Summarised inspection findings

St Gerardine Primary School Nursery

Moray Council

17 December 2024

Key contextual information

St Gerardine Primary School Nursery provides Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for children in Lossiemouth, a coastal town on the north east coast of Scotland. Current staffing means that a maximum of 24 children attend at any one time. The setting has capacity for 40 children to attend at any one time from the age of three until they start school. 25 children are on the roll. Most children are in their second year of ELC, joined recently by a few children new to the setting. Children attend nursery from 9 am to 3 pm. A few children attend more than one setting across their week.

The small team are led by a nursery manager, who also manages another setting. The team includes a senior early years practitioner (EYP), two EYPs, a pupil support assistant and part-time support worker. There is one main playroom and a small office area. Children have direct access to a spacious, fenced outdoor area.

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 are respectful, caring and nurturing as they interact with children. The staff team use praise well to reinforce positive behaviour. Children are polite and helpful, they frequently assist their friends as they play. Highly positive relationships are evident between the manager, team, children and families. Practitioners use their knowledge of children's needs and interests effectively to offer a wide range of experiences in the playroom, outdoor area, beach and local community.

- Children enjoy exploring their senses as they play with sand and water. A few children would benefit from more challenging activities to sustain their concentration and engagement throughout all areas of the playroom and outdoors. Children are motivated and enthusiastic as they visit their local shop to purchase items for their cafe. They enjoy learning from parents and practitioners about how to care for their environment and grow food in their small vegetable plot. Children are creative and proud of their work to make a scarecrow using recycled materials. The team should continue to increase opportunities for children to use technologies to support learning as they research, document and explore their interests.

- The manager and practitioners engage with children in a natural, playful way, commenting with genuine interest as they extend children's vocabulary and understanding well. Most practitioners use open-ended questions effectively. This supports children well to share their ideas with adults and one another. The team act quickly upon children's suggestions about what they would like to do.

© Crown Copyright

- All practitioners make regular observations of children at play and record these within children's individual folders. Large books record useful photographs and comments about the wide breadth of beneficial experiences children have enjoyed. These records do not yet fully reflect children's progress over time. The manager should continue recent, necessary work with the team to develop further the quality and focus of all observations. Practitioners now need to build on their positive start to use observations to fully inform their planning of spaces and experiences. Commendably, the manager has initiated and participated in important work to develop new approaches to track and monitor children's progress. This includes positive partnership work with teachers in the school and colleagues across the local authority. This supports all colleagues to begin to develop a shared understanding of the progress children make across the early level.

- The team collaborate effectively with parents and other agencies to agree and implement clear, up to date, relevant support plans for children who require additional support with their learning. The manager commendably prioritised necessary work to agree, role model and implement consistent strategies for children who have additional needs in the last session. The team now use gesture, visual prompts, and vocabulary well to support all children to access all areas of learning and play alongside their peers. The team's regular reviews of plans, honest communication with families and effective partnership working ensures children's plans are current and reflect children's changing needs.

© Crown Copyright

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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 school and the education authority.

© Crown Copyright

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 communication and early language. Almost all children engage in conversations with adults and their friends. Most children listen well to stories in large groups and a few children take books to quiet spaces to look at for their own enjoyment. Most children confidently sing nursery rhymes and can display the actions to go along with these. Children mark make independently using a range of resources. A few children are beginning to form recognisable shapes and enjoy describing their drawings. Most children now need to mark make and write for a purpose more frequently.

- Children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. Most children can confidently count to 10 and beyond. The majority of children explore measure and volume well in the sand and water areas. Small groups of children work very well together to measure their teddy bear's feet for new shoes. Children are beginning to identify two dimensional shapes and develop an early understanding of fractions as they help prepare food. Children are ready to develop a wider range of mathematical language.

- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children understand a few of the national wellbeing indicators and refer to these, for example, knowing how to stay safe. Children confidently run, climb, balance and ride bikes to develop their gross motor skills in the outdoor area. Almost all children understand the importance of hygiene and know how to take care of themselves. For example, washing their hands after playing in the mud kitchen.

- Children are making good progress over time relevant to their age and stage of development. Children are happy, confident, and independent in their learning. Senior leaders now need to develop robust systems to track progress over time for all children.

- Children's achievements are captured well and celebrated frequently within the nursery. Children independently use an online system to gain points for being responsible and other acts of kindness. This is recognised and celebrated each day. Practitioners gather information from home and celebrate these within the nursery, such as swimming lessons. Children are given praise and are proud of their achievements.

- All practitioners have developed strong, positive relationships with children and their families. Practitioners support children with additional support needs well through good partnership

© Crown Copyright

working. The manager and practitioners are sensitive, non-judgemental, and resourceful as they support families who may experience any barriers to accessing nursery trips or changes at home. The manager should continue to review and minimise any additional costs to families.

© Crown Copyright

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.

© Crown Copyright