

# Summarised inspection findings

**Clerkhill Primary School Nursery Class**

Aberdeenshire Council

4 July 2023

## Key contextual information

Clerkhill Nursery Class is based within Clerkhill Primary School and serves the area of Peterhead in Aberdeenshire. The nursery class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged three until they begin primary school. Children can attend all year round. There is a mixture of part-time and full-time placements available across the year. The nursery is registered for 27 children at any one time. The current roll is 44. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. This responsibility has been delegated to a deputy headteacher from the school. A senior early years practitioner has day-to-day management of the setting with support from a lead practitioner. In addition, an Excellence and Equity Lead (EEL) has been recently deployed to the nursery. This year, a number of new staff have been employed.

### 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 benefit from the positive, nurturing and respectful relationships that they have with practitioners. Most children are confident within the setting to access the range of experiences both indoors and outdoors. They are motivated in their play, engage well and sustain interest for extended periods. Practitioners encourage children to share their thoughts, ideas and interests and respond positively. As a result, the majority of children lead their play, particularly outdoors.
- Practitioners provide stimulating learning environments to enable children to develop a range of skills through play. Most children demonstrate curiosity and creativity as they explore the outdoor area and make good use of natural and open-ended resources. The routine of the day allows for long periods of time where children can choose where to play. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to monitor the flow of the day. At particular times in the day, a few children would benefit from opportunities to rest and relax.
- All practitioners interact sensitively with children. They know their individual needs and respond effectively to support and encourage children in their play. Most practitioners make good use of questions and commentary to support and challenge children's thinking. They use tablet computers well to help children find out information about castles. Practitioners should now increase the use of digital technologies to develop and extend children's skills further.
- During play, practitioners observe children using a focused approach to gather information on how children engage with experiences and the learning taking place. In addition, they record 'wow' moments. They use these observations along with assessment information to support their judgements about children's learning and to identify what children might learn next. Each child has a personal profile that contains observations and a few examples of their paintings and drawings. Practitioners recognise they now need to review and adapt the current approach to profiling. They should agree the purpose of profiles and ensure they capture children's

experiences and progress more effectively. Currently, children are not able to use their profiles to reflect on their learning.

- Practitioners use a range of approaches to plan for children's learning. This includes being responsive to children's ideas and interests as well as learning initiated by practitioners based on their knowledge of children. Practitioners track children's learning well in literacy, numeracy and specific developmental milestones based on information from assessment and professional judgement. The current approach to planning and assessment would benefit from review in order to create a streamlined approach. In doing so, practitioners should consider how they plan to provide children with greater depth and challenge in their learning.
- Children who require additional support with their learning have relevant individual support plans. These plans identify clearly children's needs and the strategies to support them. Practitioners should ensure children's targets are set with reasonable timescales and evaluated regularly to ensure children continue to develop and learn well.

## 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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 good progress in their learning since starting nursery.
- In health and wellbeing, children are making good progress. Most children play co-operatively with their peers. They demonstrate kindness to each other, take turns and share resources well. Children are able to talk about their feelings and emotions and relate them to experiences. They share confidently ways to keep safe in different situations. Most children develop physical skills during outdoor play. They would benefit from greater levels of challenge. All children could develop their independence skills further during snack and lunchtime.
- Most children are making good progress in early communication and language. Children communicate their needs in their own way through gesture, use of signing, symbols and words. Most are confident to talk to their peers and familiar adults about their experiences. They share with practitioners the story of their drawings with increasing detail. Practitioners recognise children could develop further their skills in rhyme and initial sounds. Most children demonstrate skills in early writing as they mark-make and attempt to write their name. They would benefit from developing these skills further to support writing for different purposes.
- In early numeracy, most children are making good progress, with a few children making very good progress. They show confidence in counting for a variety of purposes and demonstrate good number recognition skills. A few children show interest in larger numbers and are able to demonstrate simple addition and subtraction using natural materials. Children are ready to extend their mathematical language and develop skills further in pattern and information handling.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements well through praise and encouragement. Children know their artwork is valued and celebrated as it is displayed around the playroom. Practitioners should continue to support and encourage parents to share achievements from outwith the nursery. As recognised, children will benefit from re-engaging with the local community to enable them to develop early citizenship skills and contribute to their local community.

- Senior leaders and practitioners know individual children and their family circumstances very well. Practitioners are aware of areas of children’s learning requiring further support and provide this through specific programmes and individualised support. They recognise that since the pandemic there has been an increase in children requiring support with their speech and language development. As a result, the EEL has recently introduced groups where families and children can learn and play together. These include activities to promote early language and numeracy development. As recognised, over time, it would be helpful for the EEL to gather data on the impact of these interventions on children’s early communication and language development. This will help inform decisions about any future interventions. All practitioners promote high aspirations for every child and work hard to ensure equity for all.

## 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.