

Summarised inspection findings

Torphichen Primary School Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

Torphichen Nursery Class is situated in a village north of Bathgate in West Lothian. The nursery class is situated in a separate building in the school campus and was opened in August 2018. The setting is managed by the recently appointed headteacher. The team consists of one full time Early Years Officer and two full-time practitioners. The setting provides early learning and childcare for a maximum of 25 children aged from two years to entry to primary school of whom no more than five children will be under three. At the time of inspection there were 15 children aged three to five. Six children attend two full days and others either four mornings or afternoons. Ten children will start school in August 2019.

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

- The setting opened less than one year ago. The vision, values and aims which were developed for the opening of the setting reflect the team's aspirations for children's early learning and childcare experiences within the school and community. The aims of the setting 'Together we nurture and care' reflects the commitment of practitioners to provide provision for children to learn in a safe and fun environment. This is evident in the day-to-day practice in the setting. As planned, the team should continue to consult with children, families and partners as they revisit their vision in the future. This will be important as they take forward plans for the next phase in the development of the setting.
- Teamwork is a strength of the setting. Practitioners work very well together and feel they are valued by the management team. They demonstrate a professional approach to their work and are keen to continue to develop their knowledge and practise through ongoing study and accessing further qualifications. Recent training has included managing leadership and Froebel studies. As a result, practitioners are becoming confident in leading aspects of curriculum development to improve outcomes for children. Practitioners share their personal research and current information with each other. Such professional dialogue has enabled practitioners to suggest new ways of working which has had a positive impact on children's experiences.
- Practitioners receive valuable support from the management and local authority early years team. Attendance at cluster groups and early years training are supporting the team to ensure changes that have taken place are based on shared understanding of how children learn. Practitioners appreciate and benefit from opportunities to collaborate and share practise with colleagues in other settings to help identify further improvements and explore best practise.
- Practitioners display enthusiasm for the continuous development of the setting. They are receptive to guidance and support to ensure that new developments are introduced at an appropriate pace and sustained. It will now be important to monitor and evaluate developments to ensure maximum impact on learners.

- Practitioners have made a recent start to using national self-evaluation guidance. They are starting to use a new benchmark tool to support the identification of what is going well and what needs to improve. The management team should continue to support practitioners to increase their engagement with local and national practice documents to help drive further improvement. This will support decisions about priorities and enable practitioners to demonstrate the impact of their work more rigorously and shape future developments.
- Commendably, in the nine months since opening, practitioners have established strong working relationships based on mutual respect and fostered positive partnerships with all. As a result they are making a difference to the lives of children and families in Torphichen.

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

- The caring ethos in the setting promotes respect and contributes to positive relationships and a relaxed play environment. As a result, children feel nurtured, safe and secure. Building on their understanding of approaches to play and learning, the playroom and outdoor area have been carefully developed by the early years team to offer a wide range of experiences both indoors and out. Children freely choose where they want to play, develop interests and revisit experiences. At times, children would benefit from more adult direction to challenge and extend their learning. Children's creativity and curiosity are developing well using the good range of natural and sensory resources both indoors and out.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are gentle, supportive and are building children's confidence and sense of belonging. Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and use questioning well to build vocabulary. Most children sustain interest in play activities, in for example, when creating and building homes for animals. Practitioners should continue to enhance the use of information technology during play.
- Practitioners use a curriculum framework to plan a broad range of experiences. Children are consulted and contribute their ideas and interests to plan learning. Floorbooks are used well by practitioners to develop relevant experiences for children and take account of what they already know.
- Practitioners capture evidence of children's progress through regular observations recorded in individual electronic learning journals. With practitioners support, children can access these. They would benefit from more support to talk about their learning. There is scope to develop the use of children's learning journals further to recognise children's wider achievements and the progress they are making in their next steps.
- Practitioners use a range of useful ways to track and monitor the progress children are making. They regularly review and discuss the information to ensure individual children are progressing well. During the visit we discussed with practitioners how this information could be used to more clearly support planning for progressive skill development and children's next steps in learning. Moderation with colleagues in the setting and across the local area is helping develop confidence in practitioner's professional judgements. The early learning childcare area support manager supports practitioners in moderating their observations which is helping staff to evaluate their practice. However, practitioners recognise that they will continue to develop their approaches to assessment and moderation at setting and cluster level.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- As this is a new service, practitioners have been involved in developing an authority curriculum framework that is matched to the developmental stages of children in the setting. Their knowledge of current early years pedagogy is evident. Planning is responsive and takes account of national guidance to deliver aspects for early learning with a focus on learning through play. Practitioners use the experiences and outcomes across curriculum areas to ensure children receive a broad and balanced curriculum across the year. Moving forward practitioners should ensure they plan for clear progression pathways in all curricular areas, to support planning and to ensure appropriate pace and progression in learning for all children.
- Free flow access to the outdoor area enables children to access a wide variety of experiences. Practitioners have worked hard to develop this area to provide children with opportunities to explore and investigate in differing environments. Open ended resources are accessible and children are encouraged to use them creatively.
- There are opportunities for children to develop literacy and numeracy skills across learning. However, these should now be strengthened to provide children with more opportunities to develop their skills in meaningful contexts.
- Practitioners support the transition from home into the setting well. Information gained at this point enables practitioners to get to know individual children and their families. The setting offers flexible early learning and childcare. Practitioners are aware of children's individual patterns of attendance and should continue to monitor these arrangements to ensure appropriate planning is in place.
- A well planned transition programme supports children as they move to school. This includes visits to the school classroom and having shared learning opportunities with buddies from the upper stages of the school. Information about children's progress is passed onto the class teacher to support progression in learning. Practitioners are developing close links with colleagues from the school. We talked with practitioners and teaching staff about how they might continue to develop joint working approaches across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See 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

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 create a positive and friendly ethos where children and families feel welcome and valued. Relationships between practitioners and children are warm and nurturing. Practitioners know children and families very well and understand the importance of building strong relationships to secure positive outcomes.
- Children are happy and relaxed in the setting. They enjoy the company of their peers and practitioners. They are developing friendships and show consideration in their play as they learn to share and negotiate with each other. Practitioners promote positive behaviour by supporting children to develop respect for others. They use praise effectively to recognise children's positive behaviour and promote their self-esteem. Practitioners value children's ideas and seek their opinions on matters such as snack and developments to the garden. We have asked practitioners to develop further children's early leadership skills, as a few of the older children are ready for increased responsibility in this area.
- Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC). They recognise the importance of their role in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Wellbeing characters created by the children with practitioners are enabling them to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. As planned practitioners should continue with their work to help children understand these indicators in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. They keep up to date with important developments in early learning and childcare. There is a range of relevant up to date policies and procedures. However, consideration should be given to personalising the generic policies provided by the local authority.
- Practitioners are mindful of their responsibility to promote children's care and welfare. They should now ensure that all information about individual children is brought together to form an effective personal plan. The setting has appropriate planning processes in place for children who may benefit from additional support in their learning. Where more specialised support is required practitioners liaise with external agencies to put in place appropriate plans of support. These plans are reviewed in partnership with parents. However, we discussed with practitioners the need to ensure that targets are specific, and are part of the day-to-day life in the setting.
- Practitioners treat all children and families fairly and with respect. They involve children in celebrating a range of cultural festivals throughout the year. There is scope for practitioners to ensure they provide suitable resources to continue with this work to expand children's awareness of equality and diversity.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
 - children's progress over time
 - overall quality of children's achievement
 - ensuring equity for all children
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- Observations of children's play and a review of floorbooks and learning journals provide evidence that children are making good progress in their learning over this time.
 - The strong focus on health and wellbeing enables children to develop positive relationships and confidence in freely choosing where they want to play. The supportive and caring environment is helping children to take risks and become more resilient.
 - With support from practitioners children develop good fine motor skills while using real tools. They enjoy the free access to play outdoors and are developing physical skills in balancing and using tricycles.
 - Almost all children are making good progress in early language. They are developing their listening skills well and are confident in talking with their friends. Children are well supported in extending their vocabulary skills during free-flow play. Children enjoy retelling their favourite stories and talking about characters in books and films. Practitioners use a range of developmentally appropriate resources to promote children's awareness of letters, words and signs. However, they should continue to improve opportunities for children to develop early reading skills and use early writing and mark-making and apply their skill in real life and imaginary contexts.
 - Overall, most children are making good progress in early mathematics and numeracy. Through a wide range of games and natural resources, children are developing an awareness of shape, size, pattern and number. Most older children are beginning to recognise numbers and develop good counting skills through a wide range of play experiences indoors and out. As planned, practitioners should continue to improve opportunities for children through the provision of a more challenging range of experiences to develop and use skills in numeracy and mathematics across learning.
 - Learning for sustainability is developing and encouraged through planting and growing. Parents and people in the community are supporting children's understanding of the world of work and the arts.

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

- Practitioners value the contributions that parents can make to their child's learning and in the life of the setting. They are very open to involving parents in sharing their views to improve the setting.
- Parents speak highly of the service they receive. They value the support of the setting and find practitioners approachable and professional. Almost all are confident their children enjoy their time in the setting and practitioners are meeting their children's needs. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their children.
- Parents are invited to attend themed stay and play sessions to share in their child's experience in the setting. They have the opportunity to continue learning at home together and are provided with ideas about how they can do this.
- Information is shared with parents in both formal and informal ways. This includes informal chats at drop off and collection times, newsletters and closed social media posts. These keep them well informed of planned activities and current events. Practitioners regularly update e-learning journals to reflect children's progress. Practitioners recognise there is scope to increase parental contributions to these journals sharing children's successes and achievements from home. Parents have the opportunity to attend formal consultations to discuss their child's learning and progress.
- Practitioners continue to develop effective partnership working with the primary school. This provides valuable opportunities for shared professional learning. This term children are enjoying play sessions in partnership with children in the primary school to share their learning. This is a key partnership for the setting within the school and should be developed further to ensure the best possible impact on children and their families.
- There have been opportunities for parents to visit the setting and share information about their occupations, skills and hobbies. Practitioners should now help children make links between the skills they are learning in the setting and the world of work.
- Partnerships are developing with a range of agencies including health professionals help ensure children and families access support when they need it.
- Practitioners are keen to expand their work with local businesses in the area to extend children's learning and support their understanding of the world of work.

1. Quality of care and support

Children could choose to be active and participate in a range of recreational, creative, social, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and out. They were engaged in learning through self-directed play and accessed a wide range of natural and open ended resources. At times, some children were not maintaining their interest in the activities on offer. Staff should continue to monitor children's overall engagement and make any necessary adaptations to ensure meaningful involvement.

Staff used descriptive commenting and open ended questions to encourage children's critical thinking and to extend role play. They listened to children and responded thoughtfully. To continue to build on this strength staff could further develop their adult initiated activities, based on children's interests, to provide challenge as well as support scaffolding of learning.

The atmosphere during snack and lunch time was relaxed with many different conversations and social interactions taking place. Children took part in the planning and preparation of healthy snacks. We could see this was supporting children to make healthy choices, to be independent and to take responsibility. We suggested staff consider the pace of the day for children, particularly how routines (snack, lunch or brushing teeth), impact on children's play and learning.

Staff fostered positive, nurturing relationships and overall, most children's needs were being respectfully met; however, we found that 'personal care' practice could be further developed. The setting should develop a 'personal care' policy and procedure in line with best practice guidance to ensure any 'personal care' provided is relaxed, safe and responsive to children's individual needs. See recommendation one.

To ensure children experience stability in their care, the service should further develop their personal plans, referred to by the service as 'Care Diaries'. Personal plans should clearly outline how the service intends to meet every child's health, welfare and safety needs. These should be reviewed with parents at least once every six months or when there is a significant change, in line with legislation. The service should consider how strategies to meet identified needs of individual children are recorded within their personal plans. For example, identifying who is responsible for implementing strategies with suggested timescales. See recommendation two.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

The premises had a video entry system, children were signed in by parents and staff regularly communicated updates to one another about children being dropped off or collected. This was helping to promote children's safety and security whilst attending the service.

The resources on offer supported a good quality of play. The nursery was well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained equipment for the children to freely access. The cleanliness was good, and children were encouraged to participate in the cleaning up and tidying away of equipment and resources. We noted some areas of the playroom were not used during the sessions. Staff could complete focused audits and evaluations of the environment to ensure that children's experiences are maximised because they are planned, purposeful and based on children's interests.

Children benefitted from free flow access to a well-equipped garden. Daily access to the garden was helping children to build their skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving. For example we observed a small group of children building a garage for the nursery bikes with loose part materials. To build on children's positive outdoor experience staff could further develop opportunities to engage in risky play. Allowing children to take risk in their play will enhance their physical development and help to build resilience by encouraging them to overcome challenges.

There was appropriate material displayed throughout the nursery, including photos of the children and information for parents. We recognise that display space was limited; however, we would encourage the service to increase the number of individualised artwork displayed to help children feel a sense of belonging and pride in their work.

To ensure children are kept healthy and to reduce the spread of infection, the service could further develop their infection control practice. We observed staff asking children to wash their hands; however, these requests were not routinely being followed by the children. This resulted in children eating snack or brushing their teeth, following outdoor play, without washing their hands.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

The staff team were supportive of each other and told us they felt supported by the wider management team. Children had built positive relationships with each other and staff. Interactions were courteous and respectful with staff redirecting children when behaviour became challenging. For example, a group of children running indoors were calmly redirected outdoors.

Staff provided children and their families with a welcoming and caring service. Staff's communication with children gave them the message that they were valued and appreciated. Children also received praise and encouragement during play and individual achievements were recognised. To support children's progress, staff could further develop their methods for celebrating achievement by focusing on targeted goals set by them, the children and parents.

The service provided some opportunities for parents to stay and participate in play and learning. Stay and play sessions were facilitated termly and provided parents with an opportunity to informally meet staff to discuss their child's care and learning. Parents strongly agreed they were kept well informed about what is happening in the service and those we spoke with told us that staff were the best aspect of the service.

Children were being cared for by staff who were trained, competent and skilled. They had participated in training courses and understood their professional responsibility to seek out learning opportunities that would develop their practice. Staff shared their plans for developing the service and had begun to use their knowledge and skills to reflect on practice. We discussed the benefit of measuring and evaluating improvement changes to support staff to identify success, working points and the impact on children. For example, using the 'Leuven scale' to better inform next steps. This will help staff to maximise wellbeing and ensure children's experiences are meaningful and promote positive outcomes.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4. Quality of management and leadership

Children's care and support was provided in a planned and safe way. The newly appointed headteacher was responsible for two primary schools under a peripatetic management arrangement. We noted positive working relationship between staff and the senior leadership team were already in place. Staff engaged in professional dialogue during weekly team meetings and the headteacher told us she planned to meet the team regularly to support staff and drive forward improvement. It is intended that staff will receive annual appraisals and we encouraged the senior leadership team to also consider offering staff periodic one-to-one support and supervision. This would support management to facilitate constructive discussions about practice, skills and knowledge, support reflective practice and promote early identification and addressing of issues facing children.

There was a good understanding of working in partnership with families and systems had been developed to ensure effective communication. For example, newsletters, social media and learning logs were used to share children's experiences. We could see feedback from children and their families was valued and that this was helping to shape the service.

There was a clear understanding of the service development needs. We discussed the service improvement plan and highlighted the need to ensure identified areas for development were fed into future improvement plans. This will ensure children benefit from developments specifically identified for the early years setting and the wider improvement priorities of the school. To do this in a focused way over a suitable timeframe, we suggested developing a monitoring calendar.

The service had a number of policies and procedures in place; however, we found there were some gaps, impacting on their effectiveness to guide staff. To ensure children experience high quality care and support because staff have the necessary information and tools we suggested the service further develop their policies and procedures, in line with best practice guidance.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

The setting had no previous requirements or recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two recommendations.

Recommendations

- The provider should develop policy and procedures for 'personal care' and ensure they have adequate facilities to meet the needs of the children attending the service, in line with best practice guidance. The provider should consider:
 - responsive care in line with children's personal plans.
 - how the privacy and dignity of children will be respected.
 - how the areas used for personal care look and feel to a child. Is it warm, comfortable and pleasant?
 - what facilities and practice are in place to support good infection control procedures?
 - what measures have been taken to ensure the changing area is consistent with best practice guidance?

Guidance is available at:

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1623/space-to-grow.pdf>

and

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1558/nappy-changing-guidance-for-early-years-and-childcareservices.pdf>

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: As a child, if I require intimate personal care there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4) and if I require personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected (HSCS 1.4).

- To ensure that children experience stability in their care, the service should further develop their personal plans, referred to by the service as 'Care Diaries'. Personal plans should clearly outline how the service intends to meet every child's health, welfare and safety needs. These should be reviewed with parents at least once every six months or when there is a significant change, in line with legislation.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states: My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care 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 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.