

Summarised inspection findings

Dalintober Nursery Class

Argyll and Bute Council

28 May 2019

Key contextual information

Dalintober Primary School's early learning class (ELC) class is registered to provide care to a maximum of 35 children in the morning and 30 children in the afternoon aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The service operates from their own dedicated space within Dalintober Primary School, located close to Campbeltown town centre.

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 headteacher, depute headteacher and practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to the setting's vision, values and aims. The vision principles are demonstrated through the ethos in the ELC class. Plans to refresh the whole school vision, values and aims will be a positive next step. As this is undertaken, it will be important they reflect ELC pedagogy. The adaptation of language to ensure it is meaningful and relevant to the ELC class will be essential. This will support a shared understanding by all stakeholders as the setting continues on its journey of improvement.
- Senior leaders provide effective support and guidance to practitioners and encourage them to build upon and share their strengths and skills. This supports ongoing development of aspects of the service. Most practitioners have leadership roles. A positive next step will be to establish leadership roles that develop identified areas for improvement across the curriculum. There is also scope to build on children's positive engagement in learning by developing further opportunities to engage all children in planning and leading their own learning. Other opportunities for meaningful leadership roles for children should be created as children demonstrate they are very keen to share their views and ideas.
- Practitioners work well together as a team. They are conscientious and keen to continue to enhance their knowledge and practice. As part of the setting's approaches to improvement, practitioners take part in peer evaluation. They engage in regular opportunities for learning and participate in professional dialogue at weekly meetings. Collaborative working with local ELC settings and development time ensures practitioners engage in critical reflection to improve their work. Annual professional reviews outline jointly agreed targets within a development plan. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities for their own professional learning in accordance with Scottish Social Services Council requirements. They take an active role in the professional review and development process.
- Self-evaluation is leading to improvements. There is documented evidence of self-evaluation activities that demonstrate use of national guidance documents 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' and 'Building the Ambition'. All practitioners are fully involved in this process. As discussed, senior leaders should continue to provide opportunities for children, parents and partners to be more involved in evaluating the work of the setting.

- The whole school improvement plan has identified priorities and areas for improvement including specific links to the ELC class. Practitioners are aware of the plan and understand the part they play in contributing to improvement. As part of the self-evaluation cycle, it will be important to continue to demonstrate the impact of change on improving outcomes for children.

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

- Across the setting relationships between practitioners and children are warm and caring. As a result, children are observed to be safe and secure in their environment. Practitioners use praise during their interactions, which is helping to build children's self-esteem and confidence in learning. Children engage with a variety of interesting experiences and have daily access to outdoor learning. They are observed interacting positively with each other, displaying respectful and considerate behaviour to their peers.
- Children have opportunities to engage in planned and spontaneous learning experiences during free play. Overall, children are observed to enjoy the experiences offered both indoors and outdoors. For example, as they visited the museum outdoors to guess the name of very old transport parts. Children are becoming increasingly independent, for example, getting dressed for outdoors. It will be useful to keep the balance between adult-led and child-led experiences under review as well as the impact of routines. This will ensure children's independence and creativity is maximised and built upon to reflect national guidance on high quality ELC.
- Practitioners have made positive changes to the learning environment. The introduction of natural materials and loose parts is supporting children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity indoors and outdoors. This was evident in the recently developed indoor garage with real car seats, steering wheels etc. Practitioners engage in conversations with children to encourage them to talk about their interests and ideas. In the best examples, practitioners skilfully use questioning to promote curiosity and inquiry learning; however, this is inconsistent at times. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop a language of learning with all children.
- Use of the interactive white board is supported and encouraged. This supports children's learning, for example, playing number games. Children have access to a tablet computer and use this to take photographs and videos whilst visiting a local woodland area. As discussed, children would benefit from further use of digital technology to enhance their learning.
- Practitioners know individual children well as learners and use their observations to inform next steps in learning. Children's learning journeys record observations of learning, individual pieces of work and information shared from home. Floor books and mind maps capture and describe children's participation and engagement in learning experiences. Children are able to talk about their learning, using their learning journeys and floor books to recall their engagement in experiences. Parents receive information on their child's progress, through daily dialogue, engagement in learning journals and two formal parents' and carers' meetings a year. Sharing

practice events also provide an opportunity to share learning and provide curriculum information.

- Practitioners meet regularly to plan for children's learning using a range of sources to inform future plans. Planning approaches are not yet fully responsive to children's interests and ideas. As the setting moves forward, it will be important to ensure that planning takes full account of children's interests. There is a system in place for tracking and monitoring individual children's progress in literacy and numeracy, alongside Argyll and Bute developmental milestones trackers for all children. Practitioners work closely with colleagues across the early level and individual trackers are shared at the point of transition. This is supporting continuity and progression in learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Learning opportunities are based around themes and increasingly respond to children's interests. Core learning initiated by practitioners is linked to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. More responsive approaches for planning will ensure that children are fully engaged in their learning and are able to build progressively on their skills. This will also support the need to ensure an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led learning within the setting.
- Throughout the setting health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy are evident across learning. Practitioners plan a range of experiences to promote learning in other curricular areas. For example, the current focus on working with tools is stimulating children's curiosity and enquiry skills.
- As discussed, it would be helpful for the setting to develop a clear, shared rationale for the curriculum. This should reflect the high aspirations and expectations for all children across the early level. The creation of a rationale will support practitioners to be clear about their shared pedagogy, taking account of national guidance on high quality ELC. The rationale should take account of the context of the setting as it implements planned areas for improvement. For example, the expansion of the outdoor learning provision.
- The outdoor learning environment has been developed to provide children with opportunities to explore and investigate through a range of stimulating experiences. Practitioners have created exciting learning spaces for children to explore whilst benefitting from fresh air and exercise. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop the outside space as well as their understanding of outdoor learning in line with national guidance. Regular visits to a local woodland area supports children to be curious and inquisitive about the natural environment beyond the setting. Practitioners plan to build on this success by developing their skills, knowledge and confidence with the support of the local cluster Lead Childcare and Education Worker.
- Transition arrangements from the ELC class to P1 are a key strength of the setting. Weekly opportunities to build relationships and visit the classroom are well established. An established buddy system with current P1 pupils in term four supports visits to the wider school environment. Prior learning is taken into account with robust tracking and assessment records provided by the ELC class to the P1 class teachers. The weekly class teacher contact supporting literacy and numeracy helps build positive relationships with the children. It also enables the class teacher to get to know the children very well as learners.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Children benefit from the setting's supportive approach to all families and their individual circumstances. The key worker approach ensures all children and families build a relationship with a practitioner who knows their child very well. Parents spoke positively about their experiences within the setting and felt included and a key part of the ELC community and their child's education.
- Parents are aware of what their children are learning in the setting by engaging with floor books, learning journey folders and regular newsletters. These are helpfully translated into four different languages. Parents' and carers' meetings and end of year summative reports give parents an overview of their child's learning in areas such as literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Practitioners are keen to encourage parental involvement to support children's learning. A programme to promote parental engagement is established and led by two childcare and education workers. Parents and carers are encouraged to join their children as they learn in the playrooms through sharing practice events. As planned, embedding these initiatives will enhance the positive relationships between practitioners and families further.
- The ELC class has strong links with the local community. A recent walk included visits by the children to a number of local businesses. Resources for the setting, provided by local businesses and parents and carers, are well used and build upon the children's interests. Participation by parents in sharing their skills and job experiences supports children to explore the world of work.

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

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

- There is a strong focus within the setting on the wellbeing and inclusion of children and their parents and carers. Practitioners understand the importance of positive relationships with families. Building caring, respectful and supportive relationships with families secures a partnership approach and a sense of community.
- In the best examples, practitioners successfully model positive, respectful interactions that promote wellbeing and encourages it in others. The team has a shared understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and support all children to feel safe, healthy, active, respected, responsible and included. Practitioners use the wellbeing indicators effectively to provide an overview of children's progress using the local authority developmental milestones. There is a developing awareness of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. As discussed, practitioners should now continue to develop children's understanding of their own wellbeing, the wellbeing indicators and their rights. There is a need to ensure children's emotional needs are responded to and that they benefit from nurturing approaches at all times.
- Positive behaviour is promoted throughout the setting. In a developmentally appropriate way, most children show consideration for each other in their play. Practitioners focus on supporting children to build positive relationships with each other and helpfully model this in their interactions. When necessary, they intervene in a way that is calm and supports children to reflect on their actions. Children are also learning about the needs of others in the community and how they can help. For example, supporting the local food bank encourages children's awareness about sharing with those in need.
- Supported by the well-established key worker system, children are considered as an individual with their own needs, rights and interests. The caring relationships and supportive learning environment create a climate where children feel confident to share their ideas. Children are supported to make decisions about aspects of life in the school and ELC class. Examples include taking part in the pupil council and being a designated helper in the setting. There is scope to develop these roles to include further leadership responsibilities. Children would benefit from involvement in risk benefit assessments and contributing views and ideas about changes to the learning environment. This would enhance their inclusion in the decision-making processes of the ELC class.
- Practitioners are very reflective about their practice and keen to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. The setting shows a good understanding of current

legislation and national guidelines. This enables them to fulfil their statutory duties and ensures children and families are kept safe.

- Practitioners are particularly mindful of their responsibility towards children's wellbeing. Where children require additional support with their learning, senior leaders and practitioners seek support and make links with external agencies. This helps to support children's overall learning and development and secure positive outcomes for families.
- Children and families are supported in a way that encourages participation and promotes inclusion. Practitioners have a very good understanding of the individual circumstances of children and use this knowledge to support them in their learning. The team have a good understanding of their responsibility to promote inclusion and equity through their work with families. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children to learn about equality and diversity in a way that is age and stage appropriate.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

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

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Overall, most children are making good progress in communication and language. This is clearly evident in listening and talking. Children confidently engage in conversation with practitioners and during the inspection shared their learning with inspectors. They have access to a range of books and enjoy stories independently and as part of a group. Children are learning to speak French, confidently reciting numbers zero – ten. They participate in daily letter recognition, joining in to repeat sounds and words using songs.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in writing skills. Opportunities for mark making are available, for example, outdoors using large chalk, brushes and water. Self-registering on arrival, going outdoors and for snack is encouraging children to recognise their name. Practitioners should continue to promote opportunities for children to write independently and for a purpose.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Opportunities to count are incorporated across daily experiences, for example, counting the number of cups needed to fill the water tray. The development of skills in early numeracy is encouraged through a range of planned experiences, for example, one to one correspondence using loose parts. Outdoors, children explore measure as they play with a range of bicycle wheels describing biggest, smallest etc. A few children can confidently count to ten and beyond. There is scope to extend the use of open-ended resources to challenge those who need it and encourage counting with bigger numbers.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children appear happy and settled in their environment. Children are caring and considerate of each other's feelings, displaying positive engagement with their peers. They make healthy choices at snack and are developing their independence skills as they serve themselves. Opportunities for children to develop their physical skills are available on a daily basis and on weekly outings to a local woodland area. This is supporting children to develop resilience and a sense of risk. Most children play independently across the learning environment and are developing their self-help skills.

- Through a range of inspection activity children in the setting are observed as enthusiastic learners who are making good progress in their learning.
- Children's individual achievements are captured and celebrated at whole school assemblies and throughout daily routines. Practitioners should continue to review how wider achievements for all children are captured and monitored. As discussed, this will ensure a holistic view of the child is gained and skills and interests can be built upon in the ELC class.
- Equity is promoted across all aspects of the work of the setting. The supportive and inclusive ethos results in a climate of mutual respect and trust. The setting takes account of the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners should continue to be proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children.

Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised Support

- universal support
- role of practitioners and leaders
- identification of learning needs and targeted support

- There is a recognition of, and commitment to, providing a high level of universal support in the ELC class. This session the setting is implementing an early arithmetic programme to support the development of children's numerical knowledge.
- Practitioners and senior leaders work very closely with parents, carers and other professionals such as health visitors and speech and language therapists. This supports practitioners' knowledge of all children, their families and any specific needs individuals may have.
- The setting's effective keyworker system enables practitioners to respond very well to the individual needs of all children. In addition to this system, practitioners continuously share information with each other about children's learning and progress. Practitioners share information both informally each day and more formally at weekly team meetings. They use their knowledge to plan their interactions and interventions to challenge and support each child. Practitioners take full account of the particular stages of development of children and use this effectively to support them in their learning.
- Where specific interventions are identified to support individual children, practitioners create effective plans, with the full involvement of parents and partner agencies as appropriate. Senior leaders, to ensure that the planned support is having the desired impact for children, monitor the implementation of these plans.
- Practitioners have supportive and caring relationships with children. All practitioners are well aware of their role in supporting all children to achieve success. Their ongoing observation of children during play means that any barriers to learning or specific needs of individual children are identified at the earliest opportunity. Practitioners work particularly well as a team to evaluate and modify their approaches wherever necessary, for the clear benefit of children.

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.