

Learning for Sustainable Futures: Project Summary

Who was involved?

Children and practitioners at Greengables Nursery School and Nicola Crerar (Strategic Development Officer, formerly Head of Centre).

The Learning Context

Greengables Nursery is situated in the Niddrie area of Edinburgh. Niddrie is undergoing a period of rapid change, and Greengables has a diverse cohort of children, all aged 3-5 years old.

Despite being in an urban area, Greengables benefits from a large established outdoor space with local wildlife walks. At the time of writing, our parents and children attend a new Nurturing Nature family outdoor learning walk project, and sustainability is an improvement priority for the setting.

SHANARRI outcomes are another improvement priority, and the children are becoming confident in speaking about the SHANARRI principles of being, for example, safe, healthy and respected.

In the 2025-26 session, Greengables staff visited [The Children Are Now](#), an exhibition at University of Edinburgh's Talbot Rice gallery. The exhibition showed artists' responses to children's lives, play and childhood. Placards made by Scottish children in collaboration with the Children's Parliament also featured, showing their views on the key challenges faced by the world today. Visiting the exhibition inspired staff to take an artistic approach at Greengables when considering how children's voices could be heard.

These various threads came together when staff met to discuss an approach to the Learning for Sustainable Futures course, and the issues that the children of the future may face. We identified our use of expressive arts resources as a possible project focus, however listening to the children's voices was the main driver for our project.

EARLY YEARS PHASE: Greengables Nursery School & Family Centre

Learner Outcome Focus: Learner Voice

*Representing my class,
school and/or wider
community encourages my
self-worth and confidence
and allows me to contribute
to and participate in society.*
HWB 0-12a

Curriculum for Excellence:
EXA 0-02a; EXA 0-05a; HWB
0-09a; HWB 0-13a; LIT 0-02a;
LIT 0-10a; SCN 0-01a; SOC 0-
08a

Related policy & initiatives:
Centre Improvement Plan
[UNCRC Article 12](#)
[SHANARRI](#)

[Realising the Ambition: Being Me](#) (Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity; Responsive and Intentional Learning)



Sustainability, Activism and Expressive Arts

Greengables has a large Family Centre space, which is used for meetings, training sessions and local groups, as well as by the children and their families when meeting with visiting professionals and attending groups for children, such as PEEP. We found that children were aware of this meeting space when they asked to go to the family centre but said to staff, “Shhhh. There might be a meeting!”. Staff asked the children what they knew about this, and during the discussion the children suggested to staff that they could have their own ‘kid’s meeting’.

In line with SHANARRI principles and the wishes the children had voiced, staff decided to help the children arrange a meeting, and that the focus of this meeting would be what was important to the children in their lives.

During the meeting, the children attending made marks to sign in and take minutes. They also made their own cardboard ‘phones’ to record the discussion, showing an awareness of how adults use technology. Children and staff discussed what a meeting was, what it is like to listen and to be listened to, what is important to them at home and at nursery, and what they know about the world and environmental issues. Staff soon realised that the children were already very knowledgeable regarding their world and the issues facing them.

Evidence and Impacts

Children discussed what they knew about trees, animals, what plants need to grow, families, and how to care for each other and be cared for. Staff provided children with visuals from the exhibition as provocation, along with books and stories to support their learning and large-scale art materials, in which they could make and share their own messages.

When asked how they could be listened to, they asked to take their banners to show others, which they then did.

Next steps

This approach can hopefully be continued, adapted and encouraged – where staff not only listen to children, but actively and creatively hear and appreciate their words and opinions on their own future, environment and sustainability.

Practitioner Reflections

Listening to children’s voices is important to the team at Greengables. Through observation we realised very quickly that the children had their own agenda which would fit in well with the project brief – the children wanted to organise, and for adults to actively listen to them on their views of their own world and life.

-Nicola Crerar



by Bob and Roberta