

# Summarised inspection findings

**St John Ogilvie Primary School Nursery Class**

North Ayrshire Council

24 September 2019

## Key contextual information

St John Ogilvie Primary School nursery class is co-located in the same building as the primary school. The headteacher, who has been in post for 13 years, has overall leadership and management responsibility for the nursery class. She is ably supported by the senior early years practitioner, who has day to day management responsibilities. A recently appointed lead early years practitioner completes the middle management team. At the time of the inspection, 13 children aged two years old attend in the morning and 12 children attend in the afternoon. Seventeen children aged three to five attend in the morning and 25 children attend in the afternoon. By August 2020, the nursery will offer the full allocation of 1140 hours to children and their families. A programme of refurbishment is planned to improve access in and out of the nursery playrooms and the outdoor spaces and garden. Internal adaptations will add a separate, multi-purpose space for dining and other activities.

### 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

- Children and their families receive a very warm and friendly welcome from practitioners as they arrive each day at the nursery. They are immediately made to feel at ease by the caring practitioner team. As a result, the environment for learning is positive, nurturing and inclusive. Practitioners make use of a wide and varied range of natural materials to create a highly attractive environment for learning. The two playrooms and the nursery garden provide children with areas that are calm, stimulating and motivating. Relationships between children and practitioners are strong and built on mutual trust. Parents we met, or who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, state they are very pleased with the quality of the service and in particular, the care their children receive.
- Most children aged two to three in the 'caterpillar playroom' confidently make choices about what they want to play with. They are encouraged by practitioners to choose where they want to play. A few children still need and receive timely support from practitioners. In the 'butterfly playroom', almost all children aged three to five, settle quickly in the inviting play spaces where they engage happily with their friends. They are enthused by the open-ended resources available to them. Many children persevere with their chosen activity for long periods of time.
- Children benefit from an extensive outdoor space where they regularly take part in energetic, exploratory, creative and imaginative play. When playing in the digging area they searched for worms and made soup using a selection of vegetables. Almost all children are confident at taking turns, at organising themselves and they are comfortable with the routines of the session. Almost all of the time, children play cooperatively, sharing gardening tools, loose parts and kitchen utensils. They show good levels of empathy for each other during their play and they are kind and caring.

- Children have some opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and environment. They look after their toys and they help to tidy up. Children are capable of taking on more challenging leadership roles within the playrooms. Using their 'special books' as a prompt, children talk knowledgably about their learning experiences. Currently, the special books contain too few examples of children's work. Practitioners could achieve a more child-centred profile by storing detailed written information elsewhere.
- Practitioners work closely as a team. They show a passion for their work and they are strongly focused on providing experiences that are of the highest quality for all children. Practitioners are ably supported by senior colleagues who are visible throughout the session and contribute effectively to children's learning. Almost all of the interactions and engagement that we observed, involved appropriate use of open ended questions to promote and extend children's thinking. Occasionally, practitioners missed opportunities to deepen children's thinking.
- Practitioners take ownership of their professional development. In their own time, they pursue additional training opportunities, including degree-level qualifications, to keep abreast of current best practice. They make effective use of new skills and knowledge to improve further the quality of children's experiences in early language, music, and outdoor play.
- Practitioners observe children daily at play. They record children's significant learning moments and share these at planning meetings. The information gathered is then used to inform future learning activities and as a focus for securing additional support for children who may need extra help or challenge. In a few instances, adult direction reduced children's independence.
- Practitioners involve parents fully in their child's learning. They provide many opportunities for parents to learn about the progress their child is making. These include, face-to-face meetings, text messaging, social media, and through enhanced transitions programmes and written reports. The transition arrangements from home to nursery, moving to the butterfly playroom and on into P1, are effective. Close attention is given to involving parents in these important points in the child's learning journey.
- Arrangements for assessing and tracking children's progress in learning are detailed and comprehensive. The nursery is data rich and regularly interpreted by senior management and practitioners as part of their evaluation of the quality of children's learning and progress. As discussed, a review of the volume of documentation associated with planning, assessment and tracking is necessary. In doing so, senior managers should be mindful of workload issues for all staff.

## 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 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

- A strong focus on health and wellbeing across the nursery has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Home visits and nurturing relationships support children to settle quickly, offering the opportunity for children to succeed and develop at their individual pace.
- Children aged from two to three years are developing their language and communication skills well within the caterpillar room. They have a literacy and numeracy rich environment where their language skills are promoted as they explore an inviting range of loose parts and natural resources. Practitioners read stories to children in an engaging manner, taking account of their age and stage of development. They are developing resilience and a range of skills through daily outdoor play, for example, mark making with paintbrushes.
- Overall, most children are making very good progress in communication and language. Most children confidently engage in conversations with adults and peers. During the inspection, children often approached inspectors to talk to them about their learning. Children listen attentively to stories and accurately recall key points. A lending library supports links with home. Spontaneous singing and a focus on rhyme supports children's early language development. Social times such as snack and lunchtime provide rich language opportunities.
- Mark making is available indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy the experience of self-registering as they arrive each day. Children recognise their names as they register at snack time and almost all children can find their name to put on their completed work. Opportunities to develop pre-writing skills are available. For example, children draw, paint and a few confidently write letters and their names independently.
- Most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Numeracy is promoted across the indoor environment with a range of loose parts, which is supporting children to develop their problem solving skills. Most children can confidently count to ten, with a few counting larger numbers. Outdoors, children were gathering stones, sorting into size and discussing weight. Planned opportunities to engage in numeracy and mathematics are evident across the nursery. For example, children skilfully use tweezers to count up to three snack items. As planned, practitioners should continue to promote numeracy outdoors.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are supported to develop their social and emotional skills well, through engagement in a supportive and nurturing environment. They enjoy a healthy snack, which they help to prepare, for example, spreading butter on their sandwiches. Daily outdoor opportunities allow children to

develop a healthy sense of risk as they confidently explore their engaging environment. Loose parts, such as guttering and pallets allow children opportunities to successfully work as a team, sharing and taking turns.

- Progress over time is captured in children's special books, on the walls and through detailed tracking. Practitioners, children, and in the best examples parents, set targets which are reviewed and updated. Regular tracking and monitoring meetings take place between practitioners and senior managers, allowing individual progress to be tracked over time. Developmental milestones, language and communication interventions are tracked across the age range to support transition and continuity in learning.
- Children's achievements are celebrated daily, with practitioners offering praise and encouragement. Wider achievements are captured in children's special books with parents encouraged to add achievements from home. Parents receive daily informal updates on their child's progress, with formal parents' meetings taking place twice a year. As discussed, practitioners should continue to explore ways to celebrate and capture wider achievements for all.
- There is a supportive and inclusive ethos across the nursery. Practitioners know their children very well and they take very good account of the socio-economic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children with a range of targeted interventions.

### 1. Quality of care and support

Staff are caring and nurturing. They show a genuine interest and compassion to support children, parents and carers. Partnerships with parents and carers are very positive, this was evident at drop off and collection times. Staff recognised the importance of including parents in the life and work of the centre. There are a variety of initiatives to support and involve parents. Parents are involved through home link visits, initial visits to the setting, stay and daily engagement. There are opportunities for parents and children to learn together for example, parental engagement programmes such as 'PEEP', 'Triple P', and 'stay and play'.

Relationships across the nursery are built upon mutual respect and trust. As a result, children feel safe and secure. The welcoming and friendly ethos supports children and families to settle into nursery. Positive relationships and family learning are a strength of the centre and underpin its work. As a result, children are treated as individuals in a caring and respectful manner.

Staff know children and families well. They understand what children need to grow and develop. They can confidently describe techniques and strategies they use to support children and families. The effective links staff have with other professionals enable them to share information and plan together to support children and families. We discussed how further development of personal plans would enable staff to record children's individual needs and how they plan to meet them more effectively. The setting should, in line with legislation, further develop personal plans which set out how children's needs, wishes and choices will be met. Staff should ensure that all aspects of children's plans are reviewed with parents/ carers every six months, or as children's individual needs change.

Staff are aware of, and supportive of children with allergies, intolerances and medical conditions. They follow safe procedures to ensure that medication is managed safely and effectively. Staff are confident in the actions they would take if a child became unwell. The centre could further improve how it ensures safety by requesting that parents provide more specific details of the signs and symptoms their child would present if medication was required.

Children have lots opportunities to learn about and practice healthy living and lifestyles. Staff ensure that children receive healthy snacks, lunches and drinks. We observed staff and child interactions over snack and lunchtime, where children are involved and encouraged to be independent. Lunchtime is also a very responsive and nurturing experience for children. In addition to this children's health and wellbeing is promoted through the use of the tooth brushing programme, and engagement in outdoor and physical play experiences.

**Care Inspectorate grade: very good**

### 2. Quality of environment

Children have plenty of space to play and learn. They are cared for in playrooms according to their age and stage of development. Children aged 2-3 are cared for in the caterpillar room whilst children aged 3-5 room are cared for in the butterfly room. In addition to this, children in the early years centre have access to the active purposeful playroom and gym hall within the primary school on a timetabled basis.

The outdoor learning environment had been a key focus of development for the service. We observed children engaging in a variety of stimulating activities outdoors. Staff training about

outdoor learning, loose parts and schematic play has resulted in improved learning experiences for children. We observed children leading and directing their own learning, exploring their natural environment and learning about potential risks and hazards associated with playing and learning outdoors. Staff are committed to ensuring that children are exposed to active, physical play every day, in all weather conditions. We noted that appropriate outdoor clothing was available to enable children to play and learn outdoors comfortably and safely in all weather conditions.

We raised some concerns about the safety of children outdoors, due to the public access through the play area. We noted that this area was very busy at the end of the school day, and when parents and carers were collecting and dropping off their children at the early years centre. Although staff are vigilant during these periods, these arrangements presented potential risks to children's safety. We discussed this with the headteacher and the senior early years practitioner who informed us that they had consulted with the local authority who had plans to extend the play space which would make public access restricted. The local authority should address our concerns in order to safeguard and protect children.

**Care Inspectorate grade: very good**



## 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.