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East Dunbartonshire Council

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Baljaffray Early Years Centre Standards and Quality Report 2024/25

Context of the Centre

Baljaffray Early Years Centre is set in the grounds of Baljaffray Primary School. Since 2021 the centre has been providing 1140 hours for all 3–5-year-old children. The Early Years Centre offers extended day and year provision supporting an extended day model for children and families. The centre has capacity for 63 children per session. The centre has three indoor areas that children can freely access throughout their day. We are fortunate enough to have a large outdoor space that is open all day, in all weathers for children to explore. We have strong links to our school, and the children have opportunities to join in school events such as assemblies, and fun days. We have regular access to school facilities such as the gym hall and pitch area. At Baljaffray 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 the nurturing principles into their practice. We have a newly established rainbow room in place that offers the children a quiet, calm, relaxing space. The staffing model consists of Head Teacher, two Depute Heads of Centre, two Senior Early Years Workers, two Early Years Teachers, 15 Early Years Workers, a House Keeper, two Clerical Assistants, and one Building Manager

Vision, Values & Aims

Our Vision

Our staff team is committed to deliver high quality learning experiences for our children, and to build positive relationships with our families ensuring their children will achieve their full potential.

Our Values

- Be happy.
- Be kind.
- Be caring.
- Be responsible.
- Be respectful.

Our Aims

We aim to support our children's wellbeing and place great value on their views, opinions, listening to them and acting upon them, whilst embedding the nurture principles throughout our practice.

We aim to provide child centred play, promoting equity and equality, with a balance of curricular learning both indoors and outdoors.

We aim to provide a safe, secure, fun environment while being responsive to children's needs and interests.

We aim to maintain local community links and encourage our stakeholders to become part of our community.

Progress in Centre Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities

Centre priority 1:

STEM – Building on achievements.

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

4.3 staff development

1.3 play and learning

NIF Priority • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;

Choose an item.

NIF Driver School and ELC leadership

Choose an item.

HGIOELC QIs

QI 3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

QI 2.2 Curriculum

Progress and impact:

Building on Achievements

As we are now in our second year of STEM, we as a team have continued to build a solid foundation of STEM learning which has been integrated throughout the EYC's vision of creating a STEM rich environment. All staff demonstrated a greater understanding of STEM and through reflecting on previous learning they worked together sharing knowledge and ensuring children's learning was impacted in a positive way. Through our Centre Leadership we consulted with our staff team on the creation of smaller focus groups to drive forward improvements within our STEM journey. Staff focus groups were created and each core team of staff effectively planned and co-ordinated the improvements in STEM for each element. This helped to provide structure and measurable success for each element as our journey progressed, and we were able to assess where we were and where we wanted to be. We made time for monthly meetings for core groups of staff to liaise professionally and share progress and next steps. This was also shared with the wider team, and our families.

Supported by STEM environment audit tools we were able to evaluate the resources in our areas and were able to identify a gap in our technology. We introduced some added resources such as Sphero, Makedo, cameras and remote-controlled cars to enhance the learning opportunities we offer the children. Through observation we have noticed that children are more independently using these resources and are purposeful in their play

An example of this is when the children, supported by staff revisited previous learning, using the 'Makedo' tools to create their own castles. Almost all children can use the tools with minimum support and have been using their skills to create a variety of models and sharing their new skills with their peers as they begin their nursery journey.



Professional Learning

Staff are committed to professional learning, and have engaged in this through CPD, in service training, professional reading and hands on practical experiences. We have linked well with other professionals within our authority to enhance our own learning and development.

Staff have shared their STEM experiences and personal highlights via our STEM Glow Form.

"We have made a stem area within the nursery for the children to explore; we have got new resources for the children."

"We have Incorporated stem throughout the nursery with new areas in room 1 and baking in room 3. We have all got behind it and think about it more in our practice. I am proud of thinking of how to link activities to experiences & outcomes I might not have considered before."

"Making STEM our focus on our development plan has made us concentrate our thoughts on how we are already incorporating STEM into our children's learning and how we can greater enhance this".



Family Learning

In collaboration and consultation with our staff team and families we created the STEM vision for our centre:

At Baljaffray Early Years Centre we believe in nurturing our learners to foster a love for STEM learning to support their future careers and critical life skills. Our aim is to empower staff to confidently deliver a play-based pedagogy to develop the concepts and skills that are important for STEM learning. We will enhance our children's understanding of STEM through the learning experiences we offer, and we will actively encourage our families to be involved in our STEM journey. This shared vision has helped to drive forward our capacity for improvement.

We surveyed our families to encourage them to share their STEM learning journey.

From the survey, parents participated in STEM learning by volunteering to share STEM in the workplace and exploring sustainability in the garden.

We had 5 parents respond, who shared their STEM knowledge. This linked well with our Improvement Plan which also included Family Involvement, Engagement and Learning. We worked together delivering play-based learning sessions to our learners, including sessions with a University Professor, Doctor, Quantity Surveyor and Storysense ambassador.

STEM stay and play – Families were invited to explore different STEM experiences that were provided in the nursery with their child. They had the opportunity to create their own bucket linking to the nursery rhyme "Jack and Jill," make paper telephones, make pizzas in the oven for snack, create bird feeders.

We used Forms via Microsoft to collect information on STEM in the workplace and parental feedback.

Partnership working with others.



We enjoyed a visit from the Royal Navy who conducted a range of STEM experiences. The children had the opportunity to virtually look inside a submarine, participate in a snap circuit table exercise and program sphero robotics. We reached out to the Royal Navy STEM Co-ordinator to ask if they would be willing to work in partnership with our centre. We arranged a visit in which the STEM team would deliver a range of different STEM based activities for the children to explore.



This included a virtual programme which allowed the children to explore the inside of a submarine. The children also took part in a programming session where they were able to programme robots using iPads. This sparked a renewed interest in programming that we extended using the BeeBots and remote-control cars.

This visit provided the children with opportunities to explore future STEM based career paths. The children were inspired and there was lots of discussion about what they want to be when they are older. This experience sparked interest throughout the nursery allowing staff to extend the learning experiences throughout all aspects of the curriculum. We invited our primary six buddies over to join in with the visit, linking with the school and building relationships with the children who were going to be buddies as our children transition to primary 1.

Some of the children enjoyed a visit from Caledonian Water who gave us an introduction to the water cycle and waste water treatment during an interactive session. They explained the journey of water, how to stay safe around construction sites and the children had the opportunity to try equipment and take part in experiments.

We have also had a visit from a microbiologist. We collaborated with the school to explore the role of a microbiologist. Most of the children explored the resources that the microbiologist uses in her work. The children were very excited to wear the lab coats during their learning.

We have also been taking part in STEM based transition visits to Primary 1. We have explored the loose parts resources at the school to support our imaginative and creative play. During this the children have been using many key STEM skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and communicating. The children have also used resources to participate in key mathematical skills including measuring, estimating, and dividing. Furthermore, the children have been exploring engineering skills through these sessions and are continuing to visit primary 1 for these sessions.



"Visit from a parent who is a University Professor - We learned all about blood and how blood is made in our bodies, we explored white and red blood cells too. We followed the steps to create our own blood adding in each element and learning what they do. We then made our own cells using playdough. We learned lots of unfamiliar words and information and developed our knowledge of science."

During the last term, the nursery children were working with P1 in the school playground. They have worked together using the loose parts toolkit to create large scale models. The children created some wonderful things, including Big Ben, a train, and a giant marble run.

"My child really enjoyed the home project linked to STEM. He also really enjoyed the visitors when they came."

Achievement

In May 2025, we submitted our STEM Nation Evidence a year ahead of time to Education Scotland for validation. We are immensely proud that we were awarded the four elements.

- Leadership in STEM
- STEM Family Learning
- Employability and STEM Partnership working
- STEM Curriculum and Learner Pathways



Next Steps:

- Moving forward we will create an action plan to allow us to plan for and achieve our final element of our STEM Nation Award, Equity and Equality.
- Continue to develop and improve the current STEM initiatives and achievements we have already made.

Centre priority 2: Family Involvement, Engagement and Learning

NIF Priority • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;

Choose an item.

NIF Driver

Choose an item.

Parent/carer engagement and family learning

HGIOELC QIs

QI 2.7 Partnerships

QI 2.5 Family Learning

QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing quality and inclusion

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

1.4 Family engagement

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Progress and impact:

This session we continued to build upon and ensure that our families felt more involved in the life of the centre. A variety of opportunities were available over the year to support parental involvement/engagement and fostering positive relationships with parents. During the year we saw a larger uptake in families joining us in centre than previous years. Our registers highlight that most children have had their parent attend most of the family workshops on offer. Popular sessions that took place throughout the year are STEM focused stay and play sessions, Family challenge of building a car for our own Christmas drive in movie, mystery readers, visit and share your occupation & gardening days. Our families had previously highlighted that set times for stay and play sessions hindered attendance due to work commitments. We listened and instead made our stay and play sessions across the week open to all at any time across the day, even offering it to some families who could only attend with their child on a day that is not their usual session. All our sessions were designed to encourage social interaction, play based learning and community building; allowing parents to network and build relationships with each other.

Each year we hold a well-attended curriculum evening where our families can join us and find out more about the centre and learning experiences that we offer to the children. The Curriculum evening gives parents an insight into the children's usual day to day routine at the centre, and the opportunity to talk to staff and look at the children's work on wall displays and floor books.

Parent meetings were held in October and May giving parents opportunities to discuss their child's progress or any issues they may have regarding their child's development. If parents were unable to attend, parents' meetings we offered alternative arrangements via phone calls or face to face meetings tailoring to individual parent's requirements. Parents commented that staff were 'Very *supportive*' and '*dedicated and passionate*.' Almost all staff found parent evenings a great way of building relationships with parents; gaining an insight into their home life and how they can work together to ensure progress for individuals. Staff who found this a bit overwhelming in October were supported, offered practical advice which allowed them to grow in confidence by May's parents' meetings.

Parents are offered support at times of transition, during settling into nursery, transferring sessions, and transferring to school. Supporting parents at times of transition is extremely valuable for them, ensuring they feel happy and secure in the knowledge that staff are supporting them and their child. We tailored this for individuals respecting that one size does not fit all, as some required an enhanced transition.

Multi Agency working community involvement is well established in our centre, and we continue to work collaboratively working with agencies through Pupil Support Groups and Team Around the Child meetings. These well-established working partnerships is paramount in the development of individual children and ensures Speech and language therapists, Educational Psychologist Health visitors and ELR outreach team are all working together for the best interests of the child. Throughout the year we have managed to enable key workers to join various meetings, and school transitions visits. Opportunities to take part in collaborative meetings gives staff an awareness of how the process works, giving them confidence to share their knowledge with families.

Home Links

Our home links have continued to grow and enhance the children's learning through experiences they can continue at home. We have a variety of home link bags for the children and families to use at home. The bags include loose parts, rights respecting, Baljaffray bear, and STEM-a-story linking to familiar story books. We have created seasonal bags to collect interesting items within nature, for example, we created Autumn bags where the children and their families collected a variety of coloured leaves, conkers, twigs, berries. Almost all of the children engaged in this experience and brought the bags back to nursery to sort into dissimilar categories and used the materials to create transient art and to use in the mud kitchen.



After use of the home link bags, our families upload photographs of the children using the resources and share comments of the children's learning on our Learning journals,

this then allows keyworkers to further interact with learning that has taken place at home. A register is kept within each keygroup, to allow keyworkers to track which home learning tasks have been accessed by the children.

Keyworkers ensure that every child in their group has accessed a home learning task each term or more often depending on the learning that is taking place.



For Christmas we set a challenge at home to engineer a car from junk modelling to bring along to the Christmas Drive-in Movie event. An information newsletter was shared with all families to give guidance on the task, and they were also given the opportunity to have support in the setting to create the car. Some parents required cardboard boxes which we sourced for them from our local food store. Families were given prior notice of the event and during this time they were uploading photographs of the progress of creating their car. We held this event in the primary school hall, and all children were invited to attend regardless of it being their usual session or not. A total of 35 out of 43 families participated in this task. Afterwards we gathered feedback from our families via a glow form, and they told us:

"My child absolutely loved the drive-in movie night. As soon as we got home, he said how much he enjoyed it."

"Our whole family from Parents to Great Grandparents, Grandparents, Great Aunties and Uncles got on board with building J's car, it was a really special project. I know my child thoroughly enjoying building his car and had the best time at the drive-in movie."

During the STEM drive in movie challenge some of the children created a stall using junk modelling materials and used their enterprise skills to sell the drive-in event tickets to families. The children also helped to create snack bags to sell at the drive-in movie. They sorted the snacks into bags ensuring that everyone got the same number of items in their bag. They reused their stall to sell their snack bags at the drive-in movie event. The children developed their numeracy skills by handling transactions and money, and they learned about social interaction by interacting with customers.



Parent workshops

Parents have come into the nursery to share their job roles with the children. We had a parent who is a doctor join us and share with the children his medical equipment, which he explained what they were used for and encouraged the children to try. Another parent engaged the children through a STEM through stories experience which she runs as her own business. The children had the opportunity to explore different sounds through musical instruments.



Gardening Day – We were replenishing and developing our growing area within the garden. We had the help and support of parents and grandparents. They helped to add soil to our grow boxes, supported the children to plant the seeds, and gave advice on how to look after the fruit and vegetables planted and the best time to harvest. Once the fruit and vegetables were ready to harvest, we used them to cook in the nursery and at home. We are in the initial stages of establishing a gardening group for our families to support this ongoing project within the setting.



We have offered tailored support to a few families over the last year, these have including toileting support, bedtime routines and support for a child who had anxiety around bathing. Our family champion has liaised with families and outside agencies to ensure the support was appropriate for each child. Working together has a positive impact on our centre, sharing strategies that work, making families feel they are not alone and having someone to turn too impacts on the overall ethos of the centre. We are creating an inclusive supportive environment for all.

One parent commented *"Families are welcomed and encouraged to support their children within and out with the nursery. Lots of opportunities are given to visit/share experiences and I very much feel like nursery is an extension of home."*

Family Consultation

Through our own self-evaluation we consulted with our families and asked the question "do we offer enough family engagement opportunities"? Over 60% of our parents responded and shared with us some of the comments below.

"The Family Engagement opportunities this year have been fantastic - they are very inclusive and offered on different times/on different days to take into account when children attend and also working parents."

"There are fabulous opportunities for families to engage from home projects, at home baking, stay and play, charity fundraisers and photos with great detail about what the children are learning and their next steps."

"It was lovely to be able to be part of my child's day at nursery. It was very useful to have them start at 9am as it made staying for a while a lot easier".

"The events were well-organized, and it was a great chance to connect with the nursery staff and other families. It was great to see the children interacting in such a welcoming environment, and the atmosphere was warm and inclusive. I appreciate the effort and look forward to future events!"

Some future suggestions for us to consider also included *"Keep on asking families to come to deliver activities, share traditions, recipes. They are inclusive activities and always fun for all."* *"Spring picnic sessions would be good"*. *"It would be good to have similar events, may be more messy things in the garden"*.

Next Steps:

- Continue to offer varied parental engagement opportunities across the year.
- Create and share parental engagement calendar with families.
- Create an area in the rainbow room to showcase wider achievement celebrations.

Centre priority 3: Children's Rights UNCRC

NIF Priority .Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

NIF Driver

Choose an item.

School and ELC improvement

Choose an item.

HGIOELC QIs

QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child protection

QI 2.4 Personalised Support

Care Inspectorate Quality Framework QIs

1.1nurturing care and support

1.2 Children are safe and protected

Progress and impact:



We have two staff members who lead on Rights Respecting within our centre. In June 2024 we were assessed in conjunction with our primary school and received our Gold Rights Respecting Accreditation. The adjudicator who assessed both school and nursery stated the nursery's 'Rights floor book' was a great starting point for introducing rights to parents, as this may be the first time that many parents will be aware of Children's Rights and how they are incorporated into nursery life. We should continue to foster positive relations with parents as he could see the impact on the children as he chatted to them throughout his visit.



Throughout the year we have been celebrating different cultures, and religious beliefs. By being exposed to different family traditions and shared cultural experiences our children are raising awareness and ensuring inclusion for all. The children discuss how they are all unique and how it is their 'right' to celebrate their own traditions. This links to our overarching 'Right' the children have been learning about Article 14 -The right to form your own thoughts and beliefs and Article 31 -The right to relax, play and take part in cultural and creative activities. Staff continue to reinforce this learning through provocations, discussions and linking family celebrations shared via their Learning Journals.



The Rights of the Child has been embedded into practice and is visible in most adult and child interactions. The EYC celebrates children's voice and captures the learning using wall displays, observations and learning journals. Through the children's rights learning, most children are developing an understanding that they have the right to be safe, play and to be loved. Throughout their session our children can play where and with whom they choose, this kind of Free play is crucial for early childhood development and is recognized as a fundamental right for children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emphasizes the importance of play and this type of play allows children to explore, problem-solve, and develop crucial social, emotional, and cognitive skills at their own pace and in a way that suits their interests. Our children are also involved in the choosing of new resources to enhance our areas, and at times we will use voting systems to offer choice to the children, this is supportive to the children's feelings of empowerment and self – worth; realising that their voice matters and is acted upon.

We have introduced a new learning experience using our Rights spoons, this is a fun and tactile learning experience for the children to enjoy. Each spoon contains a different right such as right to a home, safety, family, education, health care, to play and to have an identify. We have a set of spoons available in each of the playrooms for children and staff to refer to through play reinforcing each right in a natural way. Through this learning the children have been observed using the 'rights' language during their play. During a recent survey a 1/3 of parents responded with 100% of them agreeing that their child's knowledge of rights had increased, with one commenting *'I think this is an excellent topic'*

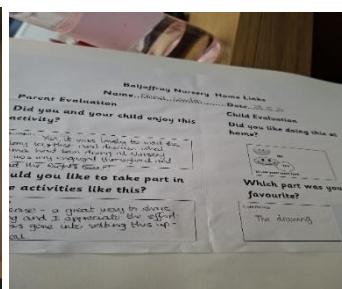
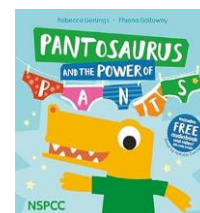


As part of road safety week in November the children learned about their right to be kept safe. They explored the role of the lollipop person and practiced crossing the road safely. Whilst outside the children looked at other ways of staying safe including checking the garden and conducting a risk assessment each day before use – Article 19 The Right to be Protected.

The children were also learning about their own body safety. This is a particularly important right and message for children to be aware of their bodies and how they can help keep themselves safe and how it is all of our responsibility to keep our children safe from harm.

Parents were signposted to the website for the NSPCC and all the information provided as the children were going to be learning about their right to be safe.

Working together with the children, staff created a HomeLink bag, for Children's Rights and introduced 'Pantasaurus' to provide a child friendly way of conveying the message of how to stay safe when looking after their own bodies. Parents feedback was positive and to further enhance this learning, we plan to introduce another bag to share with our families.



Parent comments – *"My child always talks about children rights. If she is asked to not do anything, by which she can get hurt, she always says Right to be Safe".*

"My child often mentions his right to play, be safe and be healthy. This isn't something he has learned at home, so it is always very impressive when he shares his knowledge of his rights".

Next Steps:

- Re-establish a Rights Committee of staff and children and organise events throughout the academic year.
- Rights EYC Committee to include new members and continue to work in partnership with the Primary School Committee.
- Work on specific, focused Articles across a term.
- Articles to be visible through planning sheets and learning walls.

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.
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- Within Baljaffray EYC we aspire for all children to reach their potential through providing age appropriate provocations and opportunities to follow their individual needs and interests. Our environment is set up to include all learners making adaptations were required.
 - Throughout the year we have actively engaged in various health and wellbeing activities giving our children and families the tools to navigate through times of stress, transition and changes that may occur in their life. PATHs and discussions about children's rights developed social and emotional skills recognising their own feelings and feelings of others enabling them to build self-esteem and resilience. Children's health and wellbeing has continued to improve, and we have continued to access and utilise our safe space 'The rainbow room'. Children are supported to share their feelings and emotions about going to school using the colour monster, which has given them the skills to regulate their emotions and describe how they are feeling. Transition planning is effective and well thought out. All children have had the opportunity to be part of our own school environment at different times of the day, and experience what school will be like first hand. All children are treated fairly with their individual needs being met, we have individual care plans and children's passports that are completed with parents and added to throughout the year.
 - Recognising the diverse background of our children allows us to be an inclusive and responsive centre. We provide a rich learning environment, including home links that encourage learning at home fostering a collaborative approach to our children's learning. Using audit tools, we monitor and plan for a starting point for individuals ensuring progress offering support and challenge were required.

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

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

Summary of Centre Improvement priorities for Session 2025/2026

- 1. Up, Up and Away
- 2. Learning to read in the Early Years – National Professional Learning Programme
- 3. Developing our centre Curriculum Rationale

What is our capacity for continuous improvement

All staff at Baljaffray EYC continue to ensure children will be offered high quality learning experiences, linking to the curriculum, and positively impacting on their learning. Working with all stakeholders we are confident that all children will make progress during their time with us. Our self-evaluation and monitoring procedures are in place to ensure we are constantly striving for improvement, guaranteeing our children will be able to reach their fullest potential.

Through continuous professional learning and development staff will use their skills and knowledge, to increase their current theory and practice. This will enhance learning for our children, providing a stimulating environment with opportunities for growth.