

Summarised inspection findings

Crown Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

14 January 2020

Key contextual information

Crown Primary School nursery class is an integral part of the school. The setting offers distinct morning and afternoon sessions which are staffed by different teams of practitioners. The setting is registered for 24 children aged three years to those not attending primary school at any one time. At the time of the inspection, 15 children attended each session. The setting operates from a classroom within the school and has direct access to a safe, enclosed garden.

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 setting shares the school's vision, values and aims. However, these do not always reflect what is needed to ensure further change and improvement in the nursery. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should review the aims to reflect more effectively early years pedagogy, using language that young children understand. The vision for the setting needs to be more ambitious for all children and reflect the changing needs of families.
- The setting has an appropriate improvement plan that focuses on three broad priorities. The school improvement plan identifies a renewed focus on working more closely across the school and nursery. Practitioners are keen to improve and require focused leadership and guidance to help them achieve the targets set out in the plan. Senior leaders attend monthly meetings that focus on self-evaluation. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners need to develop a more rigorous, dynamic approach to self-evaluation to increase the pace of change and improvement. Practitioners would benefit from more in-depth engagement with national guidance, for example, 'Building the Ambition' and 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?' (2015), to support them in this process. Practitioners need to review and develop their practice in line with current early years approaches to children's learning and development.
- Practitioners work as two separate teams for the morning and afternoon sessions and meet weekly to plan learning and discuss nursery matters. This helps them ensure consistency of provision across both settings, whilst allowing flexibility for the children in each group. Practitioners have recently taken on leadership roles to improve aspects of the setting's work, including as curriculum champions. However, this is at an early stage and senior managers need to support this initiative through providing careful direction and support.
- Practitioners undertake a range of training. Senior leaders need to ensure that those practitioners who have taken part in professional development, share their learning across the nursery team more effectively. This would support greater consistency across practitioners to improve children's learning and development. Practitioners need to look outwards to other settings, to broaden their knowledge and understanding of effective practice elsewhere.

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

- Nurturing, mutually respectful relationships are evident between children, families and practitioners. Children are happy and engage in all play and learning opportunities on offer. They understand and follow rules and routines. As a result, almost all children are secure and settled. The majority of children confidently use the language of learning to talk about their interests. Practitioners plan engaging experiences to encourage children's curiosity and ongoing interest.
- Families share that children are excited about their nursery experience. They feel their children are safe, secure and progressing appropriately through their play and learning experiences. Families are informed regularly of children's experiences through digital profiles, apps and the nursery blog. As a result, they feel involved in their children's learning. Practitioners need to ensure their observations of children focus on significant learning and identify appropriate progression and next steps that are understood by children and their families.
- A few staff are developing their skills in questioning and adult-to-child interventions and have attended training to support this. They need to continue to refine and improve how they check and build on children's understanding through developing their use of questions and interactions. Not all staff have a clear understanding of how to do this well or are consistent in their approach.
- Children are involved in planning a few aspects of their learning, including designing a colourful fairy garden outdoors. As a result, children are engaged and use their imaginations well. Children need to be more involved in planning their own learning with an understanding of what success will look like, to enable them to develop relevant skills.
- Practitioners have introduced a few approaches to encourage children to lead learning. They use floorbooks to capture children's participation and the knowledge they bring from home. To enhance these further, practitioners should now look at ensuring progression in children's learning, including next steps. These should be discussed with children and made more visible.
- Children make choices from the available resources both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners ensure that the outdoor environment is well planned and offers a wide range of experiences to encourage children's curiosity, investigation and promote deeper learning. Indoors, resources are more limited and do not always support children's individual learning needs. Practitioners now need to review the provision of resources indoors and include more open-ended, heuristic materials. They need to offer personalisation, choice and challenge, particularly for those children capable of more demanding activities. Practitioners also need to enrich and support children's learning through the use of digital technologies.

- Practitioners are developing their awareness of how to use information from observations to plan further for children's learning. However, not all staff are confident in using the information they gather to inform their future interactions with children. They need to continue to improve their understanding of how to analyse key messages from observations, to ensure that children's learning is appropriate and relevant to their needs.
- At times, children are not learning effectively through large group times, which do little to improve or further their progress. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to learn in small groups, or as individuals, through planned, purposeful play linked to their needs and interests. Practitioners should take a flexible approach and ensure relevant, focused interventions to support children in their learning through play. This will support each child to make the best progress possible. Practitioners should now look outwards to other settings to observe how others offer small groups of children timely, targeted interventions in order to secure progress. They need to ensure such activities are relevant and flexible to support all children to develop their sense of themselves as effective contributors and successful learners.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan learning using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They now need to engage further in professional discussion to ensure children's individual needs are at the centre of the planning process.
- Senior leaders and practitioners need to work with children, families and the wider community to create a curriculum rationale that explores the setting's uniqueness and reflects their changing needs. Senior leaders and practitioners should develop whole-school approaches to learning for sustainability and developing global citizenship when developing the curriculum rationale, to enrich children's existing learning opportunities. It is important that children, families and practitioners have a meaningful and shared understanding of what the setting wishes to achieve.
- Children, families, practitioners and the wider community value intergenerational learning. Digital profiles evidence children and older members of the local community engaging in play together, during visits to a local care home. Practitioners report children show kindness, empathy and compassion towards residents whilst there.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are highly supportive of the setting. They appreciate the welcoming, inclusive ethos and are confident their children are happy and well cared for by supportive and empathetic practitioners. Parents are welcome to approach practitioners at any time, should they have any concerns about their child, They are confident practitioners will work closely with them to ensure their child's wellbeing. They are kept very well informed through social media, meetings and stay and play sessions. There is scope to plan these sessions more regularly throughout the year to encourage parents further to become involved in the life of the setting.
- Parents are encouraged to share their skills and knowledge to support children's learning across the curriculum. As children listen to real-life experiences, they are beginning to gain an awareness of the world of work.
- Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through online journals. These offer examples of children's learning and encourage parents to reinforce learning at home. Parents volunteer to accompany children out in the community. As a result of this valuable input, children regularly visit local care homes to the benefit of all concerned. There is scope to extend partnerships within the community to enhance learning 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. 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

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

- Children's health and wellbeing is a prominent feature of the setting's work. Practitioners have positive and respectful interactions with parents and carers, children and each other. Relationships between practitioners and children are caring and empathetic. Most children are settled in the nurturing environment. Most engage confidently in a range of play experiences by themselves or with friends. Practitioners support sensitively less confident children to develop resilience.
- Practitioners value children as individuals. They greet children using emotional check-ins to see how they are feeling on a daily basis, to enable them to support children throughout the session. Practitioners listen carefully to children and most engage well with them as they play. Children feel valued and included. Overall, most children behave well as they play together. They are learning to share and take turns and most support each other well during play. A few children are making important friendships. Overall, most practitioners work sensitively with children to help them to understand how their actions can affect others. Practitioners should continue to work with each other to ensure greater consistency of approach when interacting with children.
- Practitioners take time to know children and their families well as they enter the setting. As a result, they have a good knowledge of each child and are alert to any circumstances that may affect a child's wellbeing. Practitioners work well with parents of children who are new to the setting by working with them in various ways until the child is fully settled. They work closely with parents and external agencies to provide appropriate levels of intervention for any child for whom they have a concern. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported well in developing their communication skills through various visual prompts, signing and modelling. Currently, records of children's needs lack detail. Practitioners need to develop more detailed recording of children's needs, planned interventions and next steps to ensure maximum impact on their progress.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and throughout the setting, children are supported to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. These are positive foundations on which to build upon existing play and learning with 'Rights Respecting Russell'. Practitioners should continue to develop children's understanding of their own wellbeing and the language with which to express their experiences including using stories, role-play and real-life experiences to achieve this.
- Practitioners are fully aware of, and implement statutory duties. Their practice is informed by a range of relevant policies and procedures which clearly outline the setting's expectations. The setting's focus on keeping children safe and healthy is very effective.
- Children and families are treated fairly and with respect. Practitioners are aware of the variety of cultures and religions within the setting. Parents are encouraged to support children's

understanding of the various cultural celebrations and festivals that are important to them. This helps children to settle, feel included within the setting and make progress. There is scope to promote further the richness and diversity of cultures within the setting to enhance further children's understanding and experiences overall.

- Practitioners work closely with parents, taking account of the circumstances and needs of children who may face barriers to learning. Whilst this is improving outcomes for individual children and families, practitioners are at the early stages of using effectively information to ensure equity for all.

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

- Children are making satisfactory progress in communication, early language and mathematics. They are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Overall, children display respectful behaviours towards adults and towards each other. Children support peers to learn new routines or to engage in new play and learning opportunities.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in their literacy learning. By the time children start at the setting, the majority have well developed communication skills. Children develop their early vocabulary and language skills through familiar songs and rhymes. They follow simple instructions and use visual prompts to support individual children's respectful behaviours. Children develop emerging literacy skills through mark making. They take pride in sharing their representations and drawings with adults and each other. Children for whom English is an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Overall, the majority of children are capable of making better progress.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in building skills in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children are confident exploring colour, size and using mathematical language in their learning. Children now need to develop further their numeracy skills through routines and real life experiences, such as snack and shopping. Overall, the majority of children are capable of making better progress.
- Children are becoming independent as they help to prepare, serve and clear up after snack. A few children talk about risk assessing the outdoor environment and take turns to do this. Children climb and balance, as well as cycling, running and using the trim trail. Children need to develop their skills in a more progressive way to ensure further progress.
- Practitioners' professional judgements regarding children's progress need to be supported by robust evidence. Their information on children's progress over time is not always robust or accurate. Senior leaders need to improve how they track and monitor children's progress to ensure equity for all.
- Children are achieving skills in a few different aspects of their learning, for example citizenship. Their involvement in inter-generational work is enabling them to become responsible and considerate of others. Children are also developing an awareness of how to care for their environment. Senior leaders need to develop systems to monitor, track and analyse children's achievements, in order to ensure that no child is in danger of missing out.

Choice of QI: Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

- Developing creativity
- Developing skills for life and learning
- Developing digital skills

- Throughout the setting, children are encouraged to be active in leading their own learning through play. Indoors, they make choices in order to explore their own ideas. Practitioners now need to offer a more varied selection of open-ended resources to encourage further children's creativity.
- Outdoors, children access a wider range of open-ended resources that promote their creativity and imagination. Children show increased levels of interest during these outdoor learning experiences and are keen to explore the natural world. They follow their imaginations as they explore the fairy garden, and become pirates as they balance on the ship's gang plank. Most children are inquisitive. They explore and investigate happily how to break through ice to rescue dinosaurs or dig in the soil to find some that are buried. Practitioners should now continue to develop children's skills and interests by offering more creative learning contexts for children indoors. As creativity develops indoors and outdoors, there is scope for children to plan, design and evaluate solutions as they apply these skills across different learning contexts.
- Children are developing skills to support them through life. They use their emerging interpersonal skills to communicate and co-operate with others as they play. The majority are learning to negotiate, share and take turns. As children develop their emotional, physical and cognitive skills there is scope for practitioners to plan individualised support to ensure appropriate progress.
- Children need to develop their skills using digital technology to support creativity. Practitioners should review how technologies are used to support learning and problem solving in the playroom and beyond.

1. Quality of care and support

The nursery staff had established good working relationships with the families. Parents/carers were all very positive in their comments about the friendliness and approachability of the staff. They were also happy with the levels of communication and feedback provided. The parents and carers we spoke with were particularly positive about the use of the digital profiles. They enjoyed reading the observations and being able to see the photographs of their children taking part in a range of activities.

We observed warm and nurturing relationships between the staff and the children in their care. Staff were aware of the individual care needs of each of the children. During the inspection, we observed good interactions between the staff and the children. They engaged with children and provided them with appropriate encouragement, praise and support.

Each of the children had a personal care plan in place. Staff should ensure that the plans for those children with additional support needs and specific health needs are fully completed, contain current information and reflect the child's care needs and how these should be met.

Staff had established links and worked with other professionals to support the health and wellbeing needs of the children. The speech and language therapist visited the service and offered staff useful guidance and strategies.

All staff had attended a range of training including child protection and first aid training and routinely attended refresher courses. Appropriate records were completed in relation to accidents and incidents. Parents/carers were asked to sign these and were provided with a copy. There was also an appropriate system in place in relation to the administration of medication.

During the inspection, we observed snack. This was a sociable experience. The snack helpers enjoyed their roles and responsibilities. Snacks were healthy and took account of any allergies and dietary needs the children might have. Consideration should be given to reviewing snack to allow greater opportunities for development of the children's independence skills. Consideration should also be given to less reliance on plastic.

The service was beginning to make greater use of floor books. As part of the inspection we looked at the most recent floor books. The service should continue to develop and make greater use of floor books to plan, develop, record and review what the children would like to learn, what they had learnt and what they would like to learn next.

Outdoor play and learning was a priority for the nursery and was very popular with all the children. The playroom opened directly onto a fully enclosed outdoor play area which the service accessed on a daily basis. During the inspection, the children all spent much of the session outdoors playing and investigating.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

The service was based in a playroom with a kitchen area. There were appropriate toilet facilities for the children and a cloakroom and reception area. The playroom was clean, bright and

welcoming. Within the playroom and the reception area, there were displays of the children's work and there were noticeboards in the reception area which were used to share information with parents and carers.

The entrance to the service was secure and was monitored by staff at the beginning and end of each session. Staff checked the playroom daily to ensure that it was safe. There were also appropriate risk assessments in place. The children were actively involved in risk assessing the outdoor area prior to it being used.

Following the previous Care Inspectorate inspection a recommendation had been made in relation to having the playroom carpet replaced. This had not been actioned and the recommendation will be repeated.

Within the playroom, we observed the children being engaged in various arts and crafts activities including painting, playdough and picture making. Children were able to independently select resources and choose which activities they wished to take part in.

Staff should review the layout of the playroom and the range of activities on offer to the children. There were only limited opportunities for messy play including sand and water play and little use was being made of IT to offer the children opportunities to develop their investigative skills and learning. Greater use could be made of loose parts, natural and open-ended resources which would challenge and motivate the children and encourage them to explore, develop their imagination and be creative.

The nursery had direct access to an outdoor play area which they made use of on a daily basis. The outdoor area offered the children the opportunity to take part in a range of play and learning experiences. All the children were enthusiastic about spending time outdoors and spent much of the session there. There was a range of loose parts and natural resources which we observed the children using as part of their imaginative and investigative play. There was a large mud kitchen and an area for digging which were both very well utilised by the nursery children.

The nursery staff also made use of the large school playground and garden, as well as the wider local environment. The staff routinely took the children out into their local community and they had made links with the local countryside ranger who visited the nursery.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one recommendation. From this, one recommendation had not been met. Outstanding issues relating to the environment are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and one recommendation.

Recommendations

- It is a recommendation that the carpet from the nursery is replaced due to its dirty and stained appearance and that a more suitable floor covering is put in its place.

Health and Social Care Standards 5.22 – I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.

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.