

Summarised inspection findings

Levenvale Primary School Nursery Class

West Dunbartonshire Council

19 December 2023

Key contextual information

Levensale Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) is situated within Levensale Primary School. The school serves the area of Alexandria in West Dunbartonshire. The ELCC opened in 2019 and is registered for 80 children at any one time. The current roll is 60. Children attend from the age of three until beginning primary school. The setting provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) over the school term with children attending from 8.50 am to 2.50 pm. Almost all children access their 1140 hrs entitlement. The ELCC includes three playrooms and an outdoor area. In addition, practitioners make use of the extensive school grounds. Over the past year, there have been significant changes to the leadership team with responsibility for the ELCC. In addition, the ELCC has experienced staffing challenges. The headteacher has been in post since August 2023 and has recently taken over the responsibility for the ELCC. She is supported by a depute headteacher, lead practitioner, senior practitioner, and a team of practitioners. The setting also has an early stages teacher who splits her time with other ELC settings.

1.3 Leadership of change

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 work well as a team and strive to provide quality ELC for children and families. Senior leaders have continued to support practitioners well through a period of change. Along with, practitioners, they have reviewed the vision and values. As identified, it will be important to continue to support children to become familiar with the vision in a developmentally appropriate way. Practitioners promote the values of successful, healthy, inclusive, nurture and engaged (SHINE) naturally through their daily practice and nurturing interactions with children. They are beginning to encourage children to use the language of the values in relevant contexts.
- Most practitioners have a leadership role based on their skills, interest and expertise. In addition, a few practitioners are undertaking additional qualifications to increase their professional knowledge and develop their skills further. Practitioners are motivated by their roles and professional learning and feel empowered to lead improvements. For example, they have deepened their understanding and improved their interactions with children to support early communication and language, numeracy and learning outdoors. Senior leaders engage with practitioners during 'Be Your Best' sessions to enable practitioners to reflect on their practice and discuss future professional learning needs.
- Senior leaders and practitioners know the local community in which their families live very well. They continually seek ways to improve support to children and families by collaborating effectively with partners and support agencies. Practitioners meet regularly to reflect on children's experiences and discuss the levels of support individual children may need to support their wellbeing and progress in learning.

- The ELCC share the school improvement plan which outlines key priorities focusing on children's health and wellbeing and raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Practitioners use the knowledge gained through professional learning and visits to other settings to help them make improvements. This is having a positive impact on the quality of learning spaces, children's experiences and the progress children are making in their learning.
- Senior leaders in the ELCC and practitioners demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement. They are a reflective team who regularly review their practice. Practitioners would benefit from consistent strategic guidance and direction to help them develop further, strategies to evaluate the quality of their practice. In doing so, this should help the team to demonstrate the impact of change more effectively.

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

- Across the setting there is a calm and inclusive ethos. Almost all children demonstrate respect towards each other and to the adults. There are warm, nurturing relationships between practitioners and children and between children and their peers. Practitioners respond well to individual children's needs ensuring that they all feel valued, safe, and ready to learn.
- Almost all children engage with a wide range of quality experiences with access to both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. Practitioners provide attractive and well-organised learning spaces with a range of open-ended resources including some natural materials. They have adjusted the pace and structure of the day to allow children to develop skills during focused times and to extend their learning through free-flow play.
- Practitioners' interactions are consistently warm and supportive. Most practitioners use open-ended questioning effectively to deepen and extend children's thinking and learning. Children make effective use of a range of digital technologies including tablet computers to support their literacy and numeracy skills and to research their own areas of interest.
- Practitioners know and understand individual children well. They plan for their groups and for designated play areas based on observations of their children. Practitioners capture observations and record these within children's learning journals and within the key worker planning documents. The quality of observations is inconsistent, however, senior leaders are providing helpful feedback to practitioners to help develop their skills further. Children's individual journals document learning experiences over time. Practitioners should focus on capturing children's voice and demonstrate how children are leading their own learning. As planned, sharing regular observations with parents using the new on-line application should support parents to understand fully their children's progress in learning.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning across different timescales. Recently they have adapted weekly planning approaches. They should continue to consider ways to involve children meaningfully in planning by capturing children's ideas and interests more effectively. This should develop further children's ownership of the environment and provide more opportunities for children, with less adult-direction to lead their learning across the setting. Practitioners could revisit the principles from national guidance 'Realising the Ambition' to consider how they could weave these approaches into children's play.
- Practitioners evaluate children's experiences, and the early stages teacher tracks older children's learning. Planning for children who require additional support for learning identifies clear long-term and short-term targets. Practitioners share these plans with parents. They receive regular updates from key workers and through planned review meetings with other agencies where relevant.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based on play and provides children with a breadth of experiences across curriculum areas. All practitioners embed literacy and numeracy opportunities across all learning spaces. Senior leaders support practitioners to identify next steps for learning for health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. They should now consider how to effectively involve children in setting and knowing their own targets. This will help children to understand themselves as learners and develop skills and attitudes to be motivated lifelong learners.
- Practitioners make very good use of the local community as part of the 'Beyond the ELCC' programme. This includes regular visits to the forest, swimming pool, parks, local shops and businesses. Children develop a wide range of skills for life and learning and contribute to their local community through these real-life learning opportunities.
- Practitioners support children and families well when they start the ELCC. There is a flexible transition programme that is adapted to meet the individual needs and circumstances of children and families. Practitioners support children well, throughout the year, who are moving on to primary school. Practitioners working within and across the early level plan a range of meaningful experiences. A few children benefit from enhanced transitions which provide additional experiences to help them make the move on to school. Practitioners share information on children's learning in relation to literacy and numeracy with primary one teachers. Senior leaders and practitioners working within and across the early level could consider ways to exchange a wider range of information on children's learning and achievements.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Since the pandemic, practitioners have continued to encourage parents and carers to come along to the setting and join in children's experiences. Practitioners provide curriculum events to demonstrate to parents the range of children's experiences provided across the curriculum. Practitioners provide helpful information leaflets to enable parents to support their children's learning at home.
- Practitioners provide highly effective support to families through 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions. These opportunities enable parents and carers to access support on a range of issues from practitioners and partners. Practitioners encourage parents to come together to share their experiences and receive support in an informal and supportive way. Parents and carers report that these sessions are extremely helpful. They state that they are non-judgemental and provide a 'safe space' to share their concerns about their child's development and learning.
- Parents and carers receive information on children's experiences and learning through learning journals, social media and daily informal exchanges. Practitioners provide opportunities for parents and carers to meet with them individually to discuss their child's progress and next steps in learning.

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

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

- The wellbeing of children and their families sits at the heart of practitioners' work. Practitioners demonstrate they value children as individuals through the setting's respectful and nurturing culture. Children have settled well into the setting and are beginning to develop firm friendships. They are thriving and developing confidence. Practitioners are good role models for children. This results in children who naturally show care and kindness for each other. Most children use daily check-ins well to share how they are feeling. They talk about different emotions and relate them to their daily experiences. Across the setting, children choose to use cosy spaces where they relax, be quiet and explore resources to support their wellbeing.
- Practitioners are beginning to support children to talk about their wellbeing using the ELCC values and the national wellbeing indicators. They use real-life contexts well to develop children's understanding. This includes talking about how to keep safe in the ELCC and when out in their community. Children benefit from healthy meals and snacks and daily opportunities to be outdoors to enjoy fresh air and exercise. Practitioners 'family service' approach to lunches offers children time to sit with their keyworker and enjoy social conversations and healthy meals. Children respond positively to the calm, unhurried experience. Most children show high levels of independence and are developing important social skills.
- Practitioners are aware of their statutory duties in relation to ELC. They work well with parents and carers to create a personal plan which focuses on children's care, health and welfare needs. When creating individual targets as part of these plans, practitioners should ensure that targets are specific and have appropriate timescales for reviewing progress. Practitioners work effectively with support agencies to meet children's individual needs, for example, health visitors and educational psychologists.
- Children and families benefit from the inclusive culture within the setting. Practitioners ensure no child misses experiences and opportunities within the local community through the 'Beyond the ELCC' programme. For example, practitioners provide support for parents and carers to attend swimming sessions with their children. Children develop skills for life and learning through opportunities to visit local shops, the bank and post office. Practitioners celebrate cultural festivals and provide relevant resources to raise children's awareness of diversity. They recognise they now need to develop this further by involving parents at a deeper level. This could improve further the quality of children's experiences and resources to reflect better the world in which children live.

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

- There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing which is having a positive impact on children's learning, development and achievements. Almost all children are becoming increasingly confident and resilient. They are developing independence skills as they help prepare snack, get ready for outdoor play, and spend time within their local community. Most children benefit from a wide range of opportunities outdoors and all children spend time in the gym hall. This is developing and consolidating their balance, coordination and gross motor skills.
- Most children are keen to engage in conversations with adults sharing their interests and ideas. They use mark-making through black pen drawings and within daily routines such as snack times and writing shopping lists for community visits. This is supporting their emergent writing skills and children's understanding of the purpose and meaning of text in real life contexts. Most children engage well during focused group times with their key workers. They listen attentively to stories and can answer questions posed by the practitioners. Children readily identify and can sing favourite songs and rhymes promoted through rhyme of the month. Older children are developing an awareness of initial letter sounds.
- Most children are becoming aware of numbers, number order and early counting routines. A few children are making effective use of mathematical language as part of their play and daily routines. Children apply their knowledge of numbers and of coins when 'paying' for their snack. They develop these skills further during local community visits to the shops to purchase items such as a pumpkin. The majority of children develop wider maths skills well through a range of real-life and imaginary contexts.
- Senior leaders in the ELCC gather data to evidence the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. They use the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and the local authority benchmarking toolkit effectively. Senior leaders use the data to inform appropriate interventions and plan for future learning. They have rightly identified the need for more robust tracking of younger children's experiences. This will support practitioners to demonstrate all children's progress over time more effectively.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements through praise, encouragement and wall displays. Achievements include . Parents helpfully share their children's achievements on the closed social media page these include success in learning. Practitioners celebrate and discuss these with children and display them on the achievements wall and within children's individual leaning journeys. This process should become more streamlined

and provide further opportunity for children's involvement when the setting introduces the new on-line application.

- Senior leaders monitor all children's progress closely to identify potential gaps in children's learning. Practitioners put in place targeted interventions to enable children to make progress at a pace appropriate to their stage of development. They review interventions regularly through 'impact meetings' to ensure they continue to meet children's individual needs.

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.