

Summarised inspection findings

Aultbea Nursery

The Highland Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Aultbea Nursery is situated in a purpose built centre, which is off campus, a mile away from Bualnaluib Primary School. The nursery is registered for 20 children and at the time of inspection, the roll was 11. The nursery currently offers morning only sessions for children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. It operates from Monday to Thursday with children receiving four hours each day.

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

- There is a well-established vision, values and aims across the school and nursery. The vision of TEAM, TEAM, BPS, (Blossoming Pupils for Success) underpins the work of the nursery and is displayed for all to view. Practitioners and children display a sense of commitment to the vision in their daily practice. As discussed, it will be important to ensure the current vision, values and aims continue to be relevant and meaningful for children and parents in the nursery.
- Practitioners demonstrate an enthusiastic and professional approach to their role, both collectively and as individuals. They are reflective practitioners who are keen to learn and make improvements to their practice. They have fortnightly meetings with the management support teacher and this is supporting positive changes, for example, changes to the planning for learning. The nursery benefit from regular visits from the headteacher and support when required from the local authority early years education support officer.
- Practitioners have valuable professional development reviews with the headteacher to identify strengths and areas for development. They access a range of professional learning opportunities, linked to their professional development reviews, to increase their knowledge and continually improve their practice. Practitioners work to achieve additional qualifications in their own time, and as a result are supporting improvements in practice. The practitioner team work across the school and cluster nurseries to share in professional dialogue and collegiate learning. Practitioners also work in the school in the afternoon, allowing them to have an overview of learning across the early level. As a result, early years practitioners are supported to make well-informed improvements in practice.
- There is a shared improvement plan in place across the school and nursery. Raising attainment in literacy, language and communication is a focus for all. The current plan does not clearly identify priorities and targets, which are specific to the nursery. Practitioners would benefit from further involvement in the creation of the plan, ensuring there are priorities and tasks, which are relevant to early learning and childcare. Leadership opportunities for practitioners and children should continue to be identified, for example, practitioners leading literacy across the early level.

- There is a clear system in place for self-evaluation, which takes full account of the national self-evaluation framework 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' and includes a monitoring calendar. Practitioners share informal, daily and weekly dialogue to inform improvements and changes in practice. As discussed, building on the positive start made to using 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' practitioners should continue to develop a planned approach to self-evaluation in order to ensure they achieve and can measure their success.

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

- Relationships across the nursery are positive and caring, as a result, children are safe and secure. Children are actively involved in their learning which is well supported and scaffolded by the nurturing practitioner team. Most children are confident and demonstrate independence skills. Children are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. They engage fully in their learning, many for sustained periods of time. Children appear happy and clearly enjoy their time at nursery, interacting positively with each other, for example, displaying respectful and considerate behaviour to their peers/friends.
- Children engage in planned and spontaneous learning experiences indoors and outdoors. Practitioners have recently developed their indoor environment, ensuring children have access to a wide range of interesting resources. For example, children explored the farm and enjoyed playing in the mud with the tractors and diggers. As discussed, the balance between adult and child initiated experiences should continue to be monitored. Continue to build on children's positive engagement in learning by further developing opportunities to engage all children in planning and leading their own learning.
- Practitioners enthusiastically engage in conversations with children to encourage them to talk about their interests and ideas. They listen carefully to children and respond in an appropriate manner. Open-ended questions are used well to support children's learning. In the best examples, practitioner's use of higher order questions encourage children to think through solutions for themselves. Opportunities for digital learning are offered, for example, camera and computer. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop approaches to digital learning to support learning.
- Practitioners know individual children very well as learners and use their observations to inform next steps in learning. They should continue to ensure their observations have a focus on significant learning. Practitioners have daily discussions and fortnightly meetings with the management support teacher to discuss individual children and their next steps, which ensures experiences have appropriate levels of challenge. Information is captured in children's personal learning journals (PLJs), for example, achievements and learning across almost all curricular areas. Most children confidently reflect on their learning using their journals as a reference. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the PLJs and share wider achievements from home and community. Parents have daily dialogue with practitioners, termly meetings to review learning journals and one planned parents meeting to discuss children's progress in learning.
- Practitioners introduced a new approach to planning for learning last year, using floorbooks and a learning wall to take account of children's interests and document learning experiences. Individual developmental overview sheets are completed for all children, these have a clear focus on skills. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop and evaluate approaches

to planning, tracking and monitoring, ensuring processes are streamlined and not overly bureaucratic.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Approaches to planning take account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. There is a curriculum overview, which practitioners complete on a termly basis to ensure children are provided with a variety of experiences and outcomes. The curriculum offered in Aultbea Nursery is based firmly on play and takes good account of children's interests, for example, recent focus on farms and tractors has engaged all children in learning.
- The outdoor garden area is used well to enrich children's learning. It offers good opportunities for children to be imaginative, solve problems and use materials and resources, such as loose parts. There is scope to continue the expansion and use of open-ended resources, natural materials and real-life objects. This will support children to develop further their skills in curiosity, inquiry and creativity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local environment to enrich learning and extend children's awareness of the world around them. For example, a walk to the local beach engaged children in an exciting number walk and extended their knowledge of the natural world.
- Providing high quality opportunities in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are seen as everyone's responsibility across the nursery. Practitioners engage with children and parents to set targets and next steps in learning to meet each child's individual needs. These are recorded in children's learning journals and are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Practitioners should continue to revisit these often to demonstrate the progress children are making in their learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnership with parents is very positive and parents who engaged with the inspection process are very happy with their experience at Aultbea Nursery. Parents commented on the settling in process and were appreciative of the individualised approach for every child. Parents are pleased with the communication from the nursery, this includes daily informal conversation, parents' notice board, newsletters and more formal parents' meetings.
- Overall, parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive, with all parents pleased with their experience in the nursery. Parents also commented very positively about the learning journals, noting that they felt they were informative and clearly showed progress in their child's learning. Recent questionnaires to parents requested more parental engagement in the nursery curriculum and responses were very positive, for example, a visit from a beekeeper and bringing in pet lambs to share with the children.
- The setting has benefitted from input from parents and partners in relation to the world of work, with visits from a police officer, dental nurse and local farmer. Parents also commented that practitioners were open and approachable, always willing to listen. Partnerships with local cluster settings is developing and this will help to support moderation and further engagement with other practitioners.

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

- There is a nurturing and respectful ethos and culture across the nursery environment. Practitioners are warm and caring, as a result, children are enabled to feel settled, safe and secure. The settling-in period allows practitioners the opportunity to get to know their children and parents well. This is sensitively managed for children requiring additional time to settle.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of relationships in supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing. They respect children as individuals with their own personalities. Children are greeted at nursery each day by practitioners who ensure they feel welcomed and valued, using their 'How do you feel today' board with all children. Children confidently engage in this process and freely discuss their feelings with practitioners and peers. Children's behaviour is appropriate to their age and stage of development. Where necessary, individuals are supported sensitively to develop the necessary skills to show consideration for their peers.
- The principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) are evident within the nursery environment, for example, on wall displays for parents and in daily dialogue between children and practitioners. An interest in 'people who help us' supported the language of wellbeing, for example, being safe if there was a fire. Building on the positive start to introducing these, practitioners should continue to develop a shared understanding with all children and parents of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included.
- Children are happy and confident both indoors and outdoors. Increased free flow opportunities indoors and outdoors supports children to be healthy and active as they have fun with their peers, for example, using different lengths of pipes to post balls and catch at the other end. This impacts positively on their sense of wellbeing. Outdoor learning is linked to current interests, for example, the current story Handa's Hen links to the fruit and vegetable resources outdoors. Practitioners support children to develop a healthy sense of risk and challenge themselves appropriately outdoors. This is evident in the garden and on outings to the beach.
- Children enjoy a healthy snack at nursery and are involved in trips to the local shops to buy ingredients. A daily helper sets the table and encourages individual children to clear their dishes onto the snack trolley. Snack time is a social occasion where children and practitioners sit down together, serving themselves and discussing their learning. Children are developing their personal hygiene skills, for example, tooth brushing. Practitioners should continue to develop leadership roles for all children, for example, risk assessor. In doing so, they should take full account of the knowledge and skills children have already developed.
- There is a clear understanding of what is required of practitioners and management in their requirement to fulfil statutory duties to secure positive outcomes for children. Practitioners display a sensitive and caring manner when responding to children's individual needs. Children

who face barriers to their learning have individual plans put in place in consultation with families and other agencies where appropriate.

- Inclusion and equality is promoted throughout the work of the setting, with all children and families treated with respect. Practitioners treat children fairly and take account of their individual likes and dislikes. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos where children are nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential. Practitioners display effective strategies to improve progress for all children, with a focus on those facing challenges in their learning.

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

- A strong focus on health and wellbeing across the nursery has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Nurturing relationships support children to settle quickly, offering the opportunity for children to succeed and develop at their individual pace. Children are developing their social and emotional skills well. This is evident in practice, as they use their emotions board to describe how they feel each day.
- Overall most children are making good progress in communication and language. This is in line with their age and stage of development. Most children engage in conversations with practitioners and peers during free play. During the inspection activity children confidently approached inspectors and engaged in dialogue about their learning. Children enjoy a variety of stories and listen well at circle time, allowing them to answer questions effectively. Conversations and the implementation of the words up strategy effectively support language and communication development.
- Opportunities for children to recognise their name are available across the nursery, for example, selecting their name at the creation station. A variety of materials supports children to mark-make, for example, chunky chalk outdoors, pencils and pens. A few children are beginning to write letters and numbers. As discussed, children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their writing skills in an age appropriate manner.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Opportunities to count in routines and planned opportunities for number recognition are supporting children to develop their early number skills. Most children count to ten, with a few counting beyond ten. Planned opportunities to engage in numeracy and mathematics is evident across the nursery, for example, children skilfully used tweezers to lift and count pom poms.
- Children are supported to use the language of measure, for example, as they explore the different lengths of pipe outdoors. They display an awareness of shape and colour in their environment and use the language well. As planned, practitioners should continue to offer experiences, which develop and challenge children's engagement in mathematics.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing, children appear happy and settled in their environment. Children make healthy choices at snack and are encouraged to develop their independence skills, for example, confidently spreading their own toast. As discussed, they could be supported and encouraged to take a bigger role in preparing snack. As a result, increasing their sense of responsibility and leadership role. Children are

observed displaying an awareness of responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. The opportunity for children to develop their physical skills is supported through daily outdoor play, access to the local park and local walks to the beach. Children are supported to engage in risk taking as they negotiate the resources in their outdoor and wider community environment.

- Through inspection observation, relevant information in PLJs, learning walls, floorbook evidence and dialogue, children in the setting are observed as enthusiastic learners who are making good progress in their learning. Developmental overview sheets, observations of learning and next steps show progress for most children and interventions are in place for those who require more support to make progress with their learning.
- Practitioners frequently praise and give encouragement to children in order to celebrate their success. Children's individual achievements are celebrated and shared in a number of ways, this includes, the 'star pupil of the week'. Parents are encouraged to share wider achievements from home and these are captured in the learning journals. Progress is shared with parents informally on a daily basis, formally through termly parents meetings where learning journals are shared and new targets/next steps are discussed.
- Equity is promoted 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 very good account of the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children, for example, using visual timetables to support learning.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Settling in procedures ensure children and families have a smooth transition into the nursery. “All about me” forms capture key information when children start the setting. Practitioners provide sensitive support to children and their families at points of transition into the nursery setting. Close attention is given by key workers to the specific social and emotional needs of each child and their families. Practitioners acknowledge the impact of life events and provide effective support to ensure equity for each child attending the nursery. Practitioners communicate with other settings when children have a split placement, ensuring continuity in learning and care. There is a well-established parent and toddler group in Aultbea, which communicates well with the nursery, supporting parents and children in the transition process.
- Transitions from nursery to school are positive with opportunities to link throughout the year. From January to June, there are a range of activities for children to engage with in the school, for example, literacy, numeracy and art sessions, PE and playtime. The P1 teacher also visits the nursery to engage in experiences, for example, story time and an exercise fitness class. Parents are invited to attend events in the school as part of the induction programme.
- Children’s PLJs and developmental overview sheets are shared with the P1 teacher. Practitioners work effectively across the school and nursery, supporting continuity in learning across the early level. The effective play-based learning approach in the nursery appears to continue into P1, as a result offering children a sense of familiarity in their new environment.

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.