

Summarised inspection findings

Clober Primary School Early Years Centre

East Dunbartonshire Council

19 December 2023

Key contextual information

Clober Early Years Centre (EYC) is registered with the Care Inspectorate to accommodate a total of 103 children at any one time. This includes 15 children aged two to three and 88 children aged three to five. The EYC is accommodated in four playrooms within Clober Primary School. One playroom has nine children aged between two and three. The other three have 57 children, aged three to five. Children can access a secure outdoor space. The EYC provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare over 50 weeks for children aged three to five, along with eligible two- to three-year-olds. The EYC is open from 8:00 am until 6:00 pm daily. Parents can supplement their funded hours to follow their working patterns. Children attend either morning, afternoon or full-day sessions. The majority of children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles six to ten. The EYC is managed on a day-to-day basis by the depute head of centre (DHoC) under the overall leadership of the headteacher. Other staffing includes two senior early years workers (SEYW), two nursery teachers and 18 early years workers. There have been a few recent changes in staffing.

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

- Senior leaders and staff have a shared vision for the EYC which takes appropriate account of agreed aims and values for children to aspire, respect, achieve and enjoy. They revised this recently following consultation with staff, parents and children. Children's voice informs this helpful development, as a result of staff's work on raising children's awareness of Children's Rights. Senior leaders and staff refer appropriately to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in agreeing the vision, values and aims. The vision, values and aims are displayed helpfully in and around playrooms. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to involve parents further in taking forward the EYC's vision, values and aims.
- Senior leaders involve staff appropriately in supporting EYC improvement using various systems. These include review and peer leadership meetings, tracking the impact on children's learning and planning next steps. Staff attend helpful discussions where strengths and areas for the centre's development are identified. All staff are included in aspects of self-evaluation. Senior leaders use current thinking, research and national guidance well to improve the quality of the early learning centre improvements. They manage the pace of change well, and together with staff, they support relevant improvements for children and families. Their improvement priorities are improving staff's practice in responsive planning, family engagement and health and wellbeing. Staff understand their important roles in improvement.
- Most staff are reflective and share helpful information and ideas on how to improve practice through professional dialogue with peers. A few have contributed well to local council good practice events, for example on children's rights. Staff value professional dialogue when colleagues from various establishments visit to inform their own practices.

- All staff enjoy using their interests, skills and talents in important leadership roles. These contribute effectively to centre improvement, including in literacy, numeracy, expressive arts, technology, outdoors and Forest Schools. Senior leaders need to continue using staff's skills, talents, initiative and creativity to build further capacity for improvement. This will help staff ensure that children take part in learning experiences which are at the right level of challenge and progress their skills further.
- Senior leaders support staff to engage in relevant professional development which is linked to the centre improvement plan. A few attended helpful East Dunbartonshire Council's professional learning sessions which supported their own practice, for example in woodwork learning, nurture and numeracy. Others feel more confident in their roles through having undertaken higher education qualifications.
- Senior leaders observe EYC practice and use information appropriately to identify strengths and areas to improve. As a result, children's experiences are improving through improvement planning. Staff's working relationships with each other are positive. They would like more involvement in initiating and sharing responsibility for changes to improve provision. Senior leaders should take forward plans to involve staff more in undertaking observations of practice and share these with each other. This will develop further their skills in self-evaluation and also share positive practices within the centre. Senior leaders recognise correctly that a parent committee would help to involve parents more in centre improvement.
- To support further improvements, all senior leaders need to ensure that they continue to have consistent and constructive working relationships with staff. Senior leaders recognise the benefits of including team building in their professional development arrangements to continue to improve EYC provision. They are also planning to increase the opportunities for staff to meet more regularly with all senior leaders to share information, identify strengths and address any concerns. All these actions are aimed correctly at continuing to improve the quality of provision for children and their families.

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

- All children have positive and nurturing relationships with adults, particularly their key worker. Younger children who are new to the centre are also developing these important relationships. Across the centre, most children are developing independence and a sense of responsibility. Most children are motivated and play well with others, and also when exploring playrooms on their own. They find solutions to challenges, including when outdoors. Children like making choices and decisions. Their interests influence what they learn. Most children engage well in the broad range of learning experiences on offer. At times, their learning is not always well enough matched to their needs. A few children need greater challenge to progress their learning and development.
- All staff know children very well and use this information appropriately to help them in their learning. They ensure that routines do not disrupt children's play. Overall, most staff support children's learning well in playrooms. In a few playrooms, staff need to use the available space better. They could provide children with smaller, well-defined areas where they can concentrate more effectively on their play. Staff enjoy playing with children, promoting and encouraging them to explore their surroundings, including when outdoors. All staff use children's interests effectively to motivate them. Where practice is most effective, staff question children well to identify what they know and how to extend their learning and development. However, staff do not always do this consistently across the EYC. Staff also need to offer children experiences which involve them in greater challenge when playing. They need to review the quality of experiences they offer and their own interactions to further children's learning and development.
- All staff use national guidance to plan relevant learning experiences for children in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy in the short, medium and long-term. They use various planning approaches well. These include informative floor books, online e-learning journals and playroom documentation to capture and record aspects of children's learning and interests. Staff are not always consistent in their approach. They need to plan experiences for children to develop specific skills with the right levels of support and challenge. When planning, staff need to provide clear and meaningful next steps across all curriculum areas for children.
- Staff observe children carefully and record information in e-learning journals. They track and monitor aspects of children's learning. Senior leaders now need to work with staff to build on these systems and review available time for staff to discuss and moderate the information they gather. Together, their collective knowledge should be used further to assess children's needs. This will help them to plan appropriate next steps in all curricular areas and support greater consistency in approaches across the EYC.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Staff are developing learning pathways which take good account of EYC values and aims and national guidance. They focus appropriately on delivering experiences that promote children's skills in health and wellbeing, communication and early language and early mathematics. They need to ensure that experiences on offer for children in physical movement enable children to develop skills in a progressive way. At times, the experiences are more appropriate for younger children.
- All staff offer children opportunities and experiences to explore, investigate and be creative. Children's interests help inform curricular topics and areas of focus. Staff need to ensure children's experiences and pathways cover all curriculum areas This will help them offer sufficient breadth and depth, challenge and progression.
- Staff recognise the benefits of working in partnership with parents and partners to enhance children's curricular experiences further and broaden their awareness of the local and wider community.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have worked well to re-engage parents in the life of the EYC and their children's learning. They share and exchange relevant information about children's experiences and progress in various ways. These include through e-journals, curricular evenings, reports, 'stay and play' sessions and through various media. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning more at home to further their development, including through the e-journals. Senior leaders and staff are actively exploring ways to promote this. Staff take advantage of those times when parents or family members drop off and collect children to share key information.
- Parents receive regular and helpful feedback on their children's progress. They have positive relationships with staff. Parents are supported sensitively by staff to help reduce any challenges which families face due to social and economic circumstances. They access useful advice which is supporting their parenting skills and children's learning. Family champions offer helpful parenting support when needs have been identified.
- Staff encourage parents to be involved in the EYC where they can. Parents help with fund-raising and are represented on the school's Parent Council. Staff have identified correctly the benefits of establishing an EYC committee and continuing with the family programme. Staff also help parents engage with other partners in the community to support not only their children's health and wellbeing but also their own.

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

- All children have positive and nurturing relationships with staff in a safe and inclusive environment. Staff's welcoming arrangements for enrolling children ensure that they settle well.
- The majority of children are developing an understanding of wellbeing indicators through engaging with stories, songs and rhymes. Most know how to be healthy and are becoming increasingly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. Children's wellbeing is supported effectively through varied curricular experiences. They enjoy sitting with friends during calm and relaxed lunches and snacks in playrooms. Children are developing good independence, social skills, and table manners through staff's support. The majority of children enjoy chopping fruit for snack. Younger children need to be encouraged more to develop language and communication skills during snack and mealtimes.
- Children's physical and emotional wellbeing is supported well through daily outdoor play. Staff encourage the majority of children appropriately to risk assess aspects of their outdoor learning. Staff need to build on this. Younger children would benefit from more free-flow play to promote further their skills in independence and in making choices. Children relax in a few quiet areas. They need more cosy and sensory spaces to support their wellbeing, particularly when tired.
- Children are developing important skills for learning, life and the world of work, including food preparation, being a leader and participating in a children's committee. They take responsibility for equality and fairness through creating an EYC's charter on their rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children are developing a sound awareness of their rights through experiences linked to the UNCRC. They need to build on this through displays, discussions and interactions with staff and other children. Staff need to expand children's leadership roles and help children identify the skills they develop in these.
- All staff are fully aware of, and comply with, statutory requirements in relation to early learning and childcare. They have undertaken appropriate child protection training and know their roles in helping to keep children safe. Staff complete wellbeing observations regularly and plan appropriate supports. Partners from various agencies support particular children's and families' wellbeing needs appropriately. A few children who have additional support needs have personal plans that outline their care and health needs. Senior leaders need to review the range of children's needs including for those who have English as an additional language or are deferred entry. Together with staff, they need to ensure targeted plans identify what these children need in terms of extra support and challenge for their learning and progress.

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

Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing

- Across the EYC, most children make good progress in early language and communication in line with their age and stage of development. They listen well to adults. The majority of children enjoy exploring sound patterns and recognise a few sounds. Most have an interest in books and authors. They are beginning to understand that books have different uses. A few children discuss which stories and books they like and why. A few children recognise letters and words, others order pictures correctly to help make stories. A few children interpret information accurately from print in their environment. Most children are developing helpful early writing skills well, including through 'real-life' contexts when playing. A few children write words with confidence. A few children could make better progress in early writing.

Mathematics

- Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics in line with their stage of development. Most enjoy exploring real-life materials where they are beginning to understand concepts and use appropriate mathematical language. The majority of children are gaining an understanding of simple fractions, for example when cutting fruit and vegetables in halves and quarters. They are developing an increasing awareness of how to measure, estimate and use correct number skills. Most children measure using scales during baking and cooking experiences. The majority of children understand and use the language of position and direction correctly. They can solve simple problems in movement games. A few children are ready to extend and apply their skills across all areas of numeracy and mathematics. Children need to develop skills further in handling money and coins through real-life play experiences.

Health and wellbeing

- Almost all children make good progress in health and wellbeing in line with their stage of development. They are developing important skills in personal hygiene. Most children have friendships and know who to approach if they are upset. Children are caring and considerate towards others. A few need to continue to develop social skills when interacting with others, including sharing and taking turns.

Children's progress over time

- Overall, almost all children make good progress in health and wellbeing and most in communication, early language, numeracy and mathematics in line with their stage of development. Senior leaders need to develop further their arrangements to gather accurate

information on children's progress over time across all curricular areas in line with their age and stage of development.

Overall quality of children's achievement

- Children like that their achievements and successes are celebrated during play, through displays, floor books, daily praise, certificates and encouragement. Most children are developing resilience and enterprising skills through engaging in 'Clober Enterprises' including fair trade, selling woodwork products and bird houses. The majority of children are developing helpful citizenship skills. They are developing skills in Makaton through learning 'a sign of the month' to communicate with others. Children's understanding and appreciation for the environment is evident through the recent EYC's Eco-Schools (Scotland) Green Flag Award. Staff are also proud of other nationally recognised awards including the UNICEF rights-based award. Staff recognise that they need to continue to develop further ways to track and build upon children's individual achievements, including from home.

Ensuring equity for all children

- Staff use appropriate interventions to address challenges which children face. They are taking forward an improvement priority on parental engagement. This will help prevent gaps in children's progress through exploring ways in which parents can do more to promote children's learning at home. Parents are being encouraged successfully at an early stage to help ensure equity for all children. Individual children are developing helpful skills and making better progress through staff's targeted interventions in listening and talking. Staff need to review their interventions for those children who have English as an additional language and those who have deferred entry, to ensure they progress in line with their age and stage of development.

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.