

Summarised inspection findings

Glamis Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class

Angus Council

28 March 2023

Key contextual information

Glamis Early Learning and Childcare Class is located within Glamis Primary School and is managed by the headteacher. A principal teacher oversees the day-to-day work of the setting and supports the senior early years practitioner and the early years assistant. The setting is registered for eight children aged three to five years. There are currently eight children attending although a few children have split placements with other settings or choose not to access their full entitlement. Children are allocated their 1140 hours from 9.05 am to 3.05 pm, five days a week. The Early Learning and Childcare Class operates during term-time only. The playroom room is extremely small. Practitioners report that children settled back to the setting very well following periods of closure relating to COVID-19.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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

- Practitioners worked with the primary school to refresh the vision and values. This followed a period of consultation with parents, carers and partners. Practitioners ensured that children were fully involved and developed values which were easily understood by very young children. The values of 'Be Kind, Work Hard, Take Care and Be True' are demonstrated by all practitioners through their positive interactions. They support children very well to develop an awareness and understanding of the values in the day-to-day activities in the playroom. Many children can explain how to be kind and caring to others, and how to take care of themselves and their friends.
- The headteacher and principal teacher lead and manage the setting very effectively. They spend productive time in the setting, know the children well and ensure that they are fully included in all whole-school activities. Their democratic leadership style has promoted the development of a cohesive and highly motivated team. Practitioners feel very well supported in their practice and appreciate the opportunities they have to enhance their knowledge and understanding of early years' issues. The leadership team and practitioners strive to ensure that relationships are supportive, and that children are happy, secure, and achieving their potential. Senior leaders have a clear overview of the work of the setting and the progress children are making in their learning.
- Practitioners are extremely nurturing in their approaches and lead learning in the playroom very effectively. They understand children's unique personalities and learning styles, and offer rich experiences, within the very limited space, which meet children's personal, social, and emotional needs very well.
- School leaders and practitioners make effective use of self-evaluation resources and approaches to audit their practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Practitioners are highly reflective and show skill in adapting their learning and teaching approaches to take account of their findings. They make thoughtful changes to spaces,

experiences and interactions. They use challenge questions to reflect on the playroom practice in a structured way. These approaches are leading to improved outcomes for children.

- Practitioners are highly motivated and use their strengths, skills, and talents to take forward developments in the setting. The senior early years practitioner has recently undertaken training in using bicycles with young so that children's physical skills outdoors can be extended. Training opportunities are well matched to the setting's priorities.
- Practitioners participate in staff professional learning days and contribute to discussions and development work linked to whole-school improvements. There is a whole-school improvement plan. This includes specific priorities linked to their own identified needs. Children, families and partners make a strong contribution to progressing these priorities. Practitioners have successfully linked with a whole-school reading initiative by ensuring a strong focus on stories, poems, and rhymes. An identified improvement target linked to the development of the school garden is being taken forward with the involvement of children and parents.

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

- Relationships between practitioners and children are warm, nurturing, and supportive. Practitioners play alongside children and respond to their needs and interests throughout the course of the day. Children readily approach them for help, and to share their ideas and discoveries. The youngest children who started recently, are supported by practitioners to settle into the setting's flexible routines. Children show enthusiasm for new learning and eagerly explore spaces and resources both inside and outdoors.
- Practitioners work very well together to plan stimulating play contexts. Working in limited space, they offer a broad range of resources to stimulate children's creativity and investigation. They use open-ended activities which develop children's imagination and encourage them to share and cooperate with each other. Practitioners show skill in their interactions with children by posing questions, introducing new vocabulary, and offering ideas to extend the level of challenge in play activities.
- Children have an appropriate balance between child-led experiences and those initiated by practitioners. Children make choices in their play and access resources independently. This allows them to develop their own ideas and interests. Practitioners make good use of the local area and community to enrich children's learning. They are actively working to extend the range of activities to develop early literacy and numeracy in play contexts. For example, they provide a range of writing materials and numeracy resources outdoors.
- Practitioners are increasingly adopting child-centred approaches to planning. They use the early level experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to initiate activities, adapting these in response to children's needs and interests. They seek children's views about experiences in the playroom and outdoors. Practitioners illustrate the learning children have experienced through comments and photographs in floor books. They plan to involve children even more fully in developing these.
- Practitioners gather observations of children at play and record these in learning journals which are shared with parents using an online platform. These observations are improving as a result of a stronger focus on depth and progression in learning. Practitioners make effective use of their observations to plan children's next steps in learning. They are developing individual trackers to show how children are progressing through the early level experiences and outcomes.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The very limited space presents challenges to practitioners when planning for a broad curriculum. Despite very good use of outdoor space, the lack of space indoors means that they can only offer a restricted number of experiences at any one time. Despite practitioner's strenuous efforts to manage space, this has a negative impact on the curriculum.
- Practitioners offer play experiences which are linked to children's own ideas and to seasonal changes. Children make their own choices about play experiences and resources. Practitioners continue to explore ways to offer a wider range of activities and materials. They have resourced the outdoor area with wide-ranging natural materials which support exploration and investigation. They are developing the outdoor area further to take account of children's ideas and to ensure that literacy and numeracy feature more prominently.
- Practitioners encourage children's voice in all aspects of the setting. Children can choose what to learn, what resources to use and with whom to share their play experiences with. Practitioners have a very good understanding of Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition and use the guidance to underpin their planning and provision. They ensure that there is a very good balance between adult-led, adult-initiated, and child-led learning. This flexible approach encourages children's independence and curiosity.
- Practitioners make good use of the local community to enhance the curriculum. Children benefit from a Forest Day each week where they can explore nature and wildlife. They make use of local parks and regularly visit the mobile library. Practitioners encourage visitors into the setting to share their skills with the children.
- Transitions into the setting are very well managed. Parents feel well supported and receive regular settling-in information, including photographs. Parents who are new to setting enjoy meeting other parents and carers at regular Meet and Greet events. Practitioners have close links with primary one staff and work closely with them to implement a shared approach across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners work very closely with families and engage with them on a daily basis. Parents are able to share their children’s learning each day using an online platform and all parents engage fully with this. They feel very welcome in the setting and are confident approaching practitioners to seek advice.
- Practitioners use a range of approaches to keep parents well informed including an informative noticeboard, daily conversations, regular newsletters, and emails. They value their strong and productive partnerships with families and understand how this contributes to children’s wellbeing. Practitioners should build on the high level of parental support by developing opportunities to enable parents to become more involved in their children’s learning. This could include parents joining in experiences such as storytelling, music, baking and outdoor visits.
- Practitioners work effectively with a range of partners and support families to access a range of specialised services. Feedback from partner agencies confirms that there are strong and effective partnerships with the school. Practitioners are positive about the value of partners’ involvement.

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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

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

- A consistent focus on wellbeing is evident in all aspects of the setting. Practitioners actively promote wellbeing with children and families based on mutual respect, nurture, and trust. The consistently positive relationships result in children feeling happy, safe, and secure. All practitioners model approaches that promote wellbeing and children are calm, thoughtful, and caring with each other.
- Children know and understand the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners have developed characters such as 'Susie Safe' and 'Annie Active' to make these more meaningful and age appropriate for very young children. Practitioners use wellbeing indicators in children's personal plans and children enjoy receiving awards for demonstrating aspects of wellbeing as they play.
- Children are developing an understanding of their own wellbeing through engagement in a varied range of experiences. They are developing an understanding of personal safety as they risk-assess their play in the forest. They help to prepare snack foods and can explain the importance of eating fruits and vegetables regularly. Children can explain the ways in which fresh air and regular exercise support their health and wellbeing.
- All practitioners comply and engage actively with statutory requirements and codes of practice. They are fully aware of their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Those children who require them have care plans or individual learning plans which are reviewed regularly with parental involvement.
- Practitioners have a sound understanding of children and their context. They use this knowledge to offer wellbeing approaches which address specific needs and ensure equity and inclusion. As a result, children feel included, engaged, and involved in the playroom. Practitioners are aware of the need to develop resources and activities which value and celebrate diversity, disability, race, religion, and beliefs. This outward focus will help children to understand the village of Glamis in the wider world.
- Practitioners are fully aware of any potential barriers to individual children's learning and work proactively to address these. They make referrals to partner agencies and work effectively with them to implement support programmes. Practitioners are enhancing their knowledge and skills in nurture principles by working closely with the Peripatetic Early Years Nurture Team. This has resulted in targeted interventions which are increasing children's confidence and communication skills and helping them to regulate their emotions.

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

- Overall, children are making very good progress in communication and language, numeracy and mathematics, and health and wellbeing. Practitioners track children's progress over time. The data confirms that children are achieving very well.
- In health and wellbeing, those children who are new are settling extremely well and becoming emotionally secure and socially confident in the setting. Older children are confident and settled in the setting and making very good progress. They can share, cooperate, and show consideration for others as they play. They are developing friendships, independence, and resilience as learners. Many children can talk about their feelings and emotions and take part readily in their wellbeing check-ins. They talk confidently about healthy eating and lifestyles. Children carried out simple investigations on germs and understand the importance of regular handwashing.
- In communication and early language, children readily engage in conversations with adults and each other. Most listen well to stories and can recall a good level of detail. They enjoy predicting the outcome of stories and describing the characters. A few can recite simple nursery rhymes. They are developing early writing skills when they make marks and patterns. Most children can recognise their name, and a few can write it. Through worthwhile musical activities, children are learning about rhythm and rhyme. Practitioners plan to give children access to a wider range of texts and extend the range of early writing opportunities to develop their literacy skills further.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are developing early concepts of number through counting songs and rhymes, and simple sorting and matching activities. When preparing snacks, they can calculate how many pieces of fruit are needed for each group. A few children can count down from twenty to zero. They are beginning to understand mathematical language such as empty and full as they pour water from containers. They can identify simple two-dimensional shapes and enjoy using measuring equipment to measure sunflowers and each other.
- Children's achievements both in the playroom and in the community are celebrated at assemblies through praise, certificates and displays. Practitioners actively encourage parents to share children's achievements with the setting. Children have a 'can do' attitude and follow the school motto of 'Aim High'.

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.