

# NURSERY OF THE YEAR



## Winner: Cowgate Under 5's Centre, Edinburgh

Cowgate Under 5's Centre is a truly wonderful nursery. All aspects of its work are informed by deeply held philosophy and principles. The staff, led by inspirational head Lynn McNair, are reflective practitioners who respect and appreciate each child's individuality. They foster the development of high levels of considerate independence, allowing space and time for uninterrupted play indoors and out, enabling children to build on their interests across all areas of learning. Links with the wider community include an enterprising forest school in the city centre.

Imaginative use is made of the purpose-designed site, which is thoughtfully resourced and beautifully presented. Every day starts warmly and purposefully with bread-making; the healthy meals include food grown in the garden. Children participate in domestic routines, and are encouraged to take increasing levels of responsibility. They are given opportunities to express, explore and extend their thinking through constructive interaction with

each other and insightful adults, who know how to support their rounded development appropriately. Children as well as parents contribute to profile records.

**'The thinking about the individual child and ways of learning is exceptional'**

Judge

Awareness of ecological issues draws families in to the wide range of recycling undertaken in the nursery. Provision for parents, carers and visitors is carefully considered: staff are generous in explaining their approach both in principle and practice. The Centre is a living example of excellence.

### VISIONS OF COMMITMENT

The four nursery finalists are very different, but they have some important points in common. All are led by visionary managers who believe in inclusive practice and show total commitment to their work. They all work to reassure parents and keep them in touch with their children's progress from the start.

**Highly Commended:**  
**Dimson Day Nursery, Kids Club and Outdoor Environmental Play and Learning, Lower Dimson Farm, Cornwall**  
**Head: Patricia French**

The Dimson Day Nursery is commended for its outstanding dedication to outdoor learning. It encourages the full involvement of children and families, with a wonderful learning environment and a healthy approach to risk. The staff at this small private nursery show great innovation and help to generate a sense of excitement among the children.

**Finalists:**  
**Rotherly Day Nursery, Hampshire**  
**Head: Linda Doyle**

**Springlands Nursery, Essex**  
**Head: Catherine House**

### Criteria

Open to registered settings offering full daycare (private, voluntary or maintained sector)

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