

# Summarised inspection findings

Heathrigg Nursery School

Falkirk Council

24 April 2018

### 1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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

- A vision, values and aims statement is shared across the nursery and school and displayed in the setting. This was developed a few years ago across the learning community. This has not been shared effectively with practitioners. This needs to be addressed to support practitioners to understand how their work helps to achieve success for all children.
- Overall, practitioners are committed to improving the work of the setting. They undertake professional reading and research to help improve aspects of the setting. Many of these activities are undertaken in their own time. They recognise that there are many areas to improve in the provision and they strive to provide the best possible experience for children and their families. However, they require more support from the senior leadership team to achieve this. The high number of staff absences and changes to the person with responsibility for management of the nursery has significantly impacted on the quality of the provision and its capacity to improve. Strategic direction is now required from the senior leadership team to ensure that the setting is supported to deliver high-quality early learning and childcare.
- An improvement plan with a clear focus on improving children's progress in aspects of literacy is in place. Although practitioners were consulted about the priorities included in this plan, the planned activities required to achieve this have only been shared with them very recently. As a result, little progress has been made to secure improvement. It will be necessary for the senior leadership team to take a much more active role in leading and progressing the improvement plan.
- A few times a year practitioners are able to meet as a team and join colleagues in the primary school. They value these opportunities to discuss new developments and engage in professional dialogue. It would be helpful for practitioners to have more opportunities to come together as a team to discuss what is going well and what needs to improve in the setting. More effective use of national guidance to support meaningful self-evaluation is necessary.
- There is little evidence of formal monitoring of the setting in order to establish what is working well, areas for improvement and the impact of new developments. For a few months last session, a principal teacher from the primary school had responsibility for the setting. Positively, this helped to improve a few aspects of the setting.
- Overall, practitioners are keen to take on leadership roles to improve the setting. A few practitioners are undertaking roles as 'communication champions' to encourage the development of children's oral communication. They work well with speech and language therapists to develop their knowledge and skills to implement a new language programme.

- There are a few examples of children taking responsibility for improving their setting, for example, at tidy up time. There is considerable scope to extend this further, for example, establishing child-friendly improvement groups.
- It is clear that the leadership of change in the setting requires improvement. To achieve this there will need to be clarification of promoted roles and responsibilities. In addition, a clear commitment by the senior leadership team to support and secure continuous improvement will be required.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Relationships are positive and children appear to be settled, happy and secure. Practitioners are developing new approaches to encourage children to be successful in different ways. Practitioners now need to encourage children to have a stronger voice and role in shaping learning environments, planning for learning and identifying their own next steps in learning. While there are examples of child-led learning, there are also still too many situations where children's learning is being influenced too heavily by adult choices and decisions.
- For the most part children engage in spontaneous play. Positive examples of this were observed in the outdoor area where practitioners supported children to extend and develop their learning about the impact of the rainfall. We have asked practitioners to build on this positive practice to enable children to lead their own learning more.
- The outdoor area and experiences, such as visits to the local library and making soup provide children with real-life, enjoyable experiences. More contexts such as these should be a regular feature of nursery practice.
- Overall, children demonstrate positive engagement in the experiences on offer. They sustain their play and a few extend their play using their own imagination. There now needs to be consideration given to how the learning environment supports children to enjoy deep meaningful learning across the curriculum. The staff team need to ensure children have the opportunity to be challenged in their learning.
- The outdoor area is well-planned and organised to support children to be curious in their learning with positive opportunities for investigative play. In particular, the new mud kitchen is used well by practitioners to encourage children's creativity and imaginative play. Despite the ongoing challenges with staff cover, practitioners working with older children recognise the importance of outdoor play and offer this provision daily. This practice should now be extended to include children aged birth to three, as they currently have very limited access to outdoor learning.
- Overall, practitioners interact well with children. In the Rainbow Room practitioners working with the youngest children have kind and respectful interactions with young children. They now need to revisit national guidance to increase their knowledge about how best to support younger children to develop.
- Practitioners working with older children use praise well, which allows children to be proud of their achievements. For the most part practitioners make use of questioning to develop and extend children's thinking.

- Practitioners have made a start to using interactive learning diaries to support assessment. This is still at a very early stage. It will be necessary for practitioners to continue to develop their understanding of assessment and moderation. The interactive learning diaries provide some form of tracking and allow practitioners to record children's progress across their learning. This is still at an early stage of development.
- Practitioners make use of floor books to plan children's learning. They plan a range of experiences to take forward children's interests. We have asked the setting to ensure depth in learning is planned more effectively. Developing approaches to document children's learning over time in a more child-friendly and visual way should be considered. Consistency in how possible lines of developments are progressed needs to be a stronger feature.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The senior leadership team and practitioners need to work together to develop a curriculum rationale which reflects the unique context of the setting. This will need to be informed by national practice guidance and by the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Practitioners working with children aged under three years make use of Pre-Birth to Three guidance to support learning. A few contexts and experiences are identified for children to help them to overtake their next steps in learning. Practitioners now need to ensure the learning environment reflects the developmental stages of young children better. More natural and open-ended resources need to be a more prominent feature of the playroom. For children aged three to five years, practitioners make use of experiences and outcomes to plan learning. An overview is maintained to identify coverage; it is not yet used to highlight depth in learning.
- The learning environment in the playrooms for children aged three to five years does not provide enough stimulation or provocation for learning. There are few open-ended resources to enable children to be more curious about their learning.
- There are opportunities for children to develop literacy and numeracy across their learning, however, this could be developed further. Effective partnerships support the development of children's early literacy skills. For example, the links with the local library and the regular music sessions delivered by a visiting specialist.
- Children have opportunities to work in pairs and teams in different contexts. The skills for learning, life and work, which children are developing, need to be made more explicit to learners.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Overall, practitioners have fostered very positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents report they are highly satisfied with the setting. Practitioners provide parents with regular updates about their child's progress. Review meetings are carried out twice per year. Staff shortages at times can prevent this taking place as planned.
- 'Stay and play' sessions provide parents with opportunities to observe their child learning through play. Parents' comments, which are on display, are very positive about this experience.
- Interactive learning diaries have been introduced in the setting. Most parents are engaging with these at home to review the progress their child is making. Practitioners are encouraging parents to contribute information about children's achievements and successes at home.
- Parents have reported that they are disappointed in the way they have been consulted about the closure of the nursery and its re-location to the primary school. They report that they would appreciate more information about the planned move. We have suggested ways in which this can be taken forward.
- There is great scope to develop further parental engagement in the setting. While this has been identified in the setting's improvement plan, there is very little evidence that much progress has been made in this area.

## 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, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- There is a calm and caring atmosphere within the setting. Children and their families are greeted warmly by practitioners. Practitioners are committed to ensuring they know each child well and are responsive to their individual needs. Parents value the high level of care demonstrated by the staff team. Overall, children appear to be happy and enjoy playing alongside children and adults. A few children are still settling into the setting and being supported by practitioners to do so.
- The setting demonstrates an awareness of Getting it Right for Every Child and practitioners are attentive to the needs of children and families. Practitioners are able to share how they are promoting children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators across the work of the setting. Children show an awareness of safety as they negotiate the outdoor area and climbing frame. They can describe healthy foods and the importance of being active.
- Health plans are created as children start the setting and are reviewed every six months. It might be helpful to develop these further to include a greater focus on the wellbeing indicators. This will be a positive way to develop parents' understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- Children benefit greatly from the opportunities they have to enjoy daily access to the outdoor area. They enjoy fresh air and exploring the attractive and interesting space in all different weathers. The setting now needs to increase the access the youngest children have to their own garden.
- Practitioners working with younger children are making positive attempts to support children's progress in their learning. They now need to take more account of the differing needs of children to ensure they enjoy greater challenge in their learning. Making more effective use of national guidance will be necessary to support this.
- Transitions are at an early stage of development. There is no consistently effective approach used for children moving through to the Sunbeam Room. Senior staff need to take a more active role in supporting transitions. Similarly, there are not effective transitions for children moving into P1.
- Overall, the setting demonstrates an understanding of current legislation and national guidelines. Approaches to record keeping need to be strengthened. Children's learning targets need to be shared more effectively across the whole staff team. Practitioners work well with other professionals to support children in their learning.
- Children and families are treated fairly and with respect in the setting. Practitioners are aware of the need to promote learning about equality and diversity. The recent 'All about Me' topic

has helped to support children's understanding about diversity in a relevant way. Celebrating children's home languages and significant cultural references would ensure all children feel valued.

## 3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Younger children make their needs known using gesture and vocabulary as appropriate. They participate enthusiastically in singing and clapping activities. They respond well to practitioners' sensitive interaction approaches. A few children choose to explore books independently. They use resources provided to develop their understanding of cause and effect. Their understanding of early number is being developed through song and rhyme. As appropriate, they are becoming more independent at snack as they set the table and spread with knives. They make use of the wooden blocks to develop their balancing skills.
- A few older children talk freely to adults and initiate conversation with other children and visitors. Most children make attempts to communicate with others. At large group time and in smaller groups children listen well to adults. Most follow simple instructions to undertake nursery routines. Children engage with different opportunities to mark-make in their play. This is an area which needs to be developed further. They are using print as part of routines and there is scope to develop this further. The floor book approach is supporting children to develop and use subject-specific vocabulary.
- Children count in the course of play with a few counting beyond ten. Positive examples were observed of children using number and appropriate comparative language as they measure the depth of puddles in the outdoor area. As part of their imaginative play outdoors, children engage in investigative play to explore volume and cause and effect. The majority of children match 2D shapes and a few are able to identify and name 2D shapes and 3D objects.
- Children are beginning to understand about being healthy. They share what they know about healthy eating. They develop their gross motor skills well in the outdoor area. Most children access outdoors daily.
- Floor books and to some extent interactive learning diaries demonstrate children's progress overtime. While practitioners are able to describe individual children's progress, this is not yet evidenced clearly. This now needs to be addressed to ensure children are making the best possible progress.
- Children's achievements are displayed on the 'Amazing Achievement' wall. Good examples of children's achievements at home are documented on this wall. Practitioners are encouraging parents to contribute achievements from home to the interactive learning diaries. It will be

important to monitor the 'Amazing Achievement wall' to ensure all children have the opportunity to celebrate success across their learning.

- Practitioners work hard to create a strong ethos of respect and trust. They value each and every child. Children new to speaking English use augmentative communication to help them in routines. Support staff engage sensitively with children who require extra help with their learning to develop their independence to participate in all experiences. Practitioners are beginning to make use of data to enable them to provide targeted support as appropriate. It will be important to keep new developments under close review to ensure they have the desired impact.

## Setting choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Evidence-based improvement
- Ensuring impact of success for children and families

- Self-evaluation for self-improvement is not yet an integral part of the setting's approach to improvement. While we recognise that practitioners are reflective and are committed to improving their practice, they are not yet using the national self-evaluation framework and guidance in an effective way. This requires a stronger lead from the senior leadership team.
- There is an improvement plan to guide the setting on its improvement journey. The detail of the plan has only recently been shared with practitioners; as a result limited progress has been made in overtaking key priorities.
- Practitioners would benefit from having more opportunities to engage in professional dialogue with each other and colleagues in the primary school. It will be important as new developments and priorities are progressed that appropriate time is given to review the impact of these. Practitioners value the opportunities they have to visit other settings to identify and share good practice. Practitioners undertake professional reading to support them to develop their practice. More opportunities for this will be required to ensure continuous progress.
- Children have a few opportunities to inform and lead improvement in the setting. Floor books are used to capture children's ideas about their learning. There is scope to develop this further. Parents are consulted about aspects of improvement such as the recent 'stay and play' sessions. More could be done to involve parents further in shaping and informing school improvement.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.