

Summarised inspection findings

Inchture Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

11 February 2020

Key contextual information

The nursery class is currently located within Inchtute Primary school. The setting is registered for 35 children aged two to five years at either a morning, afternoon or whole day session. The current roll is 58. There have been several recent changes to staff in the setting. The setting will move to a new purpose-built accommodation in August 2020.

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

- The nursery shares a simplified version of the vision, values and aims of the school to 'strive to be the best we can be'. There have been recent changes to the provision, including agreeing nursery rules, led by the newly appointed senior practitioner. Children have ownership and are confident and involved in following their nursery rules. Several changes to practice in the nursery are empowering practitioners to create a nurturing and positive learning environment. There has been a focus on identifying and increasing practitioners' understanding of the importance of strong attachments. As a result, children feel safe and secure. All practitioners have specific leadership roles and demonstrate a willingness to undertake additional responsibilities. The team is eager to accept and apply advice as they advance and develop their shared pedagogy. There is scope to build on the range of visits within the school and local community to make the learning for children more relevant. Practitioners are well placed to help children develop further their citizenship and leadership skills.
- Strategic planning is well-organised and this ensures priorities are manageable. This has been taken forward well through the improvement planning process and practitioners have clear priorities to work on. Practitioners have been supported well in their professional development to take forward the local authority initiative, addressing key areas of learning. The themes that have been developed include curiosity and connections. Practitioners are supported to audit the themes within the playroom and outdoors, identifying good practice and areas for development. This programme is co-ordinated by the visiting teacher and the nursery acts as host to other settings in the locality who join them for training. Practitioners have welcomed the opportunity to work with other settings. They recognise the potential of this being followed-up by visits as part of the observation and auditing aspect of the programme. Practitioners are keen to develop and share practice further.
- There have been a number of recent changes successfully introduced by the lead practitioner and supported by senior leaders in school. These include improving approaches to planning, increasing professional collaboration and developing important aspects of the curriculum. All practitioners have leadership roles to enhance children's experiences. It will be useful to review roles and remits to ensure these now reflect the changes undertaken within the nursery provision.

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 under three

- Children under three are being very well supported. They experience sensitive and warm relationships with practitioners who understand very well the developmental needs of these young children. Practitioners help children become independent and grow in confidence. They plan well, based on national guidance of how to support young children learn. Their application of professional learning, particularly in relation to schemas, is having a significant impact on motivation, engagement and learning of young children.
- Across the nursery, relationships between practitioners and children are nurturing, calm and caring. As a result, children are safe, secure, settled and confident in their environment. The available space, both indoors and outdoors, has been developed thoughtfully to ensure children are well supported in their learning. Almost all children develop their independence and confidence very well as they make choices within the playroom and outdoors. Most children engage fully in their learning and practitioners join them when necessary to help support or extend play. For example, practitioners support children to use the digital camera to capture models that they are proud of having made and then printing images. There is emerging good practice in strong interactions that help support children to problem solve and develop higher order thinking skills. Practitioners should continue to develop and maintain these approaches. A stronger focus on the role of the adult will help support consistency across the setting. Almost all children are happy, busy and clearly enjoy their time at the setting. They are encouraged and supported well to follow their interests. As a result, children are often absorbed in their play.
- The learning environment has undergone significant improvements this session that includes an increasing use of open-ended resources, natural materials and real-life objects. This is enabling most children to develop important skills, such as curiosity, inquiry and creativity very well both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners are eager to ensure a high quality experience for all children and support one another well to get the best for all children. Practitioners are alert to children's interests and use this information well to be responsive through their medium and short-term planning. Practitioners are confident to make adaptations that extend and deepen children's interests. The building of the new nursery provision has provided a basis of interest that has children role playing the construction work. Children have prepared questions for an interview session with the foreman of the construction site.
- Practitioners have recently introduced new learning journey profiles. These remain at an early stage of development. Key workers have responsibility for completing these for each child. There are clear approaches to ensuring the rationale for the profiles is shared and understood by practitioners and parents. These profiles are bespoke to the interests and progress of each child. In a short period of time, practitioners have developed further their observations of

significant aspects of learning and progress for children. These have been shared with parents and carers. In a few instances, they include parent/carer views and examples of other achievements from beyond the nursery. Commendably, practitioners develop their own practice through a programme of peer observations, professional dialogue and regular self-evaluation.

- Recent changes to planning have begun to deepen learning for children, even though these new approaches being at the early stage of implementation. Through regular team discussions, practitioners are becoming more confident. They focus on identifying and making explicit the links between children's interests and ideas and how they plan to support and extend learning. The new approaches to planning are prompting further review of aspects of the role of the adult. This includes the responsibilities associated with arranging and developing play areas.
- Practitioners identify progress for individual children. To ensure clarity around tracking groups and individuals, their use of data needs to have a stronger strategic approach. It will be important to ensure additional challenge for children who have already overtaken their targets. There is scope to develop opportunities for moderation within the early level and across other settings.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Nursery practitioners have worked very well to establish a strong sense of direction for themselves as a new team. They have a clear understanding of what provisions within the environment help stimulate a quality learning experience for children. Practitioners follow the local authority guidelines and use developmental milestones for individual children. These have been developed further by the school. As a result, they link to aspects of National Benchmarks for the early level in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing.
- The well-judged changes to the curriculum are improving the learning experiences for all children. This begins with the children under three being well supported and having learning that is developmentally appropriate, caring and calm. Practitioners working with older children have become more responsive to children's interests, allowing them to lead their own learning more effectively. There is now a better balance between uninterrupted play that deepens learning and adult-led group times which focus on quality discussions. The changes to the sessions allows children to have greater ownership, independence and choice. There is a positive climate for learning that is encouraging children to make better progress across important areas of their learning.
- Practitioners have high aspirations and understand their role in promoting literacy and numeracy skills in the nursery. There is scope to better support children who are ready to make faster progress. A progression pathway for mathematics has been introduced to support planning and provide additional challenge for children. Progression pathways that include all curricular areas are not yet in place to ensure continuity across the early level.
- The children's transitions into the setting are very well supported and children are helped to settle through an individualised approach. The new team of practitioners need to build relationships across the early level within the school and beyond to ensure better understanding of expectations. This includes developing more opportunities to provide additional challenge for those children who may require it. Practitioners and teachers would benefit from engaging in professional dialogue to understand progress and support learners across the early level. Individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing is collated and passed to the school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents and carers are very welcome in the nursery. They are involved fully in sharing important information about their child before they start their placement in the setting. Parents and carers are invited to visit and join sessions to share their expertise and talents. There are opportunities for 'stay and play' sessions that have a specific focus. These reflect and link well with the professional learning undertaken by practitioners for example, fostering curiosity. There are growing examples of how the work of the nursery is being used and developed further at home. Examples include pizza making, counting when out shopping and more advanced concepts, for example, learning about and experiencing respect.

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

- Practitioners, children and families have trusting and respectful relationships. The team communicates effectively with parents in order to understand children's individual likes, preferences and home life in detail. They use this information to ensure children are happy and settle quickly to their learning in the nursery class. Children are developing friendships and most children are kind and patient with one another throughout their play. As planned, the team should continue recent work to support children to understand and express their feelings. This will support children to discuss their own and develop empathy for others. Most practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of the principles of nurture and attachment that underpin their work. As a result positive relationships support children to feel secure and happy at nursery.
- A recent focus on improving and developing the language of wellbeing throughout the work of the nursery team is working well. Most practitioners and the majority of children have an increased awareness of the wellbeing indicators. The current focus on respect supports children to improve how they look after their resources. This also links to reinforcement of listening and taking turns. As planned, the team should now work with parents, children and other partners to embed the full range of wellbeing indicators throughout all aspects of their work. The team role model positive behaviours and increasingly assist children to discuss and resolve conflicts together. Almost all children are able to share space, resources and cooperate well as they play. Practitioners have recently begun to make initial use of the wellbeing wheel with children and families. This supports increased engagement with children to express their wellbeing needs and understand a wider range of concepts of wellbeing.
- Most children demonstrate good independence as they help to prepare snack, brush their own teeth and as they transport resources to use in their learning. Children are confident as they share songs with their relatives. Most children enjoy the important role of snack helper as they prepare and serve snack to their friends. Children share their views and ideas about changes to the learning environment. They enthusiastically make suggestions about the design and layout of their new nursery. Most children are ready for increased opportunities to be responsible and take leadership roles throughout their nursery. Children's active participation in decision making could link better to their successful initial work on the wellbeing indicators. The team should explore how rights-based approaches could extend and develop children's understanding of fairness and increase participation.
- Statutory duties are met due to effective communication between practitioners and good range of monitoring and audits by the leadership team. An appropriate range of core professional learning, for example in first aid and child protection, ensures all practitioners are up to date with their responsibilities. Practitioners ensure records of children's needs are accurate, up to date and regularly reviewed. Sensitive, appropriate use is made of records about children's needs such as 'All About Me' and notes of contact with parents.

- Practitioners' inclusive approaches ensure all children are included and treated equally. The team work well together to ensure all children have the support they need to learn and develop. All children are valued as individuals. Practitioners value difference and respect diversity as they plan for religious and cultural celebrations. The team should continue to audit and review resources to ensure they represent and celebrate diversity.

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

Children under three

- Toddlers are making good progress across their learning. Most children make good progress with their communication skills as they begin to use two-word sentences. Children concentrate intently as they transport sand and natural objects between containers. Almost all children are beginning to share and take turns as they enjoy a sociable snack time. Most children are independent and resourceful as they make music, paint and wash their hands. As planned, children need continued opportunities to develop and extend their schemas through play.

Children aged three-five years

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. A few children listen intently as they share stories in their comfortable book corner. Most children ask thoughtful questions, expand their vocabulary and listen intently to visitors involved in the design and construction of their new nursery. They frequently mark make in many areas of the playroom and in floor books. A few children recognise the initial letter of their name. Most children are now ready to apply their early literacy skills across all areas and build on their prior learning.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and early mathematics. Most children demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical language as they measure and record lengths of tables and towers they build in the construction area. Children are developing confidence in counting through daily routines, helping to prepare snack and during free play. Most children recognise numerals within ten and a few children count confidently to twenty. A few children need more challenging opportunities to consolidate and develop further their skills and prior learning. Most children need to apply and develop further a wider range of early mathematical skills.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children apply their good knowledge of risks and safety as they enthusiastically complete risk assessment records in the engaging outdoor area. Children climb and balance confidently as they explore pallets and equipment. They are creative and inspired by the limitless possibilities of playing with a large cardboard box. Most children also make good progress in developing their fine motor skills as they thread cubes and work with playdough. A recent focus on respect has improved children's participation in looking after their learning environment. Children need support to identify and celebrate their skills in health and wellbeing.

- Learning journals and floor books demonstrate that children make good progress over time. Most children develop their ball control skills well as they participate in football sessions. Children express their creativity as they make and decorate unique creations using recycled materials. Most children increase their knowledge as they participate in science experiments with volcanoes and ice. Practitioners do not yet track children's progress across other areas of learning. Children need to develop their skills across learning in a way that builds on their prior knowledge and skills.
- Increasingly, parents, children and practitioners share information to record and celebrate children's achievements outwith nursery. Practitioners now need to use this information about children's achievements to inform their planning of learning for individual children. They need to work with children and parents to develop a shared language of learning as they use new learning profiles. This will support children to recognise the skills they are developing over time.
- The nursery team work in effective partnerships with parents and professionals such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. Records of children's needs are current, updated regularly and include specific targets that have been agreed with parents. This ensures the team work together to identify and minimise any barriers to learning in order to secure children's progress. As planned the team now need to use data to target interventions and measure the impact on groups or individuals of specific strategies.

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.