



Riverbank Nursery

2021-22

Introduction

Riverbank Nursery is a privately owned nursery caring for children aged 3 months to 10 years. The nursery works in partnership with South Ayrshire Council to provide funded sessions for children aged 2-5 years old. The staff team consists of the Owner, Manager, Senior staff, Cook, Cleaner and 13 fully qualified Early Years Practitioners who work together to create a positive enabling environment with high quality learning experiences, providing opportunities for children to question, problem solve, investigate, explore, take risks and be creative. The staff are SSSC registered, continuing to develop their professional knowledge and skills through research and by completing relevant training to reflect and improve their practice and nursery provision.

Learning at Riverbank is individual to each child's needs, abilities and interests and parents work collaboratively with staff in celebrating children's achievements, strengths and in agreeing goals for learning and development. This supports children to reach their full potential and become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Values

In addition to supporting children to be confident, healthy and happy, we aim to include the following values: These were reworded to make them meaningful and accessible for our young children and community to remember.

Respect
Inclusion
Value
Engagement
Responsibility
Being me
Active
Nurturing
Kind

Aims

- Provide a safe, caring, nurturing, stimulating and secure environment to support resilience and wellbeing.
- Capture and enhance natural curiosity building on the child's potential for learning to help create confident and enthusiastic learners.
- Provide a qualified motivated staff team committed to improving outcomes for children and families.
- Promote partnership working with parents, children, staff and other agencies to support and improve outcomes for children.

Context of the early years centre

Riverbank Nursery is a privately-owned day nursery in the heart of Ayr which has been established since 1989 and aims to provide the highest standard of care for children aged from 3 months to 10 years old. The nursery is open from 8am till 6pm Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. With the experience and professionalism of our staff team, we offer a secure, safe, stimulating and above all a happy and fun environment for all our children.

We are also in partnership with the local authority, which means that although we are a private nursery, we can provide funded early learning and childcare on a full year or term time basis to eligible children. We use the key person system to foster warm, nurturing relationships and to support appropriate attachment and bonding relationships with the staff and friendships in their peer group.

The Nursery building is set over two floors and comprises of eight spacious rooms, the ground floor accommodates our office, Bluebells, Buttercups, Daises and Juniors along with toilets and kitchen facilities. The upper floor plays host to our Seniors along with more toilets and staffrooms. Our outdoor space within the nursery grounds has been redeveloped as a large area for play, and promotes investigation and exploration through climbing, planting, cooking, digging, building, water and imaginative play. The indoor environment is also reviewed periodically to ensure it is responsive to the needs of the individual child, is stimulating, creative, exciting, and inspiring.

Out with the nursery our children also utilise the grounds of St John's Tower and the Fort Tennis Courts which are both only a few minutes' walk from the nursery. As we have a central location, we benefit from walks to explore our local environment including the beach, river, train station and many more on a regular basis.

The nursery was last inspected in July 2019, receiving a 'good' for both quality of care and support and quality of management and leadership. There were no recommendations or requirements, and the report highlighted strengths as being a warm caring, and nurturing environment, where relationships with parents were valued and encouraged and children were engaged in their learning and happy in their play.

The Scottish government has now removed many of the restrictions that have been in place to control the spread of Covid-19, this is in part due to the vaccination programme and natural immunity. Although at present we are still moving cautiously towards pre covid time by ensuring all infection prevention and control measures remain in place and by promoting covid sense, if a child is unwell, they should stay at home and recover. We have a shorter risk assessment to keep Riverbank safe, and a contingency plan, in case of an outbreak.

Over the last year we have lost a number of our experienced staff to the local authority, retirement and change of career. This has resulted in a recruitment drive to attract new staff. We increased the salary to adhere to the living wage and are trialling a four day week, with condensed hours, more part time staff and term time only staff. We have utilised employability staff from the job centre, on-line employment websites and social media to ensure a diverse range of recruitment and contact methods. This has brought about recruitment of newly qualified workers, unemployed and returners to early years. However, by regularly sharing information with staff, offering praise and recognition, celebrating achievement, listening and valuing ideas, we ensure our new team have the necessary skills, qualifications, experience and motivation to provide the very best for all children. Staff are proactive in the change process and in evaluating the impact of improvements. We aim to source additional training for all staff as per our 2022-23 Improvement plan.

We have provided volunteering opportunities within the local community, leading to further training, qualifications and employment prospects. Our volunteers have now found full time employment. We have also completed the work experience application process to return to the programme again in September 2022

Since earlier in the year when we found it necessary to close our baby rooms due to covid, we have had limited disruption, we have found however, that children's communication and language development continue to require additional support. Our comparison with children's progress and milestone assessments from previous years, data gathered in May 2022, and our Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles at that time were detailed as follows;

25% of our children are from deciles 1-3
33% of children are from decile 4-7
42% are in decile 8-10

Data relating to progress within the developmental milestones for children age 4- 5yrs (18 children) have been reviewed. In previous years information was gathered on the number of children who have achieved 10 or more milestones, this has now changed to gathering the number and percentage of children achieving 8 or more milestones. For the purpose of comparison on previous years, we have used the percentage relating to the achievement of 10 or more milestones. The following information was obtained in May 2022, detailed below:-

	2018/19	2020/21	2021/22
Health and wellbeing	70%	75%	95%
Communication and language	70%	60%	70%
Mathematics and numeracy	65%	65%	20%

Analysis of the trends over time, reveal that by continuing our focus and awareness of the challenges that remain post COVID-19 in respect of children's Health, Social and Emotional wellbeing, shows that the resilience of children should never be underestimated. The increase in health and wellbeing in 2021-22 is due to our quick response in making children feel comfortable, safe, nurtured and connected to others. By creating a calm, positive and happy atmosphere with a greater level of outdoor play, children began to understand their own and others feelings and emotions. They relished in the freedom of exploring nature, the natural world and active play outdoors.

Mathematics and numeracy have decreased immensely; however it also states that 80% are working towards achievement. Therefore, consideration on staff knowledge and understanding of the milestones in numeracy require further moderation and professional dialogue to ascertain accuracy of judgement in reaching a level. This will be further developed in SIP 2022-23.

Although the data shows that overall attainment in communication and language has improved since 2020/21, we also explored why all children scored 100% in a few milestones. We feel this is due to our understanding of the challenges faced during the pandemic and our focus on consistency supporting children's speech, communication and language development

using a phonics programme, with support from Speech and Language Therapy. We aim to continue as per our SIP22-23 to reflect on the skills of staff judgements using a triangulated approach to assessment.

Our fundraising opportunities supported the Ayrshire Hospice, as children participated in a number of fundraising events raising a total of £860! This was gathered through our 'Just Giving' page, a fantastic amount, which the charity was very grateful for.

We reflect and continually monitor our practice to quality assure our performance by:

- Referring to and following best practice as indicated in the Health and Social Care Standards, Realising the Ambition, Getting it right for every child, How good is our Early learning and childcare and Care Inspectorate Quality Framework.
- Thriving on challenge and embracing change
- Our commitment to self-evaluation and improvement
- Analysis, evaluation and using data information to grow and improve.

In line with HGIOELC the significant relationship between effective self-evaluation and improvement can be seen as an "inwards, outwards, forwards" approach to help all involved in Riverbank answer the questions at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Using this approach allows us to look inwards to analyse our work, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others locally and nationally and look forwards to gauge what continuous improvement might look like in the longer term. We continue to work in partnership with parents, health professionals, and others to 'get it right' for every child.

We aim to continue to support wellbeing further through the 'Hygge' Accreditation programme. Applying the concept of hygge within Riverbank will allow for a home-from-home feeling to emanate. In turn, it will help to create a sense of security and wellbeing that enables the children to feel calm and relaxed, and to explore and investigate with confidence. This will also assist staff wellbeing to help our team grow strong after the strains of the Covid pandemic.

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Nurturing and caring for the children and helping them develop resilience and independence are known to be shaped by both nature and nurture. We know that vital attributes like determination, persistence and commitment have supported children's ability to 'have a go', make friends, build relationships, take on responsibility, increase confidence and to be more aware of their emotions and talk about how they are feeling. Many children are confident in talking about what is happening in their life and how it makes them feel, children are opening up and talking about what scares them including bad dreams. This was reflected on further using the Colour Monster as they spoke about feeling blue or green. This openness has also assisted in meeting their needs, reviewing resources, using the diversity and inclusion books and stories and ensuring the playrooms provide an emotionally rich environment where children feel their views are listened to and respected.

During consultation with the children on their graduation, they wanted to focus on their 'superpower!' in saving our planet. We talked about real superheroes including NHS staff during the pandemic, but we found that people who are courageous and kind and do things to help others are true superheroes! We celebrated the amazing resilience and achievements of all children in a child centred graduation, where fantasy and reality were momentarily blurred. Children highlighted what they had learned about litter and the impact this has on our planet, including ocean pollution in our community. Many of the children felt very strongly about this and included their songs and posters for parents and local residents to see, know and understand about caring for our world. Their passion and enthusiasm have not wavered as they told parents and carers that 'you can make a difference, even if your little'. Learning about sustainability has helped children to care for the environment: an important life skill and to know that it is crucial for everyone to make good choices.

Further research on what happens to our recycling resulted in children gathering all the ripped/torn books to put in the bin for recycling paper. We recycled and reused boxes and tins to make our 'Rubbish robots' and other models. Using junk modelling, children were encouraged to evaluate their own inventions and creations, adding to floor books and sharing their ideas for future planning and audits of the areas. We aim to continue to review our food waste through the Napp sac study beginning in September 2022.

We took part in ‘Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel’ to encourage all children and their families to walk, use scooters or bikes on their journey to nursery to promote the benefits of active travel. Children made their own maps, looked at maps of the area and google maps to find the quickest routes from home. The feedback was very positive, and parents described how quickly their child was ready for nursery in the morning with their cycle helmets..... and pyjamas.

Our learning environment provides a range of resources and experiences to nurture children’s interest, help them make decisions, solve problems, and develop independence. As a staff team we engage in regular discussion in the context of pedagogy and schemas. Staff are skilled at motivating children to engage in experiences; with opportunities often personalised to support individual needs. Children learn and experience many things in the outdoor space, in all weathers, helping them to establish a healthy and active lifestyle. Since developing this area, children can run, climb, pedal, balance, throw, dig, grow, investigate, explore, discover, invent, experiment, talk, interact, make friends, create, construct, make music, express themselves, relax, imagine, and dream big! They have opportunities to have responsibility, be independent, be confident, and experience changes in weather, nature and learn about seasons. We aim to continue to develop this area further and support staff training in outdoor play pedagogy. We have provided parents with information on the benefits of this in every newsletter with ideas to introduce on family outings.

Children choose their favourite pieces of work products and photographs to include in their learning journals, they reflected on their learning using the observations and photographs. Parent meetings via zoom, phone or outdoors in person has taken place every three months, this supports discussion about the child’s progress and learning and assists in jointly identifying their interests and goals.

During the pandemic we introduced mindfulness and yoga daily, which we have since continued as the benefits of learning these techniques for both children and staff can support self-health, relaxation, and inner fulfilment. It builds balance and coordination, promotes emotional awareness, self-regulation and increased concentration and focus. It also encourages children’s self-esteem and body awareness with some physical stretches and breathing techniques. To further support this we introduced a ‘Spa week’ where children gave each other and staff facials, pedicure, manicure, head massage and explored our senses using different scents. A successful relaxation week, that everyone took part in and thoroughly enjoyed.

By introducing the child’s right to play and exploring what this means, consultation on children’s understanding of the difference between needs and wants reminded us of the importance of listening to the individual child’s thoughts and opinions. They spoke of the need for friends, a mum and dad, sisters and brothers (debatable), food and shelter and the opinion of many in what constitutes a need – at this time. A new car was a need because the old one is in the garage but giving children the opportunity to talk about this resulted in the same child agreeing with her peers that “we could actually walk to nursery and don’t need a car!” A ground-breaking moment and a very enlightening discussion. One child’s needs introduced God’s love, presenting another debate about what this is. A very interesting concept where children debated love and heaven.

We have continued to utilise a room for serving and eating lunch for all our Senior children, we regard snack time and lunch time as an essential part of the children’s daily routine. We purchased real crockery and glassware, tablecloths and using real cutlery. This provided valuable opportunities for children to experience and use real, good quality resources and learn to look after them carefully. Children are also encouraged to serve themselves independently, learning about the importance of hygiene and gain responsibility for cleaning up and recycling. Lunch and snack times provide valuable opportunities for learning and for adults and children to enjoy this time engaging in conversation. Adults at the table can role-model social behaviour, such as active listening and courteous table manners in a relaxed atmosphere and the children enjoy the opportunity to socialize in small groups using the three tables available. We also work in partnership with parents to develop and support healthy eating habits which will not only promote their children’s growth and development while at nursery and home, but which will also provide a strong foundation for health and well-being in their adult lives. Staff use a consistent approach to help manage and regulate children’s behaviour to support conflict resolution.

To support staff in developing a pedagogy that recognises and supports learning outdoors, we required a better understanding of our role as an adult in this. Talking part in the Virtual Nature School training provided a reflection on learning how to create play spaces outside that nurture and inspire learning throughout the winter months, which seem to be more difficult for staff than other seasons due to the weather. We learned how to follow and support the children’s’ lead outdoors, extending opportunities to scaffold thinking and help them to realise their potential. In completing this training, we have more knowledge and understanding in providing open-ended, diverse and meaningful learning experiences connected to nature, and children have a greater respect for the natural environment, and an awareness of environmental issues and sustainability. Our developments in this have been recognised as part of inspiring examples of good practice. See our journey on; . <https://map.virtualnatureschool.scot/>

Priority 1 Improve our leadership, empowerment and approaches to self-evaluation and improvement	
Links to HGIOELC QI:-	Links to CI Quality Framework QI:-

NIF Priority:- Creating a culture of collaborative leadership	1.1 Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation 1.2 Professional learning 1.3 Planning for continuous improvement 1.4 Building and sustaining a professional team.	3.1 Quality Assurance 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge & values Key Q5 Support during COVID-19 pandemic
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Progress and Impact

As the Care Inspectorate new Early Years Framework was introduced in part as Key Question 5, all staff were provided with the task of reviewing, reflecting and understanding the impact of what this meant for Riverbank. An excellent task which improved staff familiarisation with the reflective questions, providing time to discuss and talk about our aspiration to provide the highest standard of care and education at Riverbank. We spoke about agreed expectations and responsibility, reflecting on the impact of the pandemic and what was required to ensure all children, staff and families stay safe and well. We agreed this would be reviewed on an on-going basis as we progressed through the pandemic.

Our aim to strive for continuous improvement hit a barrier as two of our experienced staff retired. As others left the nursery, we required to recruit to build a new staff team, this was challenging at times, however it has also improved over time. A quality assurance calendar was complete and as we worked through the tasks, coaching, and modelling good practice supported changes, leading to positive outcomes for children and families. As the situation changed and new challenges presented themselves, we adapted and responded positively to manage them effectively.

As the demands of working through the pandemic hit hard, we had no choice but to close our baby department in March, which impacted on the anxiety felt throughout. As immunisation and immunity increased our on-going review of the covid situation, assisted staff in talking about and discussing our risk assessments, current mitigations and cleaning regimes. This also assisted in reflecting on children, families and staff health and wellbeing.

Planning, observation and assessment of children was reviewed in line with Realising the Ambition (RtA). This ensured staff considered the interactions, experiences and spaces for learning. Further staff tasks included discussing the case studies in the RtA training module and sharing good practice. Staff reflected on their own childhood experiences and the comparison of the nature of play today. As we talked about our own preconceptions, our mindset and prejudices, we realised that everyone can have a tendency to only see what we are looking for. This self-reflection helped consider our own practice and assessment processes, and how we must always take the lead from the child and think about the possible ideas to extend this.

A key part of self-evaluation is to identify impact, strengths and areas to improve, we used open discussions, questionnaires and observations to assist in this and have put together ideas for improvement, which includes further leadership of learning.

We have introduced the Care Inspectorate ‘Quality Framework for Day-care of Children’ and reflected on how this links to ‘How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare,’ which will be reflected in our Improvement plan for 2022-23.

Next Steps

- Some staff feel overwhelmed in trying to consider all documents, although new planning is helping to consider the links. RtA will be further reviewed in our improvement plan.
- Ensure the pedagogy of play is promoted and underpins all aspects of children’s learning across literacy and numeracy experiences and outcomes.
- Professional engagement and collegiate working through Hygge accreditation

Priority 2 Review our pedagogical approaches in communication, language, and numeracy skills across the curriculum

NIF Priority:- Improvement in attainment in Literacy and numeracy.	Links to HGIOELC QI:- 1.3 Leadership of change 3.2 Securing children’s progress. 2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment 2.4 Personalised support	Links to CI Quality Framework 3.1 Quality assurance 2.2 Childrens experience high quality facilities. 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, value 1.4 Family engagement
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Progress and Impact

As staff reflect on theory, practice and policy, they have become more familiar with developmentally appropriate practice and an understanding of how children grow and learn. RtA was used to consider how literacy, communication and numeracy is embedded across all areas both indoors and outside. We used the ITERS audit to determine what was working well and what we needed to do to improve.

Some areas required more opportunities for listening and speaking, so we introduced visuals including signs, symbols, words, songs, photographs and notices. We also completed training on enabling environments, providing resources for learning letters, words, stories, emotional literacy, counting, calculating, shape recognition, weighing and measuring. Our children seemed to have a natural fascination for numbers so by establishing a collection of loose parts, children were able to lead their own learning in this area.

Working with families and sharing children’s favourite stories has improved language, literacy, and communication development, this is evident in children who were non-verbal, now able to retell a whole story from beginning to end. We have worked together with Speech and language, health visitors and parents to support a number of children with little or no language. We used a variety of strategies including visual prompts, pictures, puppets and gestures to support children in conveying their meaning. Listening and attention were enhanced through these aids, enabling children to keep their concentration and focus on something visual whilst listening to instructions. Understanding skills have also improved, allowing children the time they need to process what they are being asked to do. The impact has been dramatic, and many have now found their voice!

Staff noticed that when children play, they differentiate that play to fit their developmental level. This was observed during outdoor play as younger children spent time playing with older siblings as our ‘bubbles’ dispersed. Assessment information gathered provides a clearer understanding of attainment data and how this is used to support next steps or intervention where required. Improved reflective language and professional dialogue through moderation has increased the knowledge of the milestones and ensures that planning and assessment is consistent, precise, and display an accurate understanding of all children’s skills, abilities and progress. We will continue to support staff skills in this.

Reflection on children’s previous learning and development of curiosity, enquiry skills, creativity, and risk taking to enrich children’s development, resulted in discussions about ‘wonder and awe’. Appropriate provocations and open questions are beginning to encourage adult supported and child-initiated experiences. Staff who are confident in planning and assessment have strengthened new staff understanding of considering the interest, needs and learning intentions for the individual child. Information gathered has been reviewed in more detail and adjusted to help make the information relevant and purposeful.

Next Steps

Fully involve parents as partners in their child’s learning, including the assessments of milestones as part of attainment. Continue to reflect on developing our outdoor space to support literacy and numeracy skills.

To continue to use The Hygge and Curiosity Approach as a basis for creating an enabling and well-planned environment where children can make progress in their learning.

Priority 3 Reflect on the key principles of Realising the Ambition – Being me and its links to health and wellbeing support guidance for all

<p>NIF Priority:- Improvement in children’s Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Links to HGIOELC QI:- 1.3 leadership of management and practitioners 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion. 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity</p>	<p>Links to CI Quality Framework 1.1 Nurturing care and support 5.1 Children’s health and wellbeing 5.3 Staffing arrangements</p>
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Progress and Impact

All staff demonstrate a good holistic knowledge of all the children in their care during planning and assessment and conversations. This helps to ensure that needs are identified, planned for, and met. As we focused on emotional literacy and nurture within all rooms, it was evident that some children coped well with change, and others took some time to build resilience, attachment, and connection.

Children are involved in decision making throughout the day, knowing their opinions matter, any tasks identified are talked about and a mutually agreed plan is used going forward. They have been confident in devising ideas to look after the world and look after each other. Our acronym from Riverbank was reflected on as children felt Kindness was the most important part. In discussing what kindness meant, many agreed it was about being nice to each other, thinking about them and doing good things for them. Some children said their superpower was being kind, others said theirs was being friendly, another child spoke about his superpower being strong. While talking about these values with children, they were empathetic, considerate, and sometimes funny! We also have a superhero that suggests he eat everyone's leftover food so there is no food waste! Further discussions on this was required.

Staff training on 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me' has improved expectations of high-quality care and learning and continues to be used to support new staff. Further professional learning from SAC has also assisted in an increased awareness of nurture and trauma informed practice. Staff use consistent language and nurturing approaches in all interactions with children and families

Training on Children's rights and global citizens has been complete, consultation began with children to reflect on their right to play (article 31). Further awareness of rights-based practice requires additional understanding for staff to become more familiar with the impact of this and to its links with GIRFEC and Realising the Ambition. Children are empowered as 'Rights holders', they are aware of their own role as a global citizen and staff are beginning to use rights respecting language to support this.

Specific staff reviewed the Play strategy from Play Scotland, detailing what we do well and how we can improve. Our outdoor space is beginning to provide open ended resources to children to explore and be creative. This requires further development due to changes of staff. Social media links has improved the sharing of good practice between staff. It has also allowed a virtual tour of different nurseries around Britain and in other countries to support the changes required to further develop our indoor and outdoor space. An outdoor structure has been built and is now named by the children as the wellie castle. This can be used for several purposes and is also a shelter in real downpours! The purchase of some large equipment is providing children the opportunity to take small risks in physical play and learning.

During fire safety week, the Children took seriously their role as Fire Marshals. This prompted further responsibilities as helpers and leaders for a variety of areas. Leadership skills allow children to have control of their lives gaining the ability to make things happen. It instils confidence, and helps children solve problems creatively, work in a team, and work collaboratively with others. It also gives children many opportunities to develop responsibility. We have snack and lunch helpers, toilet monitors, register taker, shoe organiser, paint pot cleaner and librarian.

To promote the health and wellbeing among staff, personal learning took place with RBS Mentor, John McGlone, which provided strategies to support mental health and wellbeing. All staff were signposted to the EYS wellbeing hub and information about anxiety at work was provided.

Next Steps

To include an awareness of children's rights and play pedagogy.

Evaluation Summary

Quality Indicator	Self-Evaluation (Please add 3 or 4 evaluative statements linked to the themes)
1.3 Leadership of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the 	During the pandemic, we reflected on the physical workplace, the impact of Practitioner knowledge and skills and of learning new skills to improve outcomes for children. Throughout this recovery, we now also consider the importance of a work-life balance, wellbeing, trust, and fairness for all staff. We talk about emotional wellbeing, mental health and burnout and looked at transferable skills and knowledge required at Practitioner level. Transparent discussions and decisions on funding and sustainability

ELC and its community.

- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

have presented another review and increase in staff salaries and training opportunities to assist in retaining experienced staff and to promote and improve employability.

Children, families, and practitioners are all involved in the creation and regular review of the vision, values and aims of Riverbank. These have been revisited and updated in line with nursery improvement and informed by current thinking in early learning pedagogy. New team members have enhanced the ethos of the nursery ensuring that our warm, friendly and welcoming reputation continues and grows.

Monitoring of how the pandemic has influenced decisions around access, communication, transitions and relationships continues to be on-going. We had maintained a cautious approach to recovery but as restrictions eased we have now dispensed our bubbles allowing children and staff to move more freely both indoors and outside. Although staff continue to be anxious about parents coming into the nursery, we have arranged open evenings in August 2022 to begin the process of welcoming our families back into the nursery. Good ventilation has been the key to having a healthy and productive indoor space. We received a Co2 monitor from the local authority and thereafter purchased one for the nursery. This allows us to monitor the flow of air and helps us assess how well-balanced ventilation with thermal comfort was over the winter months. Doors and windows continue to remain open to assist in this. Good ventilation helps to reduce the risk of all viral airborne transmission not only of the Covid virus but also from other viruses like cold and flu. Infection prevention and control measures continue to be in place in relation to cleaning and handwashing. By retaining on-going dialogue with all involved in the nursery, we are providing reassurance that the nursery is as safe and clean as possible.

As change and improvement moves forward, our communication with each other is becoming more productive, it is improving morale and providing a shared sense of purpose. A review of our induction process has been complete using the National Induction Resource and reflective questions. This plan is a process of welcoming our new employees from the first day of work to six months. A new handbook detailing day to day practice has been introduced and we have also provided initial training, which is based on practical support which impacts positively on children's care and wellbeing. We have continued to identify and make changes in the nursery; however, some take time to embed, therefore we are careful to make these at an appropriate pace.

We utilise both local and national priorities and current guidance when planning our areas for improvement in addition to those identified in Riverbank. Staff reflected on Realising the Ambition challenge questions to support their practice, reference research and consider the space, interaction and experiences provided. We used a range of evidence from observations, reflections from children and families as well as comments from local authority quality improvement and other professionals to inform our improvement priorities

Children in the nursery learn and achieve well. They are settled, enjoy very positive relationships with staff, are forming friendships with their peers and learning to play well together.

As the Care Inspectorate introduced the Early Years Framework, requesting a review of Key Question 5, all staff were provided with the task of reviewing, reflecting, and understanding the impact of what this question, and the document itself meant for children and adults. An excellent resource with relevant research findings which improved staff familiarisation of what good practice looks like, supporting our vision for quality. It provided time to embed reflection and self-evaluation, celebrate achievement and nurture, and talk about our aspiration for a high impact learning culture. We spoke about agreed expectations, future training, and responsibility, reflecting on the effects of the pandemic on children. It ensured everyone's input was valued and played an important part in improving outcomes for children.

Practitioners continue to be supported to have an awareness of their own and the nursery strengths and areas of improvement, to consider what worked well and what we think, feel, and believe we need to improve on. Our motivation, passion, and energy to get through challenges, build resilience and make changes has supported our plans for

	<p>improvement. Evaluations are on an on-going basis as we progress through recovery. Our aim to strive for continuous improvement has been tested at times as experienced staff left nursery, gaining employment with the local authority and two staff retired. Mentoring, coaching and several training events provided has supported Practitioners to improve their skills, abilities and knowledge with confidence and competence to help them to learn and grow on the job. Simple appreciation of ‘a job well done’ has helped to build an environment that is positive, motivating and engaging.</p>
<p>2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment</p> <p>Learning and engagement</p> <p>Quality of interactions</p> <p>Effective use of assessment</p> <p>Planning, tracking and monitoring.</p>	<p>All staff are aware of the importance of the cycle of planning, teaching, assessing and recording children’s progress, and how this helps to raise children’s attainment. Some of our new parents are using a variety of apps to determine what stage of development their child should be at. This can have both positive and negative contemplations. Children reach these milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act and move, but all children develop at their own pace. This prompted a review of planning and assessment with a key group of staff to look over the assessment process for children under 3yrs. We used children’s stages of development, milestones and current assessment points for consideration. In addition to Realising the Ambition training, under 3’s masterclass by Alice Sharp has been booked to support staff understanding of enriching play and responding to the children’s interest and needs. Looking at talking and listening, play spaces and further supporting schemas, the use of holistic assessments continues to be developed and planning for assessment is more consistent and applicable.</p> <p>Curriculum for excellence training enriched knowledge and skills by introducing the Building the Curriculum series of documents, providing advice, guidance and policy from different aspects of learning. Staff are also thinking more about what is being recorded if it is relevant and what we can do to improve. They have engaged in collaborative time to discuss and moderate attainment using the milestones This training and development has reminded staff of the importance of child centred play and learning, and our aspiration for all children to develop the four capacities to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Our ‘Floor Books’ create opportunities for children to participate in peer assessment; and this resource is accessible to children at all times.</p> <p>Improved professional dialogue is also supporting an understanding of the importance of using the information gathered from discussions with parents, children and other staff to enrich the learning experiences and care provided. We support each other to solve problems and develop our skills, building consistency of practice. By discussing individual children’s progress using the data gathered from milestones, we are reflecting on our understanding of relevance and judgements in planning and assessment. New Care Plan and learning journal targets were set to address any deficit.</p> <p>Although the pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on children, the ‘All about me’, ‘All about me at home,’ ‘more about me’ and further discussions with parents has provided a more individualised plan for every child. We have facilitated the development of each child’s executive function skills, specifically their emotional control by establishing routines, modeling social behaviour which has created and maintained supportive relationships. We are teaching children appropriate strategies for managing feelings, behaviour and thinking, helping them foster self-regulation within a growth motivated environment.</p> <p>Our indoor space is flexible and responsive to meet the needs, interest and abilities of the individual child. We are working towards creating a team skilled at providing play and learning outside. We know outdoor play supports confidence and allows opportunities for big scale play, therefore a delivery of tyres, wood, tubes and crates etc has increased children’s problem solving and creativity capabilities. We need to continue to promote the benefits of outdoor play in all weathers.</p> <p>There is growing research evidence, including our own findings that the pandemic has had an impact on some children’s social and emotional wellbeing. Talking about feelings and being in the moment has helped children deal with uncertainty and challenges. It has helped them make age-appropriate decisions that affect them and the ability to cope if</p>

	<p>things don't go to plan. Targeted individual intervention provided opportunities to support receptive and expressive oral language, literacy and listening skills. It has also supported an understanding of number names and recognition.</p> <p>Working with families and sharing children's favourite stories at home has improved language, literacy, and communication, achievements are evident in children who were non-verbal, now able to retell a whole story from beginning to end. We worked together with Speech and language, health visitors and parents to support the children with little or no language. The impact of intervention has been dramatic, and all have now found their voice!</p> <p>The children have developed a natural fascination for numbers outside so by establishing a collection of loose parts, children were able to lead their own learning in this area. Staff noticed that when children play, they differentiate that play to fit their developmental level. This was observed during outdoor play as younger children spent time playing with older siblings as our 'bubbles' began to disperse.</p> <p>Reflecting on children's previous learning and interest, further opportunities were provided to promote curiosity, enquiry skills, creativity, and risk-taking which have enriched children's thinking, resulting in discussions about 'wonder and awe'. Using this approach, we began 'Hygge' accreditation as part of recovery from the pandemic. This approach helps to create a sense of security and wellbeing, enabling children to feel calm and relaxed, and to explore, discover and investigate their world with confidence. Children are taking part in the consultation and evaluation of their learning, the environment and resources provided to monitor progress.</p> <p>Staff have also complete Enabling environment training and reflected on Froebelian practice resulting in a natural review of other areas of practice.</p>
<p>3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Wellbeing</p> <p>Fulfilment of statutory duties</p> <p>Inclusion and equality</p>	<p>All staff and children contribute to a positive nursery ethos creating a warm, welcoming climate where everyone is included, valued and respected. Fairness and equality is embedded into the daily life of Riverbank. Our inclusive approach supports and promotes the wellbeing of all.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic and as we recover, we continued to ensure a safe and secure climate for learning. We are confident that all our children feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are listened to and feel secure in their ability to talk about different aspects of their lives. Staff know the children very well and this has made an impact in terms of developing an inclusive learning environment across the nursery</p> <p>Planning and learning journals reflect and promote diversity, inclusion and equality. During staff meetings professional dialogue around the dignity and rights of the child at Riverbank are considered and acted on. (see also priority 3)</p> <p>Within our training programme staff have complete SAC annual update of Child protection training and GIRFEC principles, ensuring clear procedures are in place to meet individual needs. Staff know, understand, use and have a common understanding of what wellbeing means in terms of the eight indicators. Key staff have focused on gender equality following distribution of books and posters from Police Scotland.</p> <p>Transitions this year have been effectively supported for both children moving internally and for our children taking the big step to primary school. This has been eased by careful proactive planning, sharing of information, discussions with parents and visits from teachers.</p> <p>Following the guidance on Zero tolerance, a small team discussed gender equality in play and how we would positively support and promote it. In giving children the opportunity to play and learn without any restriction these stereotypes place on them, we reviewed all resources and books. As part of this we encouraged children to reflect on 'Different families.' A child's home context and culture has a significant impact on what and how they learn. Every family's contribution is valued as we recognized and celebrated</p>

	<p>different cultures, racial and ethnic group festivals, celebrated by our children and families.</p> <p>Parents are supported in their role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected A genuine commitment to work co-operatively with parents is a key feature of our nursery which impacts on every aspect of practice. Their expertise is recognised, and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing through care plan conversations.</p> <p>Next steps To embed the rights of the child To complete impact assessment</p>
<p>3.2 Securing children’s progress.</p> <p>Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Children’s progress over time</p> <p>Overall quality of children’s achievement</p> <p>Ensuring equity for all children</p>	<p>We have developed a greater understanding of the impact of the COVID pandemic on the individual family and discussed how best each child can be supported and cared for. Staff have gathered a wide range of resources, including natural resources, available for children to self-select in order to problem solve and encourage creativity. As much as possible, children are given “real life” experiences to ensure learning is relevant and meaningful, for example being challenged to find products from Scotland in the supermarket for the One Planet Picnic, and Burns’ Day, within a focus on Food from around the world. Children are actively encouraged to share, cooperate and work together as a team, for example, at the Christmas musical, Sports Day and Graduation programme. Once again due to Covid restrictions the Christmas show was filmed and sent to enable parents to celebrate their child’s achievement. This year’s Graduation was a welcome change as parents of children graduating in 2022 attended our first show.</p> <p>Children have been developing new skills, including science and nature from growing their own food. They have had fun digging in the soil, getting messy, tending plants, watching them grow and harvesting. We have been successful in growing potatoes, carrots, onions and tomatoes. Some of our other vegetables were eaten by insects and birds, which the children agreed was good. There was also a discovery that all the vegetables grown were different sizes. When cooked for lunch, it was also agreed they tasted nicer than the ones from the shop.</p> <p>We promote healthy eating within the nursery and we adhere to the Setting the Table document published by the Scottish Government. Our carefully planned menus are designed to make sure our children are nurtured with home-cooked food and a nutritionally balanced diet. Children are provided with a variety of healthy options for snack, presenting the opportunity to prepare and make it independently. The children take part in the Child Smile Tooth brushing programme. This has impacted on the children’s dental hygiene at home and in nursery. Health studies have proven that the programme has dramatically reduced tooth decay in our younger children in Scotland.</p> <p>A food management system is in place and all staff have also complete food hygiene training.</p> <p>We regard every child as an individual with their own ideas, thoughts and interest and this is reflected in their care plan and learning journal.</p> <p>Staff who are confident in planning and assessment have strengthened new staff understanding using children’s interest, needs and learning intentions for the individual child. Information gathered has been reviewed in more detail and adjusted to help make the information relevant and purposeful.</p> <p>Assessment information gathered provides a clearer understanding of attainment data and how this is used to support next steps or intervention where required. Improved reflective language and professional dialogue through moderation has increased the knowledge of the milestones and ensures that planning and assessment is consistent, precise, and displays an accurate understanding of all children’s skills, abilities and progress. We will continue to support staff skills in this.</p>

	<p>Staff training on ‘Realising the Ambition: Being Me’ has improved expectations of high-quality care and learning and continues to be used to support new staff. Further professional learning from SAC and additional training groups have also assisted in an increased awareness of nurture and trauma informed practice. Staff use consistent language and nurturing approaches in all interactions with children and families.</p> <p>Training on Children’s rights and global citizens has been complete, consultation began with children to reflect on their right to play (article 31). Further awareness of rights-based practice requires additional understanding for staff to become more familiar with the impact of this and to its links with GIRFEC and Realising the Ambition. Children are empowered as ‘Rights holders’, they are aware of their own role as a global citizens and staff are beginning to use rights respecting language to support this.</p>
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What are the key priorities for improvement in 2022/23

We will embed literacy and numeracy in all indoor and outdoor play areas and staff plans will embed challenge, depth, and progression in all areas. Continue to develop assessment and staff professional judgements using the milestones, ensuring a clear programme for strategic change and improvement, evaluation and monitoring. Raise attainment by using assessment information to inform high quality, planned learning and teaching, ensuring appropriate pace and challenge for all children. We will continue to strengthen and develop the expertise of staff to ensure that the care and learning for children is of a consistently high standard and that opportunities for quality improvement are identified and actioned.

We aim to re-establish family engagement and involvement in nursery life, by building mutual trust and respectful relationships, and ensuring shared high aspirations for their child by directly or indirectly supporting their child’s learning.

We will continue to develop Froebelian and Hygge approaches, utilising new, and existing, learning environments to embed high quality learning experiences, which promote a child-led approach. We will also continue to promote the Nurture Principals whilst ensuring that Realising the Ambition- Being Me influences our everyday pedagogy.

What is the capacity for improvement?

We consider ourselves to have a very good capacity to improve. As a staff team new and existing we share a clear vision for the nursery and are confident in our ability to meet our aims and improvements.

All staff are committed to their continuous professional development, some are studying to degree level which is impacting positively on playroom practice. We will continue to focus on the effective use of data gathered to support outcomes for learning. As we focus on triangulation of assessment, we will collect appropriate evidence of learning from multiple sources using a range of quantitative and qualitative data. Through observation children demonstrate skills, by engaging them in conversation to assess understanding as well as collecting any products made, we will have a better understanding of their progress and achievements. By considering what continuous improvement looks like in practice and in exploring the adult’s role is in this, we can model language, strengthen relationships, and provide the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and extend the children’s learning.

Our continuous self-evaluation processes, observation, coaching and modelling of good practice will be embedded in all aspects of the nursery which will lead to improvements. We recognise the importance of parents as partners in their child’s learning, and have missed their involvement over the pandemic, therefore our focus will be on working together for the very best outcomes for children. To ensure parents have a variety of opportunities to play an active role at Riverbank we will encourage their involvement as much as their circumstances will permit.

Riverbank’s journey to improvement will be displayed on the main noticeboard located at the entrance, ensuring opportunities for children, staff, parents, partners and visitors to comment on any aspect of the information gathered; we will also consider ways to share this journey digitally.