

Summarised inspection findings

Twechar Primary School Nursery Class

East Dunbartonshire Council

28 January 2025

Key contextual information

Twechar Early Years Centre is situated within Twechar Primary School. The setting has one large playroom separated into two play spaces. Children have access to an outdoor area. The Early Years Centre is registered for 42 children and there are 24 children on the current roll. Children can attend from the age of two years old until starting primary school. The Early Years Centre is open from 8am to 6pm five days per week, for the full year. Children can attend a variety of patterns.

The acting headteacher has overall strategic responsibility for the Early Years Centre. The senior leadership team includes a depute head of centre and a senior early year practitioner. They have both recently taken up post within the past six months. The Early Years Centre team includes a full-time nursery teacher, ten early years workers and an early years support worker.

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 nursery shares the same vision, values and aims with the primary school. These were co-created with children and their families and launched in 2022. The values of belonging, respect and fun, are embedded throughout the nursery. Children are beginning to talk about the values, and these are demonstrated throughout their interactions with each other. Practitioners show a strong commitment to their professional values and demonstrate these in their daily interactions with children, families and other professionals. As planned, senior leaders should review the vision, values and aims with all current stakeholders to ensure they remain relevant and meaningful.
- Senior leaders manage the setting well. The acting headteacher, depute head of centre and senior early years worker are visible throughout the day and provide effective support to the Early Years Centre team. Senior leaders and practitioners should now look outwards to other settings to develop and enhance their practice to make further improvements. This should include developing further systems and processes around children's wellbeing and developing further children's leadership in the setting.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are committed to professional development. All practitioners engage in regular professional review meetings to discuss development opportunities related to their individual interests. A clear plan is in place to support practitioners to engage in meaningful training linked to key priorities for the Early Learning Centre. This has the potential to help to secure better outcomes for children. Practitioners use their sound understanding of child development to enhance the experiences on offer to children. For example, practitioners have learned about strategies to support children's progress in literacy which they are putting into practice. This is having a positive impact on children's early literacy skills.

- The Early Years Centre improvement plan for this year is based on robust self-evaluation activities. This includes staff evaluating the progress in children's learning through reflecting on children's 'scrap books'. Staff have selected priorities that are relevant to the setting. These focus on reviewing assessment and tracking, outdoor learning and family engagement. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to evaluate changes they make to ensure these are leading to improvement in children's learning.

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

- Practitioners create a positive and welcoming ethos. Almost all children are happy, settled and engaged as they play indoors and outdoors. They are respectful to their peers and all adults. Practitioners understand when to step back, and when to intervene in play to ensure all children are safe and settled.
- Skilled practitioners support children aged two through warm and nurturing interactions. Practitioners consider their needs thoughtfully and are aware of how children explore and learn through play. Children are beginning to develop in confidence and access the range of experiences across the setting. They are learning the Early Learning Centre routines and becoming familiar with the environment. Practitioners agree developmentally appropriate targets with parents. These targets are clear, relevant and achievable for young children. This supports children well to make progress in their learning.
- Practitioners provide a wide range of appropriate and well-planned provocations to promote children's creativity and curiosity in their play. Most children engage well with adult-led activities. Occasionally, children use digital technology to learn, for example, using the interactive whiteboard to watch and copy physical exercises. Practitioners should provide further opportunities for children to develop their digital skills using a variety of technologies.
- Practitioners interact well with all children. Practitioners are skilled in asking open-ended questions to provide challenge for children in their learning. Practitioners have a sound understanding of child development and respond appropriately to individual needs. A few practitioners talk and sing to children in different languages, such as Gaelic and Polish, and children are beginning to respond well during these opportunities.
- Practitioners use observations well to gain knowledge about their groups of children and to support their wellbeing. They record observations of significant learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and suggest appropriate next steps. Practitioners gather robust assessment evidence detailing children's progress in their learning. They identify targets which are reviewed regularly. These are recorded in 'scrap books' that parents can take home to review. Practitioners should develop ways to gather more information about children's learning at home from parents. This would help them to develop a more holistic view of children's learning and progress.
- Practitioners plan a wide range of developmentally appropriate experiences for children. There is an effective balance of responsive and intentional planning. Senior leaders and practitioners meet three times per year to discuss the progress children are making and to identify any gaps in learning to be addressed. Senior leaders and practitioners should now explore ways to track

the skills children are developing. This will help staff to identify where children may need further support in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners take account of children's ideas and interests when planning across the curriculum. Children are involved in experiences indoors, outdoors and within their local community. This provides them with rich, real life learning experiences in different contexts. Children regularly attend a local community centre to take part in a wide range of activities, such as bicycle riding and community gardening. Practitioners have developed strong links with the local library. Parents and children can borrow books and are invited to family story sessions to build their enjoyment of reading books together.
- Practitioners plan and support transitions very well for children starting the Early Learning Centre and for children moving stages. Practitioners remain as the key worker for a child throughout their time at the Early Learning Centre. This helps to provide consistency and supports a strong relationship between children, their parents and the practitioner.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners establish strong, positive relationships with parents. All parents are invited to 'stay and play' sessions, outdoor family learning 'families connect' sessions and curriculum evenings. Practitioners offer weekly coffee morning events to support parents. The majority of parents engage well with these planned events.
- Practitioners invite parents to discuss their child's progress and achievements through 'parent contact' sessions. Through consultation, practitioners listened to parents' concerns about barriers to accessing the internet to participate in their child's learning. As a result, staff now use a physical 'scrap book' to share children's learning with parents.
- Practitioners share strategies with parents to help support children's learning at home. They also signpost important information from partners and help parents to access relevant support. For example, parents have sought advice on toilet training and healthy eating guidance. This approach is helping parents better support children and their needs.

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

- Children learn in a calm, safe and nurturing environment. Children are recognised as individuals and are valued and respected by their peers and practitioners during their time in nursery. Children are thoughtful, kind and considerate to each other. They feel confident to make their own decisions in a trusted environment.
- Children benefit from the nursery's positive and respectful ethos which supports them to behave well. Children show empathy and consideration for other children's feelings. Children are becoming aware of their own rights and understand their views are listened to and heard. Children are beginning to understand the wellbeing indicators. As planned, practitioners should help children to develop their understanding of their own health and wellbeing. They should support children to talk about the indicators in relation to their own experiences at the Early Learning Centre and at home.
- Children experience successful transitions as they move from the Early Learning Centre into P1. Practitioners have made changes recently to the way they support children at points of transition. Children moving to P1 experience a range of opportunities, such as classroom visits, assemblies, lunch visits and trips to the school playground. This supports children's transition to primary school effectively as they are already familiar with the environment and staff. This ensures children's needs are met well and their wellbeing is prioritised during these periods of change.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of most of their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They know individual children very well. However, there are gaps in staff's understanding of particular processes for ensuring children are kept safe. For example, not all staff fully understand the specific duties required linked to children's care plans and medication. Senior leaders and staff need further training and support to ensure they understand and implement current national guidance. This will help to ensure that all staff are confident in fulfilling their statutory duties to improve outcomes for children.
- Practitioners have effective strategies in place to support particular groups of children, such as those facing challenges. Children who require additional support are well supported using appropriate resources. Practitioners set achievable targets which are regularly reviewed by staff. These approaches are helping children to make improved progress in their learning.
- Practitioners provide a wide range of experiences for children to develop their understanding of diversity. This includes learning through stories and discussion about how everyone is different and unique.

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

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. Most children listen very well to stories and are motivated to explore a wide range of books, such as Scottish stories and encyclopaedias. Almost all children mark make using a variety of open-ended resources. This is helping them to develop the fine motor skills they need for writing. Children recognise letters from the alphabet correctly. A few children use their writing skills to create labels for the nursery environment. Children engage confidently in conversations with their peers and adults during their play. Practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to apply their mark making skills through play, across all areas of the nursery setting.
- Children are making good progress in early mathematics and numeracy. Most children count independently up to 20 during their play and show correct number recognition. Almost all children talk about aspects of measure during their play, such as 'big' or 'fast'. They identify colours and solve simple problems. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and recognise patterns. Most children are ready to develop their mathematical language further. Saff should now provide further opportunities for children to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills through play.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They talk about being safe and responsible in their play and how to look after their own health and wellbeing. Children recognise the importance of keeping active and talk with confidence about the impact this has on their bodies. They make healthy food choices at snack and mealtimes. Most children understand the importance of toothbrushing and washing their hands. As planned, practitioners should support children to develop and apply their knowledge about health and wellbeing in relevant and real-life contexts.
- Children are making good progress over time. Practitioners track children's progress during their time at nursery to identify how well they are progressing in their learning and to inform next steps. Practitioners know each child very well and make accurate professional judgements about their progress. As planned, practitioners should review and develop the current tracking process to better check on children's skill development across all areas of the curriculum.
- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated by practitioners. Children value the 'proud cloud' which celebrates achievements from their Early Learning Centre experiences. For example, practitioners use the 'proud cloud' to highlight when a child uses sign language to

communicate and when a child successfully writes their own name. Practitioners should develop ways to gather information about children's achievements from home and to celebrate these in the Early Learning Centre. This will help children share and celebrate their achievements out with the setting and enhance their confidence and sense of belonging

- There is a strong inclusive ethos across the Early Learning Centre, where relationships are built on respect and trust. Practitioners know children and their families well and act to reduce potential barriers to learning. For example, staff ensure that all children have access to appropriate outdoor clothing for all weathers. This helps ensure that all children are engaged and involved in their learning.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing care from adults that knew them very well. Positive relationships formed were resulting in children feeling loved and happy, as they received the right support from adults when needed. This gave children the message that they mattered.

Children enjoyed relaxing mealtimes with a range of nutritious food options. This was a calm experience where children were encouraged to self-serve which supported children to develop their independence. Staff sat with children and encouraged friendly social interactions which supported language and communication development. This facilitated children to feel included, develop conversations and learn about healthy choices.

Children requiring support with personal care experienced sensitive, caring, and nurturing approaches from staff. Various communication strategies were used to meet the individual needs of children during these routines. This ensured their privacy was respected and their dignity maintained. For example, after lunch, a mirror was provided so children could independently check if they needed a face cloth, promoting autonomy. As a result, children felt safe, secure, and confident in the setting.

Children benefited from a staff team who knew them very well and confidently understood their care needs. Information provided by parents was recorded in personal plans when children joined the service. Some next steps focusing on literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing were documented in children's 'scrapbooks.' However, key information was sometimes missing, and strategies to support care were not consistently identified. To improve, the service should enhance personal plans to clearly outline how children's health, welfare, and safety needs will be met. These plans must also be reviewed at least once every six months.

We audited the medication stored on the premises and discussed its storage and recording with management. For example, we identified a healthcare action plan that could not be fully implemented if required. The manager, in collaboration with the provider, promptly addressed some of the identified issues. Moving forward, the manager should implement a robust process to monitor and audit medication, including accurate recording of information. *Management of Medication in Daycare of Children and Childminding Services* should be used as a guide to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. (See area for improvement 1 in 3.1 quality assurance and improvements are led well).

Staff had a good understanding of child protection and were confident when and how to pass on relevant information. However, there needs to be an improvement into the handling, and processes of child protection concerns. (See area for improvement 2 in 3.1 quality assurance and improvements are led well).

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning

Children were actively engaged in leading their play and learning through a thoughtful blend of spontaneous and planned high-quality play experiences. For example, one child enthusiastically prepared dinner for an inspector in the house corner. This illustrated that children took ownership of their learning and felt confident and secure in the setting.

Children were provided with rich and meaningful play opportunities that supported their development in key areas such as literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. Literacy skills were nurtured through activities like reading stories with a variety of props, glitter in sand trays to develop fine motor skills needed for writing. Numeracy was encouraged through activities such as measuring paint and counting while exploring loose parts. Health and wellbeing were supported by activities like playing football and practising toothbrushing routines. These experiences helped ensure that children were progressing well across all areas of their development.

Staff demonstrated a solid understanding of child development, including theories of practice such as schematic play. This knowledge was used effectively to enhance children's experiences and match play opportunities to their developmental levels. Staff's skilled interactions, observations, and effective questioning helped extend play and scaffold learning.

Planning approaches were responsive and child-centred, ensuring that children's interests and needs were respected. Staff used observations to assess and track development, celebrating achievements and identifying next steps. For example, one child's scrapbook documented their learning journey, illustrating the progress made whilst settling-in to the nursery. Through careful monitoring and tracking, staff worked collaboratively with parents and children to discuss progress and next steps, ensuring a consistent approach to learning and development.

Children had regular access to the local community, which supported their sense of belonging and connection to the wider world. For example, they visited the local centre, the Glen, and got to know key people in the local area, such as the bus driver. These community experiences reinforced their understanding of the world around them.

The service fostered strong relationships with parents through initiatives like stay-and-play sessions, weekly coffee mornings, and community centre activities. These opportunities were beginning to focus on areas such as healthy eating, further strengthening the link between home, nursery, and the community.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was warm, homely, and welcoming for children, with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. The comfortable and high-standard furnishings contributed to a positive atmosphere where children felt secure and valued. Children had access to a variety of play spaces, including two indoor playrooms. This enabled children to move freely between areas, fostering independence and confidence.

Both the indoor and outdoor environments were thoughtfully designed to suit the learning and developmental stages of children. Staff had worked hard to adapt these spaces, creating interesting and exciting areas for exploration. The layout promoted freedom of choice, with staff continually evaluating and improving the learning environment to meet children's needs. We would encourage the service to continue this approach, ensuring children remain at the heart of improvements.

The resources available were engaging, tidy, and well-organised, sparking children's curiosity and imagination. Play spaces were designed to encourage problem-solving and creative thinking. For example, children explored real-world items like spices and potatoes in the house corner, used small-world play for storytelling, and engaged with loose parts to build and create.

Although there was no free-flow access between indoor and outdoor spaces, staff managed transitions effectively. Children accessed the quad, an enclosed outdoor garden space that provided opportunities to be active and explore the natural world. Children also accessed community spaces daily, guided by their interests and needs, for example, a child's interest in the moon resulted in a local walk to explore the sky. This ensured children's experiences were not limited by the layout of the building.

Infection prevention and control practices were embedded in the daily routine. Children confidently managed personal hygiene, including handwashing and nose-wiping, supported by visual aids like mirrors and sequence cards at the "sniffle station." These routines promoted independence in self-care.

Risk assessments were thorough, with appropriate mitigations in place to keep children safe. Staff ensured consistent monitoring and supervision, particularly outdoors, with clear procedures for counting children in and out. This contributed to a safe and secure environment where children could thrive.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior leadership team demonstrated openness and honesty throughout the inspection, promoting a shared vision in collaboration with staff to deliver a high-quality service for children and families. The nursery revised its vision in 2022, incorporating input from children, staff, parents, and the wider community. Children were beginning to engage with this vision, for example, through activities like Veronica the home link bear, fostering strong connections to the setting.

Since the last inspection, there have been several changes within the senior leadership team. The current manager, depute, and staff collaborated effectively, creating a culture of shared responsibility. Strong foundations within the newly formed team indicate the setting is well-positioned to continue improving.

The enthusiastic staff team was committed to providing high-quality learning experiences, promoting independence and choice. As a result, children were safe, secure, and happy in the setting. Distributed leadership was evident, with staff leading on a number of areas such as literacy, community links and the parents' group and children being part of the Eco Schools and Fair-Trade committees. This was contributing to a positive culture of shared responsibility.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were in place and led to continuous improvement. For example, staff used observations of children's play to adapt playroom layouts and extend learning opportunities. Feedback from parents and staff also informed changes. However, there were missed opportunities in areas such as personal plans and medication management. Moving forward, the service should ensure quality assurance activities are purposeful and informed by national best practice to support high-quality outcomes. (See area for improvement 1).

Safeguarding procedures required strengthening. For example, there was no robust system for recording and reporting concerns, potentially compromising children's safety. Plans to address these issues were discussed during the inspection, and the manager is encouraged to implement and monitor these changes, including auditing safeguarding procedures and ensuring compliance with notification requirements. (see area for improvement 2).

Defining roles and responsibilities within the leadership team will further embed effective quality assurance processes, such as monitoring personal plans and auditing medication procedures. This will ensure systems and practices continually support positive outcomes for children and families.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

4.3 Staff deployment

The children at Twechar benefitted greatly from the care provided by a dedicated and professional staff team. Staff were kind, warm, and nurturing, creating a safe and welcoming environment for both children and their families. Parents consistently provide positive feedback about the staff's approach and skill set, highlighting the strong, trusting relationships built between staff, children, and families. This fosters a sense of security and belonging within the setting.

The staff team were deployed very effectively to ensure the wellbeing of all children. Appropriate numbers of staff were present throughout the day, which resulted in children receiving high-quality experiences tailored to their individual needs. Staff were assigned to areas that match their skills, knowledge, and experience, ensuring that each child is supported in the best possible way.

Collaboration and relationships among staff contributed to a positive and inclusive team atmosphere. The team was motivated, solution-focused, and committed to continuous improvement. Through ongoing reflection and professional development, staff were able to enhance their practice. This provided children with a happy, supportive environment where they felt valued.

The mentoring system in place supports staff development and empowerment, with experienced staff taking on mentoring roles and using the national induction resource, as a guide. As a result, staff felt well supported in their role.

Staff were highly engaged in their work, showing enthusiasm and a strong commitment to providing high quality care. They communicated effectively with one another, particularly when coordinating outdoor activities and passing messages to parents. Overall, the nurturing, professional, and kind approach of the staff at Twechar Early Years Centre ensures a positive and enriching experience for all children in their care.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one area for improvement. This area for improvement has been met. As a result of this inspection, there are two areas for improvement.

Area for improvement

1. To ensure continued positive outcomes for children, the manager should ensure they take a key role, along with the management team in the early years centre, in implementing a robust quality assurance system with a focus on monitoring children's personal plans and, medication policies and procedures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19).

2. To ensure that children are safeguarded and protected from harm, the provider and manager should implement robust systems and processes in relation to child protection.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying, and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20). 'If I might harm myself or others, I know that people have a duty to protect me and others, which may involve contacting relevant agencies.' (HSCS 3.25)

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.