

Summarised inspection findings

Tarbat Old Primary School Nursery

The Highland Council

22 August 2023

Key contextual information

Tarbat Old Primary School Nursery is based within the building of Tarbat Old Primary School. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) placements for children from Portmahomack and the surrounding area. Children can attend the nursery from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting can provide places for 17 children at any one time. Currently, there are 12 children on the roll. There is one playroom, a kitchen and dining area, a conservatory and children have direct access to the outdoor area. Children attend during term-time from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm. A minority of children access their nursery provision through a blended model of provision, spending part of their entitlement in the nursery and the remainder in other ELC settings. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the nursery has experienced significant periods of instability in leadership due to absence. An acting headteacher has supported the nursery on a temporary part time basis since September 2022 then full time since February 2023. Further significant changes in staffing are expected at the start of next session due to planned retirements. The acting head teacher is acting head teacher of Tarbat Old Primary School and Nursery and Hill of Fearn Primary School and Nursery cluster. She has responsibility for the nursery. There are two full time equivalent early years practitioners (EYP). One EYP works full time and two EYPs share the other full time equivalent post. They are supported by the cluster principal teacher one day a fortnight.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Staff work well together to create a warm, nurturing ethos across the setting. There are very positive relationships between children and adults and between children. Children demonstrate respect well towards adults and each other in their interactions and play. This is helping children to develop the values of teamwork, trust, honesty, respect and being responsible. Children do not yet know the language of the values. The newly appointed acting headteacher recognises there is a need to revisit the vision, values and aims with parents, staff and children. This should help practitioners to ensure they are relevant and meaningful to the current cohort of children and help children to achieve better outcomes.
- The acting headteacher has a strong focus on developing further the experiences children have when attending the setting. Learning and teaching in the nursery is weak. The acting headteacher now needs to develop a robust programme of monitoring learning and teaching in the nursery. All practitioners engage with senior leaders to evaluate the work of the nursery. They make regular use of *Realising the Ambition: Being me, 2020*, and *How good is our early learning and childcare?* to support them in this process. The acting headteacher identified clear, key areas for improvement for the nursery within the school and nursery improvement plan. The principal teacher meets regularly with practitioners to review the progress of improvement work in the setting and agree next steps for further development. This is beginning to help improve the pace of change in the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners

work effectively with local authority staff to identify short term action plans for targeted improvement work. Senior leaders should support practitioners to begin to lead areas for improvement in the setting identified in the action plans.

- Practitioners engage regularly in professional development and review meetings with senior leaders. Together, they identify practitioners` areas of strength in their work and next steps to develop their skills. Practitioners have engaged in a range of professional learning including training about intentional and responsive planning, observing children`s learning and child protection. This is helping them to observe and begin to record children`s significant learning. Practitioners are beginning to develop further their planning processes to help children to make progress in their learning.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Children are settled and happy as they play and learn in nursery. They engage for short periods of time in a range of adult-led, child-led and child-initiated experiences. Practitioners have recently reviewed the layout of the nursery indoor environment. They have developed areas where children can play or be calm and quiet, together or individually. As a result, children can now choose from a wide range of readily available resources to support them as they play. Children have too many learning experiences which are adult-led. Practitioners should review the balance of child-led and adult-initiated experiences across the setting. They should give children more opportunities to engage purposefully with digital technology as they play.
- Children have direct access to the outdoor area and choose to play outside for extended periods of time. Practitioners are developing the outdoor area with a range of open-ended and natural materials for children to play with. Children enjoy opportunities to develop their gross motor skills as they run, jump and climb in the outdoor area. A few children develop their problem-solving skills as they play outdoors. For example, children enjoyed finding the best way to get water from high to low using gutter tubing of various lengths.
- Learning and teaching in the nursery is weak. Practitioners need to ensure they give children time to be creative and curious in their play. They should ensure they ask open-ended questions which encourage children to think and explain their thoughts. Almost all children move from area to area often, without always being involved in purposeful play. Practitioners do not always identify this and opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. Practitioners have engaged in professional learning about observations of children's play and the questions they ask children in interactions. They need to improve the quality of interactions and questioning to help children extend their learning further.
- Senior leaders and practitioners identified correctly planning for children's learning as a key area for improvement in the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners have developed an ongoing planning format which is beginning to help them to take account of children's needs and interests as they plan for learning. They link these learning experiences to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas. Practitioners have reintroduced the setting of individual targets for children's learning very recently. These targets are not linked to the skills children need to help them make progress in their learning and development. Practitioners display children's targets on the Tarbat lighthouse display in the playroom. Children and practitioners celebrate when each child achieves their target by lighting up the lighthouse and presenting certificates. Senior leaders and practitioners need to develop this further to ensure targets set are specific and measurable.
- Practitioners record regularly their observations of children's learning in learning folders. They have engaged in professional learning about effective observations and how they are

documented. They do not yet record with rigour the skills children are developing. Practitioners now need to develop the language used in observation records to ensure children's skills are consistently identified and recorded. This should help them to demonstrate the progress children are making.

- Practitioners use well-established, individual proformas to support them to identify and document if children have achieved local authority individual developmental milestones. The acting headteacher has very recently introduced an online tracking tool. This is helping her to work with practitioners to identify gaps in children's learning. They are at the very early stages of using this information to plan experiences to help close gaps in children's learning. It is too early to identify the impact of this work.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners offer a wide range of resources and experiences which children can choose freely to play with, both indoors and outside. These experiences are overly adult-led. Practitioners have recently improved the indoor environment for children. They have developed space where children can be creative and curious in their play. There is a need to increase the range of opportunities children have to develop their numeracy and mathematics skills. Children are not yet consistently using areas to their full potential and engage in too many activities which are adult-led.
- Children enjoy playing in the outdoor area and school 'big field'. They make good use of slides and climbing apparatus to take part in risky play and develop their gross motor skills. Practitioners should support children to access the wide range of activities on offer to develop their skills across the curriculum.
- There is a planned programme in the summer term to support children as they move from nursery to P1. This includes linking with buddies from the older classes, visiting the school classrooms and engaging in learning experiences, such as a whole school lunch or assembly. This helps children to settle quickly as they move into P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners share very positive relationships with parents and families. They are beginning to reintroduce opportunities for parents to be more actively involved in the life of the nursery. They offer stay and play sessions for parents and these are well attended. Most parents say that practitioners know their child very well as an individual and that they treat their child with respect.
- Parents enjoyed the recently introduced 'breakfast and blether' session. They welcome the opportunity to have a say in what they feel the nursery does well and how they can improve.
- Parents are beginning to share children's wider achievements from home and this is recorded in children's learning folders. Parents enjoy regular updates about the work of the nursery on an online application.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- All children benefit from warm, nurturing relationships with practitioners and each other. At the start of each session, children identify if they are feeling happy, sad or tired. They self-register by choosing the happy, sad or tired picture board to put their name card on. Practitioners use this information well to engage children in discussion about why they are feeling that way and how the practitioner can help. This helps children to settle quickly each day as they come into nursery. Practitioners make good use of praise and encouragement to help children to build their self-confidence. Children are happy and calm in the nursery.
- Children make their choices for lunch, with their help of their parents, at the start of each week. Practitioners have recently reviewed snack and lunch time routines and developed a clear action plan to improve routines. As a result, children are now fully involved in preparing healthy snacks, setting the tables and serving themselves snack and lunch.
- Overall, children are not yet confident in talking about the national wellbeing indicators and what they mean to them. Practitioners support children to understand what it means to be healthy and safe as they interact with them in their play. Children are becoming aware of the meaning of safe as they play outdoors on large apparatus such as chutes and climbing frames. A few children can identify some food and drinks which are healthy, such as fruit and water or milk. Practitioners should further develop learning experiences and interactions which help all children to understand the full range of wellbeing indicators. Practitioners have not yet developed children's understanding of their rights.
- All practitioners have a clear understanding of their statutory duties relevant to early learning and childcare. They know their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. Practitioners work with families to develop individual plans to support children's health, care and wellbeing needs. They need to ensure that these are appropriately updated when they are reviewed to reflect if children's care and wellbeing needs have changed.
- All children treat each other with respect and are respected by practitioners. Practitioners work effectively with multi-agency partners and parents to develop clear plans to support children who need additional support with their learning. They should ensure targets set are specific and measurable.
- Children enjoy celebrating a few religious and cultural festivals across the year, such as Diwali and Chinese/Lunar New Year. This helps children to begin to develop their understanding of the wider world. Practitioners should review and develop the curriculum and resources further to ensure a wide range of cultures and characteristics are reflected in the nursery.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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 satisfactory progress in communication and language. Most children listen well to simple instructions and enjoy listening to stories. A few children retell familiar stories as they play. Most children are developing their mark making skills in a range of indoor and outdoor experiences. Most older children are beginning to write their names and draw recognisable people with some detail. All children would benefit from more opportunities to write, and mark make, for real-life purposes as they play. Children recognise their name as part of daily routines, for example, as they self-register in the morning and choose their lunch. A few children recognise the names of other children. Practitioners should further develop learning experiences which encourage children to develop their communication and language skills. They should increase the range of mark making materials and opportunities available across the nursery.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children can count to 5 and a majority can count to 10. A few children count beyond ten confidently. A few children are developing their understanding of tall and short as they compare themselves to others or talk about plants in the garden. Most children can sort and match by colour and shape. A minority of children can recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes. Almost all children need to develop their skills in copying or continuing a pattern. Most children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop further their numeracy and mathematical skills in the context of play.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. All children regularly access the outdoor area. Most children are developing their gross motor skills as they run, jump and use large apparatus, such as slides and climbing frames. A few children are developing their understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They talk about their heart beating faster and being out of breath when they are active. Most children are developing their fine motor skills through activities such as mark making, preparing snack and serving their own snack and lunch. Most children can identify when they feel happy, tired or sad. Children now need to develop their understanding of a wider range of emotions. This should help them to identify how they are feeling and take appropriate steps to address their feelings
- Practitioners use praise well to celebrate children's achievements. This is helping children to be proud of themselves and feel good when they have achieved success. Practitioners encourage parents to share children's achievements at home with the nursery. Practitioners celebrate these achievements and are beginning to record them in children's learning folders.

Practitioners should consider how they build on these achievements in nursery to help children to make progress.

- Practitioners know and understand well the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of children and families. All children can access clothing for outdoor play in wet or cold weather. This allows all children to be fully involved in all aspects of outdoor play and learning. Senior leaders and practitioners are at the early stages of analysing data about children's progress to identify where children need support to make better progress. This should help them to plan targeted interventions to support all children to make progress.

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.