

Summarised inspection findings

Dunlop Early Childhood Centre

East Ayrshire Council

28 January 2020

Key contextual information

Dunlop Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is located in the village of Dunlop in East Ayrshire. The ECC is located within the main school building. It has two adjoining playrooms with direct access to the secure, enclosed outside space. At the time of inspection, there were 25 children registered for the morning session and 14 children for the afternoon session. Regular use of the local community includes visits to the shops and the local park.

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

- Practitioners have created a positive and caring ethos. This results in almost all children in the setting being motivated and keen to learn. Children are polite, friendly and enjoy playing with their friends.
- Children engage for sustained periods with a variety of interesting experiences and have daily access to the outside learning space. The use of natural materials, everyday items and recycled materials is supporting children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity. As a result, children are becoming increasingly independent in their learning. Senior leaders should review regularly the balance between adult-led and child-led experiences, as well as the impact of routines. This should ensure children's independence and creativity is maximised further.
- Small group times provide children with an opportunity to come together. During these times, they look at their 'learning books' and spend time with their key worker, talking about their interests and ideas. This supports the development of positive attachments between children and practitioners and promotes well a language of learning with all children. In a few examples, practitioners use questioning well to promote curiosity and inquiry in learning. Senior leaders should monitor the implementation of knowledge from professional learning to ensure high quality interactions are developed further.
- Practitioners make regular use of digital technology, including the interactive whiteboard, tablets, cameras and programmable toys. This is helping children to learn positional language, for example, forwards, backwards, left and right. Children regularly use digital scales for cooking and baking activities. This enhances their awareness of the importance of measure.
- The principal teacher and practitioners know children's needs and circumstances very well. Well-established, weekly professional dialogue meetings are valued by practitioners. This provides them with regular opportunities to discuss observations of children's development and progress. Individual 'learning books' detail what children have experienced and achieved in the ECC. They offer a tool for children to discuss and reflect on their learning. The team use mind maps within floorbooks to record what children already know. This is supporting the development of children's involvement in their learning. It is important that practitioners gather

children's views on what they would like to learn. In doing this, they will ensure they fully build upon prior learning, knowledge and skills to plan effectively for all children's individual needs.

- The principal teacher has updated planning documentation. This is supporting practitioners to plan over a variety of timescales using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. The planning includes the use of local authority's progression frameworks weekly and monthly planners, with a focus on health and wellbeing, and floorbooks. Practitioners are developing their use of the 'I Can - Learning Journey' booklets. These contain learning statements for literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and health and wellbeing. The principal teacher and practitioners have identified tracking and monitoring of children's learning and progress as an area that needs to continue to develop. More consistent linking and use of planning documents, individual learning targets and monitoring and identification of next steps in learning, is an essential area for development.
- Practitioners should continue to jointly plan across the early level. Practitioners should continue to build upon the programme of activities supporting children in their transition to P1. This should support children's progression across the early level and help staff to develop further a shared understanding of high quality early learning pedagogy and play based learning.
- Senior leaders have identified the need to work alongside colleagues in the local education group to moderate early level planning and assessment. This should support practitioners in the sharing of standards using the National Benchmarks.

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.

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

- Children are making good progress in their learning, appropriate to their stage of development. Quality learning statements, created by the principal teacher, are supporting practitioners to develop further their confidence in making professional judgements. They should continue to develop approaches to provide further evidence of children's progress over time.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are making good progress. Children show familiarity and an understanding of the importance of routines, such as handwashing and tooth brushing. Children are learning about healthy eating, engage daily with food preparation for snack, and are learning to peel, slice, mix and spread. They are encouraged to taste a range of new foods. Children experience a range of well-planned learning experiences that improve their understanding of their health and wellbeing. These include yoga sessions, park walks, the 'Mini Forest Schools' programme and physical education during gym time in the school hall. This is resulting in children being able to talk about how their body changes when engaged in physical activity. Children display an interest in the natural world and are able to talk about the changes they see in their local environment. Children's independence skills are developing well by getting ready for outdoor play. A positive next step would be to expand the opportunities children have to make decisions that matter to them.
- Most children are making good progress in early language and communication. They speak in social situations and are confident and enthusiastic when discussing their thoughts and ideas. The majority of children use an extensive range of vocabulary during their play. Children enjoy looking at the wide variety of non-fiction books available both indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy familiar stories. They benefit from the setting's participation in a national book-sharing programme and the well-established, parent-led lending library. Mark-making opportunities and resources support children's developing understanding that writing has a purpose. This is clearly evident across a range of curriculum areas. Most older children can recognise and write part, or all of their name. They have an awareness of the letters and respective sounds that they represent. The language and communication champion, alongside the local authority teacher, are developing effectively children's knowledge of nursery rhymes. Practitioners helpfully share these with families. This is supporting children's exploration of the patterns and sounds of language.
- In numeracy and early mathematics, most children are making good progress. Most of the older children count confidently to ten, with a few able to count backwards from ten. A few children are aware of, and use larger numbers in meaningful contexts. The use of block play is supporting children's understanding of positional language and the relationships between

2D shapes, 3D objects and their properties. Most children consistently and accurately use the language of measure, such as short, long, big and small. During group times, children talk about days of the week, months of the year and seasons. They can relate these to events in their lives. Children use simple graphs to show a variety of information, for example, a bar graph for eye colour. Children who are capable of more challenge require better individualised planned learning to ensure they can reach their full potential.

- Practitioners praise and encourage children to build their confidence and to celebrate their successes. Practitioners now need to gather and monitor this information. They should build upon the achievements and current interests of children to ensure the holistic development of the child is maximised.
- Children who require additional support with their learning are supported well in the ECC. Senior leaders and practitioners work well with partner agencies to deliver interventions and strategies as required.

1. Quality of care and support

During this inspection, we considered whether children and their families had access to the right support at the right time. In addition, we looked at individual children's personal plans, as well as evidencing how children and families were listened to and what processes were in place to keep them safe and protected from harm. We found that outcomes in these areas were good (Health and Social Care Standards 1.2, 1.13, 1.15, 1.23, 1.24, 2.17, 3.1 and 3.20).

Together management and staff had successfully established a caring and inclusive ethos throughout the service. We saw children and their families being warmly welcomed into the setting and found relationships between staff, parents and children were positive. Interactions between staff and children were caring and responsive, supporting children to feel safe and secure. We observed staff providing reassurance, support and comfort where appropriate and children confidently approached staff knowing their immediate care needs would be met. As a result, children were happy and positive attachments were formed.

Staff recognised the importance of working in partnership with parents and used a variety of methods to ensure information was shared timeously. This included the use of a blog, school App, parents' information board and newsletters. Parents spoke positively of the opportunities available to them to be involved within their child's learning including; stay and play sessions, lending library and regular care plan reviews. This supported the development of trusting, respectful partnerships with parents.

We found children were provided with opportunities to make healthy lifestyle choices. Children had direct access to outdoor play daily, moving matters physical activity programme and the snacks offered to children were varied, healthy and reflective of best practice guidance, 'Setting the table'. We have asked the management team to ensure allergen information contained within the snacks provided are shared with parents.

We sampled medication processes and found some improvements could be made in line with best practice guidance. In order to ensure all children's medication is recorded and administered safely the management team should update the recording and auditing systems to reflect Care Inspectorate's best practice guidance, 'Management of medication in day care of children and childminding services'.

Information gathered about children during the settling in process supported staff to develop personal plans for children. We found plans did not clearly outline how staff planned to support individual children. Management and staff should review personal plans with a focus on supporting every child's health, welfare and safety needs (recommendation 1). Staff should ensure next steps in learning identified within children's plans are linked to the planning, evaluation and observation cycles.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

During this inspection we considered how the environment supported children to direct their own play and learning. We looked closely at whether children had access to a wide range of experiences and resources within a safe indoor and outdoor environment. We found that the environment was offering good outcomes and experiences for children in this area (HSCS 1.32, 2.27, 5.17).

Effective health and safety procedures had been developed, risk assessments had been established that identified potential risks to staff and children and outlined appropriate control measures. A risk benefit approach had been considered in the outdoor environment, enabling children to take some controlled risks in their play experiences. Staff should now consider ways to involve children in identifying and managing risk.

Staff had considered the layout of the environment to provide opportunities for children to play alone or in small groups. We found play materials were accessible allowing children to make some independent play choices. The development of the STEM room provided a variety of natural and open-ended materials, supporting children to develop their skills through natural curiosity, inquiry and creativity. Staff should continue as planned to extend the use of natural materials throughout the indoor and outdoor environments.

We found that children's ideas and views were gathered and used to influence planned learning experiences. The service is at early stages of implementing floor book planning systems with the aim of empowering children to actively lead their own learning. The management team should continue to monitor the progress and impact of their current planning systems to ensure children are provided with challenge, depth and progression of learning enabling children to reach their full potential.

Staff had attended a well selected and appropriate range of training and further education opportunities. We recognised the training attended had potential to improve the quality of the experiences offered to children. The management team should continue to support staff to embed professional skills developed from training opportunities with a focus on improving outcomes for children.

We found accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents, records sampled confirmed that appropriate treatment was given to children when required. We have asked management to uptake an audit with a focus on identifying common patterns in relation to the environment, resources and individual children. Appropriate action should be taken and recorded when required.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

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 one recommendation.

Recommendation

1. The management team and staff should review children's personal plans to ensure they are reflective of individual children's current health, welfare and safety needs. Plans should clearly outline how the service will support these needs and identify children's next steps.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care standards which states; 'My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

Personal plans developed should be consistent in line with, The Social Care and Social work Improvement Scotland (requirements for care services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210) regulation 5 - Personal plans.

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.