

Summarised inspection findings

Lairhillock Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

5 September 2023

Key contextual information

Lairhillock Nursery Class is based within Lairhillock Primary School which is situated in a rural area of Aberdeenshire. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged from three until they begin primary school. Currently, there are 25 children on the roll. Opening hours of the nursery are 9.00 am – 3.00 pm during term-time. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery, he has been in post since October 2022. On a day-to-day basis, the nursery is led by a senior practitioner. She is supported by a lead practitioner and a team of six practitioners with varying working patterns.

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 come to Lairhillock nursery with a range of skills, knowledge and experiences. Almost all children are motivated and access a range of learning experiences that sustain their interests. Children engage well in their play both indoors and outdoors. They make choices, follow their interests and lead their play because of the stimulating learning environments.
- Positive relationships are evident between children and practitioners. Most children are confident within the nursery and feel safe and secure. Practitioners are supporting children effectively to become familiar with their rights. The majority of children contribute well to the nursery by sharing their ideas and views.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are caring, nurturing and responsive. They support and encourage children to be curious and to problem solve. Practitioners interact sensitively with children, making good use of questions to support and deepen children's learning. They should increase the use of digital technology to support children's learning. This should help to develop children's skills and confidence further in using the interactive board and tablet computers for a range of purposes.
- Practitioners observe children during play and record these on an electronic notebook. The quality of observations is inconsistent and practitioners are not yet recording next steps for learning. Currently, children are not able to engage with their individual notebook to reflect on their learning. Moving forward, tools for recording children's learning should demonstrate children's individual progress more effectively. Children should be able to use the tool to record, reflect on their own learning, and contribute to what they might learn next.
- All practitioners plan using a responsive approach to planning which effectively enables children to develop their ideas and interests through play. There are a few examples within floorbooks of where practitioners have supported children to learn in depth. Senior leaders recognise that they now need to introduce additional planning which allows for adult-initiated experiences that will support children's learning more effectively. This should support

practitioners to plan learning that takes better account of children's strengths and next steps. Most children would benefit from greater levels of challenge in their learning.

- Senior leaders recognise that they need to develop further the systems for tracking children's learning. Senior leaders rely on practitioners' professional judgement to identify the progress all children are making. It will be important for senior leaders to support practitioners to develop a shared understanding of children's progress. This should help them to make more accurate judgements about the progress all children are making. With the headteacher, senior leaders should develop an approach to tracking progress that supports continuity across the early level.
- Practitioners should review and amend plans for children who require additional help with their learning. Children's individual plans should set out specific targets that are measurable within appropriate timescales. This should enable practitioners to identify and record clearly the progress children are making.

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.

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

- Overall, children are making make good progress since joining nursery. Practitioners should now ensure the information they gather on children's learning is robust and builds on their prior learning. This should enable practitioners to identify clearly children who require additional challenge in their learning and those who require additional support. Most children could be making greater progress in their learning.
- In early communication and language, children are making good progress. Most children readily engage with familiar adults and their peers to share their experiences, thoughts and ideas. They are becoming familiar with the work of authors and illustrators. A few children talk about their favourite author. The majority of children are ready for increased opportunities to develop an awareness of initial letter sounds through play. The majority of children are producing drawings with increasing detail. They form recognisable letters as they write their name and create signs around the nursery.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They count for a purpose and recognise numerals during their play. A few children know that zero means nothing. They recognise amounts without counting objects one for one. Children use relevant mathematical language to describe objects or make comparisons. Most children recognise basic two-dimensional shapes. They would benefit from increased opportunities to explore the properties of shape, including three-dimensional objects. Children could develop a greater awareness of money through play and real-life experiences.
- In health and wellbeing, children are making good progress. Children are beginning to recognise emotions and feelings and can talk about them using the 'wellbeing tree'. Children are independent when washing their hands and brushing their teeth. They help set up for lunch and pour themselves a drink of water. Most children demonstrate good climbing and balancing skills as they navigate their way around structures created using open-ended resources. Children demonstrate good fine motor skills when threading and sewing.
- Practitioners promote a positive and nurturing environment where successes and achievements are valued and celebrated. Families are encouraged to share achievements from outwith nursery on their child's dedicated wall space. Practitioners use praise and feedback consistently. Children respond well to responsibility and take on early leadership roles, for example 'nursery inspectors' for tidying up. Children also enjoy yoga sessions that help several children develop their ability to regulate emotions. These experiences enable children to feel valued and successful.

- Practitioners know children and their individual circumstances well. Practitioners gather key information on children that identifies potential barriers to learning. They recognise that a few children require support to develop further their early language skills. To support this, practitioners provide specific experiences that are supporting children in their 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.