

Summarised inspection findings

Nursery Rhymes

Dundee City Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Nursery Rhymes is a private provider who work in partnership with Dundee City Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in the Broughty Ferry area. The nursery is registered for 30 children at any one time and caters for babies to children not yet attending school. The nursery also provides funded places for children aged two years who are eligible for 1140 hours of ELC. There are currently 55 children on the roll. Children can access their nursery provision through a very flexible approach to attendance. The nursery has recently had a small extension added to the main playroom for children aged two to five years. The extension will increase the registration from 30 to 36 children following the award of a completion certificate from Dundee City Council.

The nursery manager was recently appointed, although has worked in the setting, as a practitioner and room leader, for several years. Supporting the manager, the nursery owner continues to play an active role in the management and leadership of the setting. The team are almost all qualified and have worked in the setting for several years. This stability has benefitted children and families over the last few years. There has not been significant impact by COVID-19 or the changes because of the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC. The owner, manager and practitioners have managed any challenges, such as the need for social distancing, well.

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
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- Senior leaders, working with practitioners, children and families are currently undertaking an extensive review of the existing vision, values and aims. They recognise that it is particularly relevant to review and refresh them to ensure they fully reflect the context of the setting, post pandemic. The manager is leading the review and making effective use of her professional learning to support the process. This is ensuring a rigorous and considered approach to exploring the current aspirations of everyone involved with the setting. Practitioners and senior leaders demonstrate their strong professional values clearly through their practice and have a clear vision for the nursery. As a team, they show a commitment to delivering the highest standards of learning and care for children.
 - Senior leaders provide highly effective and well-respected leadership. They motivate, nurture and inspire practitioners to deliver a high-quality service to children and families. As a team they provide very positive role models to practitioners who appreciate their calm and relaxed leadership style. Senior leaders provide personal and professional support to practitioners and families. This has been particularly valuable to individuals over the last few years. Senior leaders and families value the stable staff team. The team work very well together and are especially proud of their effective teamwork.
 - Practitioners are very enthusiastic about leading ongoing improvements. Senior leaders empower practitioners to explore aspects of their practice. This includes identifying and leading developments, both individually and as part of a team. Senior leaders encourage creativity and

nurture, the development of skills and professional confidence. This is helping to build capacity for improvement and secure an appropriate pace of change. Together, practitioners are exploring different approaches to providing children with high quality learning experiences. This shared learning and understanding is leading to well-informed improvements. This includes the development of specific areas in playrooms and approaches used by practitioners to plan for children's learning. Practitioners are proud of the changes they have made and can articulate the difference this is making to children's experiences.

- Practitioners enthusiastically participate in a range of professional learning that is leading to improved outcomes for children. This learning is often targeted at the learning needs of individuals and at other times practitioners participate as a whole team. The well-planned approach is supporting personal development and continuous improvement, for example, the development of leadership skills and changes to the learning environment. A few practitioners have gained their initial qualification through working in the setting, while others have been promoted into leadership posts.
- The manager and practitioners use robust self-evaluation to effectively identify what is working well and what needs to improve. This informs relevant targets to improve outcomes for children and families. Senior leaders have created an improvement plan that contains priorities that are well-judged and build on learning from the pandemic and existing good practice. It would be helpful to have more detailed time scales for implementation of targets. This will support senior leaders to manage an appropriate pace of change.

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

- There is a very nurturing and welcoming ethos across all areas of the nursery. All children benefit from consistently friendly, respectful relationships with the adults who care for them, and with their peers. As a result, children are happy and settled in nursery and engage very well in a wide range of purposeful learning experiences. Practitioners celebrate children's individual successes in their learning through praise, displays and sharing with parents via social media. Practitioners encourage children successfully to lead their own learning through involvement in planning and selection of resources.
- All children access a wide range of well-resourced learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. They have access to a wide range of quality natural and open-ended materials to develop their play. Practitioners make very good use of the local community and outdoor space to support children's learning. They have been creative in ensuring children continue to have quality learning experiences despite constraints as a result of building work. This includes adaptation of space within the nursery grounds and increased use of community resources.
- All practitioners know children and their stage of development very well. They observe and listen effectively to children's opinions and discussions during play. They use skilled questioning to extend children's learning. Practitioners use floor books and learning walls to help them plan learning experiences which take forward children's individual interests and build on prior learning. They help children to make good use of digital technology to extend and deepen their learning. For example, children use online search engines to research areas of particular interest such as the planets and space and the origins of words.
- All practitioners make careful observations of children's learning which they record to help them track children's progress and identify next steps. They regularly meet to discuss and evaluate children's progress. This, and discussions with children about their learning, helps them to plan learning experiences which meet individual needs and interests. Practitioners are beginning to make effective use of an online tool to record and document children's learning and progress. They are beginning to use the online tool to effectively share this information regularly with parents. Parents welcome this approach and say it helps them to understand how well their children are learning. This online tool will replace well-established and effective paper-based approaches to documenting children's learning. Senior leaders recognise the need to streamline approaches to recording children's progress and should continue with plans to further develop the use of the online tool.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners have a clear focus on developing children`s skills across all areas of the curriculum. They use national and local guidance well and apply their local knowledge and very good knowledge of the children in their care to enrich the curriculum. They provide learning experiences across all curriculum areas which are relevant to children`s interests and build on their previous learning. All practitioners ensure the development of children`s early literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in learning experiences across the curriculum. Children access a wide range of learning experiences which promote their curiosity and creativity through their play.
- Practitioners support children and families very well at points of transition. There are clear processes in place which are flexible to meet each individual child`s needs. Almost all children settle quickly into nursery and are confident and happy in the setting. Parents appreciate the personalised support offered to their child and to themselves.
- Practitioners make extensive use of the local community to support children`s learning. Children benefit from visits to the local contemporary arts centre, science centre, beach, community gardens, shops and library that contribute to their progress and achievement. Visitors to the nursery, including specialists in football and music and movement, widen and enhance children`s experiences.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Strong partnership working is a key feature of the setting. Practitioners have very well-developed relationships with families that support effective partnerships in the care and education of children. Parents receive regular information about their child's care and learning, both informally and formally, and welcome this. Senior leaders are introducing a digital online tool to aid communication and provide families with ongoing updates about children's learning. This is currently supported by a closed social media group. Parents very much value the insight into their child's nursery experiences and welcome the introduction of the digital online tool. They could now be more fully involved in children's learning within the nursery. This could include sharing their skills, interests and occupations, for example, to support children to understand the world of work.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- The wellbeing of all is of central importance to the work of the nursery. Practitioners ably support children to feel safe, secure and confident. Professional learning undertaken by practitioners has deepened their understanding of the importance of relationships and children's mental health. Very positive relationships are evident between children, children and practitioners and practitioners and families. Senior leaders and practitioners are proud of the family ethos they have created. This ethos has a very positive impact on the wellbeing of everyone involved with Nursery Rhymes. Practitioners provide very positive role models in their interactions with each other and with children. Children are treated as individuals, each with their own needs and preferences, and consistently with respect. Practitioners could now explore, with children, the concept of rights, in an age-appropriate way.
- Practitioners encourage and enable children to make choices and share their thoughts and ideas. Children have contributed to plans for the new extension to the playroom and are excited about the changes that are happening in their environment. Practitioners listen respectfully to children and support them to make many decisions throughout their day, for example where they will play, where they will visit in the community and what they will eat and drink. Children enjoy an interesting range of snacks and foods. They benefit from relaxed and unhurried mealtimes, supported by practitioners. They have well-developed skills in serving and eating which they do independently from an early age. Children have a strong understanding of their own wellbeing including the need to relax, the importance of exercise, their emotions and factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Practitioners could consider the use of the national wellbeing indicators to develop a common language of wellbeing that would enhance further existing strengths in this area.
- Senior leaders take particular care to ensure the wellbeing of practitioners. They carefully nurture the physical, mental and professional wellbeing of each individual member of the team. Practitioners are highly valued by senior leaders and families for the contribution they make to the work of the nursery. This results in everyone feeling valued and demonstrating a high level of commitment to their role.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are clear about their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe and their role in promoting wellbeing. Practitioners recognise when they may require additional expertise from other professionals to provide support to children. They know how to access this to ensure all children make very good progress.
- Senior leaders have a sensitive approach to ensuring that there are no barriers to participation in the life of the nursery. All nursery activities are provided with no additional costs. As a result, everyone benefits from the very inclusive ethos and can fulfil their potential.

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

- Babies and toddlers are developing literacy at their individual developmental stage. They enjoy exploring mark making using a range of materials and developing their vocabulary through singing and stories. Almost all older children are making very good progress in early language and literacy. They engage in mark making and emergent writing in their play. For example, children mark make to write food orders in the outdoor kitchen and record their findings in outdoor learning. Children access a range of interesting texts regularly. Groups of children listen well to stories read to them by practitioners. Most children enjoy talking about their favourite books and can identify why a certain book is their favourite. Almost all children engage well in conversation, appropriate to their age and stage, using a well-developed range of vocabulary. They talk confidently about their experiences in nursery and at home and readily question to further their own understanding.
- Babies and toddlers are developing early numeracy skills through daily routines and songs and rhymes. Almost all older children are making very good progress in numeracy. Children use the mathematical language of measure, time and position effectively in a range of learning experiences. Almost all children count in context and recognise some digits. A few children count confidently beyond 10. A few are beginning to add on one or two more successfully.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's health and wellbeing. Babies are developing their gross and fine motor skills through exploring balls of assorted sizes, moving to music and climbing on appropriate resources. Toddlers and older children are developing fine motor skills through use of a range of appropriate resources such as play dough and pencils or natural materials for mark making. Children are developing their independence and social skills very well. Almost all children take turns and share resources effectively. Older children are developing their gross motor skills well during outdoor play. They make effective use of balance bikes and scooters to develop their coordination and balance. Older children develop their understanding of their bodies when taking part in physical activity. For example, they identify effectively the reactions their bodies have to physical exercise such as increase in heart rate and feeling hot.
- Almost all children are making very good progress over time appropriate to their stage of development. They are becoming increasingly confident and are developing well as independent learners.

- Practitioners work effectively with families to ensure they know and celebrate achievements children make at home. They record achievements at home and in nursery in children's journals and on social media. Practitioners should continue to reinstate links with the local community, which were well established before the pandemic, such as intergenerational work with local care homes. This will maximise the development of skills and awareness of others in their development as citizens of 21st century Scotland.
- All practitioners take positive steps to ensure equity for all and have created an inclusive environment for all children. Senior leaders should continue to develop the effective use of all available data and information to ensure equity and the best outcomes for all children. This should include information related to socio-economic context.

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.