

Summarised inspection findings

Lasswade Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Setting

Midlothian Council

27 February 2024

Key contextual information

Lasswade Early Learning and Childcare Setting is based in Lasswade Primary School. It provides early learning and childcare across four and a half days a week during the school term. The setting is registered for 64 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. There are currently 61 children registered. Fifty-five children attend on a full-time basis.

The headteacher of Lasswade Primary School has overall responsibility for the setting, with delegated management responsibility given to a depute headteacher. Two senior early years practitioners manage the day-to-day running of the setting. They are supported by a team of early years practitioners and a learning assistant.

The setting consists of a large indoor space and an enclosed outdoor play area. Practitioners and children make use of spaces in the wider school environment, such as the gym hall, playground and grass areas within the school campus.

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

- The early learning and childcare (ELC) setting was included in the school's review of vision, values and aims. Practitioners bring these to life through the very positive ethos and the day-to-day experiences they provide within the setting. They should continue to refer regularly to the values and aims to make them meaningful for all children in a developmentally appropriate way.
- The headteacher and depute headteacher play an active role in leadership of learning and childcare within the setting. They guide and support senior early years practitioners well, who in turn, lead and motivate practitioners. As a result, practitioners take on meaningful leadership roles, including improving the use of areas within the setting. Children across the nursery demonstrate their leadership in a few meaningful activities, for example, as snack ambassadors. In doing so, they take turns to show responsibility in leading snack time. Practitioners should now develop further children's leadership opportunities by developing an increased range of responsibilities.
- ELC leaders and practitioners continue to place a high priority on improving the early learning and childcare they provide for children and families. They are aware of what is working well and what needs to improve. This is evident within their development plan and on their 'Road to Improvement' display wall within the playroom. Practitioners invite the views of children and their families to comment on learning and the early years environment through a 'you said, we did' approach. Practitioners should continue to seek the views of children and families and ensure they have opportunities to increase their participation in this process.

- All practitioners are increasingly involved in self-evaluation activities. They have recently introduced an annual monitoring calendar to support them in this process. Practitioners audit aspects of their provision using national self-evaluation frameworks. This helps them to identify improvement priorities which are appropriate for their setting. Practitioners have successfully developed areas of children's learning. This is resulting in children making accelerated progress in literacy and wellbeing. Practitioners are now focusing correctly on making further improvements in numeracy and early mathematics following an audit of children's experiences in these important areas.
- There is a strong culture of reflection by practitioners through daily dialogue. They evaluate their provision well at weekly staff meetings. They collaborate effectively in this way, and this is having a positive impact on children's experiences and learning indoors. They should continue, as planned, to improve outdoor spaces to enable children to engage in quality physical play outdoors.
- Practitioners value the importance of professional learning to continue to develop their skills. This is reviewed during their 'Making Performance Matters' meetings with senior leaders. All practitioners share their ideas well with each other and take part in moderation activities. As a result, practitioners have increased their understanding of additional support needs and early language development. Practitioners should now engage in professional collaborative learning and share ideas and effective practice beyond their own setting.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Practitioners have established positive and supportive relationships with children and their families. Practitioners know children well as individuals, and as learners. They are enthusiastic and committed to providing high quality spaces, interactions and experiences. Practitioners listen to and value children's interests, needs and motivations. As a result, children feel safe, happy, confident and meaningfully engaged in play and learning.
- Practitioners empower children to follow their own lines of enquiry. They interact well with children to help them extend their learning. Children are given time and space to develop new skills, promoting independence and curiosity. All children are beginning to explore more fully their rights. They are respectful towards each other during play, demonstrating an awareness of the rights of others.
- Practitioners observe children and record accurate information about their learning through digital platforms, floorbooks and displays which include written observations and photographs. Practitioners use these resources well to help celebrate children's learning journeys and wider achievements. Practitioners should now develop their approaches so that children participate more fully in revisiting and sharing their learning, using digital technology where appropriate.
- Practitioners plan children's learning well considering a balance of responsive, intentional and child led experiences. These approaches help to engage and motivate children in their play and learning. Practitioners' plan and moderate using the local authority progression pathways for health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy. These help to identify and mitigate potential gaps in children's learning. Practitioners routinely involve families in identifying possible lines of development (PLODS) to explore with children. Practitioners should ensure a consistent approach to linking PLODS with journal observations, to make children's progress and achievements more visible.
- Practitioners work effectively to plan and meet the needs of children with additional support needs. When planning, they consider how the ELC setting can be adapted to reduce any barriers to learning that children may experience. In doing so, they are providing a quality and inclusive ELC setting where children with additional support needs make progress in learning.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have correctly identified that they should undertake more robust tracking, monitoring and evaluation of all children's progress. This will help to improve depth in children's learning and show progress children make over time. This data will also help practitioners to increase expectations for a few children through a higher level of challenge, including those with additional support needs.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan meaningful contexts across the curriculum and use these to motivate children to be curious and learn about the world they live in. They ensure the curriculum takes account of children's interests through responsive planning. Practitioners in leadership roles are providing useful literacy and numeracy opportunities across the curriculum. They should now begin to measure the impact of the targeted approaches they provide.
- Practitioners ensure a good balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led play within the setting. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should develop the outdoor learning environment to ignite wonder, curiosity, and enhance further children's creativity. Practitioner engagement with relevant national guidance will inform future professional enquiry and developments.
- Children become familiar with their local community through walks to the woodland area within the grounds of the local care home. As planned, practitioners should develop further their meaningful links to the community, including visitors into the setting, to develop children's skills in real life contexts.
- Children's transitions into the ELC setting and as they move into primary school are well planned. Practitioners share information booklets with families to ensure a smooth start for all. They have developed a blended placement policy to support children where this may be required. Practitioners and school staff should continue to work collaboratively to ensure progression in children's learning across early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have strong positive relationships and work closely with parents/carers. Practitioners keep parents/carers informed through helpful information displayed in the welcome area, daily dialogue at drop off and pick up times and monthly news shared online. Parents/carers appreciate the very caring and supportive approach of practitioners. They are invited to join in activities termly including autumn welly walks to the woods and 'stay and play' sessions within the setting. As planned, practitioners should encourage families to engage more in ELC literacy initiatives.
- Practitioners make effective use of online learning journals to share each child's learning with parents/carers at home. They find that this helps them understand their child's learning and enjoy having access to their child's journal. Practitioners should continue to develop approaches and encourage parents/carers to contribute further, for example sharing information from children's experiences and achievements at home.

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

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 wellbeing and understanding of equality and inclusion is developing well. They benefit from the strong relationships they have with practitioners who model kind, caring behaviour and encourage children to be respectful. As a result, almost all children cooperate well, share resources and are kind and caring towards one another. Children feel confident to engage with adults and share their views and opinions. Practitioners should continue to build upon this and develop additional approaches to help children share their views.
- Most children are at the early stages in developing an appropriate understanding of their rights or what wellbeing means to them. Practitioners should continue to reinforce aspects of wellbeing and rights regularly. Children have a sensitive and appropriate awareness of diversity and they recognise and celebrate a range of festivals in the calendar year. Children's understanding of a range of cultures, is promoted well through music making activities.
- Children's wellbeing is supported effectively by the headteacher and all practitioners. Almost all children are settled and happy in the ELC setting. They respond positively to practitioners' responsive interactions when meeting individual needs. Practitioners encourage children to talk about their feelings and discuss emotions in a range of ways. They provide effective enhanced settling-in programmes for those children who require them. Children receive a knitted 'Mid Mouse' toy as part of an authority wide project, to help children with transitions. Children from the ELC setting use these very well to support them as they move into school. As a next step, practitioners should consider increasing relevant transition experiences for children. For example, ELC children would benefit from being introduced to the 'Lasswade Learning Superheroes' in their pre-school year.
- The ELC team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe and meeting their care and learning needs. Practitioners attend appropriate training to ensure they understand procedures and policies. The setting engages parents prior to consulting with agencies. Children with additional support needs have effective individualised educational plans in place which identify children's next steps and strategies to support them. These are monitored and reviewed to ensure appropriate progress is made. Practitioners need to continue to ensure that personal plans for all children are reviewed with and signed by parents, at least twice a year.
- All children receive appropriate and sensitive support to enable them to make the best possible progress. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos throughout the setting. All practitioners are aware of procedures to follow where a child may benefit from support with their learning or input from other agencies. They signpost parents and families to relevant organisations where more support is needed.

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

- Most children make very good progress in early communication and language. They follow instructions, listen attentively during group activities, and use a wide range of vocabulary in play and conversation. During spontaneous play, most children demonstrate awareness of rhyme, letter sounds and a love of reading. Most children show a keen interest in early writing, with a few beginning to write their own name clearly. Children use their imagination to create their own stories and perform these confidently to their peers. As a result, their emotional literacy and creativity is developed well.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are developing early mathematical language using open-ended, natural resources and materials. Most children identify and match colours while playing board games. Children count within 10 during real life scenarios, such as, the snack-time café. They use money for a purpose to exchange goods during role play. Children are increasing their knowledge of mathematical concepts. For example, children fill and empty containers in the water tray, weigh and measure as they bake, and make playdough. A few children would benefit from more challenge and opportunities to explore numeracy and mathematics in their play.
- Overall, children are securing very good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children are confident and share how they feel as they take turns in their play. Almost all children develop physical skills for example, running, climbing and balancing while outdoors and in the local woodland areas. Most children show very good levels of independence in serving themselves snack. Practitioners should encourage children to have more independence at lunchtimes.
- Practitioners capture children's achievements and share these well with parents through their child's online journal. Almost all children are successful in developing important skills during their time in nursery. This is apparent across a relevant range of meaningful activities. Children receive appropriate praise, and their achievements are celebrated on the 'Our Learning Leaves' achievement board. Children are happy that their success is being recognised in this way.
- Most children are making good progress across aspects of their learning over time. Practitioners record the progress children make on different formats including observation sheets and online platforms. As planned, they should now collate this evidence in a more manageable way. In doing so they will see more clearly the progress children make over time. This will support progression for children at early level as they move into P1.

- Practitioners take account of the differing circumstances of children and families very well. They take account of any barriers to learning that exist and are skilled in ensuring equity for all. For example, they provide sensitive but effective interventions to meet effectively the needs of individuals. Children benefit from interventions that have a positive impact on those who receive them. Practitioners should now develop approaches to measure more fully the impact of interventions over time to ensure that they are aware of any further or potential gaps in learning.

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.