

# Summarised inspection findings

## Gracemount Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

17 September 2019

## Key contextual information

Gracemount nursery operates from a separate building in the grounds of Gracemount Primary School. At the time of inspection the setting was registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for 56 children at any one time and there were 84 children currently attending. Children attend on two different attendance patterns of either morning or afternoon sessions. There are two large playrooms, an enclosed large outdoor area and a family room within the nursery. The team includes practitioners, seniors, an assistant and full time teacher. The work of the nursery team is supported by an experienced, supportive and actively involved depute headteacher. From August 2019 the team plan to deliver an extended service that offers 1140 hours across the year.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships in the nursery are caring and supportive and children feel valued and secure. The majority of children show a keen interest in the available resources and engage well in their play both indoors and in the outdoor area. A few children concentrate for long periods of time on their chosen experiences. They talk to each other and adults about what they are doing. This was particularly evident at the small construction table and in the block play area. Children have a good level of freedom and this allows them to follow their interests and select the resources they wish to use. This supports most children to develop their creativity and imagination as they create situations and negotiate well with each other. At times during the session, a few children became less engaged in their play. They spent time watching other children at play and became involved in less purposeful play experiences. Practitioners should review the flow of the session. In doing so, they should consider how they can integrate opportunities for children to discuss their learning. All children need to experience carefully planned, appropriately challenging experiences that meet their individual needs.
- Practitioners are kind and caring and demonstrate positive relationships with children. They know individual children well and have a sound understanding of the importance of learning through play. Practitioners interact sensitively to support children's play and enable them to follow their interests. We observed a few practitioners who were using open-ended questioning and commentary effectively to support children to start to think about their learning. This now needs to become more consistent throughout the nursery to ensure children are supported to extend and deepen their learning. In planned work to improve the learning environment the team should review resources to ensure they support children to build on and extend their skills. Overall, most children need more opportunities for challenge and depth in their learning.
- Children use a range of digital technologies including tablets. They also use the interactive board to look at and talk about their online journals. Practitioners should continue to build on this positive start and develop further their use of digital technologies to support and extend children's learning.

- Practitioners observe children and how they interact with experiences in the playroom. They use a range of assessment materials to gather information on learning. Practitioners discuss the information at team meetings and make judgements about children's progress. There are examples of how they are starting to use this information to plan future learning for children. This is not yet consistent or embedded in practice. They record information about children's experiences in online journals at regular intervals. The majority of parents access journals and comment on their child's experiences. Practitioners need to explore how they can encourage and support all parents to engage more fully in their child's learning. This will enable parents to be more aware of and involved in their child's achievements. Currently, the information recorded in the journals does not fully capture children's significant learning. Moving forward, practitioners need to refine their assessments and use the information more effectively to plan next steps in children's learning.
  
- Practitioners meet together to plan for children's learning over different timescales using national guidance. They display a set of useful prompts in play areas to remind practitioners about the focus for learning. During the session practitioners record episodes of responsive planning with individual children and detail the resources they have provided to extend children's experiences. The team recognise that the information they gather about children's progress does not yet fully inform their planning. There is scope to have a clearer focus on learning. The team shared their plans to adopt new planning procedures. When doing this they should consider how they can involve children more meaningfully in the process. This will help to give children a voice and support them to start to lead their own learning. The team will also benefit from making use of the design principles to ensure they are providing appropriate depth, challenge and relevance for all children.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

### 3.2 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

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. Almost all children develop their vocabulary as they engage in extended conversations with practitioners and others about their experiences. Children independently access and share books in various areas of the playrooms. In the best examples, children enjoy using digital technology to create their own stories and make their own books. Most children are developing good listening skills as they follow instructions. A few children confidently write their name and a few familiar words as they mark make in floor books. There should now be an increased focus on developing mark making and early writing skills.
- Almost all children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children are developing their understanding of volume as they fill and empty containers and transport water using pipes and tubes. The majority of children use the language of measure appropriately. They compare, sort and order objects and people by length and height. Almost all children recognise numbers to ten and the majority of children count during play experiences. A few children use scales accurately to invent and play a game where they compare the weight of stones. Children would benefit from a better balance between free flow play and planned experiences that develop further their existing skills.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children share space and resources well. They understand the nursery rules and refer to these in their interactions. Most children negotiate, co-operate and include one another throughout their free flow play. Children develop their fine motor skills as they carefully explore playdough and use tools. Most children enjoy the challenge of travelling and jumping in different ways from physical equipment. Children develop responsibility and independence as they help to prepare healthy snacks for their friends. Overall there is scope for a more progressive approach where children develop further their leadership skills.
- Over time most children show increasing creativity, perseverance and developing independence as they play in the outdoor area. They are proud of paintings they create by mixing colours together. Most children enjoy imaginative play in their 'bus rocket' and ship in the outdoor space. At present there are missed opportunities to build on and develop further children's existing skills.
- The majority of practitioners use well-judged praise and specific feedback to support children to persevere or recognise their achievements. All children have an electronic learning journal that contains up to date observations of activities and experiences within nursery. As planned,

the team should continue to improve the use of these journals to ensure they reflect children's progress.

- All children are valued and respected for their individual skills and abilities. Practitioners have a good understanding of children's unique needs, strengths, personalities and interests. The team notice and share where children may require additional support or encouragement. A few children have specific plans agreed with parents, other professionals such as speech and language therapists that support them to make progress. The nursery has recently had a focus on closing the attainment gap. They have used available data to identify children who require support and put in place targeted play-based experiences to support their progress. All practitioners should continue to carefully monitor the success of these planned interventions to ensure children continue to make the very best possible progress.

### 1. Quality of care and support

Throughout the inspection, children presented as happy, confident and secure. Children were able to direct their own play, making independent choices about how and where they played. Children were developing skills in communication, problem solving and creativity as they engaged in uninterrupted periods of play. For example, within the block area children developed ideas, making some complex and imaginative creations.

Children's wellbeing was promoted as they enjoyed nutritious, balanced snacks. They were developing their independence as they prepared the food and self-selected their own choices. Staff sat with children, supporting the development of social conversations and creating a relaxed atmosphere.

Children had many opportunities to be active and engage in energetic, physical play. Through these experiences, they were developing gross motor and movement skills such as running, skipping and balancing. Children were developing their confidence, self-esteem and learning new skills as they had fun taking part in a weekly dance session.

Staff were aware of children's medical needs; however, we found at times, best practice had not been followed in relation to the storage of medication. The nursery should ensure that any medication that children need is available during their time in the setting. We were confident the nursery was able to address this in order to effectively meet children's medical needs.

Where children required additional support, staff worked effectively with other professionals to promote their wellbeing, development and learning. They had developed positive partnership working that resulted in children getting the support they needed in a way that was right for them. Strategies of support were effective. Some children benefitted from enhanced transitions into both the nursery and when they made the transition to school. This helped to promote a sense of security and build children's confidence.

Personal plans were in place for children and included some information about their needs and preferences. We discussed with the nursery how for some children personal plans could be further developed to better reflect their changing needs and to ensure the information remained meaningful. This would support staff to holistically plan and evaluate for all children's care and support needs. Personal plans should be reviewed and updated with parents, as changes occur and at least every six months. We were confident from our discussions with the nursery that they would consider how they would develop their approach to personal plans.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

### 3. Quality of staffing

Interactions between children and staff were warm and nurturing. Staff were sensitive to children's individual needs and personalities. This contributed to children feeling secure and confident. Staff knew children and families well, resulting in the development of positive and trusting relationships across the nursery.

Staff were clear on their roles and responsibilities throughout the day, meaning sessions were calm and organised. Staff were focussed on the needs and experiences of the children. Positive and effective communication was a key strength of the team. This supported children as staff

shared information with each other that helped promote a continuity of care. Staff had regular meetings as a team and with the Depute Head Teacher who had responsibility for the nursery. This allowed them to discuss various other aspects of nursery. Children were benefitting from staff working together to create an ethos of respect and inclusion.

Children were achieving because staff planned experiences based on their individual interests. However, during the inspection there were some missed opportunities for staff to promote and extend children's learning. For example, children would benefit from all staff using open-ended questions. This would support children to further develop and deepen their ideas and learning. The nursery should continue to develop approaches to learning so that children can experience greater challenge and depth across learning. We discussed with the senior leadership team how developing staff practice and skills in specific areas of their work would help support consistency in relation to children's experiences and learning.

Staff used assessment tools, such as the communication and language resource 'Up, Up and Away' to consider children's needs. This helped them to highlight where children may benefit from additional support. This meant there were effective support strategies in place and children were included, respected and achieving.

To develop different aspects of the nursery, some staff were taking on leadership roles, which were set at yearly professional development reviews. An example of one such role was the introduction of an outdoor champion. This had resulted in the development of nature play sessions in a local wooded area. Through these sessions, children were active and included in their local community. Children were learning new skills, having fun and experiencing the wonder of nature as they took part in each session.

### Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had one requirement and no recommendations. From this inspection the requirement has now been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no recommendations.



## 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.