

Summarised inspection findings

Gorebridge Primary School and Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

26 March 2019

Key contextual information

Gorebridge Primary School nursery class is situated within Gorebridge Primary School, Midlothian. Early learning and childcare sessions are available morning and afternoon during term time for up to 60 children aged three to five years. The nursery has a large, spacious playroom with access to an outdoor area.

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

- Practitioners in the nursery class work well together and are keen to bring about positive change for children and families. They have an understanding of the needs of children and how they can support families through building effective relationships. Practitioners would now benefit from exploring further their understanding of what they aim to achieve for children. They should then refresh their vision, values and aims as planned. This should include consultation with parents, children and other stakeholders to help guide the direction of improvement.
- The team are supportive of each other in their practice and show a collective commitment to improving the service they provide for children. Newer members of the team are mentored by other practitioners. This has encouraged practitioners to look more critically at their own practice and understanding of early learning. Practitioners have individual interests which they have taken forward as areas of leadership. For example, a practitioner has led the 'bedtime reading initiative' which they feel is showing early signs of impact. These roles are at early stages and need more focused evaluation to ensure they achieve the desired impact. As leadership roles continue to grow within the team, it will be important to have a focus on the curriculum. This will help practitioners to look in depth at children's learning and the progress they are making, as well as plan future interventions.
- Practitioners are supported by the local authority early years team. This support is valued and helps them evaluate their practice. The newly appointed early years officer has also made a positive start to supporting self-evaluation and creating relevant improvement action plans which are well-judged and carefully considered. There is a need to re-establish monitoring by the school's senior leadership team (SLT) to help nursery practitioners to reflect more accurately on what is working well and what needs to improve.
- Self-evaluation is mostly informal within the setting and carried out through regular discussion. Practitioners have also introduced 'self-evaluation books' which record some aspects of the setting's improvement journey and use national guidance as a tool for reflection. Improvement plans identify appropriate targets for development but require more robust monitoring and evaluation to achieve the desired impact.

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

- Overall, approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is a welcoming ethos within the setting where families are warmly greeted and made to feel included. Practitioners have established positive and respectful relationships with children which encourage them to feel relaxed, safe and secure. Children play well together, have the time to follow their own interests and choose independently from a range of resources both indoors and outside. We have asked practitioners to continue to review the learning environment to ensure it more effectively supports children's needs and provides increased challenge. This should include a focus on natural and open-ended resources that promote children's imagination, creativity and curiosity. As planned, opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy across learning should also be improved.
- Children make decisions about their learning during play and their choices are respected. Most children sustain their concentration well during their chosen tasks. They are motivated to learn and confidently and co-operatively play together. Practitioners pay close attention to children's emerging interests during each session and use these as a starting point for planning. The team has recently introduced a floorbook approach to planning which is allowing them to be more responsive to children's ideas and individual interests. As these planning processes develop, it will be important to continue to build on children's involvement. This will enable children to lead their own learning further and reflect on their learning with more depth.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals and respect their needs and dispositions towards learning. They have an understanding of how young children develop and are building their understanding of how they learn. The team has created nurturing relationships with children and established a positive climate for learning. Practitioners interact in a way that promotes children's self-esteem and helps them to feel encouraged. In a few examples, they use skilled questioning to encourage children to extend their thinking and consider ways to solve problems. This now needs to be more frequent and consistent to ensure practitioners take advantage of opportunities to deepen children's learning.
- The team are developing their understanding of children as learners. They make detailed observations of children's play which are recorded in their folios and often include children's comments. Children enjoy sharing these folios and talking about their experiences. They also share these folios at 'nursery natters' which gives parents and children the opportunity to talk about learning together. Practitioners identify children's next steps in learning through observation. It is less clear how they subsequently reflect and follow up on these observations. As a result, children's folios do not accurately reflect their progress over time or support practitioners to plan for future learning. Observations need to be more frequent and focused. Practitioners need support to build confidence in using their tracking system to include all children.

We have therefore asked the team to reflect closely on children’s progress and to strengthen the cycle of planning, observation and assessment. This will ensure children achieve as highly as possible.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The setting's curriculum continues to develop and is firmly based in learning through play with sensitive adult interactions. Practitioners have worked well to make improvements to the learning environment to meet children's learning needs more effectively. This includes taking greater recognition of children's interests as they play. As planned, the team should continue to review and refresh the learning environment. This includes increasing the range of open-ended resources and those, which promote children's creativity and problem-solving skills.
- The essential aspects of quality ELC need to be more effectively promoted with a stronger focus on health and wellbeing, numeracy, mathematics and communication. As planned, the team should review and improve literacy experiences including ensuring that children experience regular stories to support language development. Practitioners are beginning to make use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes with their floorbook planning. It will be important to monitor this closely to ensure children experience breadth and balance in their learning. This also needs to be more effectively reflected in children's folios to form a comprehensive picture of children's progress and build on prior learning consistently. Approaches to planning are flexible, and take account of children's emerging interests and are used to help plan contexts for learning. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop this practice to add increasing depth and challenge to children's learning. It would be useful to consider curriculum design principles and expectations for children's progress as part of this work.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the life of the setting. A few parents and carers give their time to support the work of the team through events and helping on trips.
- Trust and respect underpin effective communication between the setting and home. Parents and carers are informed of children's progress through daily conversations, individual folios and planned opportunities to meet practitioners. Parents and carers should now be more involved in recognising achievements and helping to plan next steps for children.
- Parents and carers have good opportunities to find out about children's experiences in the setting. The 'Nursery Natter', 'Bring our adult to school' (B.O.A.T.S) sessions, and other opportunities allow parents and carers to find out how children learn and what they can do to help. The 'Big Bedtime Read' supports parents and carers to help children develop a love of books. Parents and carers have opportunities to learn some practical strategies to support children's early communication skills. An established parenting programme also helps parents of younger children prepare for their child joining the setting and aids this transition process.
- Practitioners work with a range of partners to provide valuable advice and assistance to families.

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 local 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 recognise the importance of positive relationships in supporting children's learning and development. They share responsibility for ensuring that all children feel welcomed and included in the nursery community. Practitioners use praise effectively to encourage children's positive behaviour and promote their self-esteem. They demonstrate kindness and consideration in the way they carry out their roles. As a result, practitioners have been successful in creating a calm and nurturing environment for children.
- Children enjoy their time in the setting. They play well with each other and are developing friendships. Most children are able to take turns and share resources during play. Children are encouraged and supported to be increasingly independent and self-reliant. They demonstrate their independence and self-help skills as they dress themselves for outdoor play and help themselves during the daily snack routine.
- Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of 'Getting It right for every child'. Professional learning is helping them keep up to date with thinking and research relating to potential barriers to wellbeing children may face. Children have an understanding of what it means to be safe and healthy. They are learning about healthy choices through experiences at snack time and by helping to prepare healthy soups and drinks. Practitioners engage children in conversations to help them understand how to manage risk, particularly during outdoor experiences. There is now a need to develop this further.
- Midlothian Council provided information about child protection referral procedures that are unique to the Newbattle Learning Community. They shared with the inspection team that they are confident that child protection procedures in the school are robust and are ensuring children are safe. We have asked that current approaches and expectations for safeguarding are outlined clearly in an appropriate policy.
- Practitioners have created a display book to share with parents the setting's work to support children's wellbeing. They need to continue to develop children's understanding of wellbeing indicators in appropriate and meaningful ways. It would be helpful to have visual representations of the wellbeing indicators within the playroom to enable children to engage with them more freely.
- Practitioners know children and families well. Information provided by parents is included in each child's care plan. Practitioners work with partner agencies to help ensure that they understand how to meet the care needs of children when they are in the nursery. Senior leaders now need to ensure effective strategies are in place to improve the progress of all children, including those with additional support needs.

- Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Approaches to recording concerns about children's wellbeing need to be improved. Midlothian Council should support the school to review their current approaches to establish if recording procedures are suitably robust. Midlothian Council provided information about child protection referral procedures that are unique to the Newbattle Learning Community. They shared with the inspection team that they are confident that child protection procedures in the school are robust and are ensuring children are safe. We have asked that these procedures are outlined clearly in an appropriate policy and this is shared with all practitioners and relevant stakeholders.
- Practitioners use children's interests as the starting point of planning. As a result, children are beginning to have opportunities to influence decisions in the setting. There is significant scope to develop this further by increasing the opportunities available to children to develop early leadership skills.
- Practitioners treat all children and their families with fairness and respect. Practitioners should consider how to support children to develop further their understanding of equality and diversity in a developmentally appropriate and relevant way.

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

- Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Most children have the capacity to make significantly greater progress. The development of children's early literacy, numeracy and mathematical skills now needs to have a higher profile in planning learning and teaching.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. The majority of children are keen to talk about their ideas and experiences and readily engage in conversation with adults and peers during play. Practitioners use visual prompts and praise to encourage children to begin to develop good listening habits. They should consider how they could make further use of visual resources to support a few children's communication needs. Most children enjoy singing at the end of each session and are becoming familiar with a range of traditional nursery songs. Practitioners have identified the need to develop further approaches to promote children's awareness of sounds and patterns in spoken language. A few children choose to make marks and are starting to write their own name with more confidence. Most children are able to recognise their name written down, for example, when self-registering and at snack time. Practitioners should now provide improved opportunities for children to share and discuss stories in cosy contexts. They should ensure children have regular opportunities to make and use non-fiction texts for a range of meaningful purposes.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are beginning to develop counting skills appropriate to their stage of development and a few children recognise numbers to ten. Most children can recognise and name familiar shapes in the playroom and outdoors. Children are beginning to explore pattern and symmetry through art and craft experiences. The majority of children are able to use appropriate language to talk about position and size. Practitioners have identified the need to provide much improved opportunities for children to develop and apply early numeracy and mathematic skills in daily routines and play.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. They show care and consideration for their peers and play together well. Children are learning to be aware of their own feelings and are beginning to develop vocabulary for talking about emotions. Almost all children play independently and most are developing self-help skills as they get ready for outdoor play and wash their dishes after snack. They are developing their understanding of how to support their own wellbeing through daily routines such as tooth brushing. Children would benefit from increased challenge in their physical play.

- Practitioners support children to develop positive dispositions and attitudes to learning. They recognise children's individual achievements in the nursery and use praise to encourage children to strive to do their best. Practitioners should develop further imaginative ways to encourage parents and carers to share information about children's learning and achievements at home and in the community. This will help ensure significant learning is built on.
- There is a supportive and nurturing ethos within the nursery. Practitioners know children and family circumstances well. They work with a range of partners to provide valuable support and advice to families to help overcome potential barriers to children's wellbeing. Practitioners are at an early stage in beginning to consider how they can use information and data to improve equity.

Choice of QI : Personalised support

- Universal support
 - Role of practitioners and leaders
 - Identification of learning needs and targeted support
 - Removal of barriers to learning
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- Practitioners know children well and are confident in planning for their individual care needs in consultation with families. They understand the importance of establishing open, respectful relationships with parents and carers. They do this through regular communication and interaction at planned events. Planning is beginning to be more responsive to children's interests with the introduction of a floorbook approach. We have asked the team to reflect on their expectations for children's learning to ensure they are sufficiently high and that planning provides children with appropriate challenge. Often children are not provided with the right level of difficulty in their learning.
 - The team identify children's individual needs through nurturing attachments and observations. Where required, they work closely with external agencies and other professionals to minimise barriers to children's participation and learning. For example, planned work with their speech and language therapist is supporting the development of children's language skills. They are beginning to use the wellbeing indicators to reflect on children's holistic development. Practitioners discuss older children's progress in health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy as part of their tracking systems. However, this information is not yet reliable or being used effectively to plan for future learning and interventions to support children's progress. The team is not yet at the stage of planning well-judged, targeted interventions which improve outcomes for children's learning.
 - Practitioners work well together and are developing their confidence in supporting children's learning. Children are becoming confident individuals as they make choices in their play and contribute to nursery routines such as making the daily snack. Children would now benefit from more regular and focused time to talk about their learning. This will help them to recognise themselves as learners, discuss what they might want to learn next and share their successes.

1. Quality of care and support

Children presented as relaxed, confident, and happy in their play. They were kind and helpful to each other and it was clear they were developing positive friendships. New children were warmly welcomed into the nursery and staff took time to get to know them, their family, and important information about their home life.

Staff supported children with a warm and nurturing approach. This created a caring and friendly environment. The nursery team had established positive and trusting relationships with children and families. There was an ethos of respect and inclusion throughout the nursery. This was a key strength observed during the inspection.

Children were supported to be independent as they selected their own snack, prepared for outdoors and took part in routines such as tooth brushing. This helped to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Personal plans were in place for children and information reflected children's appropriate care needs. This meant children received a continuity of care. However, within some personal plans strategies for support were not always meaningful or effectively reviewed. The nursery team should consider how they could better evaluate the impact of any strategies in place, as this will support them to measure whether the strategies are enabling children to make the best possible progress in all areas of their wellbeing and development.

Children's learning was recorded in a floorbook and staff were becoming more confident using this as a planning tool. Staff were considering how they could now support children to lead their own learning through the floorbook approach. Within children's 'Learning Folios' staff should consider ways to develop the recording of children's learning as the quality and frequency of observations needed to improve. We saw there were missed opportunities for staff to effectively track and monitor children's progress. We have made a recommendation about this.

Whilst staff in the nursery knew whom they should report safeguarding concerns to, the policy and procedures for safeguarding required review so that there is a clear and consistent process for acting upon and recording concerns. The senior management team should review all children's files and the systems used to ensure that they provide clear information in line with current best practice guidance. We have made a requirement about this.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

Children were safe as the environment was secure, clean, and well maintained. An attractive entrance area provided parents with useful information about the life of the nursery as well as highlighting different supports available in the local community.

The layout of furniture and resources allowed children enough space to move freely around different areas of the room. Children were able to plan their own play as resources were set out in a child friendly and accessible way. We saw a number of positive role-play situations where children were developing their imagination and social skills using the resources on offer.

Children had daily access to the outdoor area, which was spacious and allowed for active, energetic play. The development of a mud kitchen was beginning to enhance the opportunities children had to use their imagination and develop their curiosity outdoors. We saw children enjoyed climbing a tree in the garden. This promoted their physical skills and supported them to take and manage risk through play. The outdoor area did require further development to fully promote children's curiosity and provide them with greater levels of challenge in their learning. The nursery team had identified this as an area of improvement and had begun to consider what resources they might add to the outdoor space.

The nursery was at the early stages of developing 'Loose Parts Play'. 'Loose Parts' are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, taken apart, put back and used together in multiple ways. Staff were aware of the benefits of 'Loose Parts' and the opportunities these provide for children to explore and learn through natural curiosity and inquiry. Staff were aware of some best practice documents regarding outdoor play. They should continue to use these documents to review, evaluate, and improve the outdoor area.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

Staff knew children well as individuals and respected each child's unique personality. Children confidently engaged with staff, inviting them into their play and enjoying conversations together. Interactions between staff and children were warm and nurturing. Supportive and open relationships with parents encouraged partnerships to develop. Staff promoted an ethos of inclusion for both children and parents. We saw staff including parents in their child's nursery experience through dialogue at the end of a session.

Staff were committed to providing positive support for children and families. Staff had some awareness of the wellbeing indicators and were beginning to use these to consider what support a child may need. Staff knew how to access support from other agencies for example, speech and language therapy. They should now begin to monitor and track the impact of any additional supports in place and use this to inform the child's personal plan to ensure children make the best progress possible.

Staff were keen to develop their skills, knowledge, and practice. Some recent staff training had been linked to the nursery improvement plan and areas identified during the early self-evaluation work the team had recently started. Some staff had recently attended training regarding children's emotional wellbeing. They were using this to reflect on how they supported children to manage and maintain positive relationships with each other. The senior leadership team and staff should

continue to consider how practice across the nursery could be developed and enhanced to further support children's experiences.

Staff encouraged children to lead their own play and were supportive of children's ideas and interests. Staff had an understanding of the benefits of uninterrupted periods of play; however, there were some periods where opportunities were missed to sensitively extend children's play and learning. Children were respected as staff spent time discussing their experiences and ideas with them. However, staff would benefit from further support to develop their skills in promoting high order thinking in order to help children's creative and critical thinking across their learning.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

A key strength across the nursery was the effort staff and the senior management team made to promote parental involvement. Recent 'Bring Your Adult to School' days had been well attended suggesting that parents felt welcomed and supported by the nursery.

Staff were beginning to lead on specific aspects within the nursery and were taking these forward with enthusiasm. For example, the introduction of the 'Big Bedtime Read' led by staff resulted in high levels of participation from parents and children. Initiatives such as this have the potential to promote children's literacy skills as well as supporting parents to be included in their child's learning.

Staff were aware of the nursery's improvement journey and were keen to develop various aspects of the nursery. Across the nursery, tools for self-evaluation were beginning to be introduced and we could see that some of the areas for improvement identified during this inspection were beginning to be highlighted through this work. The nursery team now required more planned support from the senior management team to develop and embed robust self-evaluation processes within the nursery. This will help the staff team to make improvements and build on the commitment and enthusiasm observed at this inspection. We will follow up on this at the next inspection.

A number of policies and procedures within the nursery would benefit from review to ensure that they offer staff and parents clarity on various aspects of the nursery. The senior management team should consider if there are any gaps in the policies currently in place and consider how they might further develop policies to support the work of the nursery.

As part of the inspection process, we reviewed records kept for children's medication and discussed the measures the nursery needed to take to improve the recording system in line with current best practice guidance. The medication policy should be updated to ensure it provides clarity on the recording, administration, and storage of medication in line with best practice. We have made a recommendation about this

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and three recommendations. From these, two recommendations have been met and one has not been met. Outstanding issues relating to the previous inspection are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there is one requirement and two recommendations.

Requirements

- In order to ensure children are effectively safeguarded the provider must review the child protection policy and procedures so that there is a clear and consistent process for acting upon and recording concerns by 1 March 2019. The provider must review all children's files and the systems used to record concerns to ensure that they provide clear information in line with current best practice guidance by 1 March 2019. This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) Welfare of users of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 and ensure that care and support are consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

Recommendations

- To ensure that staff effectively support and track children's learning, observations and next steps within children's learning folios should be improved. The service should support staff to develop their understanding of how to assess children's learning and record quality observations so that they can effectively monitor and track children's progress. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education' (HSCS 1.27).
- To ensure children's health and wellbeing is maintained the nursery should ensure clear and consistent systems are in place for the recording and administration of medication. They should ensure that records clearly identify the symptoms and plan of action to be taken. The medication policy should be updated to ensure it provides clarity on the recording, administration, and storage of medication in line with current best practice. This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which states 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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.