

# Summarised inspection findings

**Sandhaven Primary School Nursery Class**

Aberdeenshire Council

14 May 2019

## Key contextual information

Sandhaven Primary School nursery class is registered for a maximum of 20 children from the age of three years up to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection, there were 12 children on the nursery roll. The nursery is located in the village of Sandhaven, on the outskirts of the coastal town of Fraserburgh. It is accommodated in an annexe building adjacent to Sandhaven Primary School. The nursery offers morning only sessions with plans to offer full day sessions in the future. Children have access to two main playrooms and an outdoor play area. Children also benefit from access to the school gym and library. There have been a number of changes to the nursery team over the previous twelve months, including the appointment of a part time senior practitioner.

### 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 and nursery team are committed to ensuring high standards for all children. The headteacher provides strong leadership to the nursery at a time of significant change. She has a clear understanding of the nursery and its community and uses this well to inform strategic planning for improvement. Improvement planning has an appropriate focus on improving learning environments, experiences and outcomes for children. Nursery action plans, developed in partnership with practitioners, enable the team to manage the direction and pace of change well. This is leading to significant improvement to provision indoors and out.
- The primary school and nursery class have recently revisited their vision, values and aims in consultation with parents. This has been effective in contributing to an increased sense of purpose and empowerment across the school and nursery. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to share the school values with children and families and embed them in the daily life of the playroom.
- There have been a number of changes to the nursery team in the twelve months prior to inspection, including the recent appointment of a part-time senior practitioner. The headteacher has developed effective relationships across the nursery and primary school. As a result, there is a positive culture for improvement. Professional learning, peer networking and dialogue across the extended team support a range of improvements in the nursery well. As planned, the headteacher should continue to review and extend opportunities for practitioners to develop increasingly effective, curriculum focused, leadership roles.
- Practitioners are reflective and strive to improve their practice continuously. As a team, they are developing their confidence in using national self-evaluation guidance, including challenge questions. They make effective use of floor books and wall displays to document and share the improvement journey of the nursery with parents and children. This provides a useful focus for critical reflection and planning of next steps. As planned, the headteacher should continue to

support practitioners to build on existing strengths to improve self-evaluation approaches further. She should continue to develop the positive involvement of parents in planning for improvement.

## 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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Children are happy, settled and confident in the nursery. They play together well and take pleasure in sharing their experiences. Play spaces are well organised and resourced so that children are able to find interesting things to play with. Playroom routines enable children to revisit favourite play experiences, for example, arranging furniture and props to create a play bus. The introduction of an increasing range of loose parts, indoors and out, is helping promote children's curiosity. As a result, the majority of children engage well in their play throughout the session. A number of children would benefit from further support to help them move from finding things that interest them, to more purposeful and sustained engagement in their learning.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are consistently positive and supportive. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their use of questioning and comment to extend learning. In improving interactions, practitioners should encourage children to develop their skills in talking and thinking about themselves as learners. This will enable children to lead their own learning in increasingly purposeful and creative directions.
- Children enjoy play with torches and show an interest in the range of digital tools and toys in the nursery. Practitioners should continue to build on children's interests to extend their skills in using digital technologies to achieve success in their learning.
- Practitioners document children's engagement in learning using floor books, wall displays and personal learning journals. A recently introduced 'Proud Cloud' is helping children begin to become more aware of their personal achievements by recording them digitally. Practitioners now need to use learning journals to plan progress in learning for individual children more consistently, and more effectively.
- The newly appointed senior practitioner has begun to work with practitioners to develop a shared understanding of expectations as children progress in key aspects of their learning. This will enable practitioners to develop further their use of observations for effective assessment. It would be helpful to review the use of online learning journals to ensure a clear focus on key aspects of learning.
- The headteacher is supporting practitioners to ensure greater clarity around what children will learn through planned experiences. Practitioners should now develop this further to enrich learning and to increase pace and challenge. Ongoing reviewing of group activities should aim to ensure experiences engage children fully and provide sufficient scope for children to lead the learning.

- The headteacher has introduced an approach to tracking and monitoring based on professional dialogue, learning journals and other relevant evidence. In developing this further, there should be a clear focus on improving progress for all children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Children learn through play in the nursery. Visitors to the setting, experiences in the local community and use of the natural environment enhance children's learning. Practitioners have made a positive start to improving outdoor play, with well-developed plans for further improvement. It would be useful for practitioners and senior leaders to develop a rationale for the curriculum to reflect the unique context of the nursery.
- There is scope to extend opportunities for children to develop and apply literacy and mathematical skills through play. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to develop their understanding of effective early language and numeracy pedagogy to promote progression and to provide enhanced challenge and support to learners.
- Practitioners should continue to develop their use of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence to support further coherence and progression in learning across the early level. They should plan additional opportunities for children to make links between the skills they are learning in the nursery and the wider world of work.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are welcome in the nursery. They contribute well to supporting a range of opportunities for children to learn beyond the playrooms, including visits to the local care home. 'Stay and Play' sessions provide valuable additional opportunities for partners and carers to find out how children learn in the setting.
- Practitioners keep parents informed about their children's learning using a range of approaches including informal interactions, floor books, and children's individual learning journals. Parents and carers should now be more involved in recognising achievements and planning next steps for children. A simple target setting approach might help parents recognise when children are achieving and what they can do to help.
- Practitioners have begun to share the wellbeing indicators with parents and plan to introduce a 'Wellbeing Bear' to develop this work further. Practitioners should now take forward plans to involve parents in developing a range of opportunities for family learning.

## 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 know children well. They welcome parents to the nursery and make good use of information from home to meet the care and support needs of children on a daily basis.
- Practitioners have a sound understanding of the importance of positive relationships in supporting children's learning and development. They demonstrate kindness and consideration in their interactions and share responsibility for ensuring that children feel welcomed and valued in the nursery. As a result, there is a calm and caring environment in the nursery. It is evident that children are happy, settled and feel at home with the nursery team.
- Practitioners encourage children to be considerate of others and to develop positive relationships with their peers. As a result, most children are developing good friendships and are learning to cooperate with others in their play. Improvements to planning, and the relaxed and positive approach of practitioners, mean that children have increasing opportunities to contribute to decision making in the nursery. There is scope to develop this further.
- Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). They work together to plan a good range of experiences to enable children to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured and included in the life of the nursery. Visitors to the nursery and regular experiences in the local community and natural environment contribute to children's sense of themselves as responsible and respected individuals.
- Practitioners have made a positive start to promoting children's own understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Children are learning about being active and keeping themselves and others safe during visits and in play. They are increasingly aware of healthy choices and of how to include others in activities. Practitioners should now explore the use of indicators further in family learning contexts.
- Practitioners understand their role in safeguarding children. They are reflective and keep informed about developments in early learning and childcare to fulfil their statutory duties. Practitioners are alert to any additional support needs of children and families. The headteacher carefully manages appropriate systems to ensure that partnerships, including partnerships with parents and carers, are effective in providing support when appropriate.
- Practitioners treat all children and families with respect and fairness. They take careful account of the individual needs of children and strive to create an inclusive ethos at all times. Practitioners encourage children to develop an early awareness of diversity through opportunities to learn about a range of different traditions and celebrations. We have asked them to continue to explore how they can engage children in further relevant learning about diversity and equality.

### 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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Practitioners have been successful in making improvements to the learning environment indoors and have clear plans to develop outdoor experiences for children further. Experiences in the community and local environment are helping children develop valuable skills for learning and life. Children demonstrate curiosity about the natural world, and readiness to share their learning. Practitioners should continue with plans to develop the curriculum. In doing so, they should provide more and better opportunities for children to develop and use their early literacy and numeracy skills to promote independence and to solve problems.
- Children are developing their understanding of health and wellbeing through a range of experiences with adults and peers. Practitioners support children to develop their emotional and social skills well. Children are beginning to learn about healthy choices through snack time conversation. They are becoming aware of the importance of taking care of their teeth and of handwashing. Play in the gym and outdoors, and with wheeled toys, helps children to develop appropriate physical skills. Children have considered what it means to be a good friend and are beginning to develop their sense of how they can help keep themselves and others safe during play experiences.
- In early literacy, children enjoy sharing stories. They readily take part in acting out favourite stories using puppets and props. Children cooperate during shared experiences and most are developing appropriate listening skills. They are developing their vocabulary through exploration of topics of interests, for example, their interest in animals across the world. There is scope to develop children's engagement with rhyme, poetry and song. Children are starting to explore mark making using a variety of tools and resources. Most can recognise their names and a few can pick out their friends' names on name cards. Practitioners offer some opportunities to enable children to begin to understand how they can use written language for useful purposes. There is scope to develop this further.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, most children are becoming aware of counting words through the routines of the nursery day. Children explore shapes, three dimensional objects and patterns through play with blocks and construction. They are developing some vocabulary to talk about direction and to make comparisons, for example, comparing their heights using simple wall displays. Play with water and baking experiences develop further children's growing awareness of measure. There is scope to significantly extend opportunities for children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and thinking through their play.

- Individual learning journals capture information about children's engagement in experiences across the curriculum. Practitioners recognise that they need to continue to develop journals to document progress in key skills more clearly and consistently.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements in the nursery well. They recognise that they now need to develop further imaginative ways to encourage parents to share information about children's achievements at home more fully.
- Children are kind, caring, and well behaved. There is scope for them to have more responsibility in the nursery and to play a stronger role in the life of the school. We discussed how practitioners might facilitate this through an increased focus on the Rights of the Child.
- There is a supportive and inclusive ethos in the nursery based on trust and respect. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children and families. The nursery team are at an early stage in developing their understanding of the role of early learning and childcare in promoting equity through the curriculum.

## Choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

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

- Practitioners understand the importance of establishing trusting relationships at the earliest possible stage. They make good use of information from home to plan care and support for children. Transitions into the nursery are flexible and adapted to the needs of individual children and their families. Parents have information about the nursery before children join.
- Practitioners support children's daily transitions into and within the nursery. Informal conversations and information sharing with parents help ensure practitioners are aware of the changing needs of children.
- Practitioners have recently extended the range of joint activities involving children from the nursery and early primary. This is providing additional opportunities for children to form relationships with 'buddies' and become familiar with routines of the school before moving to primary. Senior leaders recognise that there is considerable scope to improve transitions further.
- Practitioners and teachers share information about children's progress through professional conversations and learning journals. Teachers in the school also spend time in nursery to get to know children. The headteacher is working with practitioners to continue to improve the quality of information about children's progress and achievements. It will be important for teachers and practitioners working across the early level to develop a shared understanding of high quality early learning pedagogy. This will enable them to continue to improve continuity and progression in learning across the early level.

## 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.