

Summarised inspection findings

Kinloss Primary School Nursery Class

Moray Council

4 February 2020

Key contextual information

Kinloss Primary School nursery class is accommodated within the main school building. Children benefit from direct access to extensive outdoor grounds. The nursery is registered for 15 children to attend at any one time and at the time of inspection there were 12 children on the roll. Most started nursery in August 2019. There is a mix of children aged three and four years old. Children attend from the village of Kinloss and surrounding areas. This includes the Kinloss army barracks which currently accommodates the 39th Engineer Regiment.

The team of a senior practitioner and practitioner has been established since June 2019. With senior leaders, they have already brought about positive change in their short time together. They recognise that improvements to date need to be embedded and built on. Working relationships are very positive. These support the developing culture of reflective practice which is underpinned by a shared vision for continuous improvement. The nursery class has considerable potential for continued development and is well placed to move forwards towards expansion of entitlement in 2020.

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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The ethos of the nursery class is underpinned by positive relationships. Children are observed to feel safe, secure and ready to learn as a result. With the new team there is a redefining of pedagogy with children now actively encouraged to be independent and responsible in the nursery environment. Although many are new to nursery almost all children demonstrate developing independence and a confidence in the routines and expectations of the setting. The developing pedagogy is supporting children to begin to contribute more effectively. Structured tidy up times, leadership responsibilities and helper roles are adopted willingly. These now need to be fully embedded and extended to allow children to fulfil their potential through opportunities to make purposeful contributions to the setting.
- Particularly since June there have been continuing development of learning environments and the introduction of more extended weekly outdoor nursery sessions. The outdoor learning environment has been accessed more extensively with children benefitting from continued free flow access between the indoors and outdoors and more effective use of spaces. These developments are motivating and engaging children more fully in their learning. Outdoors children are observed to persevere, problem solve and demonstrate resilience in challenging situations. This is supported well by the extended use of loose parts and more natural, open-ended resources. Practitioners should now continue to develop the learning environments as planned with a continued focus on curiosity, inquiry and creativity. There is scope to soften the indoor environment to provide cosy areas, for example redefining the story corner and support a quieter learning space. The positive developments already made should continue to be built on including children's increased access to resources. As already initiated,

a focus on children leading their own learning, for example through making independent choices within an enabled environment, will enhance children's experiences further.

- Interactions between practitioners and children are consistently responsive and nurturing. Commentary and questions are used well to support children through clarifying understanding and increasingly, to provoke curiosity. Children are listened to and changes being made to how learning is planned for ensures that the child's voice is valued and acted upon. This is reflected in the appropriate length of time children are afforded for uninterrupted play to become immersed in their activity.
- The use of digital technologies is at an early stage of development. Resources such as tablet computers and interactive board could be used more effectively to support, enrich and extend learning. This will help children to develop and apply skills they require as citizens of 21st century Scotland.
- Since August practitioners have prioritised getting to know children as individuals and increasingly as learners. New systems have been introduced to support this such as focused observations of children at play. These now need to be strengthened by more regular, spontaneous observations that capture significant more fully. Over time this will create a coherent story of learning for each child and better inform future learning needs and where appropriate, planned interventions. There are plans to shortly introduce local authority tracking systems in line with whole school approaches to capture and record progress at key points in time. This should provide an evidence-based approach to identifying children's learning needs and a measure of progress.
- All children have an individual folder that contains observations and photographs of them at play and examples of their art work. The content and structure of children's learning folders have been refreshed this session. These are at the early stages of supporting children to reflect on their learning. Practitioners have also correctly identified the need to involve parents and families more in the creation and sharing of the folders.
- New approaches to planning are being developed. The 'working wall' evidences the flow of learning that is child initiated. Planned experiences are stimulating and capture and build on children's interests, for example a regular focus on science based experiments. 'Spur of the moment' planning capitalises on children's interests further by practitioners being responsive in a more immediate way as a result of a 'spark' from children. At appropriate times practitioners introduce new concepts and ideas to children through 'teaching moments'. It will be useful to reflect on the needs of individuals and the group as a whole to determine the most significant learning needs. This should include an explicit focus on early language. Establishing what children already know and what they want to find out about next would support greater depth in learning. As planning approaches develop and embed it will be important to evaluate their effectiveness. Curriculum design principles would provide a useful structure to this evaluation.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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

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

- In communication and early language most children are making satisfactory progress. In group activities the majority of children listen well. They enjoy sharing their personal experiences and thoughts and feelings in conversation with familiar adults. To apply these developing skills more fully it would be helpful for children to experience more stories being read to them with related discussions. A love of books is fostered through the home loan library which children enjoy participating in. Through the use of storytelling spoons and concrete materials children explore characters from familiar stories and a few can retell basic storylines. The majority of children draw recognisable figures as a representation of themselves. A few children show a keen interest in mark-making including mud painting outdoors. Phonological awareness is at the early stages of developing with a few children identifying initial letters of words and their associated sounds.
- As a result of their nursery experiences children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics and numeracy. It will be important that children experience an appropriate depth of learning across all aspects of this curriculum area to ensure maximum progress is secured. Meaningful contexts like monitoring the growth of chives and mint planted introduce children to concepts such as measurement. A range of mathematical language is beginning to be used appropriately in context such as to describe position, simple fractions and to compare. Most children show a developing awareness of number, for example counting in their play. A few are ready to develop this further, for example counting backwards and identifying the missing number. A recent exploration of favourite weather types provided a context for children to be introduced to simple data handling.
- The clear focus on health and wellbeing is resulting in most children making good progress in their understanding. The majority of children are developing an understanding of the national wellbeing indicators through the use of their doll, 'Shanarri'. Children enjoy taking care of her and promoting her safety, for example using high visibility clothing. As this approach embeds care should be taken to ensure that all indicators are explored as fully as 'safe' and 'healthy'. A daily focus on feelings is supporting children to recognise and label simple feelings. This is enhanced through the use of puppets. Children are developing and applying their awareness of the importance of personal safety through the use of a range of real-life tools including woodwork tools, knives and scissors. Building on this children could be more fully involved in assessing and recording risks in their own play, for example the use of fire, outdoors and challenging physical play. Most children are able to describe important factors in a healthy lifestyle, for example food choices, personal care and the need for exercise

- Almost all children are becoming confident and independent learners which is being supported by the developing pedagogy. Although children are at the early stages of being able to talk about their learning, they are developing positive attitudes and skills to help them become life-long learners. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress over time as a result of their nursery experiences.
- Recently the importance of recognising and capturing achievements has been developed. The 'success and achievement' board displays personal achievements that are meaningful to the individual. This approach should continue to be developed in partnership with parents and families to ensure the achievements of all are celebrated. Praise is used consistently to recognise success and celebrate achievements in a meaningful way. Practitioners are keen for children to make further contributions to the work of the setting. They recognise this could be widened to contributing to the local community and to the development of skills and understanding as global citizens.
- Equity is promoted throughout the work of the nursery class and is supported by the inclusive ethos where everyone is treated as an individual. Practitioners use their knowledge of children, families and the context of the setting to help identify and reduce any potential barriers to learning for children. This will be enhanced further by utilising tracking of children's progress that will provide an evidence base for determining the need for any interventions.

1. Quality of care and support

Children experienced a friendly and welcoming environment that enabled them to feel comfortable and happy. The friendly and kind interactions of staff helped children to form friendships and enjoy each other's company. Children were being helped to develop an understanding of their own emotions and a sense of fairness. We noted children were beginning to associate well with a doll named Shanarri (wellbeing indicators). This was helping children to have a tangible and meaningful understanding of their own wellbeing. We suggested that associating the indicators more widely to helper roles within the nursery may also be beneficial for such purposes.

Staff had got to know and were getting to know the children well. Information gathered in relation to a child's individual need which formed the personal care plan. It helped to monitor children's wellbeing so that support was responsive and meaningful and took account of all those involved, as promoted in Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). Including known strategies, professional visits and any action would further enhance the effective approach to holistic care. Such information should be reviewed with parents/carers at least every six months to check nothing had changed. Parents told us that staff worked well together with them, this helped families to feel at the heart of support to their child.

Children were able to make free choices about their play that captured their interest through investigation and exploration. Staff helped children to widen their learning during conversations during activities whilst enabling children to lead their learning and support their independence. Children were confident and happy and co-operated well with each other.

Appropriate procedures and documentation were in place to support the safe management of medication.

Children were able to choose when to have snack (flexi-snack). It was a positive eating experience for the children, they sat together in a small group and chatted with each other. Staff also sat with the children to help with the learning of good social skills and behaviours associated with eating and drinking. Children clearly enjoyed being involved with the preparation of foods at snack time and helping themselves to utensils. Foods supported good practice and took account of children's dietary needs and food preferences.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

Children were being cared for in an environment that enabled them to feel welcome and comfortable. They were able to move around the play space, independently and safely. Children were learning about the importance of personal hygiene and how to keep healthy as they washed their hands after using the toilet and before having their snack. The service was clean and free from hazards.

Staff ensured that children were treated appropriately should an accident occur as they had completed first aid training. Accidents and incidents were being appropriately recorded and information was shared with the parent/carer, to help promote the wellbeing of the child.

The playroom was bright and welcoming for the children, natural and open-ended (no fixed purpose) materials were threaded throughout different activities. Space had been arranged so that children could be independent in their play and make their own choices. At times the acoustics of the room meant that it could be noisy, we suggested that introducing more soft furnishings and drapes in a quiet/cosy reading area for example, would be beneficial to overall wellbeing.

Children clearly enjoyed the benefits of free flow play with most of them choosing to be outdoors at various points throughout the sessions, they were confident in choosing what clothing they needed to wear. The wider introduction of loose parts and natural materials were clearly helping children's socialisation, thinking skills and imagination. The recent introduction of a weekly wood session was enabling the children to explore the natural environment and further develop skills to access and manage risk. Continued generation of real life and scrap materials indoors and outdoors would help to enrich the environment so that children's capacity for learning was increased through creativity and exploration.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

Staff were friendly and welcoming towards the children that helped to create an environment where children were comfortable and assured. Staff recognised the importance of supportive and positive relationships with the child and their family so that children's health and wellbeing was promoted. Staff enabled children to make choices and used kind words in a calm and unhurried manner so that they had time to absorb information. Staff positioned themselves well so that they were able to step into conversations and offer quiet and unassuming support to children, helping them to form friendships and enjoy each other's company.

Staff held a relevant qualification, they were clearly motivated and enthusiastic, they were using their skills and experience well to support children's wellbeing and development. Staff recognised the benefits of children leading their own learning whilst being aware of the moments to encourage deeper levels of engagement to help them to work out their own theories. Staff also shared roles in the day to day delivery of the service such as snack or supervising handover of children to parents at the end of the session.

Whilst the newly formed staff team worked well together and had made changes that were beginning to have a positive impact on children's experiences, the team remained in a period of instability. Formal systems of support had yet to be established so that staff had opportunity to further develop their own professional development through training opportunities, discussion of practice, reflection and continuous evaluation. This would enable a culture that valued staff and a shared vision for the service to be established. (See recommendation 1.)

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

Recommendation

1. The senior management team should ensure that the development needs of the staff are clearly identified through formal discussion, training is planned, shared and evaluated, with a view to improving outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I have confidence in the people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS

3.14) and 'I am confident that people are encouraged to be innovative in the way they support and care for me' (HSCS 4.25).

4. Quality of management and leadership

We saw that children had made some contributions towards the planning of activities as their views had been included in the somewhat recent addition of a working learning wall. Whilst it remained in its infancy the senior practitioner had a clear vision for fully embedding a responsive approach to planning that was child led. There was also recognition that involving parents/carers more widely in the process would help to develop a shared approach to family learning. Parents/carers were greeted by staff at the beginning and end of the session, enabling them to ask questions and/or discuss any issues. Parents told us that they were kept informed of the nursery day and any changes through their daily contact with staff, and notice boards in the reception area.

The depute headteacher had responsibility for overseeing the nursery provision, they provided informal support to the staff team and gave their knowledge and skills status. Formal meetings would lead to a conduit for reflection of the service, and open debate about adjustments and how to make things better. We suggested that a standard agenda that included responsive planning/improvement and a concise action plan would also be beneficial for the purposes of monitoring and continuous evaluation.

A focus for change in relation to the environment had improved experiences for children in leading their learning. However, a programme of robust monitoring and self-evaluation across all aspects of the nursery had not yet been established. It was recognised that this was in part, due to the significant changes within the staff team. The senior management team was referred to the framework – How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC) and Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), My Support, my life, for such purposes. (See recommendation 2.) To help ensure that this was effective, the senior management team should continue to receive support from the local authority in improving their own skills and knowledge of early learning and childcare.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

Recommendation

1. The provider and senior management team should establish a continuous, manageable and effective system of self-evaluation, that seeks the views of all those involved, leading to sustained improvement.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve' (HSCS 4.8) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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.