

Summarised inspection findings

Hilton Primary School Early Learning and Childcare

The Highland Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Hilton Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is located within the primary school. Hilton Primary School is located in a residential area of Inverness. The ELC operates from two rooms which have independent access to a dedicated outside play area. At the time of inspection, 82 children aged 3-5 years were enrolled in the ELC. At the start of the session an Early Years Graduate (EYG) took up post in the ELC. The Acting Principal Teacher (PT) with responsibility for the ELC took up post from October 2018. The ELC is also supported by an Early Years Education Support Officer (EYESO).

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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships across the ELC setting are kind and caring. As a result, children are happy, safe and secure. Children are developing their confidence and independence skills across the learning environment, for example, navigating the obstacle course outdoors. They are beginning to form friendships and are learning to play cooperatively with others.
- The majority of children are engaged in learning through free play, planned and spontaneous play opportunities. Practitioners have made changes to the indoor environment, which is beginning to support children's curiosity, enquiry and creativity, for example, the introduction of natural materials. Children enjoy learning through free play, particularly in the outdoor environment. Practitioners should continue to review and reflect on their indoor and outdoor environments to ensure children's interests are fully reflected. In doing so, practitioners should continue to ensure learning is challenging and that they support children to lead their own learning.
- Practitioners know their children well and are supportive in their interactions. They listen effectively to children and support them, for example, by giving praise and encouragement. Practitioners are increasingly developing their use of open-ended questions and 'Words Up' strategies to support children's language development. They should continue to develop their use of skilled questioning to challenge children in their thinking and build upon their natural motivation and curiosity to learn. On a few occasions, interactions could be used more effectively to support and encourage children's concentration and engagement in learning. While opportunities to engage in digital learning are provided for children, practitioners should continue to develop further approaches to digital learning to support children more effectively to develop their digital skills.
- Observations of children's learning are recorded by all practitioners. These are at an early stage in supporting them to identify children's next steps in learning effectively. Practitioners are engaged in professional learning on recording of observations and now need to develop a consistent approach to capturing significant learning for all children. Weekly meetings led by the principal teacher are supporting practitioners to develop their skills in observation, planning

and tracking. The ELC moved from electronic learning journals to 'Learning Journey' folders at the beginning of the session and have made a positive start at introducing these for all children. Developmental overview sheets are completed for every child. Parents and carers have daily dialogue with practitioners, informal discussions and formal parents and carers' meetings twice per year to discuss children's progress. They have opportunities to view and contribute to their child's folders, sharing learning and wider achievements from home.

- The transition programme from ELC supports children well as they move on to school. The principal teacher for ELC is also the P1 teacher and this is effective in making transitions smooth for all children. In term four children have weekly visits to the P1 classrooms to stay and play with the children. This is supporting children to have a seamless transition into P1. Children also have access to the school library, gym hall and have lunch in the dinner hall. During the month of June, there are information sessions for parents and carers where they meet the teacher, find out information about the school and visit the classroom. Practitioners work closely with staff across the early level, this supports continuity and progression in learning for all children.
- Approaches to planning continue to be developed across ELC. Floorbooks, learning walls and the 'Planning Tree' are continuing to support practitioners to plan for children's learning. As planned, the senior management team and all practitioners should continue to reflect on, develop and evaluate approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring, ensuring processes are streamlined and not overly bureaucratic.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

3.2 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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress. Recent improvements to the learning environment mean that the majority of children are increasingly engaged in their learning. Practitioners are keen to continue and develop the learning experiences provided in the ELC.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are developing an awareness of what it means to be healthy, washing their hands and taking part in daily tooth brushing. Children access snack independently and experience a wide range of foods. Children have recently been developing an awareness of their body. They enjoy regular gym sessions in the school hall and children respond positively to these learning experiences. Regular visits to the local park are enabling children to develop an appreciation of the wider local community and of the natural world. The developing outdoor area is supporting children's opportunities for daily physical activity. There is scope to develop further this area to promote management of risk and the use of loose parts to support children's creativity, curiosity and problem solving skills.
- In early language and communication, children are making satisfactory progress. They enjoy sharing their news and are developing their ability to listen to others. Non-fiction books are used with children to find information about their interests. Participation in table-top games to support learning is enhancing children's ability to concentrate and take turns. Children enjoy having a story read to them by an adult. They can talk about familiar stories with a few able to re-tell and share their thoughts about the story. Children enthusiastically engage with rhymes and songs, during story time. The recently introduced sharing of 'Rhyme of the week' with families is supporting the children with their understanding of word patterns and rhyme.
- Opportunities for mark-making using a variety of media and resources are available, for example, using brushes and paint outdoors. Children self-register when they arrive and this is supporting recognition of their name. A few children write their names and the majority are starting to identify letter shapes and letters in their names. Practitioners should continue to promote opportunities for children to write independently and for a purpose.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are making satisfactory progress. Children are aware of numbers with the majority counting aloud from zero to ten. A few children can recognise larger numbers. Children are aware of 2D shapes and can match regular 2D shapes during play. A positive next step will be to explore further 3D objects; this could be supported by the developing use of loose parts and block play both indoors and outdoors. This will support children's understanding of mathematical relationships such as symmetry and an awareness

and use of positional language. Most children are able to sort and match objects and some use mathematical language in their play.

- Practitioners should continue to develop children’s literacy and numeracy skills in more real-life contexts and support them to apply their skills across all areas of the playroom and outdoors. There is scope to ensure that observations inform more effective planning for all children to experience appropriate pace and challenge more consistently. This will help to support children to make good progress. Ongoing support from the EYG in literacy, numeracy and family engagement opportunities will support this.
- From assessment information available and inspection activity, children are making satisfactory progress over time as a result of their experiences at Hilton ELC. Practitioners monitor children’s progress through care plans, ‘Learning Journey’ folders, and local authority developmental overviews. They should now consider how to link each of these to ensure a clearer overview of children’s progress across the curriculum. Practitioners recognise that the use of ‘Learning Journey’ folders to identify next steps in learning for children is at the early stages of implementation. ‘Learning Journey’ folders include personal targets that encourage children to think about their own interests. This is supporting the children to talk increasingly about their learning. Monitoring of ‘Learning Journey’ folders by the Acting PT provides feedback to practitioners and supports further professional learning. This is developing practitioners’ skills in making key learning observations. As planned, the development of a peer support network across the ELC will be a positive next step. As the knowledge, skills and confidence of practitioners continues to develop, this should support more consistent observations of children’s key learning to evidence progress in learning over time.
- Children’s achievements are recognised on an individual basis through sharing news from home at group time and at school assemblies. Practitioners should continue to review how wider achievements for all children are captured and monitored. Families should continue to be encouraged to contribute to and share their child’s learning and achievements. This will allow practitioners to build upon and extend children’s skills more effectively.
- The supportive and inclusive ethos supports practice where potential barriers to learning are quickly identified and acted upon. The senior leadership team, childcare manager, additional support needs teacher and practitioners understand the individual circumstances and family lives of all children. Well established transition arrangements as children start the setting allow practitioners to identify children’s individual needs and how best to support them. Practitioners contact external agencies such as speech and language therapy to support children and families and minimise barriers to learning if required.

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.