

Summarised inspection findings

Innerwick Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Innerwick Primary School nursery class is a service provided by East Lothian Council. The nursery is registered to provide a service to 16 children aged between three and five years. The nursery provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC). Innerwick Primary School is a small rural school in the village of Innerwick in East Lothian. The nursery class is within the school. The setting has one playroom and access to an enclosed outdoor learning area.

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 nursery class share a set of core values with the primary school. Practitioners, parents and carers were involved in the consultation process to refine the core values. The shared vision, values and aims are evident throughout learning experiences and children can talk about them. For example, 'cooperation' when working together to spread new bark chips on paths. Innerwick nursery class has an embedded ethos and philosophy based on children's rights and play-based learning. The nursery philosophy is shared with all stakeholders. As discussed, a review of the philosophy by the new nursery team will ensure a shared understanding for all and reflect the changing context of the service.
- The headteacher and senior early years practitioner meet weekly to share developments and improvement priorities for the nursery class. This is supporting the pace of change. The senior early years practitioner provides strong leadership and creates a positive ethos that supports the newly created team to work well together. The headteacher values creativity and is supportive of practitioners developing their talents and skills. Practitioners are motivated, engage enthusiastically in relevant professional learning and demonstrate a strong commitment to improvement. They have high aspirations for all children. More regular, planned observations of the learning provision are now needed. This will enable the headteacher to support practitioners to identify professional learning linked to improvement priorities.
- Practitioners develop and plan for specific development priorities and initiatives. They are enthusiastic and keen to develop their leadership roles further. This will build upon their shared ownership in the journey of improvement, for example, by supporting the further development of areas of the curriculum. Children are supported to have a meaningful and active role in leading their own learning. They are enthusiastic participants in other leadership roles including snack and recycling helpers. A positive next step will be to include children in whole school pupil voice groups such as the pupil council and Eco Group.
- Improvement priorities for the nursery class are incorporated in the whole school improvement plan. This is supporting the school to make links with areas for improvement and ensure progression across learning from early level to second level. The improvement plan is shared with all stakeholders and the review of the plan includes input from parents and carers gathered at a well-attended annual event.

- Self-evaluation using the national framework 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' is fully embedded and skilfully led by the senior early years practitioner. Evaluative activities are focused on areas for improvement with practitioners included in the process. The senior early years practitioner attends whole school staff meetings and development time. To support a collegiate approach to ongoing self-evaluation and improvements it will be important to ensure protected time for development and professional dialogue is identified. This will support the new team to have a shared approach to leading and implementing 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

- Children are confident, enthusiastic and enjoy their time at Innerwick Nursery Class. Almost all children make independent choices about where they want to play, accessing a wide range of high quality experiences both indoors and outdoors. They are actively involved in their learning through spontaneous play opportunities. Children have sustained engagement in their play and work cooperatively together. A commitment to play-based approaches promoting children's perseverance, communication, an assessment of risk and a sense of achievement supports this.
- Practitioners demonstrate warmth, kindness and care in their interactions with children. All children are treated with fairness and respect. Overall, practitioners have a very good understanding of early learning pedagogy and skilfully put this into practice demonstrating a high level of commitment to play-based pedagogy. The value of play and its link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is shared with children and families. As a result, there is a positive climate for achievement created through responsive interactions, skilled questioning and effective use of praise. Practitioners promote language and interactions in line with children's developmental needs. Learning is supported by the effective use of digital technologies.
- Practitioners know children very well as learners. They make good use of their observations to identify next steps in individual children's learning. These are recorded in individual 'Learning Story' folders that record children's experiences and progress over time and support children to reflect on their learning. The 'Learning Story' folders are regularly shared with parents and carers who contribute information from home life experiences. Regular home visits from 'Adventure Ted' supports this further. As discussed, professional learning to support practitioners in their identification of significant learning will be a positive next step. This will ensure approaches to capturing evidence are proportionate and manageable.
- Practitioners plan effectively over different timescales and across all areas of learning using the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. Floor books support collaborative discussion and planning illustrating children's ideas, voice and interests. Children plan and review their own play using an established approach that enables them to have a meaningful voice. This 'Map-Do-Review' approach empowers children to lead their own learning and outlines the role of the practitioner to secure positive outcomes for children in a nurturing environment. There is a system in place for tracking and monitoring individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. As discussed, the continued use and alignment of tracking processes with the primary school will support progression in learning across the early level further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Throughout the nursery class health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy are evident across learning. Practitioners plan a range of experiences to promote learning in other curricular areas. The use of local authority progression frameworks for literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and health and wellbeing, supports planning and progression of learning. As planned, the use of local authority progression frameworks across all curricular areas from August 2019 will support continuity of learning.
- Floor book planning is at the early stages of implementation. The floor book records responsive planning and illustrates learning initiated by children's interests. As discussed, it will be useful to review and reflect on the content and purpose of the floor book. This should include how recorded information links to planning for next steps and evidence of progress found in the 'Learning Story' folders.
- The outdoor learning environment has been developed to provide children with opportunities to explore and investigate through a range of stimulating experiences. As discussed, increased use could be made of the local area and resources to support and extend children's learning. This will support children to be part of the wider community and to develop an awareness of the world in which they live and grow.
- Transition to P1 is well planned and includes opportunities to share prior learning. Children have planned visits to the wider school environment and are supported by P6 buddies. As discussed, sharing of information and summarising individual learning will support progression across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The school identified the quality indicator 2.7 as their choice QI.

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

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

- A nurturing environment has been established through an ethos of mutual respect. The nursery philosophy and aims are shared with families and reflect the national wellbeing indicators. They underpin the well-established play-based pedagogy and the setting's commitment to a child's right to play. The nursery class team work very well together to create strong and effective relationships with parents as a priority in order to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Practitioners are very aware of their role in promoting wellbeing through the modelling of respectful relationships. They have a shared understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and ensure children are supported to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. This information is shared with children and families. As planned, practitioners should continue to progress this work with children to help them develop their language with which to express their feelings.
- There is a clear focus and commitment to support children to build relationships with others. Positive behaviour is very successfully promoted by careful consideration of children's emotional needs and encouraging the building of early friendships. Practitioners' awareness of children's dispositions, including the promotion of a responsible attitude and considering the feelings of others, supports positive relationships. As a result, almost all children play together co-operatively and respectfully. When required, practitioners intervene to support children with their behaviour in a way that builds trust and understanding.
- Listening to children and enabling them to have a voice throughout their early learning is central to the work of the setting. Children show high levels of independence in the environment and are becoming confident individuals through exercising choice.
- Practitioners are very reflective about their practice and keen to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. Policies and procedures demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements and codes of practice in relation to delivering early learning and childcare. Individual personal care plans incorporate the wellbeing indicators and are created and updated in partnership with parents.
- Practitioners are particularly mindful of their responsibility towards children's wellbeing. Where children require additional support with their learning, the headteacher and practitioners seek support and make links with external agencies. This helps to support children's overall learning and development and secure positive outcomes.
- There is a culture of inclusion with practitioners working proactively to ensure equity and that all children make the maximum progress in their learning. Practitioners are aware of different circumstances and treat children as individuals. This information is used effectively to promote children's wellbeing and plan for their care.

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
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- Children are confident, settled and well supported by attentive and caring adults. This means that they are ready to learn and explore and are becoming confident and resilient learners. Through inspection observation, information in children's 'Learning Story' folders, floor book evidence and dialogue, it is evident that children are making very good progress in their learning.
 - Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They make choices about their play and are very engaged. They are kind and considerate towards each other, and are able to share their space and resources. The high quality outdoor learning area supports children to assess risk, develop motor skills, physical skills and balance. Weekly learning walks in the school grounds and immediate local community are enjoyed by children and provide opportunities for children to explore the natural environment. Children are developing their independence by getting themselves ready for outside and helping with snack. As discussed, further exploration of the local and wider community will support children to understand their place in the local area.
 - Children are making very good progress in early language and literacy development. They talk confidently about their experiences and communicate and listen respectfully to each other during their play and group times. Children enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and most understand that books have useful information to help learn new things. They enjoy rhymes, songs and poems. Children are aware that their marks have meaning and are a way to communicate, for example, sharing experiences undertaken during holiday periods. They mark make using a range of materials and can explain what it means. Children are supported with emergent writing and most are aware of environmental print. Almost all children recognise their name with most older children attempting to write letter shapes or letters from their name.
 - Practitioners provide a rich range of mathematical experiences for the children. They capitalise on real-life opportunities to develop children's mathematical learning, and extend children's interests very well. Use of approaches to support early arithmetical learning supports professional judgements about the progress children are making in numeracy and mathematics. Children's use of block play both indoors and outdoors helps develop their understanding of mathematical relationships such as symmetry, positional language, awareness of 2D shape and 3D objects. Children are developing their creative thinking, perseverance, problem solving and an ability to design. Most children enjoy exploring numbers and counting with one-to-one correspondence and most older children are interested in much

larger numbers. They recognise numbers to ten with a few recognising numbers to 20 and beyond. The majority of older children can sequence numerals beyond ten and a few can work out missing numbers and count items in groups. Almost all children display problem solving skills in a variety of learning experiences. Children understand daily routines with a developing awareness of the seasons, time and days of the week.

- Families share wider achievements through completion of a home/nursery sharing page and these are celebrated with children regularly attending wider achievement assemblies in the school. The use of 'Adventure Ted' supports the sharing of experiences outside of nursery and helps practitioners have a more holistic understanding of the children in their care. As discussed, a positive next step would be to create an overview to support the setting in identifying any barriers to participation and resulting next steps.
- Equity is promoted across all aspects of the setting's work. Practitioners know their community very well and work hard to create an inclusive environment and meet the needs of all children and families. Feedback from parents confirms this positive and supportive ethos. Work with partners and external agencies ensures that children who have barriers to their learning are well planned for and supported.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnerships
- Impact on children and families

- In the nursery class, practitioners ensure that their strong communication with parents leads to effective feedback about each child's progress. Parents, grandparents, carers and families are encouraged to spend time in the setting and learn more about the curriculum and how young children learn. This is shared in a variety of ways through 'Family Play Mornings' and regular and very well attended 'Stay and Play' sessions. Almost all parents and carers feel there is no need for a formal parents evening. This is as a result of the regular dialogue and detailed feedback given by practitioners about their children's wellbeing and learning.
- Partnerships with a wide range of agencies and institutions ensures sharing of best practice to support positive outcomes for children. Ongoing work with Education Scotland to support the nursery class as a setting for innovation and impact will further improve children's development and learning.
- Information to support parents and carers involvement and engagement is shared regularly. In addition, newsletters and the annual review of the improvement plan 'Coffee and Cake' session support the engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting. Through questionnaires and dialogue with inspectors, parents confirmed they felt well informed, involved and engaged with the nursery class.

1. Quality of care and support

Since our last visit to the nursery, the service had continued to use high quality self-evaluation and reflective practice to maintain very good care and support outcomes for children.

To enable staff to meet the care and support needs of children they gathered a range of information about children before they started in nursery. This information was reviewed and updated regularly with parents and children to ensure that it still reflects a child's individual needs. Personal plans were well documented with reference to the wellbeing indicators associated with Getting it Right for Every Child. These plans and recordings were shared openly with parents. Plans showed clearly the outcome of support offered to children or wider family. Staff had a very good understanding of circumstances or events that impacted on children's wellbeing and had experience of developing strategies to support children and their wider family.

The service had recently moved to providing full day provision. Staff had considered the needs of children in this change and parents had been effectively consulted with in this process. Lunch was well organised and provided children with meaningful social experiences where they could practice self-help skills, exercise choice and interact with the wider school community. Staff supported this time very well and ate and chatted with children ensuring they ate and drank well. Work had been carried out to achieve a pace to the day, which offered children opportunities for a short period of rest and reflection after lunch that set them up for their afternoon of play and learning.

The ethos of the service focussed strongly on the voice of the child. Consultation with children was continual and genuine regarding their activities, range of play resources and pace of the day. Staff fed back information to children in a way that they could understand and this helped children to develop decision making skills and fostered a sense of responsibility. The involvement of children in decision making helped them to develop necessary skills for self-regulation and staff were observed to support children to negotiate and be responsible for their own behaviour.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

3. Quality of staffing

We spoke to staff who were motivated and knowledgeable about how to achieve and what evidenced positive outcomes for children. They had as a group undertaken a very good amount of professional development and we could clearly see the discussion and research they carried out being pulled through to practice in the nursery. Some staff were at different stages in their professional career and we could see that the whole staff team took responsibility for offering support, encouragement and mentoring to less experienced colleagues.

Staffing procedures included induction for newer staff which was a mixture of on-site induction and computer based activities provided by the local authority. Staff confirmed that this gave them the information they needed to carry out their role effectively. Procedures were in place to help staff with their professional development. This helped them achieve the aims of the service. To further support this process the head teacher should undertake observations of practice to enable professional development conversations.

The deployment of staff had been given consideration to make the most of skills and experience, this had been a challenge due to the work patterns of staff, but communication between staff

members was strong. We spoke to staff who had a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the nursery. We noted a strong team working ethic and a sharing of responsibility and accountability for the quality of the service provided to children and their families. This could be further extended to give individual staff opportunities to take on leadership roles.

The introduction of the full day session had only just been implemented at the time of our visit. Staff were trying hard to find opportunities to meet to discuss the provision and reflect on the experiences for children and this could be further explored to ensure that staff had some dedicated time to meet as a whole team. This would further strengthen teamwork and the shared setting of team goals.

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.