



Gartconner Early Years Centre  
Standards and Quality Report  
2023/2024

## Context of the Centre

Gartconner EYC is situated in a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Kirkintilloch. The setting has 99 children enrolled at present. With the capacity being 54 children in the 3-5-year-old room and 15 children in the 2-year-old room.

The establishment includes a catchment consisting of a mixture of private and social housing. The interest in the centre continues to grow with the increase of new-build housing within the area.

Our families and relevant stakeholders are actively involved within the centre, offering us continuous support. At Gartconner EYC, we pride ourselves with the positive engagement we have with parents and carers. We continue to have a robust home to nursery link and value our families' input with day-to-day involvement in the centre.

The practitioners, children and families work collaboratively to provide rich valuable learning experiences for all.

Within our centre, we thrive in the positive ethos of teamwork we have created, where all practitioners are sensitive to the individual needs of the children and their families. Each staff member has a leadership role that they continue to develop and attend relevant training to build on their skills to ensure the best outcomes for all.

Our vision, values, and aims are at the core of everything we do, with our nursery ethos being to promote a safe and nurturing environment, with a focus on wellbeing to support the growth and development of children and families. All staff work incredibly hard to promote this, which is evident with the grades we have received.

## Vision, Value and Aims

### Gartconner Early Learning & Childcare

#### Our Vision

*'Where curious minds flourish and grow'*

#### Our Values

We want everyone in the Gartconner community to be:

*'Safe; Healthy; Achieving; Nurtured; Active; Respected; Responsible; and Included.'*

#### Our Aims

We will work together with children and young people, parents and the community to promote and maintain positive partnerships to maintain:

- *Equity and equality for all as we value the rights of all children;*
- *Leadership at all levels;*
- *A safe, caring, happy, nurturing environment which enables everyone to aspire to do their best;*
- *A learning environment that promotes high quality experiences indoors/outdoors and in the local community;*
- *Children's' and families' voices and opinions are respected and valued;*
- *Quality outdoor experiences that provide children with a learning environment that allows creativity, thought provoking ideas, and risk taking activities;*
- *Provide support through transition periods and build resilience;*
- *Continuous improvement to our service through rigorous self-evaluation.*

As a team, we, the leadership team, staff, parents and children will support one another to ensure that we meet our nursery aims and the vision of the Scottish government to incorporate the principles of 'The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014', 'Pre –birth to Three National Guidance', 'Curriculum for Excellence', 'Health and Social Care Standards', 'GIRFEC', 'The Rights of the Child (UNCRC)', The Promise Scotland and 'Realising The Ambition' into our daily practice to give each child the best possible start in life, respecting their views and meeting their individual needs.

## Progress in Centre Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities

### Centre priority 1: Family Engagement – Froebelian principles (Unity and Connectedness/ Freedom with Guidance)

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

#### 1.4 Family engagement

Choose an item.

NIF Priority • Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing;  
• Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education;

NIF Driver Parent/carer involvement and engagement

Choose an item.

HGIOELC QIs

QI 2.5 Family Learning

QI 2.7 Partnerships

Progress and impact:

- At Gartconner EYC it is imperative to us that all children are confident and have the opportunity to make progress with all aspects of their learning. Throughout our centre we have created a natural nurturing, holistic environment that lends itself well for children to explore and develop their imagination. All staff ensure all areas of the nursery have provocations that are developed with the children through their interests, this ensures that all children are able to build and grow, experiencing an exceptional learning environment. Through supporting children with their learning and observing, the nursery teacher(s) continue to undertake detailed assessments and all staff observe, monitor and record children’s progress. Through studying detailed tracking systems, it is evident that all children are continuing to make progress with their learning. The leadership team ensures effective quality assurance is organised and regular playroom monitoring takes place as well as staff participating in critical friend evaluations. The leadership team follow monitoring procedures regularly, ensuring all staff are monitored and receive purposeful feedback.
- As a team we continuously strive to ensure our children and families are fully involved in the life of the service. We communicate continuously with families, for e.g., engaging through surveys, Microsoft Sway, Learning Journals etc, where we ensure they are included in any decisions or aspects of the service. We gather all feedback and act on this respectively, by creating “You said, We did” wall displays highlighting the feedback given to us and how we will support this, where possible. On average less than half of parents and carers communicate with us via surveys, expressing their views and we continue to use the parental feedback to improve the needs of the service, where possible. A recent survey sent to parents and carers requested their input on their knowledge of the documents United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and if they were aware that we use these documents to support children’s wellbeing. In turn 14% of families expressed that they were unfamiliar with the documents, therefore, the leadership team, nursery teacher and the UNCRC/GIRFEC champion organised an open evening where a PowerPoint was delivered to the parent/carers, detailing the purpose and use of the documents along with small workshop stations with information. Through receiving evaluations from the families all parents and carers that attended the open evening found the event very informative.
- The Child’s Voice remains a crucial aspect of our day to day running of the centre, all staff ensure that all children’s voices and opinions are respected and valued. Every area of the establishment has a floor book where evidence of the child’s voice and input is recorded through the learning experiences that take place. Out with the area floor books, other floor books have been developed which also incorporate the child’s voice, such as the Care Inspectorate, Safety Inspect Monitor Observe Act (SIMOA) the helpful elephant which supports the children with keeping safe both in

the inside and outside environment. SIMOA has also been used to create the Tidy Up Project, where the friendly elephant is used to encourage children to be responsible and develop their independence skills. SIMOA is also used for health and safety, accidents and incidents are audited regularly, this is then created into a child friendly social story. A UNCRC/Health and Social Care Standards floor books has been created where the child's voice and input are widely documented throughout, supporting the children to understand their rights. And lastly, we have a Makaton floor book that enables children to contribute with the weekly Makaton sign, expressing their opinions throughout. The majority of children are confident with ensuring their voice is heard and recorded in all floor books, ensuring that their opinion is valued and evident throughout the daily life of the centre.

- The children benefit from on-going initiatives that have been developed such as Forest kindergarten, where almost all children (rotated) participate in weekly adventures to the local Nature Park, this initiative has been particularly valuable for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) where they have been developing their independence and feel for nature. An Intergenerational project has also been developed where almost all children (rotated) visit a local care home to experience the day-to-day life in a very different centre. The children have built positive relationships with the residents, where they share learning experiences, such as craft making and participating in rhymes and singing. Termly evaluations are issued to gather feedback and identify improvements, if required.
- The family champion has completed Triple P training and is dedicated to attend all training events and support meetings to ensure it is embedded in practice. This is evident with a few families who have requested support with parenting strategies for e.g., disturbed sleeping patterns and poor eating habits. The family learning co-ordinator organise monthly stay and play and big chef, little chef sessions for all families to participate, with on average just less than half the parents and carers attend the sessions available. However, over the last year we noticed a dip in the intake of families attending, therefore we made the sessions more inclusive and held focused sessions such as cultural cooking experiences relating to different origins and countries around the world. The Senior Early Years Worker and the family learning co-ordinator also organise parent committee meetings, this ensures another method of gathering families' opinions which are then acted on, where possible. Evidence of the parent committee meetings have highlighted that a few parents attend regularly, and positive relationships have developed with parents/carers and their dedication and commitment to the meetings has supported the centre invaluabley.
- Detailed playroom observations identified that at times lunches were mechanical and somewhat adult led. Questionnaires and evaluations were issued highlighting that there needed to be increased children's choice, there was currently three lunch sittings, and the timing was dictated to children. A Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle was completed in consultation with staff. It was highlighted that children were not involved in the timing, or preparation of their lunch and snacks, as much as they have previously. Moving forward the end goal was introducing a café style, free flow lunch and snack experience, with a space that would promote freedom with guidance and develop independence. It was imperative to gather the voice of children, parent/carers and families at the planning stage. Benchmarking visits were arranged to ensure staff had a good understanding of best practice. Working closely with colleagues from another authority best practice was observed, current practice evaluated, and a plan put in place to drive forward improvements. The transition from three lunch sittings to a rolling lunch where children continuously self-served was implemented. An interim PDSA was completed, showing improvements. Children were growing in confidence when using the 'red and green' traffic light system to show when there was a space at a table to eat. Children are visibly more confident in serving themselves using utensils and scraping their plates. There is less wastage as children are eating when they were hungry rather than at a dictated time. It was agreed that calming music is put on daily to provide a more relaxing experience. The snack area is developed to allow for more independence, a staff member designated solely to that area for 6–8-week blocks. Children are encouraged to continuously prepare their own snacks, chopping fruit and veg. Over the last few months this has progressed further and now baking and cooking experiences are offered daily to the children, ensuring cultural diversity. Children are able to confidently follow visual instructions and measure out the correct ingredients to make bread etc. To involve the families and ensure 'Freedom with Guidance' are being continued at home, a focused Big Chef, Little Chef session was planned. Parents and carers who attended noted in their evaluations how beneficial it was to

be able to cook and bake with their child in a meaningful way and noted progress within the area and initiative. Post questionnaires were issued to staff, results showed that almost all of the participants felt that children were more confident and that there was progress within the area. Cooking and baking will continue to be the continuous core provision offered daily, the snack and lunch area promotes independence skills and provides a nurturing relaxing environment. Big Chef, Little Chef sessions run regularly and are more focused, for example, families from different cultural backgrounds have been invited into the centre and provide sessions around menus from their country of origin. Real tools and utensils are risk assessed and used by children daily.

**Next Steps:**

- Continue to provide focused stay and play sessions to ensure all children see themselves within the establishment.
- Continue to raise awareness of the benefits of having a healthy parents committee to ensure families input is valued and acted on.

**Centre priority 2: Numeracy**

NIF Priority particularly in Literacy and Numeracy.  
 • Improvement in attainment, Choose an item.  
 NIF Driver School and ELC leadership  
 Parent/carer involvement and engagement

HGIOELC QIs  
 QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment  
 QI 2.2 Curriculum

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

3.2 leadership of play and learning  
 1.3 play and learning

**Progress and impact:**

**Maths**

- In August 2023 all children identified as likely going to school, in August 2024, our learners took part in some play-based assessments. Based on these assessments it was identified that 40 % had mostly achieved Phase 1 from the EDC maths framework putting them at challenge level. This was higher than the national average. The core group, accounted for 48% of Gartconner’s preschool cohort and these children had achieved 40-50 % of phase 1 at the start of their preschool year. For the support group, this was a mixed picture with all support children being at emergent level, with a wide range of 10- 60 % achievement at this level. The support group in August 2023 accounted for 12% of children. This group received a mixture of targeted and universal support throughout the year as well as access to number sense boxes that had been created to support their number sense. By May 2024 all play based assessments were repeated. The challenge group increased to 45%, the core was 47% and the support group decreased to 8%. The challenge group had achieved the majority of phase 2, which is well ahead of anticipated attainment, as phase 2 is usually achieved towards the end of primary 1. Our core cohort had all achieved phase 1 and part of phase 2, about where they were expected to be. Support was more mixed but 50 to 100% of emergent was achieved indicating all children in this group had made progress. Five children who had moved into core from support made excellent progress as they had achieved most phase 1 by May 2024.
- The number sense boxes were created by the numeracy champions who received training in developing number sense using natural materials. They then shared expertise with staff at planning meetings and during in-service days. Throughout the year all staff took part in maths pedagogy CPD of some sort, some attended a series out online training sessions with Education Scotland, others came along to maths training focusing on developing early maths concepts CLPLs. Staff were then witnessed incorporating key strategies learned in the playroom through provocations and number talks, which aided in the achievement of children’s next steps in numeracy.

- A PDSA cycle was created by SMT in order to uplevel staff planning meetings to meet the changing needs of the centre. These now take place every 5 to 6 weeks and have allowed for a more cohesive vision with respect to numeracy and mathematics. We now use these meetings to frequently explore EDC's framework for development for Numeracy and Mathematical with staff sharing good practice with colleagues and carrying out peer assessment of planning.
- Learning journal monitoring has continued to be rigorous and a new template was implemented in March/April 2024 in order to triangulate planning with milestone progression and evidence recorded in floor books. With regards to the impact, this has helped us identify key strengths in maths provision and also helped us identify if any key workers were requiring additional support in supporting their key children with milestone development.
- A series of naturalistic numeracy provocation packs have been developed to support problem-based heuristic play both indoors and outdoors. In the outdoor area these provocation packs have included: wooden ten frames with naturalistic items to count e.g. pinecones, wooden number rhyme disks, counting and stacking blocks that are sized to support number awareness. Various measurement and capacity devices have also been resourced in the outdoor area including timers and measuring tapes. Since the packs have been introduced there have been an increase in numerical milestone achievements reported by outdoor staff via learning journals. There have also been multiple recordings of children demonstrating concepts to younger children by pointing to digits, demonstrating how to stack numbers/ match quantities etc.
- Fixed numeracy resources were purchased from Perry's Woodcraft and placed in the outdoor area to support continuous provision e.g. large number lines, dot patterns.
- Within the indoor environment we have expanded the numeracy and mathematic area. This was due to the fact that at the beginning of the year the area was often very popular with children but at times lacked space to include all the children who wanted to explore there. A numeracy provocation table was set up to support with this. This table is set up with resources/provocations that encourage problem-based learning in a real-life context e.g. based on interests in football the table was turned into a miniature football pitch. This enabled the children to not only play finger football and keep a tally of scores, but also to explore shape and pattern on the pitch.
- Shop activities as well as fairtrade and subitising activities remain popular in the playroom and have helped support number sense with most of the children.
- Ferre Laevers observations highlight the popularity of the maths area and spontaneous learning has been observed on a daily basis. We have approximately eight baskets which are replenished on a weekly basis with the recommended resources from EDCs Framework for Mathematical development for the early years and this supports with continuous provision.
- Child's spark planning continues to be successful in supporting numeracy development in a context our learners appear to enjoy. Through tracking and monitoring we have been able to ensure that the following activities/provocations have had a particular positive impact in helping children to achieve milestones towards next steps: incorporating measure and capacity into the sand area, playing What's the Time Mr Wolf? creating a shoe shop, and making numicon people.
- The key activities that highly support the outdoor environment have included: hopscotch, number rhymes, mud kitchen 'baking' and natural exploration for e.g. investigating properties of flowers, how many petals etc.
- Termly snap shots taken for learning journal maths pathways show good progress for almost all children with some children making excellent progress. The nursery teachers have uploaded all pathway break downs from EDC's framework, and we now have emergent, phase 1 and phase 2 pathways on learning journals which helps to support with differentiation of learning and supports staff with breaking down next steps.
- Family engagement in numeracy learning has been promoted through the sharing of weekly number rhymes on learning journals to families, focused stay and play sessions and home learning packs. Some additional home learning bags were devised for children at risk of under achieving. Play based assessment indicates that following home learning bags going home there was a moderate increase in attainment.
- Environmental checklists have continued to be paramount in supporting continuous provision and also in the development of number sense. These checklists have been carried out on a weekly basis for each area: the template themselves are updated if ever an area is adapted in any way for e.g. we created a woodwork zone recently. Having checklists displayed ensures areas are appropriately replenished with dot patterns, number lines etc, which has supported with heuristic learning. This is evidenced in the snack floor book where children are seen self-serving appropriate quantities using the displayed numbers/ dot patterns available.

- Several T4W writing stories have had a mathematic focus including; What the Lady bird Heard. Following this story children were inspired to create their own maps and the story also helped to develop directional language, as well as vocabulary related to size.

Next Steps:

- Replenish home link maths bags with new number stories that were donated to the centre in May 2024 through the 1,2,3 count with me scheme.
- Continue to incorporate elements of Linda Keith Outdoor Maths/Messy Maths pedagogy that uses nature to enhance mathematical learning
- Continue to uplevel use of EDCs framework across the setting, ensuring new staff members have access to appropriate training

**Centre priority 3: Learning for Sustainability**

<p>NIF Priority • Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people; Choose an item.</p> <p>NIF Driver School and ELC leadership Choose an item.</p>	<p>HGIOELC QIs</p> <p>QI 2.2 Curriculum</p> <p>QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality &amp; inclusion</p>
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Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

- 3.2 leadership of play and learning
- 1.1nurturing care and support

Progress and impact:

**Eco Schools and maintenance of our Green flag status**

The Eco Committee have continued to work on the agenda points for each focus topic within our Eco Schools action plan. The focus topics from June 2022 – June 2024 are Global Citizenship, Food, and Climate Action. The progress implemented for each focus topic is as follows:

Food- Staff and most of our learners have been involved in further planting experiences both indoors and outdoors. In addition to planting within the nursery gardens, there is now scope for growing food crops in our new Polytonal which has recently been purchased and set up within the School grounds. Plans are in place for ensuring both the school and nursery learners can access the Polytunnel alongside staff to carry out food growing learning experiences, as well as planting of other general plants/ flowers. Most of our learners have chosen to participate within healthy baking experiences, using Fairtrade products. Our learners have been educated on the benefits to the environment of using Fairtrade products and using local produce. Furthermore, our staff and most learners were part of learning opportunities where they could identify different types of Fairtrade products, during Fairtrade Fortnight. Our families have also been involved in this during our Big Chef Little Chef family participation events. Furthermore, through communication via our online learning journals platform.

## **Global Citizenship**

Most of our learner's participation within Fairtrade fortnight has been a positive source of evidence towards our agenda focus in this area. This has been evident through involvement of children's voice throughout learning experiences, use of the online learning journal platform, and the sharing of Fairtrade recipes with children and families.

Within our centre, we have been working alongside the Primary School to develop a rights based approach in line with the UNCRC. Initially we did this within nursery by including the children's voice within the UNCRC Floor book and wall display, with the children beginning to gather an awareness of the UNCRC and how this relates to them. Since setting this goal, there has been evident progress with this focus. We developed a UNCRC Action plan, which was informed by a visit to Clober Early Years Centre to benchmark practice around rights based practice, linking in with the UNCRC. When our UNCRC Champions visited Clober Early Years Centre, a range of nurturing ideas and provocations were observed. Within our action plan, we planned to implement many of these ideas. Since then, we have delivered an update UNCRC presentation to the staff team, and sourced a variety of nurturing UNCRC provocations. These include UNCRC child friendly books which are being used within our nursery, being read to the children. Furthermore, these books will be part of home to link bags, sent home with families, linking in with different articles from the UNCRC. We also held an open evening for families to attend, which focused on developing our families' awareness of the impact UNCRC and GIRFEC have upon children's care and learning. The School are now working at silver level as a rights based accredited establishment. Therefore, the Nursery are collaboratively working alongside the Primary School with developing our next steps towards progress with the implementation of the UNCRC.

SIMOA is another initiative which we have been implementing with all of our learners. All of our learners have been involved in learning about keeping safe, using 'SIMOA our Purple Elephant', as a provocation for this. Staff have developed a floor book on this to document the children's voice and learning. Furthermore, there is a further floor book which has been used towards a 'Tidy up project' using SIMOA the Purple Elephant'.

## **Climate Action**

One of our focus points towards Climate Action are focusing on reducing litter within our Nursery and School grounds. This has been managed through daily monitoring of litter, and learning about the impact litter can have on pollution within the environment. There has also been a focus on advocating walking or cycling to nursery to help the environment. Most of our learners supported this focus through participating in walking and cycling experiences within Centre. Also through helping to create posters for Walk or Cycle to Nursery week. This focused on the purpose of reducing carbon emissions within the environment.

Next Steps:

## **Eco Schools and maintenance of our Green flag status**

Our Eco Schools and Green flag renewal was submitted to Eco Schools in June 2024. The renewal involved submitting an evaluation of the current action plan, and the three key focus topic which were Food, Global citizenship, and Climate Action. We have now received a response from Eco Schools confirming that the evidence submitted was adequate for progressing towards developing a new action plan for the award term. Therefore, the nursery and School are required to develop a draft action plan which is required to be submitted by the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. The nursery Eco Committee will therefore hold a meeting together to discuss ideas and requirements for next steps towards continuing

our Eco Schools, and Green flag status. Working collaboratively, the nursery and School will collate the evidence from meetings, and evidence-based practice to develop a new action plan. The new action plan will include three focus topics. These focus topics will be determined in due course. After this stage, new next steps can be confirmed in terms of project work, and focused action points for each topic. All stakeholders will be involved with developing the new action plan. The child's voice will be captured through child consultation, and documented within meeting minutes, as well as the Eco Schools floor book. Furthermore, all staff will have the opportunity to voice their ideas, and input ideas for change. Our families and carers will also be invited to voice their ideas, and opinions through questionnaires through methods such as survey links, and use of the online learning journal platform. The parents committee will also be invited to share their ideas through upcoming parents committee meetings.

### **Global Citizenship**

Implementing experiences related to Fairtrade will continue to be implemented across the work of the centre. The past term has seen a variety of initiatives being implemented to support Fairtrade, involving all stakeholders. There will now be a forward focus of continuing these initiatives, as well as introducing new ways to advocate Fairtrade. There will be an emphasis on capturing the voice of the child and aiming to further increase the level of participation of families, and carers within Fairtrade initiatives. Proposed ideas are to introduce new open events for families, and carers to attend. Families, and carers will also continue to be invited to participate within our ongoing planting and growing projects.

Advocating the UNCRC continues to be a sustainable focus of the nursery. Staff will continue to implement the action points which have already been implemented to date as mentioned above. However, staff will collaboratively explore new initiatives which can be implemented to further develop the nurseries focus on Global Citizenship. We will continue to benchmark practice against our Primary School who already have a recognised accredited award for UNCRC. Strategies to further support the sustainable focus on UNCRC will involve the voice and opinions of all stakeholders. This includes families, carers, staff, and children.

### **Climate Action**

Climate action will continue to be advocated within the nursery. This will involve the continuation of litter monitoring and learning about the impact of pollution in the environment. The nursery will work collaboratively alongside all stakeholders to develop new initiatives to promote this within nursery. Proposed ideas could include initiatives such as offering children the opportunity to embrace leadership as Climate Action leaders, supporting alongside staff, and families to embrace ideas for change. The nursery will also continue to work collaboratively alongside the School with this.

## **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 attainment, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy.

## **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	Very good	Excellent
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	Excellent
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Very good	Excellent

## Summary of Centre Improvement priorities for Session 2023/2024

- 1. Family Engagement – Focusing on Froebelian Principles
- 2. Numeracy
- 3. Learning for Sustainability

## What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

In June 2024 Gartconner EYC was recognised in the recent Care Inspection for the high standard of overall performance. Grades of Good, Very Good and Excellent were achieved.

How good are we now?

At Gartconner EYC it is imperative to us that all children are confident and have the opportunity to make progress with all aspects of their learning. Throughout our centre we have created a natural nurturing, holistic environment that lends itself well for children to explore and develop their imagination. All staff ensure all areas of the nursery have provocations that are developed with the children through their interests, this ensures that all children are able to build and grow, experiencing an exceptional learning environment. Through supporting children with their learning and observing, the nursery teacher(s) continue to undertake detailed assessments and all staff observe, monitor and record children's progress. Through studying detailed tracking systems, it is evident that all children are continuing to make progress with their learning. The leadership team ensures effective quality assurance is organised and regular playroom monitoring takes place as well as staff participating in critical friend evaluations. The leadership team follow monitoring procedures regularly, ensuring all staff are monitored and receive purposeful feedback. We are currently on a journey striving for improvement.

How good can we be?

Improvements within structural aspects of the building have been highlighted at the recent care inspection. We are currently liaising with the local authority to have these issues rectified.

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