

# Summarised inspection findings

**Gartconner Early Years Centre**

East Dunbartonshire Council

29 October 2024

## Key contextual information

Gartconner Early Years Centre (EYC) is located within Gartconner Primary School. The setting is in a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Kirkintilloch. There are two playrooms. The smaller playroom is for the youngest children and one large playroom includes a dedicated lunch space. Children access their spacious outdoor area using the main nursery entrance. The centre offers a maximum of 69 places. At the time of inspection, there were 10 children aged 2 years old and 63 children aged between three to five years old. A further 14 children who are experiencing a deferred year enrolled. The centre is open all year between 8 am and 6 pm and offers full and half day sessions.

The acting headteacher has strategic responsibility for the EYC. There are two job-share depute heads of centre who have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the setting. The large team of full and part-time practitioners, support workers and job share early years teachers work together as a team to provide early learning and childcare.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**very good**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- There is a welcoming, respectful, and nurturing ethos across the setting. All practitioners are highly attuned to children as they anticipate and respond to their individual interests and needs. The team work very well together to create and adapt their interesting learning spaces. Almost all children sustain their play for extended periods, demonstrate their creativity and apply and develop further their skills throughout their day. Children and their families are highly motivated to engage in learning as they participate in cooking sessions, outdoor learning or utilise home learning resources. Practitioners support all children and families effectively to build and maintain highly positive, secure relationships. Children behave very well. They play and learn in a motivating and respectful environment supported by practitioners. The team should continue to develop further their important work on children's rights. Practitioners should ensure language used helps children to make connections with their everyday experiences. Most older children are ready to talk in more depth about the skills they develop through their learning.
- Almost all practitioners have a well-developed understanding of child development. The team apply this skilfully to adapt spaces, experiences, and their vocabulary as they join or observe children's play. Most practitioners use higher-order questioning techniques very well to encourage children to share and extend their thinking and next steps. Practitioners complete thoughtful work with children to improve the block play and woodwork area. This supports children to plan, design and develop their ideas very well. The team's skilful use of sensory resources supports younger children to listen attentively to share, and to express their emotions. Practitioners use the interactive whiteboard effectively to develop children's digital

skills using educational games. Practitioners should develop further opportunities for children to engage with a wider range of digital technology as they, for example, create their own digital content with them.

- The team document and collate an extensive range of information about children's progress. This includes the use of regular observations, assessments on learning and reports to parents. Senior leaders, teachers and practitioners record and track children's progress in learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They do this in a variety of ways, including the use of personal learning plans, online learning journals, floor books and from planning records and displays. Senior leaders have identified rightly the need to further streamline documentation to minimise duplication and ensure they fully reflect the very good progress made by children. Practitioners should continue to consider how to involve children in planning and evidencing learning more fully, as identified through extensive self-evaluation activities.
- Children who require additional support with their learning have relevant educational support plans. These focused, accurate and up-to-date plans identify children's needs effectively. They highlight the appropriate strategies and multi-agency approaches to support them. Practitioners are well informed about the needs and strategies for all children and implement agreed approaches in a consistent, inclusive way. This results in children making very good progress appropriate to their developmental stage.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

very good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Almost all children listen attentively as they take part in daily small group story, rhyme and frequent singing with practitioners. Most older children can talk with understanding about their favourite stories and authors. Younger children increase their vocabulary as they repeat and discuss new words. Children use symbols, gestures, and simple sign language well to express themselves. Most older children identify their name when self-registering. Younger children recognise and are beginning to make marks to represent their name. Most older children engage frequently in mark making and emergent writing opportunities throughout all areas of the playroom and outdoors. A few children are ready for increased opportunities to document their own stories.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most older children write numbers to 10. Most count forward up to 10 with a few counting beyond. A majority of younger children count forward up to five. Older children compare and measure quantities to bake bread. They are using positional language increasingly when identifying three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional shapes during block play. A few older children use tally charts to collect information. A group of children are highly motivated to identify and solve problems as they work in small groups to investigate size, depth, length and number.
- Children make very good progress in health and wellbeing. They have a well-developed understanding of how to assess risk and keep themselves and one another safe, as they explore the local woodlands, and when using their woodwork area. Children care for and support one another well, for example, as they help their friends to dress for outdoor play. All children, through their work with stories, characters, visuals and discussions make good progress in understanding their own and others feelings. This includes very young children who are new to the setting.
- Practitioners record and share children's achievements in on-line learning journals. They use praise effectively to build children's self-esteem and reinforce positive behaviour. Parents and practitioners share and celebrate children's wider achievements from home. Practitioners should develop further strategies to track children's wider achievement with an increased focus on the skills they are developing. This will support children, parents and practitioners to celebrate the very good progress children make and help practitioners to identify children who would benefit from additional experiences.

- Practitioners have a very detailed understanding of the social and economic context in which their families live. They ensure with sensitivity that all children have equal access to all learning opportunities. For example, they provide families with resources to support learning at home, such as book bags and the use of number bags that can be borrowed. Parents work in partnership with practitioners to suggest and lead helpful initiatives such as a food share project that is open to everyone. The early years team should continue, as planned, to involve children, parents and the local community in promoting equity for all.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.