

Summarised inspection findings

Kingsford Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeen City Council

30 April 2019

Key contextual information

Kingsford Nursery Class is located in the grounds of Kingsford Primary School, Aberdeen City. The nursery is registered for 40 children to attend at any one time and offers morning or afternoon sessions. At the time of inspection, there were 75 children on the roll, aged from three years to those not yet attending school.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- The senior leadership team within the school need to strategically support and lead improvements across the early level. They need to establish robust processes for monitoring and reviewing all aspects of practice. To ensure this is effective, monitoring and evaluation needs to be carried using a strategic and focused approach.
- There is a long established vision, values and aims which are shared across the school and nursery. These are displayed within the nursery environment and practitioners are aware of them. The vision, values and aims should be revisited to ensure they are relevant, current and take full account of the local context. Consultation with all stakeholders is required to ensure there is a sense of ownership and make the vision, values and aims more meaningful to all.
- Practitioners demonstrate an enthusiastic and professional approach to their role, displaying a sense of collective responsibility and commitment in taking forward improvements. The lead practitioner has engaged with local settings and welcomes the opportunity for professional dialogue and collegiate working. Practitioners engage in a range of continuing professional development opportunities within the setting and those provided by the local authority. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their own professional learning, for example, through further visits and engagement with local settings.
- Practitioners are reflective in their practice and strive to meet the needs of children and families in their community. As a team, they have weekly meetings where they reflect on practice, emerging interests and individual children's needs. Practitioners have engaged with national guidance documents, for example, Building the Ambition. They regularly use national guidance to help them improve their practice.
- An improvement plan is in place across the school and nursery with appropriate priorities identified. These are at the early stages of being addressed. Leadership opportunities for practitioners are limited, currently there is a range of shared responsibilities. As planned, opportunities for all practitioners to develop their own skills in leading improvements should be explored further.

- Self-evaluation is at the early stages across all aspects of the nursery. The team share informal, daily and weekly dialogue to inform improvements and changes in practice. The team are at the early stages of using the national self-evaluation framework to evaluate the quality of provision. The team now need better strategic support from the senior leadership team to guide them as they build on the sound practice which exists in the nursery class. We have suggested that local authority guidance on self-evaluation will enhance and inform future practice.

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

- Relationships are warm and positive, as a result, children are safe and secure. Children are actively involved in their learning which is well supported by the nurturing practitioner team. Experiences, which extend and sustain learning, allow most children to make informed choices about their learning. Indoor and outdoor environments engage most children fully in their learning. They benefit from the free flow access, which allows them to develop their confidence, independence and resilience.
- Practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and early learning pedagogy. In the best examples, they use this knowledge and effective questioning to promote children's curiosity and inquiry learning. Practitioners listen very effectively to children's views, which are clearly respected and acted upon. Children have time and space to follow their interests and deepen their individual learning. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop the language of learning with children. Children have access to tablet computers, interactive whiteboard and an electric typewriter, which they use to write stories. We have asked the setting to continue to develop the use of digital technologies to enrich learning experiences.
- Practitioners know the children well and meet regularly to informally discuss children's progress. The lead practitioner records children's individual circumstances at key points in time. The team are at the early stages of using observations to inform future plans and to determine how much progress children are making in their learning. There is potential to develop further the quality of practitioner observations. We discussed the use of Education Scotland materials to support practitioners develop further their observation skills.
- Practitioners have started to talk with colleagues from outwith the nursery to develop their shared understanding of children's progress and achievements. Practitioners are at the earliest stage of tracking children's progress over time, this is not yet tracked or monitored systematically. They understand how to assess children's learning and have very recently begun to engage with local authority guidance on developmental pathways. We have asked the team to continue to develop this for all children to support the identification of clear targets and next steps in learning.
- Electronic, individual learning diaries are used to capture and record children's learning. This information is shared with parents. However, there is no opportunity for parents to contribute online. As planned, the team now need to evaluate whether this approach effectively captures all children's learning. They may also wish to explore other ways in which families can contribute to their child's learning. Moving forward, the children also need to be involved in, and have more ownership of their learning diaries.

- Responsive planning is supporting children's learning. We discussed with practitioners the need to consider the balance of free flow and planned experiences for children. We have asked the setting to review and refresh approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring to ensure systems are streamlined and not overly bureaucratic.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Recently introduced 'planning in the moment' takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. The curriculum is based firmly on play. Pedagogical approaches reflect practitioners' clear understanding of developmentally appropriate play-based experiences. As planned, practitioners should now develop their curriculum rationale in conjunction with primary colleagues across the early level. This will support progression and continuity in learning across the early level and beyond.
- The outdoor area is used well to enrich children's learning. It offers good opportunities for children to be imaginative, solve problems and use materials and resources, such as loose parts. Practitioners encourage creativity and curiosity through a range of open-ended and natural resources. Children's interests are noted and quickly capitalised on, for example, making a guitar with a box and string. This resulted in real guitars being introduced and brought from home with children performing a show the next day.
- Literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the environment with resources introduced to deepen children's learning and engagement. Practitioners build on opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy. At times practitioners missed opportunities to extend learning, for example, supporting children to count as they climbed up pallets.
- Planning for individual children clearly considers their needs, interests and stage of development. Approaches to planning are flexible and very responsive, however there needs to be a clearer focus on capturing the progress children are making. Engagement with parents should capture what children already know and can do, as well as ongoing learning. This will allow practitioners to improve continuity in learning within and beyond the setting.
- Transitions – See Choice QI

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Relationships between practitioners and parents are positive, this was evident during drop off and collection of children. Regular communication with parents takes place through daily dialogue, parents meetings, and newsletters. Parents have opportunities to be involved with the nursery through 'stay and play', engaging in outings and responding to questionnaires. There is a weekly lending library where children are encouraged and supported to take a book home to share with parents. The nursery have an open evening where parents can visit the nursery, alongside the more formal progress meetings.
- During the inspection parents spoken to report that they are very happy with the nursery. They commented on the positive changes to the environment, in particular the garden area. Overall, parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire are very positive. A minority noted that they would welcome more organised opportunities to share in their child's learning. Online learning diaries capture children's learning. Parents do not currently have direct access to these and as a result, printed copies are shared with parents. We have asked practitioners to evaluate the purpose of the individual learning diaries as a tool for sharing learning with parents. As planned, they should continue to engage in collaborative work with parents.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Relationships are built upon mutual respect and trust, leading to a warm, welcoming and friendly ethos for all children and their families. Practitioners welcome the opportunity to get to know their children and parents well during the settling-in period. This is sensitively managed for children requiring additional time to settle. As a result, children are supported to develop a feeling of being safe and secure in their environment. Overall, children's behaviour was positive in line with their age and stage of development.
- Practitioners and children are at the early stages of using the language of the wellbeing indicators across all aspects of their work. A shared understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included should be developed across the setting. This would promote the language of wellbeing and further support the development of positive outcomes for children and families in their community. We discussed with the team ways in which this could be done in a developmentally and meaningful way.
- Children are happy and confident both indoors and outdoors. Free flow opportunities to play indoors and outdoors supports children to be healthy and active. They have fun with their peers, for example, making an obstacle course with loose parts. This supports them to develop confidence and resilience and impacts positively on their sense of wellbeing. Children are kind and considerate, particularly in the outdoor space. Opportunities to share and take turns with their peers support this.
- Children benefit from healthy snacks and enjoy this social experience. They have opportunities to make decisions about the snack menu and are actively involved in ordering snack foods online. Practitioners engage with children while they are having snack. This is particularly effective for supporting children who have difficulty participating and eating. Children are developing a range of personal hygiene skills, including tooth brushing. Opportunities exist for children to take a leadership role, such as preparing and serving snack. We have asked practitioners to continue to build opportunities for children to develop leadership and responsibility.
- The senior leadership team need to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility in relation to statutory duties. Policies and procedures need to be reviewed and refreshed in line with current guidance and best practice in early learning and childcare. The lead practitioner collates records of concerns relating to wellbeing, safeguarding and additional support needs and passes them to the senior leadership team. They should now implement rigorous procedures to ensure that important information and significant events are appropriately recorded and monitored. Individual plans for children who require them should be developed, ensuring that SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and trackable) targets are in place to improve progress for all children.

- All children and families are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children and parents in relevant and meaningful learning about diversity and equality. As planned, practitioners should continue to explore gender in more depth ensuring potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

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
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- Through inspection activity and dialogue with children and practitioners, children are observed to be making satisfactory progress, with a few making good progress in their learning. A range of anecdotal and informal sources provide evidence of children's engagement in learning experiences. However, the setting could not provide robust data that demonstrates the progress children are making across their learning. It will be important, going forward, to identify and build upon significant learning to ensure children continue to make progress over time. We have asked the setting to ensure that children's progress is captured, recorded and shared with children, parents and other professionals in a meaningful format.
 - Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in communication and language. They confidently engage in conversation with practitioners and approached inspectors to engage in learning experiences during the inspection. Opportunities for mark making are freely available indoors and outdoors with a few children writing their name, letters and numbers independently. Procedures for self-registration are supporting most children to recognise their name, with all children designing and mark making on their own signing in mat.
 - Children have access to a range of books and enjoy stories independently, and as part of a group. Singing and music is promoted well throughout the environment, with a few children confidently using the instruments to perform a show. Practitioners should continue to promote children's voice in the nursery, allowing all children to develop their language and communication skills. There is potential to increase opportunities to access literacy outdoors, for example, adding recipe cards to the mud kitchen.
 - Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Opportunities to count occur across daily experiences, for example, counting at snack time. A few children can confidently count to ten. Children are supported to use the language of measure, as they explore using a rope outdoors. Measuring tapes are available in the playroom, with children engaged in their use. However, as discussed, their use could be developed further to deepen children's learning. Most children can identify colour and shape. Overall, there is scope to develop further numeracy and mathematics across the setting.
 - Children appear happy and settled in their environment and most are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They make healthy choices for snack, serve themselves and clear away their dishes. Children display an awareness of responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. The opportunity for children to develop their physical skills is supported through

daily outdoor play, access to the local park and school gym hall. Children are supported to engage in risk taking as they negotiate the resources in their outdoor environment.

- Practitioners frequently praise and give specific feedback to children in order to celebrate their success. Wall displays capture examples of children's achievements .are. We have asked practitioners to track and monitor children's achievements. This will support them to take action to ensure no child is missing out on the development of a range of important life skills. We discussed ways in which the setting could capture children's wider achievements.
- There is a very inclusive ethos where all children are valued. Children who require additional support to access the curriculum are supported well to enable them to make the best possible progress. Experiences, environments and interactions are adapted if needed to ensure all children can access learning. The senior leadership team now need to ensure that interventions are monitored and evidence used to inform future decisions.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- The arrangements for children moving from home to nursery are effective. Practitioners provide sensitive support to children and their families at points of transition into the nursery setting. Close attention is given by key workers to the individual social and emotional needs of each child and their families. As children move from nursery class to P1, they are encouraged to take part in events in the school. These opportunities are planned throughout the year for and as a result, almost all children settle into school well. Parents are invited to attend events in the school as part of the induction programme. We have suggested that the transition to school programme needs to better reflect a reciprocal partnership with parents. The current programme is overly authoritarian. We have suggested that the school needs to embrace parents as equal partners in their child's learning journey.
- As yet there is no consistent approach to planning the early level across the nursery into P1. Information is shared about children's emotional and social needs and this is acted upon well by teachers. Greater continuity of curriculum experience could be achieved by working collaboratively across the early level. The effective play-based learning that is evident in the nursery class needs to continue into P1 as this would offer children a sense of familiarity in their new environments.

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.