

Summarised inspection findings

Blairhall Primary School and Nursery Class

Fife Council

21 May 2019

Key contextual information

Blairhall Primary School nursery class is situated within the campus of Blairhall Primary School. It serves the village of Blairhall in Fife, and offers early learning and childcare for up to 36 children aged 3 to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection there were 12 children attending the nursery. Children have access to an inviting, well-planned playroom and dedicated outdoor space.

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

- Relationships throughout the nursery class are caring and positive. Children arrive at the beginning of the session keen to begin their play and see their friends. They are settled within the playroom and becoming confident individuals as they make choices about their learning. Children demonstrate responsibility and respect for their environment as they play and tidy up when they are finished using each area. They are motivated by the interesting, well-planned experiences within the playroom which encourage children's independence and curiosity. For example, children enjoy mixing their own paint and creating their own playdough for sensory activities. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their use of open-ended resources which develop children's creativity, investigation and inquiry skills.
- Children are supported well to make decisions about their learning and share their ideas. They are confident to approach practitioners to request support in their play and additional resources. The structure of the session is flexible and allows children the time and space to follow their own ideas. Practitioners support children well to extend their thinking and use digital technology to research topics of interest. This helps children to deepen their learning and develop their 'learning wall'. Children's ideas are used as a starting point for planning learning which allows practitioners to be responsive. Children are supported to ask questions and to explore the possible answers and solutions. They are beginning to use tablets to record aspects of their learning with the support of practitioners. There is potential to develop this further and encourage children to share and talk about their learning more regularly. Practitioners have correctly identified that they would like to develop further their use of the language of learning. The team also recognise it will be important to continue to evaluate the balance of the day. This will help to ensure children experience sufficient pace and challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners have a sound understanding of child development and know each child well as an individual. They are developing their knowledge of children as learners. The team listen effectively to children and interact in a sensitive way which promotes children's self-esteem

and confidence. Practitioners continue to build on their use of skilled questioning techniques to support children's curiosity.

- The team plans for children's learning over different timescales and experiences are developmentally appropriate. Practitioners make effective observations of children as they play to inform judgements about their learning and progress. These are recorded in children's learning journey folders which are shared with parents at regular intervals throughout the year. They provide an overview of the wide range of learning experiences children are involved in across the curriculum. Practitioners have a good understanding of the progress children are making which allows them to plan next steps in learning. These now need to be more personalised according to children's needs and frequently revisited to ensure the best possible progress. Practitioners are building their confidence in using tracking systems to monitor children's progress over time. As planned, the team now need to ensure these are used consistently to fully demonstrate children's learning and inform future planning and interventions.

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

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
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- Across the setting, quality approaches to early learning and childcare are having a positive impact on children's learning and development. Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They confidently converse, listen well to each other and express their needs. They enjoy participating in rhyme activities which are helping to develop awareness of the patterns of language. Practitioners effectively apply consistent strategies to promote children's language skills, appropriate to their stages of development. Children enjoy sharing books with practitioners throughout the session and during the 'bookbug' group. We have asked the team to ensure all children experience regular stories to support their language development and enjoyment of books. The majority of children are interested in mark-making and representing their ideas through drawing and emergent writing. Children would now benefit from more frequent opportunities to develop and apply these skills in order that they make the best possible progress.
 - Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They count with increasing confidence during play and real-life contexts such as preparing snack. The majority of children recognise numbers in the environment and when playing board games. Children explore shape as they play with construction resources and demonstrate an understanding of direction as they experiment with programmable toys. Children enjoy exploring concepts of weight and measure while playing in the mud kitchen and participating in baking activities. We have asked practitioners to focus closely on children's developing skills and to provide additional targeted support and challenge where appropriate. This will help all children to make the best possible progress.
 - Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are becoming confident individuals with a growing sense of responsibility. Children understand how they can support their own wellbeing through making healthy food choices and keeping active. The current interest in birds is supporting children to learn about their environment and features of wildlife. Children confidently talk about the birds they know as they make their own bird food. Most children are developing good physical skills and an understanding of risk as they negotiate loose parts play and take part in outdoor learning. Children show an awareness of the needs of others through their community links and co-operate well as they learn. They are respectful of each other and inclusive in their play. We have asked practitioners to continue to increase opportunities for children to influence and contribute to the life of the nursery.

- Children are becoming successful learners and are making good progress over time. Practitioners make sound professional judgements about how children are developing and learning. As planned, this now needs to be more effectively demonstrated in children's tracking information. Practitioners use praise effectively to recognise children's achievements and attractively display their work in the playroom. The use of the 'learning wall' and tablets to record children's learning contributes to a positive climate of learning and achievement. Families are encouraged to share achievements from home which are included in children's learning journey folders.

- Practitioners know children and families well. They take good account of their individual circumstances and provide tailored support. This includes linking parents with valuable community resources. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to learning in order to promote equity in their work.

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.