embedding nurturing principles into their practice.

Session 2024–25 has been a year of growth and progress for Auchinairn Early Years Centre, with the nursery going from strength to strength. Despite some significant challenges, including changes in the senior leadership team and moments of sadness, the team has shown remarkable resilience and commitment.

Strong teamwork and collaboration have been central to this year's success. Effective partnerships with parents, support from the local community, East Dunbartonshire Early Years colleagues, and the unwavering dedication of Team Auchinairn have all contributed positively to the nursery's development. The ethos of positivity, determination, and a solution-focused approach from staff has led to a range of meaningful improvements benefiting children and families.

Staff wellbeing, alongside the wellbeing of the children, has remained a clear priority throughout the year. These values have been at the heart of the centre's Improvement Plan. Almost all staff reported a clear understanding of their individual contributions and recognised the positive impact of the changes made within the centre. Furthermore, staff expressed that the vision, values, and aims of Auchinairn EYC align closely with their personal beliefs, fostering a unified and collaborative team culture.

Progress in Centre Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities

Centre priority 1: Continue to embed UNCRC: Gaining Bronze Accreditation

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework Qis

1.1 Nurturing care and support
1.4 Family engagement

NIF Priority

- Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;

NIF Driver

- School and ELC improvement
- Parent/carer engagement and family learning

HGIOELC QIs

QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion
QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child protection

Progress and impact:

Rights Respecting Bronze Award

During the 2024–2025 session, Auchinairn Early Years Centre (EYC) continued to prioritise a child-centred approach to learning, through positive relationships, respect, and a nurturing family ethos. A key focus this session was our ongoing journey towards embedding children's rights across all areas of practice.

Our dedicated Little Chatters Matter children's rights committee, made up of both staff and children, met regularly to take part in training, share ideas, and lead the development of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles as part of our pursuit of the Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award.

Almost all staff consistently demonstrated their commitment to upholding and promoting children's rights, ensuring that children were regularly given opportunities to influence their learning and the nursery environment. This shared ethos has led to a more stimulating and inclusive learning space, rich floor book planning that highlights children's ideas, thoughts, and voices, and children demonstrating increased confidence, independence, and ownership in their play.

Feedback from our Rights Respecting Nursery questionnaire showed that nearly all participating children feel safe, respected, and heard at nursery.

They expressed that:

- "Everyone is kind"
- "We are treated with respect"
- "We can make choices and help make decisions"
- "Nursery is fun and I like coming"

The committee introduced several innovative initiatives this session, including:

- SIMOA the Purple Elephant, now a key figure in our nursery friendship code and play spaces. SIMOA helps children understand the importance of safety and has been used as a relatable tool to support risk assessment discussions. As a result, most children can now confidently identify hazards in their environment, ask for help when needed, describe how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Visual Safety Cues, including yellow and black boxes placed near exit points, have helped reinforce the importance of only leaving with a known adult, improving children's situational and safety awareness.
- Ender Bear, a character introduced to support risk assessment during local trips and excursions, has helped children develop responsibility and independence while exploring the wider community.

The commitment and teamwork of staff and children has resulted in EYC proudly achieving Bronze Rights Respecting Nursery accreditation this session. These efforts have created a more empowering, respectful, and secure environment for all.

Looking ahead to session 2025–2026, we are excited to build on this by embedding children's rights further into everyday practice through working collectively towards achieving the Silver Award and continue to celebrate and promote children's voices as central to all we do. The success of our journey so far reflects the strength of our ethos and the shared belief that children's rights are not only respected but lived every day at Auchinairn EYC.

Children's Rights Home Learning Bears

In May 2025, Auchinairn Early Years Centre proudly launched the Children's Rights Home Learning Bears initiative as part of our continued commitment to promoting children's rights and embedding the values behind our Bronze Rights Respecting Nursery Award.

This initiative was introduced to support children in developing a deeper understanding of their rights and the Wellbeing Buddies, in a meaningful and relatable way that connects learning between nursery and home.

To mark the beginning of this project, the Little Chatters Matter group participated in an exciting visit to the Bear Factory, where they selected and created special bears for each key group. The naming of each group's bear provided a sense of belonging and ownership, an awareness of article 7, a right to an identity. The bears have since become a central part of both in-centre and home-based learning experiences.

Each bear now visits children's homes on a rotating basis, accompanied by activities tailored to the developmental needs and interests of each child. These experiences encourage children to explore important rights-based themes such as:

- Friendships and kindness
- Caring for the environment
- Understanding their place within the community
- Feeling safe, respected, and valued

Children and families have embraced the bears with enthusiasm, sharing stories, photos, and reflections upon return. These shared experiences have strengthened home–nursery connections, encouraged family involvement in rights-based learning and boosted children's confidence and understanding of their rights in everyday contexts.

The Home Learning Bears have proven to be a powerful and engaging tool for extending learning beyond the nursery walls and deepening children's awareness of their rights in a way that is fun, accessible, and memorable. We are excited to see how this initiative continues to evolve and contribute positively to our children's rights journey as we work towards our Silver Award accreditation.

Article 3 – children have the right to be with adults who do what is best for them

“Adults should do what is best for me.”

At Auchinairn Early Years Centre, staff consistently embrace a child-centred approach promoting strong relationships, nurture, and wellbeing. This ethos is embedded in daily practice and is supported by our Wellbeing Buddies, helping children to understand their rights in a way that is accessible and meaningful.

Children are supported to build positive relationships and mutual respect through the consistent use of our Friendship Code, which provides a shared and familiar language used by all keyworkers. This consistency has helped reinforce clear expectations and contributed to a safe, supportive, and emotionally secure environment.

As a result, almost all children demonstrate positive behaviours, showing kindness, respect, and empathy toward others. Children who require additional support receive it through nurturing strategies that promote emotional regulation and resilience. The environment reflects a culture where every child's best interests are at the heart of all decision-making and daily interactions. This ongoing commitment to nurturing relationships and children's rights ensures that all children feel valued, heard, and safe, highlighting the success of our inclusive and rights-respecting approach.

ECO progress

This session, with a focus on children's rights and environmental responsibility, saw children further embed ECO principles into their everyday learning. A key highlight was hosting an ECO Climate Picnic, where children proudly showcased their environmental projects and shared their learning experiences with their families.

With strong family support, the children enhanced their garden space by planting flowers and greenery that promote biodiversity. This sparked curiosity about pollinators such as bumblebees and butterflies. A growing interest in bird life also emerged, with children taking responsibility for refilling bird feeders and observing an increased variety of bird species visiting the garden. One particularly engaging project involved learning about the butterfly life cycle. With great enthusiasm from children, staff, and parents, children observed live caterpillars spin cocoons and eventually transform into butterflies. Families joined in a special celebration as the butterflies were released, enriching children's understanding of life cycles and the wonders of nature. Throughout our Eco-Schools journey, both staff and children have developed greater knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and the importance of sustainability. For example, we established a recycling centre, empowering families to take more responsibility for reducing waste at home.

Being part of Eco-Schools has also strengthened our nursery's role within the wider community. We have successfully built partnerships with local businesses and community groups, further extending our impact.

Children, families, and staff have all shown genuine enthusiasm for adopting more eco-friendly practices. By working together and making small, meaningful changes, we are collectively contributing to a healthier planet.

This hands-on, community-focused approach has deepened children's connection to nature, nurtured a sense of environmental stewardship, and reinforced the importance of sustainable living.

Family Partnership

Throughout the 2024–2025 session, Auchinairn Early Years Centre has made significant strides in strengthening partnerships with families, recognising them as key contributors to children's wellbeing and learning. We have taken proactive steps to instil open communication, inclusive engagement, and meaningful collaboration with parents and carers.

We restructured our pick-up procedures, allowing parents full access to the centre. This change has encouraged informal dialogue between families and staff, enabled parents to observe their child's learning environment and supports stronger relationships and information sharing.

Enhanced communication systems now ensure important updates, such as lunch menus, care routines, and incidents are shared consistently during handovers or via email, contributing to increased transparency and trust.

We introduced termly phone calls with families, offering a dedicated opportunity and time to discuss children's interests and friendships, routines, development, and progress, concerns, achievements, and next steps. These conversations have proven valuable in helping children settle more confidently and have given parents greater reassurance about their child's happiness and progress at nursery.

This session we offered a variety programme of Stay and Play sessions and family events, including:

- Book Bug sessions
- Dough Disco
- Nursery Leaver Reunion
- Triple P parenting programme
- Eco Climate Picnic
- Sports Day and concerts
- Library walks and Family Discos

Almost all families have participated in at least one event, with many programmes involving grandparents, siblings, and wider family members, strengthening the sense of community.

- "The stay and play was excellent, great to see what the children get up to and the different types of learning that is available."
- "Sports day was well organised and fun. There was a good turn out of family members. There was a good mixture of various sports games."
- "I have had a lot of support and advice for my son. Nursery staff have created different strategies to help him regulate both in nursery and at home. The staff contacted educational psychologist on our behalf which I really appreciate. The nursery is warm and inviting. The staff are always happy to listen to any concerns I may have and go above and beyond for all the families of the nursery. Thanks guys."

Parents have also contributed as volunteers, sharing their skills and knowledge, for example, healthcare professionals leading discussions and activities with children. This has enriched our curriculum and given children insight into the wider world.

In the upcoming session, we aim to extend these strong partnerships by:

- Strengthening links with the local community, including care homes and nurseries both locally and overseas
- Continuing to create welcoming spaces for families to feel involved and valued in all aspects of centre life

Our commitment to family engagement has led to a more inclusive, supportive, and collaborative learning environment, where children thrive through the strong and trusting relationships between home and nursery.

2-3 play space rolling lunches

In March 2025, we introduced rolling lunches in the 2–3 room as part of our commitment to develop independence, autonomy, and child-led routines. This approach allows children to decide when to eat, what to choose from the available options, and who to sit with, all within a calm and supportive environment.

Since implementing rolling lunches, we have observed several positive impacts:

- Increased confidence and independence as children make choices about their meals and manage elements of their routine themselves
- Strengthened self-help skills, including serving food, cleaning up, and transitioning between activities
- Enhanced social development, with children sitting in smaller, changing groups, leading to more natural and meaningful peer interactions
- A calmer, more relaxed mealtime atmosphere, which supports emotional wellbeing and helps children better recognise their own hunger cues.

This flexible mealtime model aligns closely with our nurturing and responsive ethos, empowering children to take an active role in their daily routines and supporting their development in a respectful and developmentally appropriate way.

Overall, rolling lunches have proven to be a valuable step in promoting independence, choice, and social connection, laying strong foundations for lifelong self-regulation and confidence in our youngest learners.

Nurture Space

Nurture Space: The development of our nurture provision has been a three-year journey of dedication, reflection, and teamwork. Originally underused, the nurture room has evolved into a vital support space, now fully embedded in our EYC approach. In response to increasing needs post-COVID, a staff-led working group transformed the underutilised parents' room into a purpose-built nurture space. The space offers early intervention, emotional regulation, and attachment-based support, away from the busy playroom. Access is inclusive, with identified children supported via observations, TAC plans, and parental input. A new outdoor nurture space launched in August 2024 adds further value through sensory-rich, nature-based experiences. Both spaces are planned, resourced, and staffed intentionally, with a 1:3 ratio, ensuring consistency and responsiveness. Activities include sensory play, trampolining, gardening, messy play, and more, tailored to meet children's individual needs. The whole team is committed to nurture principles, ensuring the space remains open and impactful—even during challenging times. Children benefit from improved wellbeing, self-regulation, and engagement, with nurture now a core element of our inclusive practice.

- "The nurture room is amazing. It has made what could have been extremely difficult years in mainstream much smoother for my family. It offers my son a safe space where he can self-regulate." – parent voice
- "My child's high level of needs are being met and supported at Auchinairn EYC, more than I ever expected. The nurture room have given staff the space and the resources to fulfil Getting it Right for Every Child." – parent voice
- "The nurture room is awesome. I like to draw in there." "The room makes me feel happy." "I'm happy playing in the den." – Children's voice
- "Our nurture room is a vital resource, many children use this room to support with transition as it is a small, calm environment especially as our playroom is large and busy." – staff voice
- "It allows staff and children to spend quality time together. Many of our children with additional support have flourished and benefited from this space." – staff voice

Tranquil Twilight

To enhance the end of day experience, the EYC introduced Tranquil Twilight, a calm wellbeing-focused routine recognising the change in staff and pace of the day after 4pm. This included embedding Mindful Mondays and Wellbeing Wednesdays, with activities such as yoga, baking, storytelling and calming games. Children benefit from exploring the garden and nurture spaces, while the opportunity to mix across both playrooms encouraging new relations and sibling connections. These quieter, reflective sessions offer children meaningful play experiences not always accessible during the busier parts of the day. They also support emotional regulation and provide a comforting transition to home. This approach has created a peaceful, purposeful close to the nursery day. Our Tranquil Twilight program has been working well, particularly during the winter months, with strong continuity and high-quality care. However, through ongoing observations, we aim to further develop the approach to encourage more staff to take initiative and ownership during the summer months, as the routine can sometimes become more relaxed during this period creating uncertainty and confusion.

Transitions across the EYC

This session, the 2–3 playroom has embraced a responsive and child-led approach to transitions across the nursery by introducing shared access to the wider 2–5 play environment at key points in the day (10:00am and 2:30pm). This strategy enables children to make meaningful choices about where and with whom they play, promoting autonomy, confidence, and social connection—core principles within *Realising the Ambition*.

By opening the playroom doors, children are supported to explore new environments at their own pace, building independence while maintaining emotional security. The use of visitor badges for children entering the 2–3 space helps preserve a calm, safe base for our younger or less confident learners, ensuring transitions remain respectful of individual needs and developmental stages. We have observed an increase in peer support and nurturing behaviour, with older children acting as role models, guiding routines and facilitating play for younger peers. Many of our 2-year-olds are now confidently engaging with the wider nursery, demonstrating growing self-assurance and secure attachments.

Staff collaboration, supported by robust communication tools such as walkie-talkies, has further strengthened team cohesion and ensured a clear understanding of each child's movements and needs across the setting. This flexible, inclusive approach also recognises the importance of consistent routines. Elements such as mealtimes, rest periods, and together time remain within smaller, stable groups to support emotional safety and nurture key relationships, particularly vital for our youngest children. This balance between stability and exploration is central to our pedagogy and supports the development of secure, confident learners.

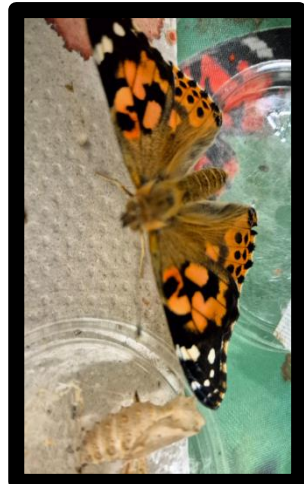
As a next step, the nursery will introduce shared mealtimes to enhance free-flow experiences further. Children from both playrooms will be given the opportunity to eat lunch in the space of their choosing. This development continues to uphold children's rights to have a voice and lead their own learning, while developing cross-age interactions and valuable opportunities for peer role-modelling. Through shared mealtimes we hope to deepen relationships, strengthen social skills, and further embed the ethos of inclusion across the nursery.

Ultimately, this approach reflects our ongoing commitment to a nurturing, child-centred environment that empowers children, supports emotional wellbeing, and strengthens community across the setting. Through thoughtful, gradual transitions and a strong relational pedagogy, we are building a connected and responsive learning environment where every child can thrive.

Next Steps:

A team approach working towards achieving Silver Children's Rights accreditation – This will involve deepening our community links with local nurseries and care homes and foster partnerships with a nursery across the seas.

Centre priority 1: Continue to embed UNCRC: Gaining Bronze Accreditation



Centre priority 2: Inclusion: Health and Wellbeing/Literacy Rich Environment approaches

NIF Priority

- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
Choose an item.

NIF Driver School and ELC improvement
Parent/carer engagement
and family learning

HGIOELC QIs

- QI 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

- 2.1 Quality of the setting for play and learning
- 1.3 play and learning

Progress and impact:

Up Up and Away toolkit

The *Up, Up and Away* toolkit was introduced to staff during the August in-service day. This provided an overview of the principles and aims of the document, ensuring that all staff became familiar with its contents and potential impact on practice.

Following this initial introduction, a small working party of staff took the lead in driving the implementation of the toolkit. Their focus was on supporting and developing the next steps for children requiring additional support — particularly those with Additional Support Needs (ASN), children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and those experiencing socio-economic challenges who were not yet meeting key curriculum milestones.

The toolkit is proving to be a valuable resource in identifying and addressing individual learning needs. The wellbeing tool has been effective for children whose Ferre Laevers observations indicated involvement and wellbeing scores 3 or below. For these children, the toolkit offered a structured approach to planning and delivering targeted interventions, ensuring that children received the appropriate support to enhance their learning experiences and overall wellbeing.

Overall, the *Up, Up and Away* toolkit has begun to embed itself as a useful framework within the setting, enabling more responsive and tailored support for children at risk of not making developmental milestones.

Nurture room staff have reconstructed their planning to align closely with the principles and structure of the toolkit. They have embedded its developmental headings — including Cuddlers & Babblers, Social Butterflies, Movers & Shakers and Young Explorers — into their daily planning and observation frameworks. This has supported staff to ensure there is a developmentally appropriate, child-centred approach that reflects the toolkit's ethos. A rich variety of provocations and experiences are now regularly offered, tailored to support the individual needs of each learner. The responsive and nurturing environment has enabled staff to better identify and meet the next steps for children with a range of needs.

The *Up, Up and Away* toolkit continues to provide a valuable framework for inclusive and targeted support, helping the staff to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and progress within a setting that is both engaging and developmentally informed.

Going forward, we aim to expand staff engagement with the *Up, Up and Away* toolkit through continued collaboration and reflection amongst staff to integrate its use into daily practice as a

whole team approach, especially as we have seen how this has influenced and shaped practice within the nurture room. Further training and support will be provided during session 2025/26 to ensure more staff become confident and familiar with the toolkit and benefits it has on children's development and wellbeing.

Staff Zone Working and Floor book Planning

During the 2023–2024 session, staff demonstrated increased confidence in their roles, responsibilities, and planning practices. To further strengthen teamwork and consistency, the August 2024 in-service day focused on how to enhance collaborative working across the setting. From these discussions, a shift was made from individual area working to zone-based working, creating three mini teams across the nursery.

- Creative Zone: Arts and crafts, messy play, woodwork, and junk modelling
- Social Zone: Snack area, book corner, construction, fine motor play, and table top games
- Discovery Zone: Outdoor play, undercover area, home corner, and table top games

Staff were invited to select their preferred zones, aligning with their interests and strengths. This choice-based approach led to the formation of naturally cohesive teams who shared a commitment to developing their areas and supporting children's learning. This approach made a positive impact as staff teams collaborated closely within their zones throughout the year, planning together, responding to children's interests, and implementing shared goals. Teams created consistency in routines, expectations, and language, which has had a positive impact on children's understanding and sense of security. Staff share ownership over zones resulting in increased motivation, pride, and creativity among staff.

Each zone team uses a floor book approach to capture and reflect the learning taking place. We have noticed that our floor books are serving as a visual, interactive planning tool that celebrates children's voices, ideas, and progress. They provide an accessible record for both staff and children to revisit and extend learning. They have reduced paperwork, allowing staff to be more present and engaged with children. Staff report that this approach not only supports child-led learning but also enhances their ability to plan responsively and reflect meaningfully as a team.

Since transitioning to termly zone working, the learning areas have become more clearly defined and thoughtfully resourced. Toys and materials are well maintained, and both children and staff demonstrate a strong sense of ownership and pride in their play environments. There is a shared understanding of where resources belong, promoting independence and responsibility. Going forward, we will continue to observe and monitor provocations and play experiences to ensure they are responsive to the needs of all learners and that there is no unnecessary duplication across different zones.

Overall, the introduction of zone-based working and floor book planning has had a profound impact on the children, staff and centre as a whole. Despite facing challenges this year, the EYC has seen:

- A noticeable increase in staff morale, teamwork, and professional pride
- Improved continuity and quality of learning experiences for children
- A flourishing culture of collaboration and shared responsibility

This model of zone working has proven to be a successful and sustainable approach, allowing the centre to thrive and meet the needs of children and families with resilience and creativity.

Going for Gold Sports Programme

During session 2024-25, the EYC has collaborated with the East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture (EDLC) team to implement the *Going for Gold* sports programme. Almost all children regularly participated in these sessions, held on Thursday afternoons, which featured a variety of engaging and developmentally appropriate physical learning games.

The programme not only promoted physical development but also supported children in building essential social skills such as turn-taking, teamwork, and cooperation. Additionally, it provided valuable professional development, enhancing staff's confidence and understanding of delivering structured sports activities for young children.

As a result of this work, the EYC successfully planned and hosted its first Sports Day. The event saw a strong turnout from families, creating a supportive and celebratory atmosphere. This milestone highlighted the positive impact of the programme on children's physical and social learning and strengthened community engagement within the nursery setting.

Through data gathering and observations during the *Going for Gold* sports sessions, the EYC identified that some children with ASN found it challenging to engage in the larger group activities. In response, staff developed a targeted ASN sports programme offering 1:2 support to create a more inclusive and supportive environment. These tailored sessions were well received, enabling children to participate more confidently and successfully in physical activities. Going forward, the EYC will continue to adapt and differentiate future *Going for Gold* sessions to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and engaging for all learners, supporting equity in physical development opportunities.

Development of the Nursery Side Garden

The EYC features a large garden and a smaller side garden. Historically, the side garden has been underutilised, serving primarily as a space for the "Play on Pedals" programme and, at times, being used for storage rather than as a dedicated play space for children.

In September 2024, a group of staff undertook a significant clear-out of the side garden. Following this, a small team collaborated to design and implement a plan to transform the space into a more engaging and purposeful outdoor learning environment.

The development team has made substantial progress in enhancing the side garden. With key areas now in place include:

- A loose parts and block play area, encouraging creativity and problem-solving
- A den, providing opportunities for imaginative and social play
- A music wall, supporting sensory and auditory exploration
- A cosy reading corner, promoting literacy and quiet reflection

In May 2025, an outdoor snack area was introduced, further enriching the space and supporting social and self-help skills. Development of this space is ongoing, with plans to add a stage for performance and expressive arts, a small world area to support imaginative and language-rich play and water and sand play zone to encourage exploration and scientific enquiry.

As a result of the changes, children are now regularly accessing the side garden, engaging with the new features and taking greater ownership of their play and learning. The enhanced environment supports a broad range of learning areas, encouraging child-led exploration, creativity, social interaction, and independence.

The transformation of the side garden is well underway and already making a positive impact on children's experiences at the EYC. Continued development will further strengthen its role as a valuable learning space within the setting.

Learning Initiatives

The EYC, is committed to prioritising children's learning and development through nurturing, child-led approaches. Central to our practice is the role of the keyworker, who regularly observes, assesses, and supports each child to ensure they are progressing with their individual developmental milestones. This approach enables staff to differentiate learning experiences, offering both challenge and support tailored to each child's needs.

This ethos has had a positive impact on children's engagement, confidence, and progress. It also provides a strong foundation for the introduction of targeted learning initiatives delivered in small groups. These initiatives aim to enrich children's learning experiences and support key aspects of their development.

Learning Initiatives offered this year include:

- **Play on Pedals:** Where children developed confidence, coordination, and balance through regular use of balance bikes. This initiative lays the groundwork for successfully learning to ride pedal bikes and promotes gross motor development and resilience.
- **Yoga:** A calming and inclusive experience that supported children's emotional regulation, body awareness, and mindfulness. Yoga sessions helped children learn techniques to manage their emotions, improve focus, and find moments of stillness during their busy day.
- **Dough Disco:** This has been a popular and effective initiative that supports the development of fine motor skills, crucial for early writing. Using music, games, and playdough. Children have engaged in fun routines that strengthen finger muscles and hand coordination. To extend learning beyond the setting, the EYC hosted a Stay and Play session for families to experience the benefits of dough play first-hand. This strengthened home-school partnerships and gave families practical ideas to support learning at home. As a festive gesture, every child received a playdough set and Dough Disco cards at Christmas, promoting continuity of learning in the home environment.
- **Story Stars:** This teacher-led initiative providing an engaging, story-inspired session that brings picture books to life through songs, drama games, and musical instruments, concluding each session with a calming sensory activity. The programme encourages a love of literacy while supporting early phonics development. Through interactive experiences, children are encouraged to explore vocabulary, play with language, and develop phonological awareness. A key focus is on identifying syllables using music and movement—such as marching, clapping, dancing, and instrument play—to reinforce how words are broken down. This multi-sensory approach helps embed essential early literacy skills in an enjoyable and memorable way. *Story Stars* allows children to immerse themselves in stories, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of books, rhymes, and songs. The sessions inspire curiosity, enjoyment, and responsiveness to language, building confidence and communication. The impact of *Story Stars* has been significant, nurturing a lifelong love of reading and improving familiarity with book structure, vocabulary, and the importance of sharing stories at home. Sessions are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners—supporting children who are developing their language skills and providing appropriate challenge for those ready to extend their vocabulary and comprehension.
- **Number Time:** At Auchinairn EYC, following training on *Maths Through Stories*, we introduced a maths initiative called Number Time, focused on using storytelling and interactive methods to introduce early numeracy concepts in a fun and meaningful way. Through the use of picture books and engaging activities, children explore counting, mathematical language, and number concepts within real-life contexts. This approach has improved children's understanding, making subtraction, measurement, and counting easier to grasp. Number Time has also nurtured a love for reading and developed rich math talk and reasoning, as stories naturally encourage discussion around

mathematical ideas. Sessions are thoughtfully differentiated, ensuring all learners are supported and appropriately challenged, which helps to deepen understanding and extend learning. By planning maths experiences that are both inclusive and stimulating, children have grown in confidence and motivation, viewing numeracy as an enjoyable and valuable part of their world. This strong foundation in early maths sets the stage for continued success in their learning journey.

These initiatives, alongside our continuous provision, have contributed to well-rounded early learning experiences. By embedding such focused opportunities within our nurturing environment, we are equipping children with skills that extend beyond the early years setting and into lifelong learning. Through these creative and intentional learning experiences, the EYC continues to support children to thrive and build essential early learning skills.

These initiatives have had a significant positive impact on children's development by:

- Enhancing fine motor skills, language, and numeracy
- Promoting confidence and engagement in small group learning
- Strengthening home–nursery connections through family involvement
- Supporting learning skills for school pathways in a playful and nurturing environment

As a setting, we are proud of the positive impact our current learning initiatives have had on children's overall development across a wide range of curriculum areas. We will continue to embed and build on these initiatives as they clearly support the development of key skills and align with our child-centred, play-based approach.

In the next session, we aim to expand our offer by introducing new initiatives that respond to current priorities and children's interests. These will include:

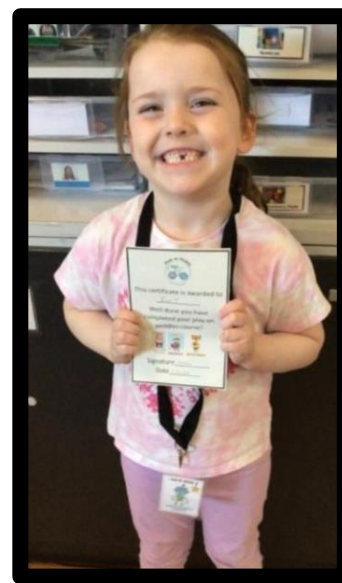
- Song and Rhyme Sessions delivered through the Book Bug programme to enhance early language development and parental engagement
- Get Up and Go physical exercise sessions to support physical health, coordination, and wellbeing
- Teddy Talks

By continuing to evaluate and adapt our practice, we remain committed to providing high-quality, responsive learning experiences that meet the needs of all children in our care.

Next Steps:

Develop and implement pre and post questionnaires for each learning initiative to enable the EYC to measure the impact of support and challenge sessions using qualitative data. This approach will support the identification of individual next steps for children, ensuring targeted and meaningful progression in their learning.

Centre priority 2: Inclusion: Health and Wellbeing/Literacy Rich Environment approaches



Centre priority 3: Quality Assurance (QA): Establishing a robust QA calendar and Holistic Tracker

NIF Priority

- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;

Choose an item.

NIF Driver

Curriculum and assessment
School and ELC
improvement

HGIOELC QIs

- QI 1.1 Self evaluation for self improvement
- QI 3.2 Ensuring children's progress

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

- 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led
- Choose an item.

Progress and impact:

Development of Vision, Values and Aims

This session brought a period of significant change and challenge for the EYC. Despite these difficulties, staff maintained a positive and upbeat spirit, consistently demonstrating resilience, teamwork, and a strong sense of unity. These qualities became particularly important during the transition to a new Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

As with any leadership changes, it was necessary to reflect on and realign the centre's vision, values, and aims. Throughout the year, this process was carried out collaboratively, with input gathered from staff, children, and families.

Through Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) in April, the SLT engaged staff in discussions about their personal and collective vision for the centre. A strong theme that emerged was the deep care, pride, and mutual respect among team members. Staff clearly value the ethos of nurture, support, and high-quality care they provide to children and families. Their passion for their work and commitment to continuous improvement were evident throughout the process.

Families also played a key role in shaping the revised vision, values, and aims. Through ongoing conversations, feedback forms, and questionnaires in May. Parents described the EYC as a caring, nurturing environment where children are supported to grow and learn to be confident individuals. Some families described the nursery as an extended family, highlighting the strength of relationships built within the community.

We asked about future priorities, both staff and families strongly supported the idea of embedding songs and rhymes more deeply into daily practice and hosting family workshops to build parental confidence. There was also a shared interest in reintroducing the forest nursery programme and continuing work towards Children's Rights Silver accreditation and achieving the second Eco-Schools Green Flag.

Through collaborative reflection and open dialogue, the centre has reaffirmed a shared vision and values that remain consistent despite structural changes. The core ethos of family, nurture,

and child-led learning continues to drive the work of the EYC. This process has not only strengthened the identity of the setting but also highlighted the strong partnership between staff, children, and families.

"I will say with no hesitation that this nursery (Auchinairn EYC) is the best around Bishopbriggs area, and I would recommend it as anyone's first choice. The team and all the staff is always dedicated to children and families and are always thinking of new ways of improving learning, children's wellbeing and parent partnership. Everybody at the nursery is approachable and they always listen to you if you have any concern or doubt. The amount of different activities families are invited to is impressive. Both my daughters have been in the nursery, and they only have good memories. We feel the Auchinairn team is family." – Parent comment

"I feel that Auchinairn Team always come together and support each other through difficult times. There is a real can-do spirit and nurturing ethos that makes me really proud to be part of the team." – Staff comment

Quality Assurance

Our ongoing commitment to quality assurance is evidenced through a comprehensive and reflective monitoring cycle led by the SLT. Through regular audits, staff observations, and collaborative team meetings, we have developed a deeper understanding of our practice, enabling more informed planning at both a setting-wide and individual child level.

With the EYC entering a new phase under fresh leadership, a key priority for the 2024–2025 session was to strengthen and embed high standards of quality assurance across the setting. To achieve this, the SLT introduced a robust annual quality assurance calendar, outlining all key procedures and improvement plan activities. This calendar provided a structured overview for all staff and ensured timely audits, such as:

- Policies and guidelines
 - Medication and incident/accident records
 - Care plans and personal passports
 - Tracking and assessment systems
 - SSSC annual declarations
 - Risk Assessments
- To name a few

This structured approach brought understanding and consistency to practice, helping the team stay on track and prioritise key responsibilities. It has also led to an increase in shared leadership and delegated tasks, which has boosted staff confidence and contributed to a strong, collaborative team ethos.

Targeted reviews, such as our focused evaluation of free-flow mealtimes, have not only confirmed the strength of staff practice and children's independence, but have also highlighted areas for further enhancement. Real-time staff observations across play spaces have reaffirmed the consistently high quality of care, responsiveness, and emotional support provided to our children.

The introduction of monthly incident and accident audits has allowed us to proactively identify patterns, implement preventative strategies, and ensure a safer environment.

The EYC participated in the local authority's progress and achievement transition audit which has enriched our practice with robust quantitative data. This has replaced the previous SDQ model and offers clear insights into children's developmental needs, aiding both transitions to school and the planning of responsive learning experiences.

Our progress and achievement transition data indicates that most children transitioning to school are achieving well in health and wellbeing outcomes, including forming positive relationships, sharing and turn-taking, and expressing their needs and feelings confidently. Almost all children are making strong progress in literacy and language development. Many can recognise their own names, understand the structure and layout of books, and identify key elements such as the author, title, and direction of text. Most children are also able to write their names independently. In numeracy, most children are developing key early skills, such as reciting, naming, and sequencing numbers from 0 to 10.

However, the data has highlighted a specific area for development in phonological awareness: less than half of the children going to school are consistently demonstrating the ability to hear rhyming words, suggest rhymes, and recognise initial sounds. In response, the EYC will implement an enhanced focus on rhyme to support children in this area. While initial strategies have been introduced, further embedding is required to ensure consistent impact across the setting. Through the pilot process, the SLT have identified the need for further support and development in moderation practices to strengthen consistency across learning, teaching, and assessment. Recent reflections have highlighted variations in how children are assessed and differences in expectations regarding developmental stages. This has led to inconsistencies in how red (emerging), amber (developing), and green (secure) judgements are applied. To address this, we recognise the importance of regular, structured moderation sessions where staff can come together to discuss observations, clarify assessment criteria, and develop a shared understanding of progression. This collaborative approach will help ensure that all children are assessed fairly and accurately, and that practitioners are confident in identifying and planning appropriate next steps. The introduction of pre and post programme questionnaires will strengthen our understanding of each child's development within targeted learning initiative. This approach will support the identification of appropriate next steps and help address any discrepancies in assessment, ensuring a more accurate and consistent picture of progress.

Investing in moderation will also support professional development, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and strengthen our ability to respond effectively to each child's individual needs. By working together, we can build a more consistent, reflective, and cohesive approach to assessment that benefits all children across the setting.

In addition to embedding quality assurance, we have also strengthened our individual care plans by embedding a stronger parental voice, prioritising critical health information such as allergies, and refining the documents to function as a key tool for keyworkers. We have introduced a new section within our care plans that invites parents to indicate where they feel their child currently sits on the SHANARRI wellbeing web. This collaborative approach supports the identification of meaningful next steps and strengthens the partnership between staff and families in supporting each child's individual learning and development. The recent update to our care plans includes the implementation of 'Play Space Passports.' These documents provide key information about each child, enabling all staff, including supply staff, to understand each child as an individual learner. The passports outline strategies that support each child's wellbeing and development, ensuring a consistent and informed approach across the team. This is particularly valuable for staff who may not yet have built strong relationships with the children, allowing them to respond confidently and appropriately to individual needs.

Early feedback indicates that these updates are developing more targeted and meaningful support for each child, with ongoing monitoring in place to evaluate their sustained impact.

Collectively, these quality assurance measures have enhanced our ability to celebrate successes, address areas for development, and continue striving for excellence in early years provision.

In the early part of the session, the EYC SLT focused on evidence gathering aligned with both Care Inspectorate and HMIE frameworks. With the introduction of the new shared

inspection framework, the SLT shifted their focus in April to familiarising themselves with this updated tool.

Although implementation is ongoing, early progress is promising. The SLT is committed to fully embedding this framework and using it as a tool for self-reflection, improvement, and celebration of success. Several staff members took part in a local authority training event in May, which included an overview of the new framework. Staff feedback was positive, noting the usefulness of being informed about forthcoming changes to inspection processes. To continue building on this, the SLT plans to deliver centre-wide training on the shared inspection framework during the next in-service day in session 2025–2026. This will ensure that all staff are confident and informed, and that the centre continues to move forward with a strong, united approach to quality assurance and self-evaluation. This focus on quality assurance has resulted in improving structure, consistency, and accountability, increased staff ownership, confidence, and leadership and enhanced readiness for inspection and continuous improvement. Our strong focus on quality assurance has led the EYC to know themselves well and identify ways forward to ensure positive well-considered outcomes can be achieved for children and families.

Holistic Tracker

During this session, we continued to develop and implement our holistic tracker as a comprehensive tool to monitor children's development across the key curriculum areas: Health and Wellbeing, Numeracy, and Literacy. This approach enables the EYC to build a well-rounded and accurate picture of each individual child's progress.

The aim of tracker was to complete collaboratively as a whole team. SLT members met with keyworkers to discuss each child and to gather and reflect on evidence of their learning. These discussions, along with observations, helped to inform a shared understanding of children's developmental journeys.

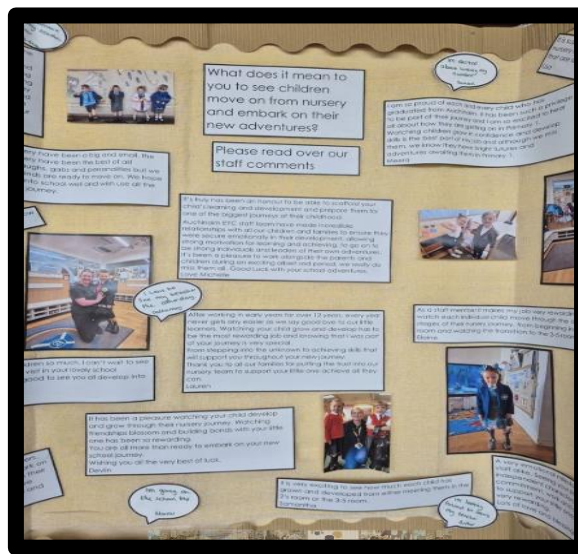
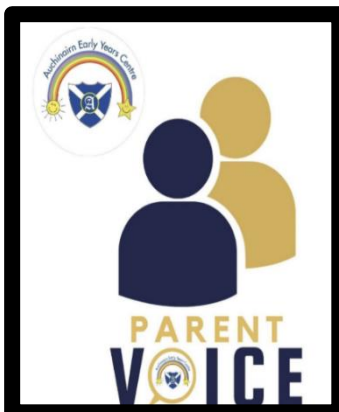
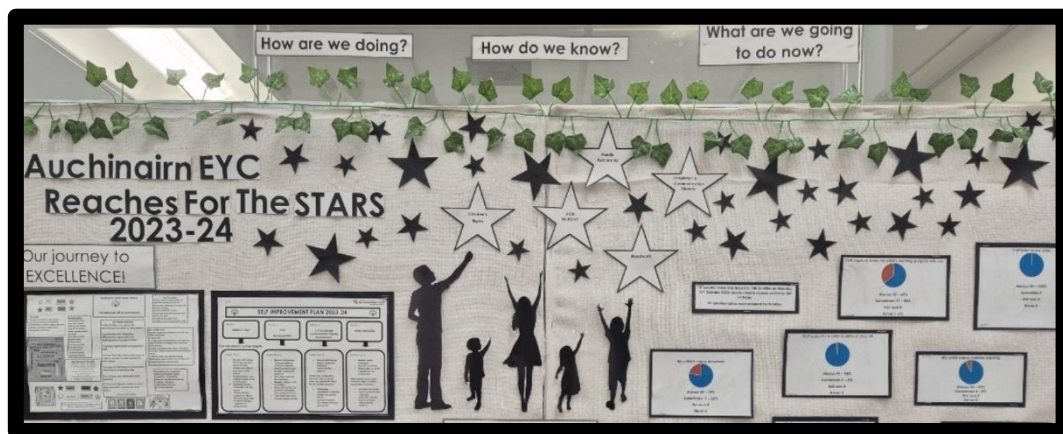
However, we recognise that there are still areas for improvement. In particular, challenges remain in ensuring regular and timely collaboration with all relevant staff, due to availability and scheduling conflicts. To address this, we are committed to refining our processes moving forward. Our priority will be to establish a more consistent and inclusive approach, ensuring that the tracker is completed through full collaboration and consultation with all team members.

By strengthening these practices, we aim to further enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of our holistic tracking and ensure it remains a meaningful and supportive tool for children's development.

Next Steps:

- Enhance feedback collection from children, families, and staff throughout the year by developing a bank of questionnaires which will highlight and support achievements and developments of the EYC. This will support ongoing evaluations and drive positive changes across the EYC.
- Promote a robust quality assurance system, encouraging all staff to consistently gather evidence to support self-evaluation, which will help to prepare effectively for Care Inspectorate and HMIE inspections.
- Establish a clear and consistent system for scheduled holistic tracker meeting, ensuring all key staff have opportunity to contribute.

Centre priority 3: Quality Assurance (QA): Establishing a robust QA calendar and Holistic Tracker



Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people; and
- Improvement in achievement, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy.

During session 2024–25, the nursery has made significant and meaningful progress across several key areas, contributing positively to outcomes for our children and families. A notable achievement has been our commitment to embedding children's rights, culminating in the successful attainment of the *Bronze Rights Respecting Nursery Award*. This has strengthened our alignment with the local authority's priority of placing human rights and the needs of every child at the heart of education. Our innovative use of *Wellbeing Buddies* has further enhanced children's understanding and ownership of wellbeing, leading to improved emotional literacy and resilience.

Our strong ethos of partnership with families continues to be a central driver in closing the attainment gap. Through collaborative initiatives and enhanced parental engagement, we have created enriching opportunities that develop a love of learning across the curriculum, particularly for our most disadvantaged children.

Child-led learning remains a core feature of our practice, with children actively shaping their play experiences—choosing how, where, and with whom they play. This approach ensures children's voices are heard, their choices respected, and their learning journeys empowered. We are confident that the skills and confidence nurtured through these experiences will support a positive and successful transition as they progress in their educational journey.

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

Quality indicator	Centre self-evaluation	Inspection/ Authority evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Very good	not applicable
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	not applicable
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	not applicable
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Very good	not applicable

Summary of Centre Improvement priorities for Session 2025/2026

- **1. Improvement Priority: Children's Rights, Learning for Sustainability & Community Connections** - In the upcoming session, we aim to further embed children's rights by ensuring their voices are meaningfully heard and reflected in all aspects of nursery life. Building on our success to date, we will work towards achieving the Silver Rights Respecting Nursery Award and securing our second Eco-Schools Green Flag. These goals reflect our deep commitment to nurturing responsible, informed, and empowered learners. Our focus will centre on Learning for Sustainability, enabling children to develop a deeper understanding of their local community, the wider world, and their role within it. Through child-led inquiry and experiences, we will support children to explore environmental, social,

and cultural topics in meaningful ways. We plan to strengthen partnerships with nurseries both locally and further afield, offering opportunities for children to connect with peers, share learning experiences, and understand different perspectives. In addition, we aim to build intergenerational relationships by establishing links with local care homes, developing empathy, connection, and mutual respect. By engaging more actively with our local environment, its history, people, and places, we will provide rich, real-world contexts for learning, enhancing children's sense of identity, belonging, and curiosity. These experiences will support improved learning outcomes, particularly in wellbeing, communication, and social awareness.

As part of our ongoing commitment to achieving the Silver Children's Rights Award and our second Eco-Schools Green Flag, we will enhance meaningful learning experiences that encourage STEM education across the curriculum. This focus will provide real-life, hands-on opportunities for children to explore and apply their learning, fostering key skills such as creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, project management, and teamwork. This approach will also support staff development, helping build confidence in delivering STEM learning and enabling us to work towards achieving the STEM Nation Award. By linking children's rights and sustainability with STEM, we aim to create a more connected, purposeful, and engaging educational experience for all learners.

- **2. Inclusion: Health & Wellbeing/Literacy Rich Environment approaches** – Session 2025-26, we aim to prioritise inclusive practice through the advanced implementation of the Up, Up and Away document to enhance inclusive approaches within our play spaces. This will continue to support staff to create environments that are nurturing, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of all learners. Continuing to develop a literacy-rich environment will support communication and language development for all children. Embedding accessible documentation, visual supports, and inclusive storytelling approaches, we will create spaces where children are immersed in language, empowered to express themselves, and supported to develop early literacy skills in a way that reflects their individual interests and abilities. This approach will strengthen our inclusive ethos and have a positive impact on children's engagement, wellbeing, and communication.

- **3. Improvement Priority: Data Collection – Measuring Impact and Driving Improvement –**

In the upcoming session, we will prioritise the effective collection and analysis of data to highlight progress, measure impact, and inform continuous improvement. Our aim is to enhance the quality and consistency of our data-gathering processes to ensure they meaningfully support planning, reflection, and outcomes for children and families. We will implement streamlined pre- and post-questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of learning initiatives and interventions. Quality assurance practices will be strengthened by embedding a cycle of regular feedback collection from children, families, and staff. This will include a combination of questionnaires, surveys, and meaningful conversations at key points throughout the year. By capturing a wide range of perspectives, we aim to build a clear and robust evidence base to demonstrate progress and stakeholder satisfaction. This will enable us to respond effectively to emerging needs and ensure that our improvement planning remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to our community.

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

Our nursery demonstrates a strong and growing capacity for continuous improvement. We are committed to sustaining our successes while embracing innovation through structured and reflective approaches. The use of PSDA (Plan, Study, Do, Act) cycles and 6-week trial periods allows us to effectively test, implement, and evaluate new initiatives in a measured and purposeful way.

As a team, we are open-minded, collaborative, and solution focused. Our culture encourages professional dialogue, reflective practice, and a shared commitment to improvement. Leadership is proactive and supportive, ensuring the whole staff team is equipped and empowered to deliver high-quality care and learning experiences for all children.

We have a clear vision, a strong sense of identity, and a collective understanding of our improvement journey. This clarity supports consistent progress and resilience as we respond to challenges and build on our strengths.