



Craighalbert Centre
Enabling Children to Achieve

Trustees Quarterly Report

December 2024

Our Values



KIND



INSPIRATIONAL



CHILD-CENTERED



COLLABORATIVE



AMBITIOUS

Chair's Statement



Welcome to our August 2024 Trustee report. This term has been busy and productive, with several key highlights.



Our Halloween event embraced a Harry Potter theme, transforming Craighalbert into Hogwarts. Children, parents and staff enthusiastically participated, making it a memorable experience for all involved.

In October we hosted our first Showcase Event, which welcomed key stakeholders and partner organisations. The event generated positive feedback and valuable discussions, emphasising the importance of our work and shaping plans for the future.

As we move into the festive season, our focus turns to Christmas, with a range of events, activities and learning opportunities underway. We look forward to sharing updates in our next report.

News Flash!

We are delighted to announce that we have received our **third ECO Schools Green Flag Award**, a testament to our innovative approach to environmental education.

The ECO assessor commended our ability to adapt climate action initiatives to the specific needs of our children, highlighting our innovative and practical approach.

Term 2

The children finished for the October break on Friday 11th October, a small cohort of the team were working at various times during the break, to allow for planning.

Staff returned on Monday 21st October and the children returned on Tuesday 22nd October.

School Roll and Children

The school roll is currently 18 children. 17 children are full time and 1 is part time.

Pupil Council

We have established three key pupil-led groups to empower our children and young people in shaping their educational experience and broader environment, in alignment with a rights-based approach:

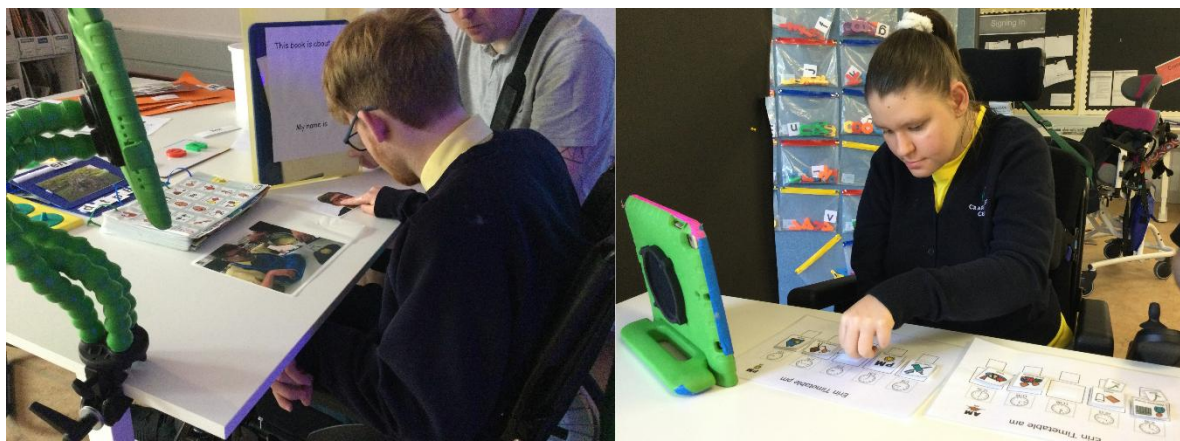
1. Health and Wellbeing Group
2. Eco Group
3. Pupil Council

These groups serve as platforms for students to exercise their right to participate in decisions affecting their lives, as outlined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

To ensure equitable access and informed decision-making, each pupil will have the opportunity to engage with all three groups on a rotational basis. This approach allows students to explore different areas of interest and responsibility before selecting their preferred group for the subsequent academic year.

Activities

Last term, our theme was **All About Me**, with all pupils working on their communication passports, which includes information that is important to them such as their views, likes, dislikes, preference and how they like to communicate, important health information and people that are important to them. This is in line with UNCRC Article 13 - the right to express our views, opinions and wishes.



Pupils working on their communication passports

Our classrooms have been renamed to reflect **tree themes**. Class 1 is now Oak, class 2 is Maple, class 3 is Willow, and class 4 is Rowan. Each class designed and decorated their doorways, showcasing incredible creativity and teamwork, with the children enthusiastically participating in the design and painting.

One of our Learning Care and Therapy Practitioners (LCTPs) recently qualified as a **Forest School** Leader, which has allowed us to expand our outdoor learning activities. A favourite outdoor learning activity for the children has been toasting marshmallows, which has so many learning opportunities including engagement in senses through touch, smell and taste, developing fine motor skills, exploration of textures and learning about fire safety.



Toasting marshmallows outside in the woods.

One of our senior pupils has begun using her first **powered wheelchair**. She is developing her skills within the Centre, with plans to transition to using the chair at home and in the community, marking a significant step in her independence journey.

Our **Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP)** continues to thrive, with children participating in regular physical activities. These sessions focus on training and participation rather than competition. The activities included within these lessons link to mobility, dexterity, kicking and striking skills. MATP gives lots of opportunities to work on crucial skills whilst at the same time being fun and enjoyable.

We have been exploring potential leisure activities for outside school, this included pupils taking part in **yoga** sessions. Pupils enjoyed the sessions, with some showing exceptional enthusiasm and talent.

October was **apple picking** season, with the Pupils enjoying picking apples from our very own apple tree and using them for baking activities.



Picking apples from one of our apple trees.

To celebrate **Halloween**, we hosted a Harry Potter-themed event, featuring sensory activities, potion-making, and a visit from Oak the Owl. Decorations by the Parent Council transformed one of our classrooms into a spectacular Hogwarts Grand Hall.



Enjoying fun activities as part of our Halloween celebrations.

Pupils explored the vibrant colours and sensory experiences associated with **Diwali and Bonfire Night**, deepening their understanding of cultural traditions. Using a special app on the TV screens the children based their art around fireworks night. Adults used their PODD books to ask pupils about the colours they would like to add to the picture, the size of the objects they would like to put in and gave opinions on what they thought of the marks they made on the screen using touch.

From 18th to 22nd November, we celebrated **Health Week** with a range of activities designed to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of our children and staff. The week included interactive and engaging opportunities to explore different aspects of health and wellness. A standout highlight was the visit from *Theraponies*, which brought joy and relaxation to everyone involved. The children had the chance to walk outside with the ponies and experience the calming benefits of petting these gentle animals. This activity provided a unique therapeutic experience, fostering relaxation and emotional connection in a tranquil outdoor setting.



Pony trekking as part of our Health Week activities.

Communication and Literacy continues to be part of everyday learning for the children. This includes the use of Eyegaze, PODD and switches to communicate with others and we have seen continued development in literacy skills. Literacy makes up a big part of our week and we have been making great progress with our independent writing. The pupils have been getting to grips with using their alternative pencils to comment on activities or photos.



Pupils engaging in communication and literacy.

As part of our research into **South America** pupils learnt about Day of the Dead, creating colourful sugar skull masks.

As part of our **Eco** and **Learning about Forests (LEAF)** programme, we repurposed pumpkins from our Halloween celebrations to feed local wildlife. We were delighted to capture squirrels enjoying the treats. We have also received our third ECO Schools Green Flag Award! The assessor shared some wonderful feedback, highlighting how much she appreciated the way our staff adapted the programme to suit our children's unique needs. She commended our creativity, especially in how we approach learning about Climate Action, and noted that we're never afraid to try new things.

The **Pupil Council** has been active in voicing ideas and organising events. They wrote a formal letter to the CEO requesting an end-of-term party, which included music, dancing, games, and party clothes. The request was granted, and we held the party at the end of term in October. The party was a great success, with all pupils enjoying the activities. The Council also chatted about school trips, spending more time outdoors, and having more opportunities to listen to music.



Pupil's enjoying the end of term party they requested.

The Pupil Council also made decisions about our **charity PJ day** and voted on which charity they would like to raise funds for. They chose to support Therapet and raised £61 for them.

Issue 3 of the **Craighalbert Courier**, is now available to view on our website www.craighalbert.org.uk/schoolnewsletter this is a termly newsletter providing an overview of the children's achievements over the term, showcasing what they have been doing and what is planned for the upcoming term.

Following feedback from the Employee Forum, we have introduced a **new staff uniform**, With new black t-shirts and jackets with our logo on the sleeve instead of the front. This change minimises visual distractions for children with visual impairments and has been well-received by staff and families.



Our team proudly showing off their new staff uniform.

Parent Council

The new Child's Plan template has been comprehensively reviewed with all parents, ensuring their perspectives on their children are accurately represented. Notably, two

parents have expressed that this is the first document in which they can truly see their child's personality reflected.



We are currently developing methods to effectively capture pupil voice. Our aim is to implement this in a meaningful manner, avoiding superficial inclusion.

This term, we have conducted a parent survey covering various aspects of school life, including uniform policies, home learning practices, communication strategies, and overall school performance. A comprehensive analysis of the survey results will be presented to the board of trustees once all submissions have been received.

The Parent Council convened on 24th September to review and provide input on the revised school uniform policy, which is being developed in accordance with parent feedback. Additionally, the initial trial of electronic diaries for the term was a key topic of discussion.

Our implementation process for the electronic diaries has evolved significantly:

1. Initially, we utilised a single form for all children, which proved to be ineffective.
2. We swiftly addressed this issue by implementing individualised forms for each child or family, substantially mitigating the risk of information being shared with unintended recipients.
3. The integration of pictures into the system remains a challenge. We have not yet automated this process but plan to revisit this functionality in the near future.

Currently, we are collaborating closely with both parents and staff to improve the consistency and quality of information shared through electronic diaries.

Professional Development and Representation

Staff have actively participated in conferences and events, including:

- Head of Health, Barbara-Ann represented the Centre at the My Health, My Rights (Children's Health Scotland) parliamentary reception.
- Head of Learning, Shona attended the Communication Matters Conference in Leeds.

- Occupational Therapy Lead, Rhona attending the Rett UK Annual Family Weekend.
- Occupational Therapy Lead, Rhona delivered a presentation to GCU 4th year Occupational Therapy students promoting the importance of postural care for children with complex physical needs.
- Head of Quality, Innovation & Partnerships, Alison and Therapeutic Innovation Project Coordinator, Kath delivered a presentation at the British Association for Community Child Health (BACCH) Annual Conference on accessing early learning and childcare for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.
- Therapeutic Innovation Project Coordinator, Kath delivered a presentation at Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) Annual Conference in Manchester on accessing early learning and childcare for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.
- Head of Quality, Innovation and Partnerships, Alison and Business Development Officer exhibited at Cerebral Palsy Scotland Conference.
- Head of Quality, Innovation and Partnerships, Alison presented at the Learning Places Scotland Conference.



Alison presenting at the BACCH Annual Conference.

Our first **Showcase Event** on 24th October, was a tremendous success, attended by key stakeholders such as Education Scotland, local councillors, and representatives from partner organisations. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the Children’s Commissioner praising the exceptional work of our team. Two of our parents shared heartfelt stories about their journeys, further validating the importance of our work.



Highlighting impact at our Showcase event.

Staffing/Staff Development

New Starts & Recruitment



Claudia Whyllie joined us as a Learning, Care and Therapy Practitioner on 8th August 2024. Claudia will be initially working in Maple Room.



Angie Evans joined us as a Learning, Care and Therapy Practitioner on 11th November 2024. Angie will initially be working in Rowan Room.



Esther Douglas joined us as a Learning, Care and Therapy Practitioner on 18th November 2024. Esther will be initially working in Rowan Room.

Nodira Akhmedjanova joined us as a Lunchtime Support Assistant on 19th November 2024.



Katie MacDonald joined us as a Teacher on 3rd December 2024. Katie is a highly skilled ASN teacher and will be working with the children in Rowan Room.

Funding

We received a donation from Ineos for £1,000. Ineos recently hosted a Tour de France Cycling Challenge! Each team faced the impressive task of cycling the equivalent distance of the Tour de France team every day, and teams who managed to complete the challenge nominated a charity to receive a £1,000 donation. We were thrilled to be chosen as one of the lucky charities, thanks to a team member who witnessed the positive impact our Early Intervention Programme had on his nephew.



Alison collecting the donation from the Ineos team.

We received a donation of £500 from Paula Dewar, who decorates her house every year for Halloween and has visitors from near and far come to see her decorations. For the first time Paula decided to put out a donation box and wanted to collect donations for the Centre, as she was aware of the great work we do. Thanks to Paula and the amazing community's generosity she raised an incredible £500.

Partnerships

Renaissance Project at Stirling Castle

We were joined by a storyteller, hired by Artlink, at the Centre to run four sessions with some of our pupils following the work we did with them last term. During these sessions our pupils had the chance to express their opinions and give their feedback on the sensory story the storyteller is developing. This story is part of Stirling Castle's 'Renaissance Project'.

Nordoff and Robbins

In partnership with Nordoff and Robbins we continue to provide integrated music therapy and occupational therapy for children aged 0-4 years as part of our Early Intervention (**Music Space**) Programme (6 x weekly 1-to-1 sessions on a Friday). Music Space uses music to promote bonding, positive interactions, communication, curiosity, posture and movement skills and emotional wellbeing.

Turtle Tots

Music Space sessions are now being complemented by **Water Space** sessions in partnership with Turtle Tots (3 x small group sessions on a Saturday for children aged 0-4 years): Delivered by one of our physiotherapists and LCTP, working very closely with a Turtle Tot swimming instructor, using the properties of the hydrotherapy pool to further develop positive parent-child interactions, communication, posture and movement skills and confidence.



Building bonds and skills through Water Space.

North Lanarkshire Disability Forum

We have launched a new **Parent wellbeing** programme, exclusively for parents and carers engaged with the Centre, delivered by North Lanarkshire Disability Forum. Sessions offer a supportive space for parents to connect, recharge, and learn. Activities include: Therapeutic art, meditation & sound bath, guest speakers sharing helpful resources and open discussions & networking. These sessions will initially run on Tuesday evenings from 6 – 7.30pm for 4 weeks with the plans to extend.

Sense Scotland

Sense Scotland is hosting a series of after school activity groups for pupils and parents. These sessions take place every Tuesday from 3.00pm to 4.30pm and include a variety of engaging activities such as sensory play, art, storytelling, and sports.



Exploring creativity and fun at after-school activities delivered by Sense Scotland.

Whizz Kidz

We were delighted to host Whizz Kidz for their wheelchair skills training for their Scotland team and our Occupational Therapy Team Lead, Rhona, had the pleasure of being involved in the skills training.



Whizz Kidz wheelchair skills training.

Feedback

The Team continues to receive strong informal positive feedback from parents and partners. There were no complaints or grievances received.

Thank you for taking the time to read our quarterly report and for your continued support. We wish you a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and we look forward to seeing everyone in the year ahead as we continue working together.

Lesley Anne Vannan

Chair, The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments



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