

AUCLONE NATURE KINDERGARTEN, SCOTLAND

Case Study



A LITTLE BIT BACKGROUND ABOUT AUCLONE

Auchlone Nature Kindergarten is an award winning early years centre (for 2 to 5 year olds) based near Crieff in Scotland. The children spend over 80% of their time outdoors while at Auchlone. Being a nature kindergarten is so much more than that. Whether we are inside, outside or beyond, we use nature to learn and provide children with authentic opportunities that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

In 2006 Mindstretchers opened the first outdoor Nature Kindergarten in Scotland, Whistlebrae. The site later moved

to Auchlone Nature Kindergarten near Crieff, Scotland, in 2009. The implementation of the Nature Kindergarten philosophy has resulted in Auchlone being considered sector leading and recognised internationally. Over the last few years Auchlone has been a finalist and winner for many different awards, including NMT's Outdoor Learning Environment 2016 and Nursery World's Nursery of the Year 2016.



PLEASE, CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AT

www.mindstretchers.co.uk

SEE FOOTAGE FROM AUCLONE AT <https://youtu.be/SxWlPeUu6x4>

NOTE FROM THE MINDSTRETCHERS CEO CLAIRE WARDEN



Claire Warden, Mindstretchers CEO, says: "We in Auchlone aim to:

- provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy and secure,
- provide children with a very naturalistic environment indoors, in the garden and in the wild woods where they are encouraged and supported to take risks and become the risk assessors,
- encourage the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of children both indoors and outdoors,
- promote the welfare of children and encourage their independence through the use of appropriate praise and reassurance,
- encourage positive attitudes regarding self and others, and develop confidence and self-esteem,
- create opportunities for both indoor and outdoor play which, at times, is challenging both physically and mentally,
- encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment,
- provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination,
- extend children's abilities to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways,
- promote a close relationship with parents and the community,
- promote liaison between the Kindergarten and local Primary schools."

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US: THE LEARNING PROCESS

We are often asked how we are preparing children for school if "all they do is play outside." We may not be doing worksheets, but we are always learning. Children's voices and the process of learning are recorded in Talking and Thinking Floorbooks®, a method developed by

Claire Warden. These books are created with the children; they share their ideas and contribute their understanding at their own level. They document group learning experiences and value each child as an individual recording their progress and understanding throughout. Families are

invited to come in regularly and share the Floorbooks with their children. The children all have individual learning stories which include documentation of their learning journeys.

WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND TRANSITION HOME TO KINDERGARTEN

Families know their child best and so communication between parents and staff is crucial. Care is taken to involve parents/carers in all aspects of children's progress through encouraging parents to look at displays, floorbooks, family books and inviting them to parents evenings or by having an open door policy.

This step is recognised as being of great importance and staff work to ensure that starting nursery is a happy, flexible experience for both child and parent. Every effort is made to ensure that a new child feels welcome and quickly develops a sense of "belonging" for the Kindergarten.

VALUING THE WORK YOUR CHILD CREATES – WE CREATE CREATORS!

We celebrate the process of creativity and not just the end product. Children of this age are still developing their gross and fine motor skills and the manipulation of small tools takes time and effort. As an environmentally friendly nursery we encourage transient art and children can produce amazingly intricate displays with natural materials which are photographed to record the process.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is nature based, following

the "Pre Birth to Three" for children aged 2 to 3 years and the Scottish "Curriculum for Excellence" for children from 3 to 18 years.



"I only wish there were more nurseries like this – that the values and services from Auchlone were universal. I cannot commend them highly enough and though I would like to give critical feedback to improve service... I cannot fault anything they do."

— PARENT INTERVIEWED BY CARE INSPECTORATE, 2017