

Summarised inspection findings

Fishbowl Nursery

Fife Council

17 December 2024

Key contextual information

Fishbowl Nursery works in partnership with Fife Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in the Leven area. The nursery relocated to new premises in October 2022. Accommodation includes one large playroom, a lunchroom, and a large outdoor area accessed directly from the playroom. The nursery is registered for 30 children attending at any one time, from two years six months old to those not yet attending school. Fourteen children currently attend for 1140 hours of funded ELC. The nursery is open from 9 am to 3 pm each day during school term time. Staffing includes the manager, two practitioners, and a part-time play friend funded by Fife Council. The building caretaker plays a valued supportive role in the life and work of the nursery. The nursery has received a high level of support from Fife Council.

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

- The manager has worked well with practitioners and the management committee to lead change over the past two years. Examples of improvements include the move to larger premises, increased play spaces and the development of a new outdoor area. Working with parents and children, practitioners have renewed the nursery's vision, values and aims. These now reflect the aspirations and opportunities provided by the change in accommodation. Practitioners display the values of care, support and partnerships with families very well in their day-to-day interactions with children and their parents and carers. The nursery's vision to provide a happy, safe and inclusive nursery is clear to see in the ways the practitioner team interacts with and nurtures children.
- Practitioners demonstrate a professional approach to their role as leaders of early learning and childcare. They undertake willingly professional learning opportunities and access a wide range of training through Fife Council. The staff team now need to evaluate what impact their professional learning has achieved. For example, recent professional learning opportunities have not yet achieved a positive impact on planning next steps in learning for individual children. Practitioners meet daily to share their learning around the staff team. They now need to record their decisions and actions to measure their impact on children's learning and development.
- The manager and practitioners agree key priorities as part of the nursery's approach to improvement planning. They use their own knowledge of children and playroom practice to identify strengths and areas for development. The nursery improvement plan currently focuses mainly on children's specific tasks and activities, with some improvements. Children would benefit from a more ambitious improvement plan which develops the curriculum and their learning more fully. The staff team need to make use of both national resources and Fife Council guidance to compare their practice with national standards. This should raise the quality of professional dialogue and identify those changes which will have the biggest impact

on children's learning. The manager needs to develop more systematic approaches to monitoring and self-evaluation to improve further children's learning.

- The manager and practitioners are committed to improving the nursery. They are becoming more reflective as they evaluate the success of their daily planning and playroom provision. The team reviews and improves the learning spaces from time to time. Practitioners could now contribute more fully to making improvements for children, and to their own professional development, by undertaking leadership tasks aimed at taking forward the nursery's priorities. This should support a more coherent approach to self-evaluation. Children lead some appropriate aspects of their own learning but there remains scope to develop their leadership roles in the playroom and outdoors.

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

- Relationships between children, practitioners and parents are positive and supportive. As a result, children feel safe and secure. Almost all children are happy, relaxed and confident during their time at nursery.
- Practitioners have developed welcoming play spaces. Children have the freedom to make independent choices during play, exploring both indoor and outdoor environments. Practitioners should introduce a wider range of experiences and resources that promote curiosity, investigation and exploration. These are necessary to support children to engage in activities more fully and for sustained periods. Practitioners should extend the opportunities for children to build skills in early literacy and numeracy in their play. All children need to experience a carefully planned, broad curriculum and appropriately challenging experiences that meet their individual needs.
- All practitioners are caring and respectful in their interactions with children and are aware of the importance of listening to children. However, at times they miss opportunities to develop children's learning. Practitioners should now consider how to develop their use of interactions, including more open-ended questioning and commentary. These enhancements to their practice will support and extend children's learning, including through timely adult interventions.
- Practitioners know their children and families well. They observe children as they play, and key workers record observations of children within online learning journals. Practitioners have begun to document children's next steps in learning in both digital and paper forms. Staff should adopt a more structured and robust approach to assessing and tracking progress. Practitioners need to ensure that the steps they identify for children's learning fully support future planning for each individual child.
- Features of children's progress are shared with parents in online learning journals and at key worker meetings. However, learning journals are very variable and sometimes lack sufficient detail. Practitioners need to achieve greater consistency and monitoring of children's learning journals. That improvement will help ensure that parents are informed more accurately about their children's progress.
- Practitioners take part in regular planning discussions and are responsive to ideas and interests which children themselves identify. These are recorded on the 'I wonder wall' and in floor books which help make learning visible to children and families. Practitioners now need to review planning processes. Improvements should ensure a more appropriate balance between planning directed by adults and more child-led responsive planning. In doing so, practitioners should ensure that children are making the best possible progress in their learning and development.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The manager and practitioners provide a curriculum that is play based and responsive increasingly to children's ideas and interests. It is broadly developed in line with national advice and reflects key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The staff team should now develop a rationale to underpin the curriculum framework in the nursery. This will build on the strong foundation provided by the recently, revised vision statement and strong focus on nurture and positive relationships. Practitioners should use national guidance more to review and develop their curriculum around spaces, experiences and interactions.
- The curriculum offers children a few opportunities to learn through digital technologies. There is scope to develop staff skills further to enable them to support children's learning skills in more innovative and creative ways, including digital approaches.
- The staff team plan transitions into the nursery very well. They are sensitive and responsive to each child's and families' needs. Children who need additional time to settle are very well supported by the patient, caring staff. Families appreciate the flexibility of the staff team, and the continuity of care offered. The manager is working to develop valuable links with relevant schools to ensure a smooth transition from nursery into primary one.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The manager and practitioners have developed very strong partnerships with parents and carers. All families are invited to be involved in a range of experiences, outings and activities. They appreciate greatly the regular information they receive through the online platform. This includes photographs of children learning in play spaces, as well as information on each child's progress. Parents enjoy 'stay and play' sessions and attending social events. Families provide a high level of support to the nursery's fundraising efforts. All parents spoken with during the inspection commented positively on the friendliness and approachability of the staff team.
- The manager and practitioners have developed a range of community partnerships that enrich children's learning experiences. Regular visits out into the local area provide children with purposeful opportunities to be part of their community. The staff team make effective use of the local area to enhance learning. This includes visits to shops, a local printers' business, library and local park, which enable children to apply their learning and understand their place in the community of Methil.

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

- Practitioners are kind, gentle and responsive to children's social and emotional needs. Children demonstrate a high level of confidence and security as a result of staff's supportive approaches. As a team, all staff provide positive role models for children. All practitioners use the language of restorative practice consistently and effectively. Children follow simple rules and routines well and show empathy for their friends. A majority of children resolve conflicts calmly and express their emotions appropriately. Practitioners use stories and displays effectively to help children manage their feelings.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of national wellbeing indicators but are at the early stages of using them to plan for children's needs. The staff team should raise children's awareness and understanding of the wellbeing indicators through experiences and stories. Children learn about keeping safe with help from the nursery's 'safe elephant.' They demonstrate a good understanding of aspects of safety as they risk assess the outdoor play experiences.
- Children have appropriate experiences at snack and lunchtimes. They demonstrate good independence as they make snack choices and collect their food. Lunchtime arrangements need to be improved so that children are not kept waiting for lengthy periods. Children need to be free to choose whether to rest or play after lunch. Mealtimes should be aimed more fully at providing social experiences where children interact well with each other and practitioners. Children are learning about healthy food choices as they select from a section of fruits at snack time. They took part enthusiastically in a 'pot to plate' growing initiative where they grew and cooked vegetables.
- All practitioners are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities in early learning and childcare. They are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe. However, children who require support with their learning do not yet have individual plans which include appropriate short- and long-term targets. Practitioners work effectively in partnership with a range of agencies to access specialist advice to support children in their learning and development. This advice now needs to be recorded in children's plans.
- The staff team promotes inclusion and equality well. The nursery has a strong sense of community where everyone is welcomed. As a result of the inclusive environment, children value and respect differences in how others play and communicate. Practitioners model fairness and respect effectively in their interactions. Children know that they are valued and listened to. While practitioners celebrate cultural festivals with children, there is scope to develop further children's awareness and understanding of diversity through a wider range of resources and experiences.

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 make satisfactory progress in communication and early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing.
- Children enjoy talking with adults and their friends, sharing their ideas and feelings. The majority of children listen well, although a few need support to help them focus more when others are talking. Almost all children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Most recognise their names, and a few enjoy exploring mark-making and attempting to write their names. All children need to develop further control of their fingers and hands through more experiences which would enable this. Children need to develop their listening and talking skills, for example through engaging more in word play, rhymes, vocabulary, stories, and puppets.
- Children are developing an awareness of numbers, number order and early counting routines. A few children can count to 10 and make good use of mathematical language as part of their play. Overall, children would benefit from more experiences which develop a deeper understanding of numeracy and mathematics. They need to develop their skills and knowledge of how to use numeracy and mathematics within play contexts.
- Children are becoming independent in routines, including dressing for outdoors and serving snack and lunch. Children are not yet able to develop confidence in making their own choices throughout the day, such as when to rest or play outside on account of staff's structure and not enough freedom. Almost all children develop physical skills well as they run, play with balls and ride scooters. They demonstrate their agility as they climb and balance with increasing confidence. The majority of children play well together well and are learning to cooperate and take turns.
- Key workers document aspects of children's achievements. However, the information gathered does not yet consistently show children's progress in learning over time. To better support children's learning, practitioners need to establish and build on children's skills, experiences, and knowledge. As practitioners develop their own skills in planning, assessing and tracking learning, they will achieve a clearer picture of each child's progress. This has the potential to give practitioners better information to help all children make better progress, plan for more targeted support for children with additional needs and ensure equity for all.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.