

# Heads of Ayr Nursery Standards and Quality Report 23/24 Introduction Vision

At Heads of Ayr Nursery, we create a home from home, welcoming environment promoting positive, nurturing relationships based on trust and respect. Providing a natural environment where children can actively explore outdoors, developing new skills and experiencing the wonders of nature first-hand. We continue to work collaboratively with families and our community to develop a shared vision and passion to support children to feel valued and inspired to achieve their full potential.

#### **Values**

At Heads of Ayr Nursery, we have created seven important values which we promote within our centre:



#### Aims

At Heads of Ayr Nursery, we believe that every day there is more to learn and that the opportunity to do so is all around us. As well as being a place of learning, we pride ourselves on ensuring that all children come into a loving, caring environment where they are valued and listened to. We also involve children and parents in continually improving our service.

To provide a safe, happy, fun and nurturing homely environment where children feel secure, valued, supported and respected.

Maintain close working relationships with parents and carers to enable them to feel fully involved in their child's learning and development.

To provide a healthy and fulfilling relationship between future generations and our environment, the outdoors, and animals.

Provide an environment that offers inclusive care and education of the highest standards.

To foster high quality leadership and learning with a commitment to the professional development of all members of staff, providing a positive working environment and staff wellbeing.

To provide an imaginative and challenging learning environment with high quality experiences where children can explore and investigate, supporting and encouraging them to succeed at their own pace.

To work in partnership with other agencies and our communities to promote and improve outcomes for children.

To promote a culture of ambition, recognising and celebrating success and achievements.

To provide a service that is eco conscious with minimal impact on our environment, teaching future generations of its importance.

Our collective aspirations were reviewed and developed by stakeholders in June 2023. Consultation took place via email survey and discussions.

#### Context of the early years setting

Heads of Ayr Nursery is a private nursery nestled within the Ayrshire countryside. The nursery opened in March 2021 and is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide childcare and education for 57 children aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school full time of whom no more than 25 children can be 2 to under 3 years. We are affiliated with Heads of Ayr Farm Park where the children have the opportunity to observe a variety of animals within their unique outdoor surroundings. These aid learning opportunities and promote a curious and innovative approach to education. Our professional staff team is fully qualified, except for our Early Years Apprentice, who, like the rest of the team, is passionate about their role and continually engages in training opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. Our staff have engaged in various training including first aid, tools training, Play on Pedals, woodwork and phonological awareness to support literacy attainment.

The nursery is open 51 weeks of the year, our opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8am-6pm. Children have various patterns of attendance. The nursery entered into partnership with South Ayrshire Council in 2021, we offer funded places for children aged 2-5 years. The 1140 hours are offered on a flexible basis according to eligibility and the

needs of families. Referrals from external agencies are accommodated. We continue to work in partnership with South Ayrshire Council. Our nursery has established strong connections within the community, including building positive relationships with the local nursing home. We recently participated in a highly successful fundraising event to support Ayrshire Cancer Support, with great involvement from our nursery families. Additionally, the children regularly visit the library bus, where they borrow books that align with their interests



and choices, further enhancing their love for reading.

Our Care inspectorate inspection took place in 2022. We are proud of our grades and remain committed to continually striving for improvement.

Quality of care and Support	4 – Good
Quality of environment	4 – Good
Quality of staffing	4 – Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 – Good

The nursery was recently inspected by HMIE in July 2024. We are awaiting publication of our report.

#### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (percentage by Decile)

Centre		Quinti	le 1	Quinti	le 2	Quinti	le 3	Quinti	le 4	Quintile	e 5
	Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Heads Of Ayr Nursery		3	2	2	1	18	3	2	0	13	4

Information from the table above shows that approx. 17% of our children live within SIMD 1 & 2 the most deprived area and approx. 40% live within SIMD 9 & 10, the least deprived area.

Ayr locality has a population of 31,101 people. 32.8% of people lived in the least deprived SIMD quintile and 6.3% lived in the most deprived quintile. 25% of Mothers exclusively breastfeed at 6-8 weeks and 80% of Primary 1 children with no dental caries.

#### Staff team

The staff team is made up of 1 manager, 1 depute, 1 senior, 9 early years practitioners and an additional 3 supply early years practitioners, 1 early year's apprentice 1 office administrator, 1 domestic, 1 chef and 1 groundsmen. Our senior is enrolled in the PDA course.

Over recent months we have encountered an evolving workforce resulting in the recruitment and training of early years practitioners. They have been deployed across the setting within the 2–3-year-old room and the 3–5-year-old room. Our staff team continually undertake training opportunities provided by South Ayrshire CLPL, engage in online training and external



opportunities to support them in their professional learning. Regular monthly team meetings take place, providing opportunities to connect and discuss all aspects of the nursery and areas for improvement. Staff appreciation and wellbeing sessions provide occasions set out to recognise individual achievements and boost team moral.

#### The building

The building consists of 2 playrooms - The Sunshine room for children aged 2-3 years and the Rainbow room for children aged 3-5 years. Within the Sunshine Room there is a separate room which provides a quiet space where children can rest and sleep. We have a large reception area with mood lighting, this is utilised for transitional experiences such as dance, yoga and mealtimes. The kitchen, staff room, office, laundry room and parent room are all easily accessible from the reception.

#### **Outdoor** area

Our outdoor area is very spacious, within its secure fenced area is a variety of natural equipment and resources to support children in their learning and development. We have an outside toilet which is easily accessible from our garden area. There is an allotment area where the children have nurtured and



grown various organic produce. Our large outdoor space consists of a sheltered deck area, outdoor classroom, shed sand pit and two tree houses. Our mud kitchen facilitates running water and access to real kitchen utensils as well as natural resources. The children have cultivated and nurtured their own calming wellbeing space, consisting of trees, a wild meadow, tyre hammocks and seating. Our loose parts offer real

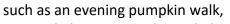


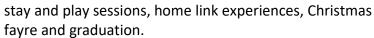
life meaningful resources and materials which continually evolves, with the latest addition of a tool shed.

#### **Partnerships**

Within session 2023/2024 we continued to maintain links with Greenan Manor Care Home. We have strong links with Heads of Ayr Farm Park and utilise many opportunities such as shop and animal visits.

We have held a number of events for our families throughout the year







Various invitations are extended to families throughout the year, providing opportunities for them to share their skillsets with the children. Overall, these events were well attended by parents and carers throughout the year.

These partnership events are in addition to our annual celebrations such as, Rabbie Burns

day, Easter Bonnet Parade, Chinese New Year, World Book Day etc. Our families have engaged in various charity fundraisers throughout the year, wholeheartedly supporting their local communities. At Heads of Ayr Nursery, we strive to make a real difference through adopting a family centered approach, improving the life of children and families via our giving tree, food bank and lending library.

We would like to commend and thank our amazing team for their professionalism, dedication and commitment shown throughout our

journey. This has culminated in our top 20 Rated Nursery in Scotland award from Day Nurseries and our recognition is something we are very proud of for the second year running.





#### **Developmental milestones data**

%	2022/2023	2023/2024
HWB	92%	100%
C & L	85%	92%
M & N	85%	92%

The table shows an overview of the developmental milestones data collected within our setting 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

The data demonstrates strength in the provision and highlights the positive impact on children's learning. The results give us an insight into areas for improvement.

The number of children achieving 8 or more developmental milestones in all areas has increased from the previous year.

The table illustrates a rise in our Health and Wellbeing milestones compared to last year. This progress reflects the positive impact of our consistent approach to fostering healthy relationships and emotional support. Strategies such as incorporating the Colour Monster throughout the setting and providing outdoor benches for emotional regulation have significantly contributed to this improvement. Moving forward, we will maintain our focus on encouraging children to discuss their learning, and express and share their feelings, ensuring continued growth in their overall wellbeing.

The consistent use of visuals and Makaton throughout our setting has contributed positively to children's language and communication. This approach, combined with targeted staff training in phonological awareness and focused Speech and Language support for individual children, has clearly contributed to an increase in attainment. To further support these milestones, we will continue offering a diverse range of letter recognition and rhyming activities, along with ample opportunities for children to engage with writing materials and enhance their literacy skills.

Over the past year, we have observed notable progress in our Mathematics and Numeracy milestones. This improvement can be attributed to targeted staff training and the development of new numeracy resources, which have significantly enhanced children's learning outcomes. Moving forward, we will maintain our commitment to offering children diverse and engaging experiences that support skills such as subitising and interpreting simple graphs and charts.

We believe that our emphasis on outdoor learning and active engagement with our environment has positively influenced our results. By providing children with rich, hands-on experiences in natural settings, we have enhanced their overall development and learning outcomes.

#### What key outcomes have we achieved?

Service Priority 1: Improvement in chi	dren and voung peor	ple's health and wellbeing
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**NIF**: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

#### Links to HGIOELC:

QI: 1.3 Leadership of change

2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment

2.6 Transitions

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion

#### **Progress and Impact:**

We have successfully rolled out a consistent, supportive approach to children's wellbeing and rights within our setting. The children were involved in creating colour coded benches and zones of regulation, supporting them to maintain their emotional regulation.



Children are frequently observed accessing colour coded benches with their peers, supporting them in communicating and regulating their feelings. The use of colour monster resources has also been key to children positively connecting with and sharing their feelings.



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Our staff team engaged in UNCRC training to

support children in developing an understanding of their rights and

responsibilities. We will continue to promote children's rights within the nursery and gain further knowledge in our journey to becoming a Rights Respecting School.

In promoting healthy, active lifestyles, children have been actively involved in demonstrating their



awareness and ability to risk assess their own environment, they demonstrate their knowledge, which significantly enhances their ability to navigate various situations safely and confidently. This ability has been fostered partly through children's large gross motor experiences. Our established track has allowed children to be involved in recognising potential hazards, understanding the consequences of different actions, and making informed decisions to avoid or mitigate risks. By fostering this skill, children become more independent and resilient, capable of handling unexpected challenges with a calm and thoughtful approach.

#### **Next steps:**

We will continue to promote children's rights within the nursery and gain further knowledge in our journey to becoming a Rights Respecting School.



#### Service Priority 2: Improvement in literacy attainment

NIF: Impro	vement in att	tainment
particularly	in literacy a	nd numeracy.

#### Links to HGIOELC:

QI: 1.3 Leadership of change

- 2.2 Curriculum
- 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment
- 2.7 Partnerships
- 3.2 Securing children's progress

#### **Progress and Impact:**

Our developmental milestone data in Communication and Language milestones shows a positive increase of 7% from last year.

Positive outcomes in early literacy skills for children, attributed to a consistent communication approach across the setting. The structured and unified method of interactions and use of visuals has fostered a more cohesive learning environment, enhancing children's ability to grasp foundational literacy concepts effectively. The acquisition of new rhyming resources and the revamp of existing materials have also played a key role in this holistic improvement, ensuring that each child's individual

needs are effectively supported. Furthermore, incorporating Spanish as an additional language has been advantageous for all children, enriching their learning experience. This bilingual approach has not only enriched their vocabulary but also boosted social skills, and overall engagement in learning activities. The integration of these strategies demonstrated a holistic improvement in early literacy, ensuring that all children's individual needs were supported in a robust and inclusive manner. The children's graduation performance in Spanish highlights the children's ability to confidently demonstrate their skills in daily recollection. This achievement reflects their growing proficiency and comfort with the language, showcasing their progress and the effectiveness of





learning an additional language.

#### **Next steps:**

We will continue to engage in phonological awareness training to further develop newly recruited Early Years Practitioners understanding of literacy through story and rhyme, positively supporting children's literacy learning experiences.



#### **Service Priority 3:** Improvement in numeracy attainment

NIF: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

#### **Links to HGIOELC:**

QI: 1.3 Leadership of Change

2.2 Curriculum

2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment

3.2 Securing children's progress

#### **Progress and Impact:**

Our developmental milestone data in Maths and Numeracy shows a positive increase of 7% from last

Positive developments in numeracy have been greatly enhanced with the addition of resources and comprehensive staff training in Effective Maths.

Through delivery of appropriate engaging experiences, practitioners have supported the children in building the solid foundations in basic mathematical concepts. We will continue to integrate and develop numeracy opportunities and experiences, supporting subitising and the interpretation of visual data.

The findings from our mathematics and numeracy audit have resulted in the addition of real-life tools and corresponding

resources. We are in the early stages of developing children's woodwork skills and the use of real-life

tools.

Our staff have undergone basic woodwork and tool use training. We continue to build on our strong foundation to ensure children have the



practical abilities to work with real life tools safely and effectively. The recent creation of our outdoor tool shed and barn has provided an invaluable space for developing and supporting the growth of both children's life skills and creative interests.



#### **Next steps:**

We will proceed to provide additional staff training to integrate best practice, promoting children's curiosity and inquiry through the use of real-life tools and woodwork experiences. We will continue to build and develop numeracy opportunities and experiences, supporting subitising and the interpretation of visual data.

#### **Evaluation Summary**

We have made substantial advancements in our 2023-2024 priorities, identifying key strengths that have positively influenced most of our children. While these strengths have yielded notable benefits our commitment to continous improvement drives us to refine and enhance our efforts further. Our next steps outline the key priorities for the future, focussing on building on our successes and addressing areas for growth to ensure greater impact and development.

QI	Self -evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	
Developing a shared vison, values and aims relevant to the ELC setting and its community.	Our setting's vision, values and aims were reviewed and refreshed to align with the aspirations of our stakeholders. Our collaborative effort, bringing together the voices of partners across our setting and its community. By engaging with families and staff and community members, we have ensured that our guiding principles reflect the collective aspirations and needs of everyone involved. Moving forward, we will focus on embedding these principles into every aspect of our setting.
Strategic planning for continuous Improvement	We regularly engage in self-evaluation and monitoring processes as a team and our families also contribute via online surveys. We have built strong partnerships with our families, this is evident through our quality feedback.  Our senior leaders carefully manage the planning and implementation of changes and improvements, ensuring a well-judged and appropriate pace benefits the entire team.  Newly appointed staff engage with the National Induction Resource as part of our induction process. They are guided and mentored by a supportive management team and colleagues, fostering a collaborative ethos. The
	team is proactive in applying their training and openly sharing best practices, while collaboration with children and parents ensures that feedback effectively informs change. Staff have taken the lead in initiatives, sharing personal skillsets such as introducing Spanish, and the implementation of a consistent communication approach across the setting using visuals and Makaton.
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Implementing improvement and change

We embrace change with a positive outlook, adeptly managing new initiatives to ensure smooth transitions. Our effective communication of our vision ensures that



everyone is aligned and informed. Key processes for self-evaluation and quality assurance are in place to promote continuous improvement, including peer assessments that support critical thinking among staff and drive meaningful change.

As a team we come together regularly to communicate and share ideas and

areas for improvement, ensuring everyone feels valued, listened to and able to contribute.



An evaluation of good, there are important strengths with further areas of improvement.

**Next steps:** To further engage parents and children in driving areas of improvement forward, ensuring a collaborative approach to our development. With recent changes to our team, we are committed to progressing in mentoring and supporting emerging leadership roles to strengthen our overall effectiveness.

QI

Self-evaluation

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and engagement

All children are very well supported by the warm, welcoming ethos within our setting. Positive relationships with children and families are central to the vision and ethos of Heads of Ayr Nursery. A warm and personal welcome can be observed at drop off and time is spent sharing the child's day at pick up. All

children come happily and confidently into the setting and engage well with staff and activities. Our consistent approach to supporting positive relationships enhances children's wellbeing. Our learning environments are nurturing. We are beginning to support children in developing an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Children's rights are evident in our setting. The nursery is in the early stages of working towards Rights Respecting Schools award. All children have access to a range of quality play experiences and resources that sustain and engage their interests. In line with our context and vision, children benefit from the rich and extensive outdoor experiences and are confident





and engaged in a range of outdoor play. Children contribute to the development of outdoor play experiences and environment and as a result children are confident in their outdoor play and managing risk. Monitoring and observations note that outdoors children demonstrate very good levels of independence and have the freedom to choose experiences and select materials freely. Children can confidently lead their own learning.

Quality of interactions

Practitioners know their children very well and most have a very good understanding of child development and use this to support each child as an individual. Our practitioners provide effective interactions that support and extend children's learning. Our new staff and apprentices are supported and mentored by management and peers, developing a consistent approach for all children. Staff continue to be supported to provide consistent higher order thinking skills using visuals and prompts. Observations of play note that most staff support children skilfully through positive high - quality interactions.

### Effective use of assessment

Staff and children share their learning experiences via digital learning journals. We continue to support children to access their journals and talk about their learning. The Big Learning Book provides an opportunity for children to talk about their learning. Plans for individual children who require them are in place. We work with parents, partners and other agencies to agree plans with appropriate targets and timescales.



## Planning tracking and monitoring

Planning for children aged 2 to 3s is largely responsive to their individual needs and interests. Planning for 3 to 5s is based upon children's needs, interests and abilities. It takes account of responsive and intentional outcomes. Staff use their observations of children's play to develop PLODs and next steps to support and extend children's learning. Staff use Learning Journals to track children's progress in key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and well -being and all other aspects of learning. This session we have implemented meetings with individual staff to discuss, track and monitor children's progress in learning. This has provided positive opportunities to ensure individual children are making good progress across all aspects of learning and are appropriately supported and challenged.

# An evaluation of good, there are important strengths with further areas for improvement.

#### **Next steps:**

We will further incorporate rights respecting language through play. Individual children's next steps are agreed through care plans. Continue to embed how this links into planning for children aged 2 years. Continue to ensure that every child is appropriately challenged through consistent high quality staff interactions and environments. Continue to develop the processes for intentional and responsive planning for 3 to 5s.

QI	Self-evaluation
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion.	Our nursery is dedicated to fostering a nurturing environment where staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility to promote the wellbeing of every child. At the core of our setting, children are encouraged and supported to build positive relationships developed by our caring team. Consistency is key to our approach, particularly in supporting and promoting positive behaviour, which aligns closely with our established policies. The children have created their own set of meaningful golden rules to follow. This consistency helps children learn to self-regulate appropriately, coinciding with the utilisation of support tools like Colour Monster and visuals.
Wellbeing	The SHANARRI principles are deeply embedded in every aspect of our setting, guiding our daily practices, care plans and interactions. We have made positive steps in exploring and embedding children's rights, providing opportunities for children to engage in small group experiences that promote these rights. The wellbeing of both children and their families is central to our ethos; we make it a priority to know our families well and to build strong and trusting relationships.
	Children in our nursery are encouraged to confidently speak about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and we are committed to continuing to embed these vital rights as we work towards our Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) accreditation.
Fulfilment of statutory duties	Staff training is a continuous process, ensuring that all team members are well-versed in child protection protocols and that personal care plans are created within 28 days and regularly updated in collaboration with parents. These plans include appropriate targets to support each child's development. Our staff are fully aware of their statutory duties and are vigilant in their efforts to keep children safe. We regularly host Team with Families (TWF) meetings working collaboratively with multi agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided for the children in our care.
	Staff show a clear understanding of their professional roles and responsibilities in line with SSSC. They are proactive in engaging in all settings, policies and procedures and in keeping up to date with current guidance and legislation.
Inclusion and equality	We promote a home from home welcoming environment focusing on positive, nurturing relationships based on trust and respect for all service users. Attachment theory underpins our core values as we work closely with children and families to build strong bonds.  We have clear evidence-based strategies in place to remove barriers and continue to promote outcomes for children within small groups and 1 to 1 targeted support sessions.

We have implemented effective strategies that have supported progress for most children, with a particular emphasis on those facing challenges, including from our most deprived areas, those with additional support needs, whilst also recognising hidden poverty. We are continuously reviewing and identifying supported needs of children across the setting. By utilising relevant data to identify the barriers children and families face in accessing wider achievements, we aim to use this information as a reflective tool for growth.

An evaluation of good, there are important strengths with further areas of improvement.

#### **Next steps:**

Continue to embed children's rights and work towards Rights Respecting Schools award. Through utilising data identifying the barriers children face in accessing wider achievement, we aim to incorporate sessions that benefit all children.

QI

Self-evaluation

3.2 Securing Children's Progress

Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing Children in our setting, including those children aged 2, are developing social, emotional and physical skills very well. They are developing confidence and increasing success as learners within a supportive and encouraging ethos. Staff and parents work together to achieve positive outcomes for all children. Children aged 2 are developing a good range of core language and communication skills. They are beginning to explore basic mathematical concepts through play. Children aged 3 to 5 are achieving very well in key areas of learning. Almost all children are making very good progress building

on prior learning from the setting and from home. Children's outcomes in numeracy, mathematics, literacy and health and well -being are very good. Staff use a range of information and data. Children's learning journals show progress they are making across learning. Children are making good progress across all aspects of learning. Children benefit from a wide range of experiences including Spanish. We use



our unique context well to enable children's learning in engaging in real life situations. This includes learning about animals, nature and shopping at the farm shop.

Children's progress over time

Our practitioners monitor individual children's progress through the digital tracking system of learning journals. They record and use information such as developmental milestones to show the progression children are making over time. Our data has shown an increase in the number of children from the previous year achieving 8 or more developmental milestones, this trend is above the authority average. Children's attendance at nursery is proactively monitored and procedures are in place to respond to non -attendance. We work with partners such as Health Visitors to support families. Termly tracking and monitoring sessions make sure every child is well supported by staff and strategies are in place to ensure that each child has the capacity to reach their full potential.

Overall quality of children's achievement

Almost all children are proud of their achievements and successes both in the setting and at home. Staff encourage children and parents to share their wow moments and wider achievements. Most parents enjoy sharing these with us. Children contribute positively to the life of the setting, and community. Children enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities in the centre such as 'safety supervisor' and 'lunch legend'. In the wider community we engage with the local care home and participate in charitable activities. Children are experienced in actively leading their own risk assessments within our outdoor area, exercising responsibility well.

Ensuring equity for all children

All of our children are valued and respected as individuals. We actively promote diversity and are inclusive of all. We sensitively incorporate festivals and events. We work collaboratively with each family and their unique experience of time in our setting, with bespoke transitions and support for children. Keyworkers are chosen by the child once they have settled. All new starts benefit from an effective induction programme, which is sensitively tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Parents feedback

indicates that they feel well supported when their child starts the centre and transitions between rooms. The settling in process is flexible and personalised to each child's individual needs and planned in conjunction with the parents. Parents are invited to stay for the settling in period. Where appropriate an enhanced transition is in place to support individual children moving onto school. Children with specific barriers to learning benefit from effective planning with partners. This includes very strong





relationships with Health Visitors, Language Provision, Autism Outreach and Educational Psychologist. This helps us to effectively support and reduce the barriers our children face. We are proactive in mitigating the effects of poverty. Families, including where there is hidden poverty, are well supported with food bank provision and the giving tree.

An evaluation of good, there are important strengths with further areas for improvement.

#### Next steps:

Continue to support children to talk about their learning and next steps. Recognise ways to gather, record and track children's wider achievements to ensure children do not miss out on wider aspects of achievement. Maintain the positive start to improvements over time and children's outcomes.

#### What are the key priorities for improvement in 2024-2025

Priority 1: Improving approaches to pedagogy, learning and teaching

**Priority 2: Promote and develop Children's Rights** 

Priority 3: Enhancing experiencers throughout our environment

#### What is the capacity for improvement?

Within our dynamic and evolving team environment centred around children, our capacity for improvement is driven by commitment to learning and teaching. As we adapt to new challenges and changes our ambition remains focused on enhancing the experiences and development of the children we care for.

Through fostering a culture of continuous growth and knowledge sharing among team members, we will continue to support, develop and maximise training opportunities for all. Our dedication to improvement enables us to provide high quality care and education, ultimately supporting best outcomes for children.