

Summarised inspection findings

The Bridges Nursery – Silverburn Lodge

Aberdeen City Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

The Bridges Nursery – Silverburn Lodge can provide up to 104 early learning and childcare places for children between three months and primary school age. Children can attend part or full days. At the time of the inspection there were 97 children on the roll. The setting provides funded places for two year olds. The setting has three main playrooms all with easy access to secure outdoor spaces. The setting is located on a business park close to Aberdeen city centre.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- The vision, values and aims of the setting were recently reviewed and revised in consultation with parents and practitioners. The revised vision, values and aims reflect key principles of early learning and childcare well. They have the potential to provide a sound foundation and direction for further improvement to provision. Senior leaders should now continue to improve approaches to the management of change to ensure the aims are fully implemented in practice. Practitioners should seek ways to share the values with children in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways.
- Parents value the support of practitioners and managers in the setting. Their views are sought using a range of accessible approaches. Feedback is provided to enable parents to see how their responses help shape aspects of practice. Practitioners are beginning to develop approaches to seek children's views about their setting. They should continue to develop these to enable children to participate in improvement processes as fully as possible.
- Managers and practitioners are keen to improve their practice. Practitioners access an appropriate range of professional learning opportunities and a good range of national and local guidance. This is having a positive impact on aspects of practice and beginning to build a shared understanding of effective early learning across the setting. Managers recognise the need to improve approaches to evaluating the impact of professional learning on experiences and outcomes for children. There is scope to develop leadership at all levels further. This will support practitioners to develop their skills and confidence in leading aspects of improvement and accelerate the pace of change.
- Practitioners and managers are at an early stage in using the national improvement framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to inform and support change. We have asked managers to improve arrangements for monitoring playroom practice and the work of the setting. This will provide a better overall assessment of strengths and help identify where leaders need to provide challenge and support to improve practice further.

- In recent years, improvement planning has enhanced the quality of learning environments across the setting and increased children's access to natural and open-ended materials. Improvements to transitions have been effective in supporting children and families. As self-evaluation improves, senior leaders should set ambitious targets for improvement planning and establish robust measures of the impact of change on outcomes for children. This will ensure that the high aspirations they have for the service are realised in all aspects of practice in the setting.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Babies are happy and encouraged to explore their playroom and develop their curiosity. Toddlers enjoy their time in the setting. They play alongside each other and are beginning to share their play with their peers. Children aged three to five years play and cooperate together well. They are forming friendships that help them in their learning. Across the setting, children enjoy using loose parts to experiment and investigate and enjoy daily access to outdoor experiences. Overall, there is a need for practitioners to increase the level of challenge in learning to ensure that children who would benefit from this have their needs met more appropriately.
- Relationships with adults are consistently caring. Babies enjoy positive interactions with practitioners who understand the importance of nurturing attachments. Children aged two to three years benefit from positive relationships with practitioners and are developing their confidence and independence. Children aged three to five years engage well, making choices and leading aspects of their learning. They show keen enthusiasm and interact well when adults intervene effectively to support and extend their learning. However, interactions at this stage are not consistently effective in extending and developing children's thinking and learning. Children need more support to extend and develop their play in meaningful real-life contexts and to apply early literacy and numeracy skills more fully.
- Observations are recorded in children's individual learning journals along with photographs, and examples of children's art. Managers have identified that observations do not always provide a sound basis for assessment. Practitioners now need support to help them develop skills in making effective use of observation to capture what is significant about each child's learning and to plan next steps. Importantly, practitioners need to develop their understanding of progression in key aspects of early learning including communication and mathematics. This will help ensure increased expectations for learners and support more effective planning for individuals.
- Children enjoy sharing their learning journals. They are enthusiastic and keen to talk about their experiences and ideas. Practitioners now need to support children to develop skills and confidence in talking about their learning. Overall, children need to be able to lead their learning more through learning conversations, reflecting on experiences and planning how to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Planning of experiences for babies and toddlers would support children's progress more effectively if there was a greater focus on learning and expected outcomes rather than on activities and resources. Planning for older children is an area requiring further development to ensure that experiences build on learning more effectively.

- The tracking of learning is at an early stage. As the quality of assessment improves, managers should develop arrangements to regularly take stock of each child's learning. Moderation using national advice such as the National Benchmarks should be a focus in this development. This will enable practitioners to support children to make the best possible progress in their learning. It will also be an important resource for managers and practitioners in evaluating and developing the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners have worked together to deepen their understanding of enabling learning environments. Building on this work, it will be important for practitioners and managers to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum. Engagement in professional dialogue will enable managers and practitioners to develop a shared understanding of early years pedagogy and the role of the adult in promoting effective learning.
- Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are a focus of planning. There is scope to increase expectations of what children can achieve, particularly children aged three to five years, recognising and building on what children can already do and know. Children will benefit from increased opportunities to apply and extend their skills in challenging, real-life experiences and contexts.
- Practitioners have made a positive start to ensure a more flexible and child-led curriculum that is relevant to young children. This includes the introduction of more natural and open-ended materials. The recent development of learning walls for children aged three to five years is showing promising indications of enabling children to connect their learning with purpose. It will be important for practitioners to make more use of the design principles when planning and evaluating experiences and children's learning, particularly in relation to depth, challenge and progression.
- The positive work on developing outdoor spaces over the last three years should be developed further to ensure curiosity, inquiry and creativity are actively promoted and encouraged. As the development of outdoor spaces progresses, it will be important to ensure that children's experiences are well supported by skilful and informed practitioner interactions.
- Transition from home into the setting is managed successfully. Induction processes enable practitioners to get to know individual children and their families well. Transitions within the setting are also well-managed. Practitioners should continue to develop closer links with receiving schools to support learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.
- A range of visitors and learning visits in the local area enrich children's experiences. Practitioners should encourage children to make links between what they are learning in the setting and employment and work in the local community.

2.7 Partnerships : Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The setting has developed positive partnerships within the local community to enrich children's learning. These include links with the local library. Practitioners use resources such as the local park to provide different learning experiences for children.
- Children's learning journeys are shared regularly with parents. Parents acknowledge how well the journals capture their child's individual personalities. They are also encouraged to complete home link sheets which are included in children's learning journeys. Practitioners complete summative reports which are shared regularly with parents. Parents are encouraged to join their children in the playrooms for joint play sessions. Parents value the opportunities they have to observe how their children are learning through play. Helpfully, children can suggest the focus of the stay and play sessions, for example, Halloween. There is also a book swap resource which is used well by children and parents. We have discussed with practitioners ways in which they could develop further their engagement with parents.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Across the setting children enjoy warm, nurturing relationships with practitioners. In the playrooms for children aged under three years, practitioners have created a calm and welcoming environment. Children appear very happy and settled. Children new to the setting are being supported well to become familiar with their new environment. Overall, in the three to five rooms, children engage well with each other, with many having developed firm friendships. Most are able to take turns and share resources with each other.
- Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). They are at the early stages of developing children's awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Children have an understanding of how the setting is helping them to be aware of what it means to be safe and healthy. They offer appropriate suggestions of healthy snack options and enjoy the access they have to eat fruit throughout the day with many taking advantage of this provision. To develop their awareness of being safe children help to undertake risk assessments of the outdoor area. It will be important for children to gain a greater understanding of how to promote safety in their use of resources, for example, the slide and sticks as part of their play to develop this further. We have asked the setting to continue to develop children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators in an appropriate way. It would be helpful to have the visual representation of the wellbeing indicators within the playroom to enable children to engage with them more freely.
- Practitioners undertake their roles in a calm and gentle way. As a result children are settled and are very comfortable approaching adults. Practitioners promote positive behaviour in developmentally appropriate ways. Children have helped to create their own golden rules and 'golden shelves' to display and celebrate their achievements. Practitioners recognise the need to refresh the golden rules to ensure they promote more positive language.
- Children demonstrate their independence and self-help skills as they help dress themselves for outdoor play and understand the practice of personal hygiene.
- Senior leaders and practitioners place great importance on getting to know children and their families well. Information provided by parents is included in each child's care plan. Practitioners now need to review these to ensure they provide a comprehensive overview of children's specific needs. In particular, it is necessary for practitioners to create targeted support plans for children who may require additional help with their learning. A very positive partnership with the Voluntary Support Aberdeen service has been used to develop a dedicated sensory area in the setting. This service provided training for practitioners in making use of this space to support children who required additional support with learning. This space is utilised for a number of purposes including a quiet area for storytelling. Practitioners would now benefit from further training to develop a wider range of strategies to effectively support specific learning needs.

- Children have opportunities to influence decisions but there is scope for this to be developed further. They are learning to take responsibility for tasks at snack and lunch times through setting the table and clearing up. Practitioners should build on this by increasing the opportunities available to children to develop early leadership skills in the playrooms.
- Children and their families are treated with respect. Parents report that they feel included and a few practitioners take positive steps to promote children's awareness of equality issues. This is done in natural and appropriate ways. There are a number of resources available to support children's understanding of equality and diversity.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- Babies and toddlers are supported well to develop their communication and early language skills. They benefit from numerous opportunities to engage with stories, songs and rhyme. They engage very well with adults to develop their eye contact and imitate facial expressions. Children aged two years can identify their favourite story books with many choosing to look at books independently. A few children demonstrate a keenness to share books with their friends, imitating the way in which practitioners do this. Toddlers engage well in conversation with familiar adults and a few with each other. They display a growing vocabulary. As part of daily routines children are learning about counting. Toddlers demonstrate independence at snack and lunchtimes as well as when they get ready for outdoor play. Babies and toddlers have daily access to outdoors where for the most part, a free flow approach is in operation. Outdoors, children explore natural materials and develop their fine and gross motor skills. As toddlers join the older children for outdoor learning it is important that practitioners ensure they always enjoy appropriate meaningful play contexts.
- Children aged three to five years are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. Most enjoy the opportunities they have to develop their listening skills as part of adult-led activities such as making play dough or listening to stories. A few need more support to listen to each other in their free play. They demonstrate a great love of books and regularly access the book corner independently. Helpfully, books are also available for reference throughout the playroom and outdoors. Children can identify their favourite books in the setting and at home, with a few able to recall different parts of familiar books. To build on this further we have asked the team to encourage children to explain in more detail about their favourite books, for example, the characters, illustrations, etc. A few children are capable of creating their own books to apply their knowledge of texts and early mark-making skills. Overall, children show an interest in mark-making. There are however only a few opportunities for children to write for meaningful purposes. Careful tracking of children's progress in developing their literacy skills is required to ensure children are being challenged and supported to make the best possible progress.
- Older children regularly count and identify numbers as part of their play and daily routines. The majority can recognise numbers which hold particular significance for them, for example, their age. A few children explore measurement in the construction area. Children have opportunities to display and interpret data. With prompting, they use appropriate mathematical language at the sand tray and in the mud kitchen. There are however many missed opportunities to

promote numeracy and mathematical thinking in a meaningful way for children in routines and activities throughout the day.

- In health and wellbeing, children are developing their fine and gross motor skills. This is supported through their outdoor play. Children are learning about healthy choices as they talk about their lunch and snack options each day. Most children can explain the importance of a healthy diet.
- Children have access to a tablet computer and use this to record aspects of their play. They would benefit from more regular access to a wider range of technology to support skills development.
- Practitioners praise children throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to share information about children's achievements beyond the setting. Examples of completed home-link prompt sheets are included in children's learning journeys. We have spoken to practitioners about ways they can build on this to involve parents more in their child's learning.
- Learning journeys are in place which demonstrates children are making positive progress over time in aspects of their learning. Children are very proud of their learning journeys and relish opportunities to share them with adults and their friends. There is scope to develop these further to ensure they demonstrate a clear picture of the progress children are making across their learning.
- Within the setting there is a supportive and inclusive ethos. Practitioners know the children and their families well and take account of children's individual circumstances. We have asked the setting to improve the ways in which they identify and record how they are supporting individual children who may have potential barriers to learning.

Setting choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression

- Practitioners have established positive relationships with families. They are able to respond to individual children in an appropriate way to meet their care needs. Practitioners take time to have regular contact with parents on a daily basis through discussions and sharing of information about babies, toddlers and older children. Parents appreciate this information.
- A range of flexible approaches support effective transition arrangements. Practitioners work closely with families and involve them fully in the planning process. As a result, transitions are handled sensitively and are a positive experience for most children and families. Parents told us about how they were able to spend time with their children at times of transition. This reassured them about their child's experience and helped children to settle quickly and well. Shared experiences, including breakfast and outdoor play, help toddlers develop confidence as they prepare to transition to the three to five playroom.
- Documentation is used to share helpful information about children's care and learning needs as they move in to and within the setting.
- We discussed with managers the need to improve transitions for children who may experience barriers to their wellbeing and learning. Practitioners should develop effective links with other settings to support children who attend more than one early learning and childcare setting in the course of a week.

1. Quality of care and support

All staff were kind and calm and used soothing voices to settle and reassure children. In the baby room, familiar and consistent staff helped children form close attachments, feel safe and grow in confidence. In the toddler room, staff interacted positively with the children by reading them stories and playing together with toys. Children were secure and happy in their care. Children in the pre-school were confident and happy to approach staff for support. As a result, there was a positive and welcoming ethos in the service.

Information to help keep children safe and to support continuity of care was collated before the child started at the service. Staff had consulted parents and other agencies to provide support for children with specific needs. Strategies and evaluations for some children's care plans should be further extended. (See Recommendation 1)

To safeguard and protect children, management and staff had taken part in child protection training and had a good understanding of possible signs of abuse and the correct procedures to follow if concerned. We discussed ensuring chronologies only contained relevant information to support the children's welfare.

In the baby and toddler rooms, staff responded well to children's needs and interests. As a result, children were engaged, happy and supported to progress. In the pre-school room, staff were developing responsive planning and child led play. However, observations of children at play were inconsistent throughout the service and were not always used to identify appropriate next steps and inform planning. As a result, not all children were supported to reach their full potential.

Children were provided with nutritious and healthy lunches. The experience in all rooms was positive, unhurried and enjoyed by the children. To support children's independence and promote healthy eating, more opportunities should be provided for older children to choose and prepare snack.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

The entrance hall supported good communication links between home and nursery. Parents were able to access an informative noticeboard, find out about Schemas (patterns of play), add recycling resources for the children to play with and look at how the service had responded to their ideas.

As previously recommended, the baby room had undergone positive changes with more natural and open-ended resources. The neutral colours of the soft furnishings and the walls contributed to a calm atmosphere. A selection of real life resources enabled children to learn through familiar play, develop their ideas and explore their emotions. However, resources and furnishing to support children in the early stages of walking were limited. Staff should continue to develop the environment to ensure it is homely and meets the needs of the young child.

Older children were able to take part in a variety of activities and enjoyed painting, reading stories and playing in the construction area. A sensory room provided children with peaceful,

relaxing space for stories or quiet, reflective play. Staff should now evaluate the learning experience for children. They should further develop the learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy and ensure activities provide enough challenge.

At times, the environment was very messy and the floors were slippery with water spills. To encourage children to play safely, and to help them grow into responsible and respectful adults, staff should encourage tidying up and looking after their toys.

The children in all areas benefited from opportunities to free flow between outdoors and indoors. The outdoor equipment and resources were varied and promoted children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity. The children in the baby room enjoyed water play using funnels and jugs. The older children were able to dig, climb and make dens.

Appropriate infection control procedures were in place and children washed their hands before eating and after outdoor play. Staff completed a nappy change following best practice procedures.

Staff had completed first aid training which provided them with the appropriate skills to deal with minor accidents. Any accidents and incidents were recorded and the information shared with the parent/carer. This helped support the wellbeing of the child.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

The manager had followed safe recruitment procedures and all staff were registered with an appropriate regulatory body. This helped protect children and keep them safe.

Staff worked well as a team and supported each other to meet the needs of the children. They were warm, caring and used praise to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Younger children were given lots of cuddles and were soothed when they were unsettled. Some staff used good questioning skills to help facilitate play and develop children's learning. This should be developed further to ensure consistency across the service.

Staff were enthusiastic and committed to further develop their knowledge and understanding to improve outcomes for children. All staff had undertaken core training to support the overall welfare of the child. Staff had attended a variety of training opportunities such as fun with forces, outdoor play and observations. This was beginning to have an impact in positive changes to the environment and in the learning experiences for children. Staff should continue to evaluate their practice and use this to improve their skills and knowledge in improving the learning outcomes for children.

Staff had an awareness about the documents 'Building the Ambition' and 'Pre-birth to Three'. They discussed how this had been used to evaluate the learning environment for children. Evaluation using the document 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' was at the very early stages. This should now be fully embedded in practice.

All staff had a continuing professional development file. This enabled staff to evaluate the impact of any training on their practice and help identify where further training may be helpful.

Staff would benefit from having leadership roles relevant to their strengths and experience. This would help staff feel valued and respected and included in making improvements to the service.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4. Quality of management and leadership

Staff spoke positively about the support given by management. The manager was friendly and welcoming and had developed good relationships with her families and staff. This contributed to a positive and happy atmosphere.

The deputy managers worked well together and were frequently in the playrooms to model good practice to staff. They were very committed and had worked hard to source documents and guidance to improve the service. They had approached a local voluntary service for support on how to promote positive behaviour in the nursery. As a result, a sensory room had been developed. They should now continue to inform their knowledge and skills in order to effectively support staff.

An improvement plan was in place and areas for development included staff knowledge of the document 'Building the Ambition', improving outdoor learning and developing transitions for children. However, the service had not undertaken sufficiently robust self-evaluation to inform and evaluate the plan.

Management undertook regular monitoring of routines undertaken by staff such as nappy changing and supporting snack. These helped ensure staff were competent and followed best practice procedures. Regular monitoring was undertaken of the children's learning journals. However, evaluations and comments were focused on the presentation rather than the content. As a result, observations of the children at play did not always show children's progress and were not effective in identifying next steps.

Staff were supported with regular monitoring, support supervision and appraisals. However, these were not always meaningful and helpful to support staff progress. (See Recommendation 2)

Parents spoke very positively about the service and the welcoming inclusive environment. They were able to chat with staff on a daily basis and were able to take part in play and stay sessions. Children's interests and preferences were reflected in the activities on offer. Staff should now find innovative ways to further involve parents and for children to make more choices.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and two recommendations. From these one recommendation has been met. Outstanding issues relating to Care Inspectorate are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and three recommendations.

Recommendations

Quality of staffing

To improve the quality of children's experiences staff should be supported to reflect on their training and development opportunities and implement the learning from these into practice. This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled,

are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes'. (HSCS 3.14)

Quality of management and leadership

To ensure children receive high quality care and early learning experiences management and staff should ensure an effective quality assurance system is developed and implemented in the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

In order to ensure all children are supported to achieve their potential, effective systems should be implemented to monitor children's progress, learning and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.