

Summarised inspection findings

Cockburnspath Primary School Early Learning and Childcare

Scottish Borders Council

23 April 2024

Key contextual information

Cockburnspath Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is part of Cockburnspath Primary School and is situated within the same building. The setting provides early learning and childcare placements for children living within the village of Cockburnspath and surrounding rural areas. Children attend the setting from the age of three until starting primary school. The ELC is registered to provide places for 20 children at any given time. Children attend during term time with all accessing full time or half-day sessions within their 1140 hours entitlement. Currently, there are six children on the roll.

There are two adjoining playrooms and children have direct access to a small outdoor area. The headteacher of Cockburnspath Primary School is the designated manager with overall responsibility for the nursery class. The Early Years Officer (EYO) took up post in August 2023 and is responsible for the day to day running of the ELC. She is supported by an Early Years Practitioner (EYP). Regular support from an Early Years Teacher (EYT) is provided by Scottish Borders Council. An Early Years Support Worker provides cover for lunch provision every day.

1.3 Leadership of change

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 have successfully worked together to develop and deliver their commitment to high-quality early learning and childcare. In doing so, they are led by an EYO and ably supported by the EYT. All practitioners demonstrate the school values of 'kind, respectful, safe' through their everyday interactions with children, parents and each other. As a result, children experience a nurturing environment and are happy in their play. Children are aware of the values and use them to influence their interactions and experiences in the setting and outside in the local community. Practitioners gather and display photographic examples of how these values are experienced by the children.
- All practitioners are highly reflective in their practice. They undertake opportunities for professional learning, including further qualifications. The headteacher undertakes professional reviews and supports practitioners to look outwards and share effective practice. Professional learning on national guidance has supported practitioners to develop their practice and impacts positively on the quality of children's experiences. The practitioner team should continue to explore aspects of their practice, both individually and as a team, to embed further key priorities. For example, the team should continue to review their observations and tracking of children's progress.
- Practitioners and the EYT use formal self-evaluation tools to reflect on the quality of provision and evaluate the quality of their practice. These include audits of the environments, use of national self-evaluation frameworks, national guidance and parent questionnaires. They identify relevant, measurable targets on an action plan to support the setting's improvement

journey. This shared reflection helps build practitioners' capacity for improvement. As planned, the headteacher should re-introduce learning walks and playroom observations as part of quality assurance approaches. This should result in the inclusion of more specific key priorities for the ELC within the whole school improvement plan.

- The ELC team have made significant changes to the ELC environment, systems and processes this academic year. The EYO has managed the pace of change very well. She has identified correctly the need to prioritise the development of rich learning environments, planning, tracking and assessment. During her time in post, she has developed an accurate understanding of the strengths of the setting and what needs to develop further. The ELC team welcome and value the support of the local authority EYT as they develop their strategic vision for continued improvement. As a result, the ELC is well placed to continue to improve.
- Practitioners work collaboratively to lead improvements in the setting. They share their knowledge and expertise of play pedagogy across early level as well as sharing practice with settings within their cluster schools group. Children take responsibility for caring for the ELC environment and resources. They are ready for more involvement in decision making that affects them. For example, children could be part of whole school pupil leadership groups in a developmentally appropriate way.

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

- All children enjoy their time in the setting and are motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Most children engage well for extended periods of time with a range of activities in thoughtfully developed indoor and outdoor environments. Practitioners offer opportunities for personalisation and choice and support children's imaginative play, curiosity, creativity and independence.
- Children explore loose parts and open-ended resources which develop their problem solving and enquiry skills. Children benefit from spending time outdoors daily. They benefit from weekly visits to a local woodland, where they explore the space, observe the changes of the seasons and enjoy physical activity. These experiences help children to develop their cooperative and team-work skills. All children apply their learning in a variety of real-life contexts. This includes visits to the local shop to buy food, using the post box to send a letter and growing vegetables in an allotment. Practitioners use digital technologies to enhance learning experiences. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop this area of practice to support children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- All practitioners are caring and nurturing. They support children well in their learning. They provide supportive commentary and extend children's learning and thinking using responsive interactions, intentional planning of experiences and open-ended questions.
- Practitioners know children very well as learners. They record effectively individual observations of children's significant learning and next steps within an online learning platform. The EYO monitors observations and tracks the breadth of coverage and children's next steps in learning.
- Practitioners plan very well across the curriculum using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Practitioners use intentional planning based on tracking, observation and the identification of gaps in children's learning. All children are included in the planning process using a responsive planning approach which meets children's interests and extends their learning well. These plans are visible and accessible to children on a shared learning wall and collated into a floor book which shows progress and coverage of learning. Practitioners review, update and discuss these child-friendly formats on a weekly basis with all children. In addition, core provision planning outlines skills development, resources and vocabulary to be used by adults.
- Practitioners have robust and effective processes to plan clear, specific targets for children who require additional support with their learning. They work very effectively with partners to plan for and support children's development and wellbeing. Practitioners review regularly

children's plans to evaluate strategies and approaches. They support effectively all children to develop skills that help with regulation and positive relationships.

- Planned termly tracking meetings accurately identify individual next steps for all children. The EYO effectively tracks and monitors children's progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and developmental milestones three times per year. Practitioners use analysis of data trackers to monitor progress and identify gaps in progress of individual children. They identify clear and measurable next steps for all children. These processes enable practitioners to make confident and accurate professional judgements about children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Children learn through play across a curriculum which is child-centred and responsive. They benefit from a well-resourced environment.
- Practitioners use local authority progression frameworks and developmental milestones to plan learning and support the identification of next steps in a progressive way. They are trialling a newly developed local authority health and wellbeing overview which is helping to identify coverage in this area of the curriculum.
- Staff in the school recently created a curriculum rationale which reflects the context of the whole school. Practitioners should consider adapting this further to better reflect the unique ELC context.
- The EYT and practitioners work with staff across the early level to promote continuity of experience and a shared understanding of play pedagogy. This is an area that should continue to be developed in order to ensure sustained progression for all children.
- Children moving from ELC to P1 benefit from a well-planned local authority transition programme. The Transition Coordinator leads activities including open evenings, sharing information about transition with parents, and providing information about prior learning to the P1 teacher. In addition, a pre-school home visiting teacher meets children and families in their homes. They share relevant information with practitioners to support children's wellbeing and meet their needs. Parents are happy with the arrangements which support their children well during transition into ELC.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents in the ELC benefit from an online learning platform which provides information about their child's learning and next steps. Parents appreciate this information as it helps them to support their child's learning at home. Practitioners share home learning ideas and curriculum information on emerging literacy and early numeracy. Parents share their child's achievements from home and feel included in their overall learning.
- Parents value the monthly opportunities to 'stay and play' which provides a valuable insight into their child's ELC experiences. Practitioners are keen to continue to increase home-ELC links to strengthen partnership working further.

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.

3.1 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

- Practitioners have established a nurturing and respectful ethos across the setting. All practitioners consistently model respectful interactions between one another and with children. They support appropriately children who on occasion need help to demonstrate empathy towards each other. The recently introduced approach to develop self-regulation supports children to be more aware of their feelings and emotions.
- Children display high levels of confidence and ownership of their environment. They benefit from a range of very effective approaches that allow them to express their views and feel listened to. For example, children plan and reflect upon their learning. Most children play cooperatively, share and take turns.
- Children have a well-developed awareness of the national wellbeing indicators. They apply their understanding in different contexts, such as washing their hands, daily toothbrushing and learning about healthy eating through snack and lunch routines. They understand how people keep them safe through meeting local emergency workers. Practitioners support children to manage their own play outdoors through visiting a variety of local community spaces. This builds resilience, physical development and coordination. Children self-register, store their clothing and water bottles and serve part of their lunches and snack. This is developing their sense of responsibility, self-care and independence skills.
- Practitioners are aware of and comply with statutory requirements in relation to ELC. They are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Children who have additional learning needs, are making very good progress towards achieving personal goals and targets. Practitioners work with partner agencies very successfully to implement strategies and approaches which support children, such as the use of visual timetables. Practitioners ensure personal care plans, individual health care plans and individual education plans accurately and robustly outline care and health needs. This helps practitioners to identify, implement and review strategies to support individuals. Practitioners value and work effectively with other professionals to help children make the best possible progress. Practitioners work directly with professionals to develop their own skills and understanding to better support children, for example, in developing language and communication.
- Practitioners have created a highly inclusive ethos which supports all children to make the best possible progress. Practitioners provide very good support to individual children and families to reduce barriers to inclusion and learning. Practitioners should now explore ways for children to broaden their awareness of different cultures in developmentally appropriate ways. This will help to promote children's understanding of the wider world.

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

- Practitioners' tracking of children's progress over time is robust and reflects accurately the progress children are making. Children are making very good progress in early language and communication, early numeracy and mathematics and developmental milestones. Practitioners support children who have needs in specific areas of learning very well on an individual basis.
- Most children are making very good progress in early language and communication. Most children listen and follow simple instructions and routines. They talk confidently to each other and when communicating with adults. Most children enjoy mark making and draw pictorial representations of people and themselves. They increasingly write common words and use texts to communicate meaning. Most children enjoy familiar books, can share their likes and dislikes and are aware of the roles of author and illustrator. Children use imaginative play, loose parts and role play resources to recount favourite stories. They are developing well their use of rhyme. Children should develop further their awareness of when to talk and when to listen in small group situations.
- In early mathematics and numeracy most children are making very good progress. Most can identify and recognise numbers from zero to 10. Most children use one-to-one correspondence to count a given number of objects to 10. A majority of children recognise numbers to 20. Children use a wide variety of measurement, positional and directional language in their play. This includes the naming of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children confidently link daily routines and personal events to time sequences, days of the week, months of the year and seasons. Children benefit from opportunities to apply and consolidate their learning in real and meaningful contexts. Children would benefit from further opportunities to use simple directions and describe positions using technology, movement and games.
- All children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Most are developing friendships and most play cooperatively. Most children enjoy eating socially at snack time and lunchtime. They explore different foods through making snack choices and eating school dinners. Most children are developing their balance and coordination. All children are developing their appreciation of where food comes from through links to the local area, including meeting local fishermen and growing vegetables. As planned, children would benefit from opportunities to link movements together and with purpose through planned physical education experiences.

- Practitioners share and celebrate children's achievements using praise and wall displays. Parents share children's achievements from home using an online platform. Practitioners should now develop an overview of children's achievements linked to skills for learning and life. This will help support planning of opportunities for a wider range of achievements within the setting.
- All practitioners know the local community context, families and their circumstances very well. This includes the impact of barriers to learning that children and families experience. All parents feel comfortable approaching practitioners if they have concerns, queries or need advice. Practitioners, supported by the Excellence and Equity Lead practitioner, make effective use of data related to socioeconomic context. This supports practitioners to make accurate decisions about, for example, interventions required to ensure children make the best possible progress.

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.