

Summarised inspection findings

Douglas Park Nursery

North Ayrshire Council

6 February 2024

Key contextual information

Douglas Park Nursery is in Largs in North Ayrshire. It is a voluntary setting managed by a Parents' Committee and staffed by a manager and two early years practitioners. A visiting teacher from the local authority provides additional guidance for staff to develop and improve practice. The nursery is located in a tennis pavilion with accommodation comprising one playroom with an adjacent, covered outdoor area. Space is currently limited but there are plans in place to extend the building to provide a lunch area and additional play spaces. The nursery is registered for 18 children, from three years old to those not yet attending primary school. The 14 children currently on the roll access their entitlement to 1140 hours by attending from 9am to 3.15pm daily.

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

- Practitioners are cheerful, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They have successfully created a calm, welcoming family atmosphere and very positive relationships with children and parents. As a result, all children are happy and settled. They move around the nursery confidently and engage very well in the range of activities on offer. Almost all children display good concentration and perseverance in their play. Practitioners listen carefully to children and respond very well to their ideas and interests. They provide an appropriate balance between adult-initiated and child-led activities. Practitioners support children to be independent and make choices about their play.
- Practitioners show skill in intervening to offer support or challenge to extend children's learning. They make effective use of questions and explanations and, at times, introduce new vocabulary to children. This helps children to think about their learning and talk about their experiences. Children have free-flow access to a richly resourced outdoor area which provides interesting play spaces. This experience encourages children to explore, be creative and use their imagination. Practitioners make very good use of the local area and community to enrich children's learning. For example, children make regular visits to the local care home, park and beach. Practitioners could make more use of digital technology to facilitate children's learning in different ways.
- Practitioners know children very well as learners and understand their strengths and development needs. They observe children as they learn, and record information about their progress in online learning journals and personal folders. Staff use this information effectively to plan children's next steps in learning. They share children's individual skills and achievements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing with parents and carers. Staff encourage families to contribute to their child's profile by sharing achievements from home. Children can talk confidently about their learning and achievements with practitioners and their friends.

- As a team, practitioners plan skilfully to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children. They ensure that planned learning is appropriate to children's age and stage of development, and linked to the next steps identified for their learning. Practitioners are aware of any potential barriers to learning and actively work to address them. They show skill in responding to children 'in the moment' by adapting playroom activities to follow children's interests. Practitioners are working to strengthen children's voice across the nursery by involving them more in influencing longer term planning. They monitor and evaluate children's progress across the curriculum, based on groups of experiences and outcomes considered holistically. This helps staff ensure that children cover a broad range of experiences. Practitioners are reflective about their practice. They ensure that assessment information is used very effectively to improve outcomes for children.

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

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 are making very good progress in communication and language. They engage readily in conversations and confidently approach adults to involve them in their play. They listen carefully in small group activities and respond well to questions. Many children choose books independently and can talk knowledgeably about their favourite story characters. They use 'story spoons' enthusiastically to act out familiar tales. Many are beginning to form letters and a majority can write their name and a few alphabet letters. Children recognise familiar words and signs in the local environment.
- In numeracy and mathematics, almost all children are making very good progress. Children recognise number symbols and can count within 10. A minority of children explore numbers beyond 20. Most use mathematical language appropriately, for example through expressions like 'taller than' and 'shorter than' when measuring towers they have built. They are beginning to understand the concept of capacity as they pour water from different size containers. Almost all children use their developing skills in sorting and matching, and a majority understand patterns and sequences.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They play well with their friends and are learning to take turns, share and cooperate. Children are becoming increasingly aware of different feelings and emotions. With support from practitioners, they are developing ways to manage their own feelings. Most children can identify ways to help a friend who is upset. Children make healthy choices at snack times. Most serve themselves independently and clear up afterwards. They can talk about different food groups and show understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. Most children are aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example when they risk-assess activities in the outdoor area. Regular park and forest visits provide opportunities for children to use their bodies in different ways to jump, climb and run.
- Almost all children are making very good progress appropriate to their stages of development. Practitioners record reliable information in online trackers, learning folders and from parental comments. Overall, children are making strong and secure progress since starting nursery.
- Children's achievements are celebrated through learning journals and on the 'Wow Wall.' This is helping children to feel confident about new learning and skills as they are growing up. Practitioners have developed robust approaches to tracking children's individual

achievements. This is supporting them to make sound professional judgements about children's progress and identify each child's unique learning needs.

- Practitioners have created a strong sense of community where children and their families are valued, respected, and fully included. They have created a supportive and inclusive ethos that promotes equity. They know the community and its socio-economic context very well and use this knowledge when planning events and activities. All children and families recently participated enthusiastically in the nursery's fiftieth anniversary celebration.
- Where potential barriers to learning are identified, staff undertake additional training and work with the local authority inclusion team to plan targeted interventions for children. Most recently practitioners' focused work on language and communication had resulted in noticeable improvements in children's listening and talking. The staff team are developing their skills in using data to evaluate the impact of their interventions and ensure that all children are achieving their potential.

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.