

Summarised inspection findings

Sandbank Primary School Nursery Class

Argyll and Bute Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Children can access nursery provision through the medium of Gaelic (sgoil àraich) and English (EME) at Sandbank Primary School/Bun-sgoil Taigh A' Chladaich. The provision for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) opened in August 2018 and is housed in new purpose-built accommodation. Recently, the EME early learning and childcare centre has been fully refurbished. The Gaelic Medium provision is referred to as Sgoil Araich Taigh A' Chladaich. The headteacher of Sandbank Primary School/Bun Sgoil Taigh A' Chladaich has overall responsibility for both sgoil àraich and early learning and childcare centre. There is a lead early years practitioner for the cluster but this is not bespoke to GME. Both classes extended their provision to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare in January 2020. Children are able to attend for 6 hours per day, with some children currently building up to 5 full days.

The sgoil àraich and early learning and childcare centre is registered for 40 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 children on the roll. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor area which is adjacent to the nursery. They also make use of the environment surrounding the school including a wooded area.

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 consulted widely with children, staff, practitioners, parents and partners to create refreshed vision, values and aims for the school sgoil àraich and early learning and childcare centre (ELCC). Practitioners bring these to life through the very positive ethos in the ELCC and ensure they underpin their work with children. As a result, there is a strong culture of respect and ambition in which children are encouraged to be kind, honest and responsible.
- The headteacher uses his knowledge and interest in early learning and childcare to provide positive leadership and direction to practitioners. He ensures that the ELCC is involved fully in the life of the school. The cluster lead practitioner and centrally deployed early years team, also provide valuable, additional support and guidance. The practitioner teams in both settings work well together. They are making good progress in developing their practice to meet new attendance patterns. They are proactive in reflecting on practice and making changes to the new learning environments. As a result, children have positive early learning and childcare experiences in a stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- Practitioners are fully aware of priorities in the improvement plan. They are diligent in embedding the values within the culture of the ELCC. They are focused fully on ensuring children are settling well and experiencing high-quality early learning and childcare. As planned, the headteacher should re-establish a regular and robust system for monitoring to better support the cycle of change and improvement. The recently released document, 'Realising the Ambition' should be helpful to benchmark accurately what is working well and what still needs to improve.

- Practitioners are highly reflective and use national guidance to evaluate and improve their practice. They take responsibility for their own professional learning. The headteacher directs them helpfully towards an electronic toolkit of resources he has created. This helps keep staff up-to-date with early learning and childcare guidance, policies and procedures. Practitioners identify their personal strengths and interests to agree informally, their leadership roles. This supports the culture of distributed leadership and empowerment in the ELCC. Leadership roles include developing the outdoor environment, developing creativity, literacy and specific barriers to learning. The headteacher should support practitioners to monitor and evaluate the impact of leadership roles to ensure that overall, they are improving outcomes for children.

Gaelic Medium Education

- Practitioners benefit from an inclusive approach by which they are valued as part of the school community. They communicate values to the children in a meaningful and relevant way. Most children demonstrate an understanding of these values as they play and learn. Practitioners attend school events and professional learning. They contribute positively to promoting GME within the school and community.
- Practitioners in the sgoil àraich have engaged well with relevant documentation specific to GME, including the 'Advice on Gaelic Education', to support improvements in their practice. They are making good progress in implementing national advice on total immersion. Their planning recognises the distinctive approaches of GME. Going forward, all feedback to practitioners on practice should be based on total immersion approaches and not be drawing comparisons to pedagogy for English medium early learning and childcare. Practitioners would benefit from visiting other GME nurseries to support further improvements.
- Practitioners are putting to good effect specific professional learning to support the implementation of 1140 hours. Parents have access to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare through the medium of Gaelic. Most practitioners in the sgoil àraich are making effective use of professional learning to develop their Gaelic language skills. This should be part of a continuous programme, with which all who interact with children, even for short periods of time, are encouraged to learn some Gaelic.
- The headteacher has responsibility for managing the sgoil àraich and has undertaken some helpful monitoring visits. He plans correctly to increase the regularity of monitoring visits and involve a specialist to provide input on literacy and Gàidhlig.

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

- Children and practitioners moved into the refurbished premises in August 2019. In addition, children now have access to increased hours allowing them to attend for a full day. As a result, there have been significant changes to the ELCC environment and staffing levels. In making these changes, practitioners have taken steps to ensure children have free access to resources across the ELCC, encouraging creative, explorative play. Children have free access to an outdoor area, a large field and a woodland area where they benefit from a range of resources which develop imaginative outdoor learning. A few children need a quiet area when they need space, and time to rest and relax when tired. Across the ELCC, children experience warm and caring relationships between practitioners, children and their families. This helps make the ELCC a place where children enjoy their learning.
- Children are encouraged to be independent in their learning. For example, all children are developing their skills of putting on waterproof clothes independently to go outside. Practitioners capture children's interests well, which provides them with opportunities to lead their learning through play. They use floor books well to enable children to discuss and plan further learning. Practitioners use questioning effectively to help scaffold children's thinking. For example, practitioners make good use of questioning within the woodland to encourage children's imaginative play. Children take the lead in preparing snack and activities such as filling the water trough. Practitioners should build on this success and develop further children's leadership skills.
- Practitioners assess children's learning well through observations of learning. They use assessments effectively to inform their planning of learning for most children. A few children need a more formal assessment of their needs. Practitioners should work with parents and other specialist agencies to identify short-term targets to help plan children's learning. Practitioners record descriptions of children's learning with photographs in children's profile folders. In a few of these folders, they identify next steps in learning. Parents can access profile folders and a few are beginning to add details of children's achievements at home. There is a need for practitioners to build on this and use children's folders to more accurately chart children's progress and identify next steps in their learning. To help moderate the standard across the early level, practitioners should work with P1 staff in the school and across the cluster.
- Practitioners make good use of the developmental milestones in health and wellbeing and the progression plans within literacy and numeracy to help track children's progress. They use information from these trackers well to identify those children needing support and challenge in their learning.

Gaelic Medium Education

- Practitioners in the sgoil àraich have created a warm and welcoming environment for children and families. Practitioners' and children's interactions are caring and responsive, resulting in children who are happy, safe and secure. For children in the GME, this is an important basis to be underpinning their immersion experience. Children's learning takes place in a range of language-rich contexts, both indoors and outdoors. Children engage well during 'welcome time' and particularly enjoy singing their welcome song. For this, most children join in with counting in Gaelic and recite the days of the week.
- Children are confident in their environment. They are developing friendships and learning to play cooperatively with others. Children enjoy role-play, which enables them to develop their imagination, whilst also developing their Gaelic language. They respond well to questions and prompts from practitioners to develop their stories.
- Practitioners use digital technology well to support learning and teaching. Children are confident in accessing digital technologies independently to support their learning. They show responsibility in keeping their playroom tidy and can relate this to the sgoil àraich's values. Children take part in a few joint activities with the ELCC. The headteacher and staff should review and evaluate these activities for their impact on total immersion, which is a core fundamental principle of GME. Children in EME should be learning Gaelic to maintain a Gaelic ethos. Gaelic is an important context to the school and nursery.
- Most children engage well during adult-led and child-initiated experiences. They sustain good levels of interest, for example when making playdough and listening to a story in the forest area. Practitioners make appropriate and effective use of questions and commentary to support and extend children's learning. They know children well and are able to identify where children require further support or challenge in their learning. Overall, practitioners differentiate experiences effectively to ensure they meet the needs of all children.
- Practitioners effectively use a range of immersion approaches. These include commentary, songs and telling stories. Adults interact through Gaelic alongside the children as they engage in activities. These interactions need to be more frequent. Practitioners also engage in adult-to-adult conversations to enable children to hear the language. They utilise productively the routines of snack and lunch to encourage children to use the Gaelic language that they are acquiring.
- Practitioners observe children's play. They use these observations to plan interesting opportunities and experiences to support children's learning of Gaelic. Children's learning is recorded in profiles, which they enjoy discussing to share their learning stories. Practitioners should use the National Benchmarks to make more focused observations of what children can do and understand. There is scope for more of children's understanding of Gaelic through immersion to be documented to have a fuller overview of children's progress. Practitioners' use of developmental overviews to track progress is not fully based on GME and, as such, is not fully effective. Practitioners should develop moderation as part of reliable and valid assessment and a shared understanding of children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum in the ELCC takes account of children's interests. Practitioners respond well to their interests and use these as a springboard for learning. For example, a new baby in a family prompted work on babies, spring and names of animals and their young. Practitioners use experiences and outcomes in literacy and numeracy from Curriculum for Excellence to plan for children's learning. In addition, they use the developmental milestones to plan for children's health and wellbeing. They have established a clear rationale for the curriculum and share the school's values.
- Practitioners play an active role in developing early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum. There is a need to continue to review the environment to maximise opportunities for literacy and numeracy through play. Practitioners ensure that there is a good balance between adult and child-led planning.
- Practitioners use the local environment well to ensure children have frequent opportunities to learn outdoors. For example, children explore regularly the woodland within the school grounds, the large field and their outdoor area. Practitioners should ensure they plan for progression in children's outdoor experiences to ensure they maximise their learning within this rich resource.
- Transitions from home to nursery are positive for children and parents. Parents are encouraged to stay in the ELCC to support their child settle. They report that they are comfortable in the ELCC and feel staff work with them as partners to help support their child's progress. Practitioners work well with staff in the school to plan a transition theme to support continuity in children's learning across the ELCC to P1. Practitioners and teachers should continue to work together to plan across the early level to ensure continuity and progression in learning for all children.

Gaelic Medium Education

- The curriculum in the sgoil àraich takes account of children's interests, total immersion and Curriculum for Excellence. Practitioners provide choice in a range of play-based experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They ensure an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Practitioners use the local environment well to enhance children's outdoor learning experiences and extend children's awareness of the world around them. Children's real-life learning experiences also provide meaningful opportunities to extend children's learning in different contexts. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to enhance further children's learning.
- In the sgoil àraich, children take part in helpful transition activities across the year. They participate regularly in whole-school assemblies and take part in weekly joint learning activities with the GME P1/2 class, for example physical education. This is supporting increased enrolments into primary one.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Children and families are welcomed into the ELCC. Practitioners know them very well and as a result, parents feel encouraged to participate in the ELCC. They share their languages, cultures and support children's learning by sharing relevant experiences. For example, one parent shared Slovakian songs and rhymes with children. A few parents demonstrated musical instruments to support children's learning in music.
- Practitioners keep parents up-to-date with their children's learning and development through children's folders, parents' evenings and daily opportunities to pass on information. This helps parents to work closely with the ELCC to support children's progress. They attend assemblies regularly when their children perform or have their achievements recognised. The leadership team provides parents with informative newsletters to share children's current learning and discuss how they might support this at home. This encourages families to make appropriate contributions to enrich children's learning.

Gaelic Medium Education

- In the sgoil àraich, practitioners have very positive relationships with children, parents and families. Practitioners are proactive in signposting parents to Gaelic resources, which can support language development at home. Parents are encouraged to attend 'stay and play' sessions to share in their child's experience in the setting. Younger siblings' attendance at these sessions is encouraged. Parents have had useful opportunities to visit the setting and share information about their occupations, skills and hobbies with children. Practitioners support parents in their use of core Gaelic vocabulary during these visits.

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

- Practitioners promote wellbeing as a key feature of the ELCC. They have created a welcoming, inclusive environment for children and their families. They value positive relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, as essential to wellbeing. Together, as a new team, they promote the values of the ELCC. They actively encourage children to show kindness and respect for others. Practitioners are sensitive and nurturing in a responsive and consistent way to the needs of individuals. As a result, most children are happy and confident in the ELCC. Most play well together, share and take turns well. When required, practitioners support children very sensitively to recognise others' feelings and to show consideration. This is helping children to develop the skills required to self-regulate. Practitioners use praise very effectively to recognise children's positive behaviour and promote their self-esteem.
- Practitioners are developing a strong sense of community where each individual and family is valued. This ethos supports children to be confident and play an active role in the ELCC. It supports children to settle at their own pace and to manage their extended day well. Children's lunchtime experience encourages and develops their social skills. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to relax after lunch.
- Children are developing their understanding of the national wellbeing indicators of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Practitioners are beginning to introduce the language of wellbeing to children in a developmentally appropriate way. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe when they go to the woods and on the bus journey to Dunoon. Most children demonstrate resilience and perseverance as they tackle new challenges. Children assess potential risks when they visit the woods to ensure their own and others' safety.
- Children are becoming aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They can talk about foods that keep them healthy. Children are learning the rules of good hygiene. However, practitioners need to reinforce consistently the rules of handwashing to minimise the spread of germs. Practitioners track carefully children's development within the indicators. They should continue to support children to articulate their own thoughts and feelings about their wellbeing.
- Practitioners consult with children and ensure they are active participants in many decisions that affect them. They are included fully in making decisions about creating their new outdoor environment. They are confident their ideas and interests are valued and taken forward.
- Practitioners understand the statutory duties required to deliver early learning and childcare. They understand the importance of keeping children safe and their role in ensuring that this happens. Practitioners know children and families very well which helps them to secure positive outcomes for individuals. Practitioners promote inclusion. They are skilled in identifying where a child may benefit from support with their learning. They work closely with

parents and agencies to plan appropriate additional support. They need to supplement this work by creating specific manageable targets for identified children to ensure focused, short-term support.

- Children explore and celebrate diversity in meaningful ways to help them become aware of cultures, customs and ways of life in Scotland and beyond. They are becoming aware of other languages and cultures amongst families in the ELCC. They celebrate their Scottish culture as they explore Gaelic, dancing and music. They are developing empathy and understanding of children's lives in other parts of the world in their role as ambassadors for the Mary's Meals project in Malawi.
- Practitioners are aware of the challenges families and children may face and take steps to support them by signposting partner agencies. They also ensure that attending ELCC should result in minimal cost and provide waterproof trousers and jackets to ensure all children can participate fully in those experiences which are on offer.

Gaelic Medium Education

- Children are becoming more independent at snack, in their personal care, and developing good friendships. They are developing life skills in hygiene and food handling. Children play very well together and show consideration for each other. They have daily opportunities to be outside in the outdoor area. Practitioners use praise appropriately, including to positively reinforce the use of Gaelic. Children's positive behaviour is recognised through the setting's values, 'rionnagan' and certificates at whole-school assemblies.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of their role in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is evident in practice. Children are at the early stages of understanding what the national wellbeing indicators mean to them. Children are beginning to explore their rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Practitioners know the children well as individuals. Where barriers to learning are identified, practitioners work closely with school staff and external agencies as appropriate. Practitioners need clearer guidance in relation to supporting children with additional support needs (ASN) in the context of GME. They should use national best practice guidance on inclusion to influence their practice.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well throughout the work of the nursery. There is a strong sense of community and practitioners have a good understanding of the context of the sgoil àraich. Practitioners treat children and families fairly. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year.

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

- Most children are making good progress in language and communication. They engage well in conversation with their peers, adults and visitors. Most children describe their play and can make their needs known effectively. A majority of children enjoy story time with an adult and listen attentively. Most children need to engage more and on a daily basis with stories, books and other early reading experiences across the playroom and outdoors. In doing this they should develop further their understanding of text and their listening and talking skills.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in mark-making and early writing skills across the ELCC and outdoors. They make good use of a variety of materials to mark-make across the ELCC. For example, in the outdoors they make good use of natural materials and mud to make marks. Most children recognise their name and a majority are beginning to write their name. Children need to be able to develop their mark-making skills more frequently across all areas of play. They need appropriate space to encourage and develop mark-making and early writing skills.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children recognise numbers in their daily routine in preparing for snack and the outdoors. Most can count to five and a majority can count to ten and beyond. They show confidence in working with volume and weight within the sand and water. They show skill in using the language of measure in comparing heights. Children collect and organise information, and display information using a variety of pictorial representations. Most children are developing an awareness of time and discuss confidently the order of the day. In order for all children to make further progress in their learning, children need to increase their understanding in numeracy and mathematics and apply their skills across the ELCC and outdoors.
- Overall, children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are developing well their physical skills and their understanding of risk through being outside on a daily basis, exploring within the adjacent woodland. Most children can identify healthy food at snack time. The majority of children are developing increasingly well their hygiene skills through tooth brushing and hand washing. Most children are developing well an understanding of emotions. They are increasingly able to express themselves appropriately through the values characters. Staff are patient and take time to have conversations with children to help them understand the importance of the values. As a result, children are developing well their friendships and their skills of sharing and playing well with each other.

- Children make good progress over time. Practitioners maintain clear evaluations of children's progress within the planned learning. They track children's progress through the developmental milestones. In addition, they use the progression pathways in literacy and numeracy which are linked to National Benchmarks. Children's profiles contain evidence of children's progress over time. However, these need to reflect more clearly when children have overtaken significant learning and identify clearly next steps in learning. Practitioners should work with parents and children to set targets for children's learning. There is a need to streamline the approach to planning and tracking children's progress to reduce bureaucracy and to make information more readily available for practitioners and parents.
- Parents share willingly children's achievements with the ELCC. Practitioners should involve parents in identifying a range of achievements from home and seek their help in identifying wider achievements that the ELCC could provide. They should track children's wider achievements to ensure no children miss out on experiences. Children are developing their citizenship skills well as they develop their understanding of the needs of others through their work with 'Mary's Meals'. They are developing their confidence well by sharing this learning about the needs of others at whole school assemblies. They show a good understanding of respect for others when they acknowledge and thank people around the school who help them.
- Practitioners know children and their families well. They provide good support to children and their families if they face challenging circumstances. They work well with other agencies to ensure equity for all children. Practitioners ensure there are no barriers to participation by providing warm jackets and waterproof clothing for all children in order for them all to access the outdoors regardless of weather. Good use is made of the local environment as a learning experience to ensure minimum cost for participation. Practitioners use the local authority minibus well to ensure all children can access activities without cost. Children who have barriers to learning make good progress in their learning as a result of appropriate planned interventions.

Gaelic Medium Education

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early Gaelic language. They understand continuous conversation, instructions and phrases used in familiar contexts, such as during snack time and welcome time. Almost all children listen well to songs and can join in with repetitive lines. Most are beginning to use common words during adult-led activities. A few children use common Gaelic language independently in their play, for example, colours and numbers. Most children engage well in conversations with adults and other children, sharing personal experiences and retelling events in English to Gaelic prompting.
- Children are developing their early writing skills as they make marks in a variety of different contexts, for example, using brushes and contributing to floor books. Almost all children can identify their name through self-registration. Children could be encouraged more to access texts across the learning areas. Independent access to library books is well supported by digital technologies, including talking tins and talking pens. Children enjoy singing and stories with partners through 'Bookbug' sessions.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are developing their skills through free play and adult-led activities. They count the number of children attending the sgoil àraich. A few older children can count to 20 and identify numbers before and after. Children develop their skills in capacity through measuring using a range of resources. They use simple mathematical language as they fill containers and pour water. Most children show understanding of time concepts through welcome time discussions, for example, the days of the week and the daily routine.

- Children in the sgoil àraich are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are happy and settled at nursery. They develop important physical skills in the outdoors and through weekly access to the school gym hall. Children's independence is developed through nursery routines, for example, tooth brushing and pouring their own drinks at snack time.
- Through discussions with children during their play, it is evident that most children are making good progress over time. Practitioners should develop the quality of observations and analyse information gathered to have an accurate and clearer overview of children's progress over time. Documentation of children's progress should include the language that they understand and use. Practitioners need to identify clearer next steps to support children's learning. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop the use of floor books to document children's 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.