

Summarised inspection findings

Auchenlodment Early Learning and Childcare Class

Renfrewshire Council

20 December 2022

Key contextual information

Auchenlodment Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) class is registered to provide early learning and childcare for 71 children aged from two up to primary school age. All children attend full day places during term time. There are currently six children aged two to three, and 46 children aged three to starting school, attending. There is a senior early learning and childcare officer, (SELCO) 11 early learning and childcare officers (ELCOs), a support worker and a peripatetic early years teacher employed in the setting. The children use two spacious playrooms, a nurture room and access a large outdoor area. Children do not have free-flow access to the outdoor area. The ELCC class has experienced significant disruption, including an additional period of closure, and high staff absence of children and staff, during COVID-19.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Practitioners in the ELCC class have worked very well together to create a meaningful vision, values and aims. Staff involve children and parents fully in this process. As a result, everyone understands well the vision, values and aims and these underpin all areas of the nursery's work. Children are able to show a developing understanding of the values and can explain how they can show kindness to each other.
- The depute headteacher plays a very active part in the life of the ELCC class. She visits daily and children know her well. She is very supportive to the staff team and has a clear vision of how to achieve the agreed priorities. The SELCO is responsible for the day-to-day running of the setting and provides a very good role model for the team. All practitioners demonstrate positive, caring and respectful relationships towards each other. As a result, they work well together and value everyone's contributions to the ELCC class. All practitioners are focused on improving outcomes for children and families.
- All practitioners are involved in planning for improvement. They have high expectations and take part in regular professional development. This is impacting very positively on the setting and practitioners are keen to share their learning. Practitioners recently shared information about supporting children with autism, which is helping to support interactions with children. Practitioners are very evaluative and work well together to develop areas of the setting. All practitioners are enthusiastic and keen to take on leadership roles. They take an active part in leading and developing practice. For example, their recent work includes developing the forest kindergarten and securing grants to raise awareness of healthy eating with children and families.
- The ELCC team have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve and have identified their future priorities for improvement. They involve children in this process and encourage them to identify areas they want to develop. This is helping children to take on leadership roles

and share their voice in ELCC improvement. Practitioners should continue to develop this positive practice.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Practitioners place great importance on developing very good relationships with children and their families. As a result, the setting is a warm, welcoming and nurturing place where children are loved and included. Children are engaged, happy and respond well to the learning experiences provided by practitioners.
- The room for two-year-olds is well organised and children have access to a wide variety of resources that enable them to develop their interests and skills. Responsive practitioners support children well and children engage in a range of interesting experiences, including sensory play and active physical play. Children develop their independence skills well, for example when tidying up after snack.
- In the three to five room, children are able to choose from a variety of areas and resources, including a home corner, block play and sensory area. Practitioners have set up the pattern of the day to enable children to make choices, including when to play outside and when to have snack. Almost all children engage in play well for extended periods with adult support during the morning session. A few children find it difficult to sustain this level of involvement throughout the day. Practitioners should provide a wider range of open-ended materials and loose parts to extend the range of learning opportunities available. This will help to provide greater challenge and enable children to extend and sustain their learning more effectively.
- Practitioners attune well to children and are able to sensitively step in with well-judged and skilful interactions. They use mathematical language and interesting vocabulary when talking to children which helps to support learning and extend children's thinking. As identified, senior leaders should support practitioners to develop their questioning skills to extend further children's learning.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn and develop. They plan responsively and follow-up on and extend children's interests. Senior leaders recognise that practitioners now need to capture observations of children's interests and previous learning as part of their planning process. This will help them to plan children's next steps more effectively.
- Practitioners add helpful information about children's experiences to individual learning journals. Children are keen to share journals with practitioners and reflect back on their experiences. At times, practitioners' observations focus on activity and are not yet consistently capturing learning and progress over time. Senior leaders have identified the need to monitor the quality of observations to ensure consistency.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use Curriculum for Excellence and local authority frameworks well to plan an interesting range of learning experiences. They continue to reflect on and use national practice guidance “Realising the Ambition: Being Me” (2020) to support improvements to their experiences, interactions and spaces. This is helping to ensure they provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Children’s individual needs are the focus for planning for transitions into the ELCC class and on to school. Practitioners manage transitions to ELCC from home with care and sensitivity. They work closely with families and support children very well to develop confidence and settle quickly into the setting.
- Practitioners and teachers across the early level work together to support continuity and progression and ensure successful transitions. Staff provide very good support to children as they move from the ELCC class into P1, including a three-day induction programme for families. Families feel well informed on how to support their child for the transition to school.
- Practitioners make good use of the spaces around the school, including accessing the gym hall, dining hall and a well-resourced outside play area.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Strong partnerships with families is a key feature of the setting. Almost all parents are positive about their children's experiences in the ELCC class and enjoy opportunities to talk with practitioners about their children's progress and wellbeing.
- During the period of COVID-19, practitioners communicated well with parents through daily interactions, social media, phone calls, and garden visits. Practitioners are now re-establishing stay and play sessions to support further parental engagement.
- Families are encouraged to support children's learning through Book Bug sessions. Staff support families' participation in the free book scheme through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. They build well on this through ELCC and school transition activities. Practitioners successfully applied to Education Scotland's 'Food for Thought' scheme. They are beginning a family learning programme focused on creating healthy, nutritious meals on a budget.
- Staff provide regular communication with parents including informal daily chats, social media and informative newsletters. Parents appreciate accessing electronic and paper learning journals that provide them with a valuable insight into children's experiences in the ELCC class. Practitioners work closely with families to share information about children's needs and progress in learning during Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) meetings.
- The Parent Council support and welcome parents to join. Practitioners encourage parents to volunteer in the nursery. This provides parents with valuable experiences and supports effectively the development of children's skills for learning and work.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Practitioners develop very strong, caring relationships with all children and families. They are very nurturing and show a high level of care for individual children. This is a strength in the setting. Practitioners support very effectively the wellbeing of all children and families. As a result, children are secure in the playroom and able to show kindness and affection towards each other. Almost all children are developing an understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They know what they need to do to keep themselves safe and healthy and are able to relate meaningfully to the "wellbeing buddies" used in the nursery.
- Almost all children enjoy eating healthy snacks and are developing independence as they serve themselves. They enjoy lunch in the school dining hall and socialise well with practitioners and each other. Staff should explore how they can involve children further in the lunch process and provide leadership opportunities. Children take part in regular energetic play outdoors and in the gym hall. They are also benefitting from their trips to the woods where they are learning about nature and taking risks.
- All practitioners have a sound understanding of their statutory duties and take part in appropriate training to help keep children safe. Senior leaders provide clear policies that are updated regularly with relevant information. They keep practitioners well informed of any developments.
- There is a very inclusive ethos in the setting and practitioners work well together to support the individual needs of all children. They use the local authority framework well, to record information about children's wellbeing. Practitioners work closely with parents when children are starting the ELCC class and collect valuable information which supports all children to have a positive start. They build on this information and meet regularly with parents to agree individual targets for children. This approach is helping to secure positive outcomes for children and ensures their developmental needs are being met effectively. Practitioners engage in a range of appropriate professional learning opportunities. They use their knowledge well to support children in the setting very effectively, including children with additional support needs.
- All practitioners know and value individual families as they develop caring, trusting relationships. As a result, practitioners are able to provide appropriate interventions when needed. Families feel well supported and value the responsive relationships with practitioners.
- Practitioners work together to create an attractive nurture room where children relax and benefit from calming interventions. They should build on this success and create quiet areas in the playroom which children can use when needed.

3.2 Securing children's progress

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

- Children aged two are becoming increasingly confident and make choices in their play. They are learning to communicate with each other, take turns and are well supported by practitioners. Children can share their feelings through the use of emotions cards and make their needs known. They are developing physical skills indoors and outside by climbing, balancing and exploring different levels.
- Children aged three to five are well supported by caring and sensitive practitioners and are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are able to express their needs, take turns and enjoy playing with each other.
- Overall, children aged three to five are making good progress in communication and early language. The majority of children engage well in conversations with other children and share ideas with adults. They can talk confidently about things they have experienced, for example favourite story characters. Children who found an interesting stick in the forest were able to recall a similar character in a well-known book. A few children choose to engage with books in the book corner. Most talk about their drawings and a few attempt letters when mark-making. Older children are interested in writing their name and a few children can write their name independently. Children use digital technology confidently when following recipes in baking, creative mark-making and for games.
- Children are making good progress in mathematical understanding. They sort and match materials in different ways, for example, by colour, shape and size. They are developing their numeracy skills and building confidence in counting. A few children are able to recognise numerals to 10 and show an understanding of measurement as they bake. They use mathematical language well to describe what they see, such as discussing longer and shorter.
- Outdoors, children show a keen interest in the world around them and are developing physical skills as they climb trees and jump in streams. Most are starting to understand how to learn to manage risk, including keeping within boundaries.
- Practitioners successfully capture progress over time in a range of ways, including through children's learning journals, an online platform and in floorbooks. They are at early stages of implementing a recently developed local authority progression tool. Senior leaders should continue with plans to use this data in a more rigorous way. This will help to ensure that children are challenged and those who require additional help are well supported.

- The setting's nurturing approach promotes a supportive climate. Practitioners know children, families and their circumstances very well and work very hard to reduce barriers to children's learning and increase family involvement. They use this understanding to support children in a way that meets their needs and promotes equity.

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.