

Summarised inspection findings

Alyth Primary School - Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

24 April 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

- Following a move to a new building in August 2017 and a period of staff change, the early learning and childcare practitioner staff team have been in place since October 2017. Overall self-evaluation for self-improvement is at a very early stage of development within the nursery class. Practitioners are motivated, work very well together and demonstrate a commitment to improvement. Parents have commented on the positive relationships which exist within the nursery, say they feel welcome and that practitioners are very supportive and helpful.
- The early years' support teacher works with staff twice a week and encourages staff reflection through the use of challenge questions from How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC?). Some collaborative pieces of work between the nursery and P1 are in place such as 'loose part' play and 'word aware' approaches. In practice, the early learning and childcare team are becoming reflective. However, a stronger focus on self-evaluation would more accurately determine the nursery's strengths and areas for improvement. An initial introduction to HGIOELC? was delivered to practitioners. Practitioners would benefit from becoming more conversant with the process of self-evaluation and how this links to improving children's progress. There would be benefit in the senior team supporting self-evaluation activities. This focus on building capacity of the team would result in practitioners having increased confidence and knowledge of the self-evaluation process.
- The nursery aims have been recently developed which reflects its context of within the school and wider community. These aims incorporate children's ideas as well as those of practitioners and parents. The development of the nursery aims has the potential to influence the intended work on vision, values and aims within the primary school to establish a stronger focus on improvement.
- Work on making improvements to children's experiences within the setting is reflecting children's interests and choices. Children are becoming more confident in sharing their likes and dislikes about particular activities and stories. The use of floor books to capture children's choices and interests is a helpful tool to record what children would like to learn. It would be helpful to share this with P1 staff to moderate children's current and intended learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

Evidence based improvement

- Practitioners show confidence in working with parents and carers and have initiated 'play and share' opportunities for parents, which is leading to improved engagement. Parents report that they enjoy these informative, informal sessions and find these helpful. Practitioners have plans to extend these events to offer greater flexibility to allow more parents to attend.

Developmental milestones are used to determine children's development and learning and are shared with parents in their child's portfolio. This needs to be further developed so that parents and practitioners have a shared understanding of their expectations of children's learning.

- The school improvement plan includes priorities for the nursery. Priorities although similar, such as the development of numeracy and mathematics need to be more specific for each sector to allow a clearer focus on what needs to be done.
- There is now scope to develop further ways of involving parents in helping to progress the improvement plan and also consideration given to how best to involve partner agencies in this process. This would result in meaningful participation in the life of the setting to continue to improve outcomes for children.

Ensuring Impact of success for children and families

- The current staff team interact well with the children in their care. Recently, children aged two years have been included into the nursery and practitioners show a warm caring approach to help children settle and become familiar with routines. It would be useful to extend opportunities for practitioners to take part in professional learning opportunities to deepen their knowledge and skills. Practitioners should also refer to current national guidance to review their practice and ensure that they use information gathered to plan future developments.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Securing children's progress

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

Early language

- Most children are making good progress in early literacy. Practitioners interact well with children during free play to extend their communication and early language skills. Children express their thoughts and ideas well during play and group times. The majority of children are confident to engage in conversation with each other, practitioners and visitors. They demonstrate an enjoyment of books and can recall key events and characters from familiar stories. They enjoy having a 'book of the week' and choosing books from the school library. A few children look at books by themselves and ask for favourite stories to be read. Most listen well during a story.
- Children have opportunities to recognise their name as they self-register. A few children are able to recognise the names of their friends. The majority of children are showing an interest in mark-making. It will be important for practitioners to ensure children continue to develop these skills through meaningful contexts both indoors and during outdoor learning.
- To support children's language development further, appropriate assessment techniques which are understood and agreed by all practitioners should be planned to support children's developing needs, Practitioners need to ensure they support children's play, scaffold children's learning, model appropriate language and help a few children engage in more interaction with others. These assessments and plans should be shared with parents and support them in playing with their children at home to support this development.

Numeracy

- Through daily routines and experiences children are developing skills in counting, number and shape recognition. There is a determined effort by practitioners to include numbers naturally in everyday activities, such as lining up to go to the gym hall or while having snack. A few children can recognise larger numbers and use appropriate mathematical language as they play with construction materials. Overall, children should continue to be supported to develop their early numeracy skills through high quality real-life and meaningful contexts both indoors and during outdoor experiences.

- Practitioners should now work to further identify and plan for the development of individual children's mathematics and numeracy skills that provide sufficient challenge and pace in learning. Most children are able to recognise simple 2 dimensional shapes and a few are able to follow a pattern using loose part items.

Health and wellbeing

- In health and wellbeing the majority of children are independent in caring for their personal hygiene. During snack times they identify foods that are healthy. Through outdoor play and focused work in planned physical education children are developing a range of physical skills such as climbing, jumping balance and ball skills. Through this they are learning mathematical language such as under, over and through.
- A positive start has been made to using the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. However, this is at an early stage of development with children. Practitioners have included an All About Me section, based on the wellbeing indicators in each child's profile.
- Children are developing a sense of responsibility as they take on roles within the setting. For example, jobs such as 'special helpers' help children to play an active role in the life of the setting and to develop their confidence and independence. Practitioners should now work together with children in order to identify areas where children are capable of taking an increased role in collaborative working with others.

Children's progress over time

- Children's progress is monitored through their personal profiles. This needs to develop further to ensure a clearer overview of individual children's progress. This will help staff to plan more effectively for children's individual learning needs and ensure that they are making the best possible progress.
- Perth and Kinross Council developmental milestones and numeracy and literacy tools are evident within each child's portfolio. Vocabulary and spoken language assessment is used to assess children's progress and shared with P1. However, it is not completely clear what is done with the results of these assessments and how they are used to develop progress.

Quality of children's achievements

- As a result of recent professional learning practitioners have introduced more natural and open-ended resources. Children are beginning to use these resources more creatively to support their play. The outdoor area has the potential to provide children with a wider range of learning experiences. It will be important for practitioners to use national guidance to support them in providing key experiences and an environment that encourages curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- Transitions into the setting are appropriate and take account of the needs of children and families. A range of activities take place to support children as they move to P1.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements within the setting. They continue to encourage parents to share children's achievements from home.

Ensuring equity for all children

- Practitioners have created a positive, supportive and inclusive ethos for children and families. They know children and families well. Any potential barriers to learning are identified and as a team work they together to reduce these for children. To improve this further, practitioners should record these interventions rather than rely on verbal engagement. Early intervention strategies used to support children should be monitored to make sure they are effective and children continue to make the best possible progress.

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.