

Summarised inspection findings

Seafield Nursery

Moray Council

6 February 2024

Key contextual information

Seafield Nursery is situated in Elgin and serves its surrounding areas. The nursery is registered for 40 children to attend at any one time. It offers sessions between 8am and 5.45pm, five days a week, for 46 weeks throughout the year. Children attend a combination of full or part-time places. At the time of the inspection 49 children from age three to those not yet attending school were registered on the roll.

The nursery manager who also manages another early learning and childcare setting has overall responsibility for the nursery. Five senior early years practitioners share day-to-day responsibilities for the running of the nursery. They are supported by a team of early years practitioners, support workers and pupil support assistants. Practitioners access training and receive valuable input from Early Years officers from the local authority. The nursery is operating with a high percentage of children who require support with their learning.

The nursery has an enclosed outdoor play area that children can access freely throughout their day. There is also access to facilities at the adjacent school, outwith school hours.

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

- The nursery team has created a welcoming and friendly ethos for children and families. Children benefit from the positive relationships they have with practitioners and are happy and settled. Children new to the nursery quickly settle due to the care and nurture they receive. Practitioners provide a range of interesting contexts for learning both indoors and outdoors and support interests in play.
- The majority of children concentrate for extended periods while leading their own play. Most respond and engage well during group time activities. Practitioners should work together to develop planned approaches to children's learning including increased use of the wider community.
- Practitioners' and children's interactions are caring and responsive. Practitioners engage children well in conversations during play. They are skilful in providing well-timed interventions to support and extend children's learning. As a result, children's confidence and communication skills are improving. Practitioners should increase children's leadership skills, for example by providing them with responsibility roles.
- Practitioners record detailed observations of children's learning. They use these to recognise children's significant learning. Parents receive this information termly as 'little letters' from practitioners to their child. They meet with their child's key worker to discuss progress made and next steps. Most parents report that this helps them to understand how their child's

learning is progressed. Each child has a learning journey profile that includes practitioners' observations, evidence of progress in aspects of wellbeing and individual achievements. Practitioners should continue to extend their expertise in recording observations to ensure clearer focus on next steps. This will help to ensure progression in learning and increase challenge for a few children.

- Practitioners have been reflecting on approaches to planning. They currently rely on observations to provide individualised learning. Practitioners should review approaches and increase planned episodes of learning. This will help to ensure that planning supports children's progress in early literacy and numeracy and across the early level curriculum. Practitioners should also look at ways of increasing use of digital technologies to support learning and teaching.
- Practitioners plan effectively for children who have additional needs. They provide useful strategies to help children engage more regularly in play activities within the nursery. They share this information with parents through helpful wellbeing postcards. As a result of these interventions being well-matched to needs, most children are making good progress in their learning and development.
- Practitioners use detailed developmental overviews for individual children who require additional support in their learning. These are helpful to track the progress children make. Practitioners should reinstate developmentally appropriate overviews to track learning and development more effectively. The nursery team recently introduced progression trackers using early level literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing benchmarks. They now need to review and streamline approaches to make sure these are helpful, meaningful and reduce workload.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The setting 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 setting and the education authority.

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 are making good progress in early language and literacy. They listen to each other and talk confidently with their friends and adults. Children explore stories with a focus on the 'book of the week.' A few children can identify familiar environmental print, referring to signs and labels in their play. Practitioners use Makaton signs in routines throughout the day to support communication with children. The majority of children access a range of mark-making opportunities which allows them to explore early writing skills. To further develop children's skills in early literacy, practitioners should offer access to relevant texts and more mark-making opportunities across all play spaces.
- In numeracy and mathematics most children are making good progress. Most children can sort and match groups of objects and colours. They can identify simple two-dimensional shapes. When building constructions, they use mathematical language such as big, small, long and short as they play. Most children can count to 10 and a few children can recognise numbers to 10. All children would benefit from more meaningful planned experiences to develop a greater understanding of number and to explore numbers within real-life contexts.
- Most children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They play well together, share resources and take turns. The children are developing fine motor control using tools, scissors and construction materials. They enjoy a range of physical activities outdoors including climbing and balancing. Most children demonstrate independence and resilience, for example in serving themselves and clearing up at lunch time. Most children are beginning to identify their feelings. They explore these regularly through activities using a local story created around the characters Shan and Arri. This helps to develop children's understanding of aspects of wellbeing in an age-appropriate way.
- Most children are making good progress across aspects of their learning over time. Tracking of children's progress is at a very early stage of implementation and does not yet show impact. Moving forward, next steps in children's learning and development should be more specific to ensure children make the best possible progress.
- Children with additional support needs are making good progress as a result of the supportive and inclusive ethos within the nursery. Children's skills in listening and early language are being developed effectively through a range of group time activities. As a result most with additional needs are now interacting well and engage more regularly with other children as they play.

- Practitioners value and celebrate children's achievements and display these on the 'Proud cloud' board. Children enjoy receiving stickers and certificates, for example for tasting unfamiliar foods. Practitioners should build upon children's achievements from home and through visits within the local community.
- All practitioners know individual children well and take very good account of the differing circumstances of children and families. They provide strong supportive relationships which are impacting positively on children with specific needs. Practitioners are fully aware of where support is required and provide sensitive interventions to meet any gaps effectively. They work closely with families and support agencies in using interventions that are having a positive impact on the progress children make. As a result, a few children make accelerated progress. Practitioners enable all children to take part in activities, for example providing recycling of outdoor clothing. Senior leaders and practitioners should work with the local authority to remove the additional costs to parents for nursery activities. This will ensure equity for all.

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.