

Summarised inspection findings

Abernethy Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

25 September 2018

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

satisfactory

This indicator underlines that rigorous self-evaluation is the responsibility of all practitioners and stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and a shared understanding of strengths and areas for development. A key factor is how to demonstrate the impact of self-evaluation and how evidence is used to improve outcomes for children. The themes are:

- collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- evidence-based improvement
- ensuring impact of successes for children and families

- The nursery team has worked well to improve approaches to self-evaluation over the recent school year. Practitioners are now beginning to evaluate their practice and provision with increasing awareness. As a result, they are starting to build a shared understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas for improvement. This work is at early stages but is showing initial signs of positive impact on practice. Practitioners are gaining confidence with how to look more critically at their delivery of early learning and childcare and consider ways they can improve. Practitioners have established positive relationships with families and gather their feedback through a variety of informal and formal opportunities. As planned, the team should continue to develop the range of ways that parents and children can contribute meaningfully to self-evaluation processes and influence improvement.
- The nursery team integrates self-evaluation into practice to improve outcomes for children. This is a positive improvement which has led to a more reflective approach and a shared understanding of the role of everyone in self-evaluation. Practitioners engage with national practice guidance to support this work which should now be carried forward with increased depth. As a result, they are beginning to make informed changes which are improving aspects of children's experiences. These include reflecting on the way in which children's language development is supported through play and interactions with adults. Practitioners now need to apply increasing focus and rigour to their self-evaluation processes in order to continue deliver well-informed change.
- Practitioners gather a range of evidence to document, record and assess children's progress. They collate this information in children's 'learning journeys' which are accessible and available to children throughout the sessions. These include focused observations of what children can do and relevant examples of their work. Children's comments are effectively gathered to reflect their views and ideas about their learning. Practitioners know children well as individuals and their particular stages of development. They have a sound understanding of child development and are building their awareness of current thinking and research in early learning and childcare. Practitioners regularly communicate with parents about children's progress and provide opportunity for discussion about learning. Working closely and productively with families is a key priority for the nursery team who value parents as partners in education. Parents are encouraged to contribute examples of learning from home to help build a holistic picture of each child's progress. This helps the team to develop a shared understanding of individual children and build on prior learning.
- The nursery team have regular time set aside for professional dialogue and to discuss their practice. They attend relevant training provided by the local authority and engage with other opportunities for career long professional learning. This has led to improved approaches and understanding of how to support children's emerging literacy skills. Professional learning is

targeted to meet the needs of children. We have asked practitioners to 'look outwards' more in their approaches to self-evaluation in line with their priorities for improvement. This will support the team as they continue to deepen their understanding of quality early learning and childcare at a national level.

- The nursery has agreed priorities which are part of the whole school improvement plan. Practitioners contribute to this process, sharing their views and suggestions. Visits from the local authority early years' team supports self-evaluation and informs the on-going improvement agenda. Regular monitoring is also carried out by the school leadership team in order to support development and professional dialogue within the nursery. This includes spending time in the learning environment and supporting self-evaluation discussions. As planned, these processes should be increasingly formalised and focused to continue to facilitate well-informed change with an appropriate pace.

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.

3.2 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

- Across the nursery, young children are developing their emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills well through experiences which promote holistic learning. Most children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. They communicate with increasing confidence as they play and the majority take part in extended conversations with adults. A few children demonstrate an interest in learning new vocabulary which is well supported by practitioners who understand how children develop early language skills. Children regularly share books together and enjoy bringing these to life with puppets. They are developing their early writing skills as they create pictures and label artwork. We have asked practitioners to improve opportunities for children to deepen and apply these developing skills throughout their play and routines.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. They count with increasing confidence during play and are developing their use of mathematical language as they experiment in the mud kitchen. Most children demonstrate an understanding of size and shape as they participate in creative play and use small construction materials. Children are not yet experiencing opportunities for exploring information handling or use of money through daily play. Use of digital technology to enhance this area of learning is also at early stages. Children would benefit from more frequent, purposeful and real-life opportunities to apply their developing numeracy and mathematics skills. This will support increased challenge in learning.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing across the curriculum. Children are caring towards each other, co-operate during play and are developing an awareness of the needs of others. They have an understanding of how to support their own wellbeing through daily routines such as making healthy food choices and being active. Outdoors, children are developing their physical skills and confidence well as they take part in woodland learning sessions. We have asked practitioners to improve opportunities for children to develop leadership and responsibility within the nursery. For example, children are capable of taking on more responsibility during snack routines. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to be independent and express themselves creatively. This will support them to make the best possible progress and provide for increased depth of learning.
- Children are enthusiastic learners and show a keen interest in the world around them. The interest in butterflies has led to children caring for caterpillars and observing the life cycle.

They ask questions to find out more information and enjoy discussing the progress of their butterflies. Children are developing an early understanding of their role in sustainability as they take part in planting and growing activities and learn about local wildlife.

- Children are becoming increasingly confident, resilient learners and are making progress over time. Practitioners know each child well and are beginning to use this knowledge to ensure that significant learning is identified and built upon. Children's achievements from home are celebrated through the 'look what I've done' sheets and children's learning journeys. The team works effectively with parents and other professionals to deliver meaningful learning opportunities.
- The nursery's caring ethos promotes a climate of respect. Practitioners know children, families and their circumstances well. They use this understanding to support children in a way that meets their needs and promotes equity. The team reflect on the impact of any strategies used to help them make decisions about future interventions.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1. Quality of care and support

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as good.

Positive and nurturing relationships between staff and children contributed to a supportive atmosphere in the nursery. Strong links with parents and good information sharing made a positive contribution to the experience of the children in nursery.

Children had individual learning journeys. These gave a picture of the experiences and activities had by the children over the course of the nursery year. We saw some evidence of the children setting targets for their own learning. Observations of the children's experiences were mainly descriptive rather than evaluative.

The individual needs of children were well met by staff. Staff made good use of their knowledge and training in this area. There was evidence of effective multi-disciplinary working and recording. Staff engaged positively with parents to support children.

Staff were beginning to adopt a more responsive system of planning. We would encourage them to develop this further. They should consider how they could offer more open ended and problem solving experiences for children. They should look at how activities could be differentiated to offer appropriate challenge.

A planned programme of transition from nursery to Primary 1 was very good. This made a positive contribution to the children feeling confident about their move. Primary 6 buddies were involved in this programme and the nursery children were very enthusiastic about them.

The snack experience for children was in need of review. The staff should consider how to use snack time as a learning as well as a social experience. Children should be more involved in selecting and ordering snack items. They should participate more in the setting up and preparation. Staff should use the snack as an opportunity to introduce learning opportunities in early literacy and numeracy. Children should have the opportunity to drink fresh water during the nursery session, not only during snack time.

Care Inspectorate grade: Good

2. Quality of environment

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as good.

Staff used their training to prevent the spread of infection. Children used the toilets independently and followed the hand washing rules. A policy was in place to ensure the privacy and dignity of children during nappy and clothes changes.

The nursery had a policy on protecting children from the effects of the sun. This practice needed to be reviewed and clarified so that staff could be clear on when sun screen had been applied and what action they would take if children were unprotected.

Staff were clear on how many children were in the setting each day. They encouraged children's independence through self-registration. Action was taken to follow up any unexplained absence on the first day.

Children had daily opportunities to experience active outdoor play. This contributed positively to their health and wellbeing. The areas used were risk assessed daily to ensure they were safe for children to use. The children were taking responsibility for making rules and beginning to assess risks for themselves.

Staff and children made very good use of the outdoor areas both around the school and in the local woodlands. This promoted the children's wonder and curiosity about the natural environment and the animals and plants that shared it.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and information shared with families. We asked that parents be offered a copy of any accident and incident reports. They should ensure that where an incident happens between two children that both parents are given written information about the event.

We would encourage the staff to look at the layout of the playroom and the core provision for the children.

Some of the areas lacked challenge and did not offer opportunities for children to be creative and to use more open ended and natural materials. More consideration needed to be given to the learning needs of the ante pre-school children through the provision of more sensory play. Staff should consider the purpose and relevance of wall displays to the children. (see recommendation 1).

Care Inspectorate grade: Good

3. Quality of staffing

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as good.

The staff team were committed to their role within the nursery and the wider school community. They worked effectively with parents and partner professionals to support children in the setting. They had an open and approachable style and we saw that they created a welcoming ethos for children and parents to come into each day. Sharing of information was part of the routine at the beginning and the end of each session.

We saw that on-going work with speech and language colleagues was having a positive impact on their dialogues with children. Staff were being reflective about how their interactions with children impacted on learning.

All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). They were aware of their responsibilities to their professional codes of practice. They had begun to access the training and learning opportunities offered by the council.

Each of the staff had an annual professional review with the headteacher. This allowed staff time and the opportunity to reflect on their role and to identify relevant development needs and training. This was making a positive contribution to the improvement journey in the nursery and had a positive impact on the outcomes for children.

Staff were knowledgeable about early child development and were beginning to use self-evaluation to improve and develop the learning experiences and the activities they offered to the children.

They should now look to national guidance and examples of current best practice in early learning

and childcare. They should use their learning to promote independence in children and offer opportunities for deeper learning. (see recommendation 2).

Children were protected from harm as staff were responsive to the signs of neglect and abuse. Staff knew all of the children well and to listen to them respectfully. Training helped to ensure that staff were appropriately skilled and knowledgeable about their child protection responsibilities.

Care Inspectorate grade: Good

4. Quality of management and leadership

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as good.

The nursery was well led by the headteacher and the principal teacher. They knew the staff and the children well and were regular visitors to the nursery.

In discussion with parents and staff we heard that they had confidence in the management team to support and sustain improvements. They highlighted an increased morale in the staff team and the stability that was being experienced in the school community. The parents we spoke to told us that everyone was approachable and they were happy that issues were addressed and resolved effectively.

The school and its staff were at the heart of their community and were held in high regard.

The management team and the nursery staff were working effectively together to consolidate their team and to identify their areas for improvement. A current focus on emergent literacy was having a positive impact on children's learning.

They had recently reviewed their aims for the nursery and we considered that this was a positive start to help them work towards the improvements they had identified through their emerging confidence in self-evaluation. During the inspection it was discussed how parents could be further involved in giving feedback which could be used as part of the evaluation process. The staff should also look at how the feedback from children could be used to inform developments.

A planned calendar of monitoring and evaluation had helped them to track improvements and had given the management team a good overview of the progress being made by the children.

Further support was given by Highland Council staff who visited, contributed to the evaluation process and advised on improvements.

With all of these processes in place, and with everyone working together, we were confident that the nursery was ready to move forward and to offer children high quality learning experiences which reflected the very best examples of early learning and childcare.

Care Inspectorate grade: Good

To be completed by the Care Inspector and inserted into the letter

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and 2 recommendations.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1. The nursery should review the learning opportunities and core provision within the setting to ensure that play and learning experiences are relevant and responsive to children`s ideas and stage of development.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that,` as a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.` HSCS 1.31

Recommendation 2. Staff should be supported to continue to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence through a variety of professional development opportunities to aid them in their practice and providing positive outcomes for children.

This is to ensure 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

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.