

Summarised inspection findings

Drongan Primary School and Early Childhood Centre

East Ayrshire Council

21 August 2018

Key contextual information

Drongan Primary School Early Childhood Centre provides early learning and childcare for children aged from two years.

The setting has undergone significant change over four years. This has included a move to new and improved accommodation, the expansion of provision to include children aged two to three years, and increased places for children aged from three years. The Early Childhood Centre team has increased from four practitioners to ten in the same period. A new senior practitioner was recently appointed. At the time of the inspection there were 10 entitled two year olds in the setting.

Provision for children under three is currently offered for mornings only. Children aged 3-5 are offered morning or afternoon places. There is no extended day provision.

There are two main playrooms. Both playrooms have access to outdoor space. The school campus offers potential for children to learn outdoors.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 recently revised vision, values and aims of the whole school are displayed in the entrance. Practitioners have begun to share the values with children in the setting. It will be helpful to refresh the aims through further consultation with practitioners, children and families. This will help to ensure that they are relevant to the families using the setting and meaningful to children. Practitioners are keen to deliver quality early learning and childcare. Senior leaders now need to make more effective use of the vision, values and aims to inform continuous improvement and provide clear direction in the setting.
- Practitioners reflect on their practice. They have begun to use the national self-evaluation framework, *How good is our early learning and childcare* (HGIOELC?). This is not yet leading to necessary improvement to learning and teaching and care as effectively as it should. Practitioners and senior leaders now need to deepen their shared understanding of high-quality early learning and childcare. In doing so, they should make more focused use of national practice guidance *Building the Ambition* and relevant national and local advice.
- Senior leaders need to put in place effective procedures to monitor and self-evaluate all important aspects of the work and life of the setting. They should do this as a matter of urgency to ensure that procedures for safeguarding are robust.
- Practitioners are beginning to develop more effective team work. Recently formed working groups are starting to implement change across key aspects of early learning. Much of this

work is at an early stage of development and is not yet impacting on children's experiences to ensure consistent high-quality learning. A positive start on promising work to improve support for children's communication skills has been made. This should now be developed more fully with solution focused management support.

- Overall, senior leaders need to make more effective use of improvement planning to prioritise, coordinate and manage the work of the setting. They need to carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of change to ensure best possible outcomes for children and families. In doing so, it is important that assessment and tracking provide a clear picture of children's progress and how well the setting supports children to learn and develop.

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

- Children aged two to three years are happy and settled. They enjoy their time in the setting and have good relationships with practitioners who are caring and kind. Children have access to a range of materials that help them to develop their curiosity. Practitioners are continuing to develop experiences to support communication skills. For children of all ages, the routines of the day need to be revisited to ensure greater flexibility and provide more scope for children to enjoy high quality learning outdoors.
- Most children aged three to five years are able to concentrate well on their chosen activities during free play. They make choices and most are becoming confident in selecting from available materials to support their learning. Overall, learning experiences do not yet consistently enable all children to sustain and deepen their learning throughout the session. Practitioners should now consider how they can extend the range of open ended and natural materials to engage and motivate learners' creativity and imagination. Effective monitoring and evaluation will assist practitioners to identify what is working well and when they need to enrich learning environments and experiences further.
- Practitioners are respectful and interact with children in a caring and supportive manner. They have created a friendly and positive ethos in the setting. As a result, most children are confident and are keen to engage in new experiences. Practitioners have begun to explore how they can further improve the quality of interactions to extend and challenge children's thinking more. They should continue this work and will benefit from opportunities to extend their understanding of thinking skills in children's learning.
- Practitioners make observations of children's responses to planned experiences and record these in individual learning journals. They should now be supported to develop their skill and confidence in making observations of children during play. This will help ensure that children's learning journals capture what is significant for each child's learning and support practitioners in planning next steps for learners.
- Practitioners plan using East Ayrshire's guidance. Learning journals and floor books illustrate the range of activities children experience in the setting. Practitioners have begun to explore approaches to enable children to be involved more fully in planning learning using mind maps and floor books. These approaches have the potential to offer children increased scope to lead their own learning. A few practitioners need to be more active in responding to children's interests as they move within the playroom. As a team, practitioners should now continue to develop responsive approaches to planning which reflect high expectations and aspirations for learners.

- Children are keen to share their learning journals with adults. They should be supported to develop vocabulary to enable them to reflect on their experiences and talk about their learning. Parents are encouraged to look at learning journals with their children. Practitioners should continue to seek ways to encourage parents to be more involved in contributing to their child's learning journey in the setting. Senior leaders now need to track and monitor children's progress across key aspects of early learning more effectively.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- See Choice QI below.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- An information board alerts parents to what is happening in the setting each week, with reminders of forthcoming events. Monthly newsletters offer useful practical information. New parents to the setting told us that they are well informed and feel supported during the settling in process.
- Information on children's learning and achievements are shared through Care and Share sessions and well attended Stay and Play days. Practitioners are beginning to provide opportunities for parents to share their skills, talents and experiences of the world of work. A few parents and carers support the setting with projects such as home link literacy and maths bags.
- The recent Spring Activity Challenge was notably successful in engaging families in sharing learning from home. Similar initiatives should continue to be offered to provide further opportunity for parental engagement.
- Family learning opportunities are enhanced by visits from specialists such as NHS practitioners who provide useful advice on supporting children's communication. Plans to implement Get Doon Tae Chat and Walkie-Talkie sessions should be taken forward to further support programmes of language development.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | weak

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

- There is a welcoming atmosphere in the setting and relationships between children and practitioners are positive overall. Children enjoy the company of friends and cooperate with adults. Practitioners are kind and caring and treat children with respect. Parents are comfortable sharing information about their children with practitioners. They told us that they appreciate the advice provided by the setting team. Practitioners should now encourage children of all ages to participate more in decisions which affect them. In doing so they should explore a range of developmentally appropriate approaches to allow children to express their wishes and opinions.
- Children are beginning to show consideration and empathy for others. Children aged from three years are supported in this through planned health and wellbeing activities. Practitioners are at a very early stage of developing a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of *Getting it right for every child*. As their understanding of the indicators develops they should share this with children through a wide range of meaningful experiences. This will enable children to begin to consider how the indicators relate to themselves as individuals and what they and others can do to improve their wellbeing. Consideration should be given to how practitioners are made to feel valued and their wellbeing promoted in the setting. Senior leaders now need to take positive action to ensure that practitioners and children feel valued and fully included in the wider school community.
- Senior leaders need to ensure that they have a robust understanding of their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the range of statutory duties which impact on children and their families. They need to ensure that all involved in the setting share a clear understanding of what is expected in fulfilling statutory duties to improve outcomes for children. Key information about children's care and wellbeing needs to be collated more systematically in individual personal plans. Documentation and procedures to safeguard children are either not in place or not yet robust enough to ensure that children's care and welfare needs are understood and met. Effective systems for management and monitoring require to be established as a matter of urgency.
- Practitioners work with parents and, where necessary, link with other agencies to request additional support. Partnership with speech and language therapists is developing through the Communication Champion initiative. This should now be developed further to build on the positive start made in supporting families develop their awareness of early communication skills. Senior leaders need to establish robust approaches to collate and track the progress of children experiencing barriers to learning. This will support effective planning for individual children's care and learning and will enable practitioners to continuously improve their practice.

- Children's achievements outwith the setting are celebrated using an achievement tree. More could be done to promote children's awareness of equality issues and of the diversity in their local and wider community. This should include a wider understanding by practitioners and children of factors which may lead to discrimination.

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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Children aged under three years enjoy sharing stories and are beginning to participate in song and rhyme in their own way. Most children are confident when exploring playroom learning spaces and outdoors. A range of appropriate experiences are helping children develop their curiosity and inquiry skills. Additional use of natural materials should be provided to extend this further. Children are developing relationships through the caring support provided by practitioners. Practitioners now need to develop high quality interactions to extend children's communication skills.
- The majority of children aged three to five years are keen to share their experiences and are becoming more confident in talking about their ideas. Planned experiences are helping children develop language to talk about feelings. Practitioners should build on this to extend children's wider vocabulary. Children enjoy taking part in singing and rhyme sessions. This is helping most children to begin to develop their awareness of patterns and sounds in spoken language. Most children enjoy sharing stories and are learning to listen attentively. Some experiences are helping children to become more confident in exploring and retelling familiar tales. A few children enjoy looking at books independently. Children are learning to recognise their printed names and use mark making tools at the writing table. Practitioners are continuing to improve opportunities for children to begin to learn about how written language can help them get things done.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, most children aged three to five years can sort and match objects by shape and are beginning to develop their awareness of pattern. The majority of children are developing confidence in early counting skills and are beginning to explore measure in their play. A few children are beginning to use a range of appropriate mathematical language to talk about experiences. Practitioners are seeking to extend children's understanding of how they can collect and display interesting information about familiar topics. There are considerable missed opportunities to promote numeracy and mathematical thinking in a meaningful way for children in routines and activities throughout the day.
- Children aged three to five years are developing friendships which help them with their learning. They are becoming more aware of their own feelings and the feelings of others

through a range of experiences. Most children are developing fine motor skills appropriately through play. Practitioners should now consider how they can support children to develop confidence in movement through more energetic and challenging physical experiences. Children are learning about the importance of hand washing and a few can explain about germs and infection. They are learning about keeping their teeth healthy through daily tooth brushing. Practitioners now need to improve their use of wellbeing indicators to enable children to deepen their awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, and active.

- Parents are encouraged to share information about children's achievements outwith the setting. Practitioners should continue to develop innovative ways to capture and use information about learning outwith the setting.
- Overall, children require more challenge in their learning. Practitioners have identified the need to improve their use of assessment to plan for and support children's learning. This will help practitioners build on what children already know and have achieved to ensure they make the best possible progress.

Setting choice of QI: 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
 - Learning and development pathways
 - Pedagogy and play
 - Skills for life and learning
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- The curriculum framework is based on play and takes account of the interests of children. Practitioners understand the importance of wellbeing to children's learning and development. They need to develop further the range of opportunities to support children's understanding of what the wellbeing indicators mean for them as individuals.
 - Practitioners continue to develop their use of national and local guidance to deliver learning for children across the setting. For children of all ages, this requires considerable development in order to ensure consistent high quality learning experiences leading to improved outcomes.
 - Practitioners should now develop a curriculum rationale reflecting the principles of curriculum design and taking account of the distinctive character of the setting and its children and families. Challenge and progression in learning should be a focus for self-evaluation of learning provision.
 - Transitions into the setting need to be improved to ensure continuity of care and support for children. Consideration should be given to home visits for the youngest children. Transitions to primary should be a continuing focus for improvement to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in learning.
 - Engagement in professional learning and dialogue will enable the senior leaders and practitioners to reach a shared understanding of high quality early level pedagogy. It would be helpful to reflect on the role of the adult in providing high quality child-led learning to ensure additional challenging opportunities for children to apply, extend and deepen their skills in play.
 - Practitioners have not always been able to make effective use of available advice and guidance and now need further support to do so. Developing high quality learning pathways to support children's early language and communication should be a focus in developing the curriculum.
 - Practitioners report that the outside area is an area they wish to develop further. They will benefit from using recent advice on outdoor learning to ensure they are able to provide high quality learning experiences to enable children to develop curiosity and enhance children's wellbeing.
 - A range of visitors and learning visits in the local area enrich children's experiences. Practitioners should continue to develop approaches to encourage children to make links between what they are learning in the setting and employment and work in the local community.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1. Quality of care and support

Under this quality theme, we looked at how the staff met and planned for the individual needs of children, their understanding and confidence in safeguarding and protecting children and the administration of medication.

Staff were kind, respectful and welcoming to all children, families and visitors. Families spoke positively about the Early Childhood Centre.

Information gathered about children during the settling in process was limited. This means that staff are not always equipped to meet children's individual needs. Information should be more robust and meaningful, and used to inform personal plans to support children. These should be in line with legislation, children's stages of development and reflect how staff plan to support children. Staff should ensure that they review personal plans every six months or as children's needs change. We discussed how the service could improve personal plans (see recommendation 1).

We spoke with the senior practitioner staff about the systems and policies that were in place to safeguard and protect children. There was a child protection policy in place and staff knew how to share their concerns. Annual training was in place to support staff's awareness of child protection procedures. We sampled children's files and found that child protection records were not recorded in a meaningful or structured way, and actions were not always identified. This means that key information was not always acted upon and potential risks may not be identified. The provider must ensure that there is a robust, systematic approach to recording and sharing concerns about children (see requirement 1).

When we sampled medication we saw that records were not always complete. Medication was not always appropriately labelled and staff could not confirm that this had been prescribed to particular children. Dosage information was not always clear and information around administering medication was not clearly communicated by parents to staff (see requirement 2).

Care Inspectorate grade: Weak

2. Quality of environment

During this inspection we focused on risk in relation to the environment and children's experiences of outdoor play.

During the inspection we saw a bright, clean environment that could be used to provide a stimulating, interesting space for children to access a range of quality play experiences.

Throughout our inspection, we observed most children playing outdoors. Children enjoyed playing outdoors and there were some resources to extend learning. Staff were observed to encourage children to prepare well for going outdoors by ensuring that they wore outdoor jackets and shoes. There was direct access for both playrooms to the outdoor play areas.

The provider should support staff in the further development of outdoor play to encourage a more

spontaneous approach. During the inspection we saw children asking to go outdoors; staff were not always responding to this. We suggested that staff should revisit access to outdoor play to enable all children to benefit fully from the rich experiential learning gained from the natural environment. The area and resources should be extended in line with children's interests and should offer children challenge and open ended resources to extend learning. Staff would benefit from training around outdoor play and reviewing Care Inspectorate publications 'My World Outdoors' and 'Space to Grow.'

We found that staff recorded and dealt with minor accidents effectively. Staff recorded accidents well and made sure that parents received a written copy of the accident which detailed the injury sustained and action taken. This meant that parents could continue to monitor their child at home and support their health and wellbeing. There could be a review of accidents and incidents to ensure there is an overview of potential risk situations and a clear plan of action to reduce risk.

When we looked at risk in relation to the environment, we did not always see staff taking appropriate measures to reduce risk, for example during water play in the two to three play room. Staff should take measures to reduce risk while continuing to allow children to access activities which they enjoy. Risks should be balanced against the benefits and make children the main focus of the risk-benefit assessment process (see recommendation 2).

Care Inspectorate grade: Adequate

3. Quality of staffing

Under this quality theme, we also looked at the opportunities that staff had to access training, including GIRFEC training and Schemas.

The local authority provided a range of training opportunities which staff could take part in through the Gateway. We saw evidence of the significant support the local authority had put in place to improve the service; this was on-going at the time of inspection. We would now recommend a strategic planned approach, from the provider, to ensure training builds capacity within the staff team and improve outcomes for children and their families (see recommendation 3).

We saw that staff were aware of Schemas in the two to three playrooms. Staff provided some resources that supported children to develop their play and learning.

Care Inspectorate grade: Adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

Some systems were in place to consult and involve families in the development of the service. For example, some parents we spoke to told us that they had been consulted and given the opportunity to influence change and make suggestions about improving the service through questionnaires. The service had a procedure for handling complaints which parents were aware of. This created further opportunities for parents to share their views or raise any concerns which they may have about the service.

We noted that there had been some monitoring or auditing of the service, although this was not always consistently applied. The headteacher, in conjunction with the senior member of staff, should reintroduce a more robust, effective system for monitoring and evaluation (see recommendation 4).

During the inspection process we acknowledged the significant challenges the service had experienced in the last few years including changes in structure, environment and leadership. The provider should now implement a strategic approach to identifying areas for development in the service, develop an action plan and continue to support the service as it moves forward (see recommendation 5).

Care Inspectorate grade: Weak

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

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

Requirements:

- 1. The management team should ensure that they record child protection information in a way which makes it clear what concerns have arisen. This information should be clearly communicated with all agencies and used to improve outcomes for children and families.

This is to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 2011/ 210 Regulation 4 (1) (a) Welfare of Service User.

Timescale for meeting this requirement: 1st June 2018.

- 2. The provider must improve the information gathered about medication. The service must ensure that they gather the correct information about medication, store it correctly and ensure all permissions for administering medication is completed.

This is to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 2011/ 210 Regulation 4 (1) (a) Welfare of Service User.

Timescale for meeting this requirement: 1st June 2018.

Recommendations:

- 1. Personal plans should be developed further and the information gathered should be meaningful and used in a way that supports children.

Health and Social Care Standards - Standard 1.15 Responsive Care – Assessing my care and support needs.

- 2. The staff and the management team should re-evaluate their approach to risk. They should ensure children are encouraged to take positive risks. Staff should enable children to make decisions about risks, and have opportunities to partake in risky play while ensuring there are strategies in place to keep them safe.

Health and Social Care Standards - Standard 5: I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

- 3. The provider should support staff to access training around current best practice guidance in particular My World Outdoors, Pre-Birth to Three and Building the Ambition to enable staff to provide a better quality of play and care experience for children.

Health and Social Care Standards - Standard 1.15 Assessing my care and support needs

- 4. More robust and effective procedures should be implemented by management to monitor all aspects of the service.

Health and Social Care Standards - Standard 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.

- 5. The provider should now implement a strategic approach to identifying areas for development in the service, develop an action plan and continue to support the service as it moves forward.

Health and Social Care Standards – Standard 4.23: I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.

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.