

Summarised inspection findings

Fountainhall Primary School Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Fountainhall Nursery Class is situated within Fountainhall Primary School. Children attend from the small village of Fountainhall and surrounding areas. The nursery is registered for 20 children aged from two years until starting primary school. At the time of the inspection, four children were attending the setting on a full day basis and there were no children aged two. The nursery operates term-time only. Staffing consists of an early years officer (EYO) who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery and two part-time practitioners. Most of the team are relatively new to the nursery. The headteacher has a shared headship with Heriot Primary school and Stow Primary School. While the headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class, she has delegated management responsibility to the principal teacher. The nursery has a small playroom with no direct access to outdoors.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Practitioners model the vision and values effectively through their practice and as they interact with children and each other. They support children to use the language of the vision and values through meaningful contexts. Children enjoy singing the 'chant' that has been created to help them remember the vision. Practitioners and children use this well to support and encourage independence, confidence and a 'can do' attitude to learning. In future reviews of the vision, values and aims, practitioners could consider ways to seek the views of parents, children and members of the local community. This should help to ensure the vision, values and aims remain relevant to the current context of the nursery.
- The EYO leads and supports practitioners well. She motivates and encourages the team as they take forward key areas of improvement. This includes developing emerging literacy and outdoor learning. Practitioners continue to use professional learning and support from the visiting early years teacher to deepen their knowledge and improve their practice. This is having a positive impact on children's experiences and learning. Increasingly, children have access to a range of interesting outdoor experiences and resources to support their learning. Practitioners ensure the environment, their interactions and the experiences they provide supports children to develop early literacy skills.
- Senior leaders are highly visible within the nursery. They provide good support and guidance to practitioners to enable them to carry out their role effectively. This includes monitoring of children's experiences and children's progress. Practitioners are very much part of the 'school family'. They are involved in a wide range of school events. Teachers and practitioners work collaboratively, sharing ideas and expertise to improve further the quality of learning and teaching.
- Practitioners engage in a range of self-evaluation activities. This includes ongoing professional dialogue, nursery audits and evaluation of key quality indicators. Moving forward, practitioners

should continue to work closely with senior leaders to systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. This includes ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the progress of improvement plan priorities. As a result, practitioners should be able to identify key areas for improvement that will have the greatest impact on children's learning. It would be beneficial for practitioners to consider creative ways to include parents and children in future self-evaluation activities. This will enable parents to be involved meaningfully in nursery improvement.

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

- All children show confidence while at nursery. They are happy, settled and know the nursery routine well. Children engage positively with learning experiences. Most sustain interest for extended periods of time as a result of the stimulating experiences provided both indoors and outdoors. Children are confident to make choices about where they want to play and what tools and resources will help them.
- As there is no direct access to the outdoor area, practitioners ensure children have regular opportunities to be outside. They continue to develop the environment outdoors to offer children a wider range of experiences to support exploration, creativity and curiosity. Children make full use of the outdoor area. They particularly enjoy using natural materials and everyday objects to create a horse-jumping arena.
- Practitioners are developing a good understanding of how each child learns, their interests and what motivates them. They use this knowledge well to support children's learning through planned and spontaneous experiences. Practitioners give children time and space to follow their interests and ideas. They use questions well during play to support and extend children's learning.
- Due to the small numbers of children attending the nursery, practitioners have recently reviewed and adapted their approach to planning children's learning. The new tailored approach has resulted in each child having their own plan. It will be important to evaluate this approach to ensure children continue to have the right level of support and challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners continue to develop how they record their observations of learning and capture the specific skills children are developing and achieving. As this approach to planning and assessment develops further, practitioners should be able to identify consistently clear and meaningful next steps for individual children. Practitioners should consider how to involve children in this process. Most children are ready to become aware of themselves as learners.
- Practitioners record children's learning and progress in a range of ways. They use individual learning journeys and a 'learning river' to demonstrate the range of children's experiences and learning across the curriculum. Floorbooks provide children with the opportunity to talk about their learning. Practitioners encourage and support children to contribute through mark making or adults scribing their thoughts, ideas and reflections on their learning. These approaches enable children to celebrate their achievements and share their learning.
- Practitioners use individual trackers to record children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They systematically collate information on all children's progress in literacy and numeracy and use this to support planning for individual children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum firmly based on play and provide a range of interesting and stimulating experiences to ensure breadth of the curriculum. They build effectively on children's interests and prior learning to plan a curriculum matched to individual children's stage of development. Practitioners recognise, for a few children, there needs to be a greater level of challenge. They are aware that children will benefit from increased opportunities to explore a wider range of digital technology.
- Practitioners plan children's transition into the nursery well. They take into account the needs of children and families to ensure children make a smooth transition from home to nursery. Parents and children take part in a series of visits to the nursery. This helps them to get to know practitioners, other children and families.
- Children have weekly opportunities to engage with older pupils and the class teachers. The principal teacher, who is also a class teacher, spends time within the nursery on a regular basis. This provides opportunities for children and school staff to develop relationships prior to children starting school. In addition, the class teacher builds her knowledge of children's learning over the year, which supports continuity in learning and progress across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners engage positively with parents at the beginning and end of the day. This enables them to share information about children’s experiences. They keep parents informed of their children’s progress in a variety of ways. This includes parents’ meetings where practitioners discuss children’s progress and next steps in learning. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire state they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing.
- Recent fundraising and enterprise events have been successful in involving parents and the local community. Practitioners are aware that post pandemic they need to focus on reintroducing parents to the nursery playroom. This will assist parents to engage in their children’s learning at a deeper level and enable them to become more involved in nursery life.

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. 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

- Practitioners ensure positive relationships, and the promotion of children's wellbeing is at the heart of their work, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children. Children benefit from practitioners who are caring, nurturing and responsive. New children settle extremely well into the 'Fountainhall Family'. Practitioners know children very well as individuals. They are attuned to their needs and recognise when children require additional emotional support. Children confidently share with practitioners how they feel when they arrive at nursery and during their day. This has created an environment where children feel safe, secure and reassured by the adults who are important to them.
- Children show care and concern for each other and willingly offer to help their friends. Practitioners support and encourage children very effectively to build resilience in a variety of ways. Outdoor play enables children to have access to fresh air and physical activity on a daily basis. Practitioners support children sensitively to recognise how their actions can affect others. They give children developmentally appropriate 'tools' to help them deal with conflict when it arises. This includes supporting children to reflect and understand how they might resolve a situation. The range of approaches used by practitioners support children's emotional and physical wellbeing very well.
- Practitioners consistently use the language of the wellbeing indicators during children's play and in relevant contexts such as mealtimes. Children understand a few of the indicators, for example, what they have to do to be safe. They carry out risk assessments of the outdoor area and explain in detail how to keep everyone safe. Children talk about other indicators and what they mean in different contexts within and outwith nursery.
- All practitioners comply with and understand statutory requirements relating to early learning and childcare. They know their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. When children transition into the nursery, practitioners create a personal plan for children in partnership with their parents. These plans include information on children's health, wellbeing, care needs and personal preferences. Practitioners review plans regularly with parents to ensure they continue to meet children's individual needs, interests and preferences.
- Practitioners have created a highly inclusive ethos. They treat parents and children with fairness and respect. They value and celebrate diversity and are aware of their responsibility to challenge discrimination. Practitioners provide very good support to individual children and families to reduce barriers to inclusion and learning. Moving forward, they should continue to review and update the range of resources within the playroom to reflect the world in which children live.

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

- Overall, children are making good progress in their learning. They are becoming confident individuals who demonstrate interest and curiosity in the experiences provided to support their development and learning. The focus on emerging literacy has had a very positive impact on children's learning and the skills they are developing.
- In early language and literacy, children continue to make very good progress since starting nursery. They mark make, 'write' their names as they self-register and create signs and labels around the playroom. Children recognise their name in print and most know that signs and symbols give messages. They enjoy listening to stories and recall key features and characters. Children are becoming confident communicators and they readily engage in conversation with each other and familiar adults.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children confidently count to ten and beyond as they play hide and seek. They count one for one and recognise some numerals. A few children recognise amounts without counting out objects and demonstrate skills in simple addition and subtraction. Most children understand more and less and use relevant mathematical language. Practitioners recognise children are ready to develop further their skills in information handling, pattern and shape.
- In health and wellbeing, children continue to make good progress in their learning. They develop skills such as balance and control when climbing apparatus and using their bikes to navigate obstacles. While manipulating different materials and intricate resources they develop good fine motor skills. Practitioners support children well to make 'good choices' to encourage kindness and respect. Children demonstrate their independence as they set the table and serve themselves during their calm and relaxed snack and mealtimes.
- Practitioners and children celebrate achievements through praise, encouragement and by singing their vision song. Practitioners share children's achievements with parents through social media and learning journeys as well as informal conversations. Parents occasionally contribute to children's learning journeys to share children's achievements and interests from outwith nursery. Practitioners use this information well to support and enhance children's learning. They are aware that they should seek ways to encourage parents to continue to share children's achievements from home.

- The range of data gathered, observations of children and conversations with practitioners demonstrates that overall, children are making good progress since starting nursery. Practitioners collate information on children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They are aware of children who require further support in specific areas of learning and support them well on an individual basis.

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.