

Summarised inspection findings

Mayfield Primary School and Nursery Class

North Ayrshire Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

Mayfield Nursery Class is situated within Mayfield Primary School North Ayrshire. Children aged from three years to those not yet attending school attend for five morning or five afternoon sessions. The nursery is registered for 30 children at any given time. The nursery roll at the time of the inspection was 38.

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 highly experienced and effective Depute Headteacher has robust systems in place with strong guidance to support nursery practitioners plan learning for children within the early years class. Practitioners value her leadership and direction and feel empowered to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. In the short time in post, the relatively new Early Years team demonstrate a strong sense of teamwork. They are included fully in all aspects of the work and life of the school and embed the school's values within their work. This is evidenced through the very positive relationships between practitioners, children and their families
- Practitioners are highly committed to their roles and their professional learning. They reflect on their own practice and participate in a blended approach to professional learning to build on their strengths and develop further their skills. As a result, we observed well-considered interactions with children that promote confidence and their independence. Practitioners across the early level use their expertise very well to inform planning across the early level. This provides free flow learning for children across both contexts.
- The strategic direction of the nursery is well planned and evidence shows sustained improvements over a period of time. The well-established systems in place, led by the depute headteacher, support the recently appointed practitioner team to maintain high quality learning experiences for children. Robust discussions support and challenge practitioners, as they continuously reflect on how well practice meets the needs and interests of children. Practitioners benefit from this level of reflection, which takes account of their own professional learning development.
- The school improvement plan has in place an appropriate set of priorities for the nursery class. Data handling, parental engagement, literacy and numeracy are the strategic priorities. Self-evaluation processes inform the priorities and take full account of improving outcomes for children. These build very well on previous priorities and practitioners collaborate effectively to implement these. As a result, children continue to benefit from experiences that enable them to make very good progress in their learning.

- Leadership opportunities for the new staff team link very well to their interests and skills. In a very short time, their teamwork and positive view of collaboration is already a strength. Moving forward we discussed the need to continue to use research and approaches to self-evaluation to develop further their understanding of early years pedagogy. In doing so continue to involve children and their families in the process.

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 warm and welcoming ethos within the setting, coupled with a strong commitment to children's rights. Relationships across the setting are positive and nurturing, supporting children to feel safe and secure. Children are confident and demonstrate independence skills as they learn through spontaneous and planned, purposeful play opportunities. They are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. All children fully engage in their learning and enjoy their time in the setting.
- Almost all children can sustain interest for extended periods of time in purposeful play. Children explored properties of water, concentrating as they used droppers to make objects float on a table. Practitioners support children's learning very well, only intervening to enable or support when necessary. The use of open-ended resources, natural materials and real-life objects enable children to develop their skills in curiosity, inquiry and creativity, both indoors and outdoors. All children have daily access to outdoor learning.
- Practitioners are very respectful and patient as they carefully listen and respond to children's verbal and non-verbal communication. Practitioners enthusiastically engage in conversations with children to encourage them to talk about their interests and ideas. Most practitioners use open-ended questions well to support children's learning. In the best examples practitioners' use of higher order questions encourage children to think through solutions for themselves. Children have opportunities to explore digital technologies, for example at the headphones station, interactive board and tablet computer. The use of digital technology supports and extends children's learning and encourages inquiry.
- Practitioners know individual children well as learners. In the best examples, observations inform next steps in learning. Observations form the basis of children's 'special books' and describe their participation in learning activities. Children enjoy looking at and contributing to their books. Practitioners recognise that their observations and sound knowledge of children now needs to be recorded more consistently to provide meaningful information about progress in learning.
- Positive engagement from practitioners has supported the introduction of the authority led process for planning. This is at the early stages of being fully embedded. There is a system in place for tracking and monitoring individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners meet monthly with the senior management team to discuss the progress and next steps for individual children. This dialogue supports the ongoing evaluation of learning within the setting.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Across the setting, the curriculum is firmly based on play. Planning takes good account of National guidance Curriculum for Excellence and makes appropriate use of experiences and outcomes and guidance from the local authority. Literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing are everyone's responsibility and are well promoted throughout the setting.
- Practitioners are very sensitive to children's individual needs and respond in a nurturing and caring manner. Children and families are encouraged to complete an 'All about me' booklet prior to starting the setting, allowing practitioners to take account of children's prior learning. There is daily dialogue between practitioners and parents, which captures continuous learning from outwith the setting.
- The setting's transition programme supports children very well as they move on to school. This includes visits with their P6 buddy to the classroom, tour of the school and lunch in the dining hall. Children have transition play sessions from the month of January where they spend time in the P1 classroom area alongside P1 children. The lead practitioner works closely with the staff from across the early level to share expectations and their understanding of early learning pedagogy.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnership with parents is very positive. There are opportunities to engage in the life of the setting, this includes tea, cake and chat on a weekly basis. Responses to pre inspection questionnaires and parents spoken to during the inspection, indicated that parents were very happy with their experience at Mayfield Nursery Class. Stay and Play sessions are offered to parents and are flexible to meet individual needs.
- Information sheets from outside agencies, for example, speech and language therapy are available to take home. Play at home information sheets are freely available, for example play at home Yoga. There are also a number of bears which go home to encourage Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. Attractive displays share wider achievements from home and are displayed on the nursery wall.
- The nursery entrance has a helpful notice board for parents with a wide range of information relating to experiences within the setting and wider community. There is a parents blog on the school website that documents learning experiences, alongside closed social media. There is a lending library available where parents and children can choose a book to share a story at home.

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

- The very nurturing and supportive ethos is important to and promoted by all practitioners. The wellbeing of children and their families underpins the settings work. Children are settled and parents engage very well with the activities that encourage them to be involved in the work and life of the nursery. The setting is inclusive; children are happy, confident and enjoy learning in the nursery. They develop friendships well and readily approach each other or adults in the playroom if support or comforting is required. They respond very well to interventions that enable them to problem solve or negotiate in situations that require them to share toys or items during play.
- Getting it right for every child features within the nursery. Staff understand this well and use the health and wellbeing indicators to support planning. Rights education is promoted and embedded within the nursery practice. Conversations between children and practitioners focus on how feeling safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving and respected applies to them in the setting. Children are encouraged to be independent and there are examples of children demonstrating skills in the setting that they do not show at home. In these instances practitioners share this with parents who then implement this at home. Importantly, regular conversations with parents focus on learning and skills development.
- Children are developing independent skills well. This is understood by practitioners and permeates the learning in the nursery. Visual timetables are in place and children are consulted on their play. Staff respond promptly to children's ideas and transform areas of learning to accommodate these. As a result there are many interesting play ideas taking place across the setting.
- Practitioners have a focus on the welfare needs of children. Led by the depute headteacher they are aware of the statutory duties. Children with barriers to learning are identified quickly and supported through an inclusive approach. As the new team continues to develop we asked them to continue to keep up-to-date with legislation and policies. This includes the new planning formats, record keeping and the new planning and stage intervention policy now being implemented.
- Rights Education is a feature across the setting and links very well with the work in the primary classes. Visual displays support conversations that children have with practitioners about their

rights and what that means to them in the setting. As a result, children are developing solution focused approaches to resolving issues. We asked the setting to continue, as planned, to develop these skills.

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

- A strong focus on health and wellbeing across the setting has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Nurturing relationships allow children to settle quickly, offering the opportunity for children to thrive and develop at their individual pace. Children are developing their social and emotional skills well. This is evident in practice.
- Overall, children are making very good progress in communication and language. This is in line with their age and stage of development. Most children confidently engage in conversations with practitioners and peers during free play. During the inspection children confidently approached inspectors and engaged in dialogue about their learning. Opportunities for mark-making were available with a few children confidently writing their name. Children recognise their own name and are encouraged to self-register and post their name at snack time. Most children enjoy looking at books and having stories read to them. Children participate in the rhyme of the week, with children having the opportunity to stand up in front of their peers and recite the rhyme. Spontaneous singing, alongside planned singing supported children's language development.
- Practitioners provide opportunities for children to develop their skills in numeracy and mathematics across the setting. As a result, most children are making very good progress in their learning. The development of skills in early numeracy are encouraged. Snack time supports children's learning, for example counting out snack items. Children are also encouraged to 'pay for their snack' which allows them the opportunity to engage with real life coins. Outdoors, children were exploring measure as they rolled balls down pipes, seeing which number they reached. Children engaged in matching games, sorting by colour, number and shape.
- All children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing, with all children appearing happy and settled in their environment. Children are caring and considerate of each other's feelings, displaying positive engagement with their peers. Children make healthy choices at snack as they are encouraged to try different fruit and vegetables. They develop their independence skills as they serve themselves and wash their own dishes. Children develop their physical skills on a daily basis, outdoors crossing the wooden bridge, throwing and

catching balls. They have planned PE in the school on a weekly basis. Children play independently across the learning environment.

- Through inspection observation, 'special book' evidence and dialogue, children in the setting are observed as enthusiastic learners who are making very good progress in their learning. Children's individual achievements from home and nursery are shared in a range of effective ways. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and have the opportunity to contribute to their special books. Helpful input from parents is captured and shared with children. Practitioners use praise and encouragement to promote positive attitudes, effective cooperation and independence. This was evident across the setting.
- The promotion of equity is evident across all aspects of the work of the setting. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos, as a result there is a climate of mutual respect and trust. The setting takes good account of the socio-economic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children.

Setting choice of QI: 1.2 Leadership of learning

- Professional engagement and collegiate working
- Impact of career-long professional learning (CLPL)
- Children leading learning

- Across the setting, the newly formed team have developed a strong ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working. Practitioners work collaboratively with children, parents and partners to secure improved outcomes for children and families. Practitioners engage with local settings, learning from best practice and professional dialogue with colleagues. The role of the lead practitioner is established and plays a key role in the leadership of learning. Moving forward there is scope for all members of the team to further strengthen their role in the leadership of learning. Constructive dialogue with the depute headteacher and other members of the senior management team supports and challenges practitioners to grow and develop in their role.
- Practitioners have engaged in a range of professional learning opportunities, individually and as a team to support their own professional development. The lead practitioner is engaging in further qualifications to support and develop her knowledge and skills. The digital leader in the primary school is committed to supporting practitioners to develop their skills and knowledge in digital learning. Records are kept of all professional learning attended and practitioners learn from each other.
- Children's ideas and interests are evident across the learning environment and help to shape and inform experiences. Practitioners skilfully question children to support and extend their thinking and understanding, for example discussion about measure. Children are confident with their peers and interact to discuss learning experiences. Practitioners are flexible and responsive to meet the individual needs of children, sharing success and achievement.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1 Quality of Care and Support

During this inspection we considered whether children and their families had access to the right support at the right time. In addition we looked at individual children's personal plans, as well as evidencing that children and their families were listened to, were safe and protected from harm. We found that outcomes for children and their families in these areas was very good (Health and Social Care Standards 1.13, 1.15, 1.23, 2.17, 3.1 and 3.20).

Staff had successfully established an inclusive care and learning environment. We observed children, and their parents being welcomed into the nursery. Staff recognised the importance of working in partnership with parents. We saw examples of staff supporting children who were less confident in expressing their views and preferences.

The new staff team within the nursery has been recently formed; however we saw evidence that communication was effective between staff and management. The staff team worked hard to ensure that communication with parents and children was active and current; we saw evidence of blogs, newsletters and daily discussions with parents. Staff and management knew the children and their families well and had their interests at the heart of the service they provided. Staff engaged with parents, children and other agencies to build a clear picture of the child.

The nursery had individual personal plans in place, these should be enhanced by including children and their parent's aspirations with regards to health, welfare and safety and should then be linked to the planning, evaluation and observation cycles. We also suggested that the personal plans reflect the progression children have made in these areas. Management should continue to ensure plans are consistently in place within 28 days of the child starting in the service, reflect individual children's health welfare and safety needs and be reviewed when required, or at least once in every six month period (Recommendation 1).

There was evidence to show that the nursery involved parents and partner agencies to ensure all children benefited from the right support at the right time. Children and their families had access to a nurturing approach, from staff who understood nurturing principles and effectively delivered these.

Management and staff worked together as a team. Formal and informal consultation with parents, children and staff helped to identify what was working well and where improvements could be made. Progress had been made in the service improvement plan, including developing family learning through affording good access to parent stay and play sessions and PEEP.

Staff had a very good understanding of child protection procedures, and the steps to be taken.

Care Inspectorate Grade: very good

2 Quality of Environment

During this inspection we considered how the environment supported children to direct their own play and learning. We looked closely at whether children had access to a wide range of experiences and resources within a safe indoor and outdoor environment. We found that the

environment was offering very good outcomes and experiences for children in this area (HSCS 1.32, 2.27, 5.17).

The environment was calm, warm and welcoming for children and their parents. Children were happy and relaxed within the nursery and relationships were positive throughout. The environment was safe and secure with the main exit doors both alarmed.

Effective health and safety procedures had been developed, risk assessments had been established that were well thought out and linked to a risk matrix. A risk benefit approach had been used in the outdoor environment, enabling children to take controlled risks in their play experiences. Children were involved in carrying out daily risk assessments of the outdoor area. During the inspection visit we observed good handwashing procedures and found infection control measures were in place. We sampled accident and incident records and found these were recorded and shared with parents. We requested that staff revisit the process to audit accidents and incidents in order to avoid any patterns establishing.

The nursery had an open plan play room and a fully enclosed outdoor area. Timetables showed that staff made very good use of areas within the school such as the gym, library and school grounds. Staff told us that they used the local community to widen children's experiences, these opportunities included visits to the garden nursery, Tesco and the use of the community centre to deliver groups for parents.

Children confidently planned their own play from the activities and resources available. As a result, we saw happy, curious children engaging with the play environment. Areas were attractive and set up to encourage different types of play including cooperative, imaginative and loose parts play. Within the role play area children were provided real food and utensils promoting real life play experiences.

We observed children directing their own learning, testing out ideas and creating their own 'challenges'. We observed staff using effective questioning to extend children's higher order thinking skills. New planning had been recently implemented and should continue to be developed and embedded to ensure high quality experiences continue to be provided.

Both the indoor and outdoor environments offered open-ended play experiences that encouraged children to develop key skills such as problem solving. During inspection we observed a number of activities within the outdoor area supporting children's early numeracy development. We spoke with staff about how free flow access to the outdoor area would support richer transitions for children from the indoor to outdoor learning environment, allowing them to freely lead and direct their own learning.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

3 Quality of Staffing

During this inspection we considered whether staff were trained, competent, skilled and able to reflect on their practice to provide the right care and support for children at the right time. We considered how skilled staff were in supporting children to resolve conflict and build positive relationships with others. We found that the outcomes for children in this area was very good (HSCS 1.19, 2.15, 3.14, 3.17).

Management and staff were professional, enthusiastic and motivated. Although the staff team had recently been established, they communicated very well together and showed respect for their colleagues' abilities. Staff told us they felt well supported by the depute Headteacher and freely able to approach the Headteacher when matters required.

A range of external and in house training had kept staff skills up to date. Outcomes for children were being positively affected by training that staff had attended. Staff showed very good awareness of this impact. We suggested that staff continue to reflect this impact in their Scottish Social Service Council Post Registration Training and Learning Logs.

A training plan was in place supporting staff to further their own professional development. Staff should continue to share learning from training attended with their colleagues to ensure outcomes for children remain positive.

Staff were skilled in setting up areas with a focus on stimulating curiosity, learning and creativity. We saw staff closely scaffolding children's learning and intervening at the appropriate times. We saw staff providing support and challenge to children on an individual basis and using effective encouragement and praise strategies.

Staff recognised when children required additional support and we saw evidence that showed us the impact of early approaches to supporting children's speech, language and communication needs. Progression had been tracked and shared with parents. Through the use of a communication board tips, strategies and rhymes were shared with parents. Further support was offered through home link activities and information leaflets.

Staff were knowledgeable and freely engaged in professional dialogue throughout the inspection visit. During the inspection visit we observed on a number of occasions that outcomes for children were clearly and effectively improving as a direct result of the staff team engaging the family in the learning process. Partner agencies that we spoke with told us about families who were previously facing challenges are now working well with staff and the nursery.

Care Inspectorate Grade: very good

4 Quality of Management and Leadership

During this inspection we considered how well children and their families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement whilst looking for assurance that their human rights were being respected. We found that the service was very good in these areas (Health and Social Care Standards 1.2, 2.3, 4.11, 4.19 and 4.23).

The headteacher, depute headteacher and senior practitioner had established good communication and working relationships. We saw minutes of regular meetings that showed good support, monitoring and active discussion relating to the operations of the nursery.

The staff team had recently been established, with only one being in post longer than three years. Although still in the early stages, we found evidence that the new staff team will have a positive impact on service delivery and has the potential to deliver quality outcomes for children and families in Saltcoats, North Ayrshire.

Staff are not directly recruited by the nursery, however in-house processes had been put in place to ensure that all staff worked collaboratively as a team to ensure positive outcomes and quality experiences were available for children and their families. The service provider should review this practice.

Policies and procedures were in place; these should continue to be developed and updated to reflect the good working practices that the nursery operated and local and national best practice guidelines. A GDPR Policy should be developed to reflect the practice in the service, and risk assessments undertaken to ensure the children's data is safe and protected. Staff should continue to be included in this process and the policies reviewed regularly.

Parents told us they had confidence in the quality of the service provided for their children by the staff team. Parents felt their children were safe and happy and that they benefited from the wide range of play and learning experiences provided. Parents particularly commented positively on the involvement and communication they experienced.

We heard that the management team had a vision for the future development of the service. Staff told us that they felt included in the life of the nursery, school and a big part of the local community.

Care Inspectorate Grade: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and one recommendation.

Recommendations:

- Management and staff should build on existing practice in ensuring that personal plans for each of the children clearly set out how the plan will meet each child's health, welfare and safety needs. The Personal Plans should show progression. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'My Personal Plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15).

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.