

Summarised inspection findings

Kittybrewster School and Nursery Class

Aberdeen City Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

Kittybrewster School Nursery Class operates from two adjoining playrooms within the school premises. Following expansion, the nursery can accommodate 30 children at any one time. Throughout the inspection, the separate, secure nursery outdoor area was not available to children due to potential storm damage to trees. This area is directly accessible from the playroom, contains a new mud kitchen and access to a range of commercial and open-ended resources. Children had access to the larger school playground area as a temporary measure. The team consists of two full-time and two job-share practitioners. At present there is a supply practitioner, and there is a vacant senior post. The team are led and supported by the actively involved principal teacher of the school who has responsibility for the nursery class.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Relationships between practitioners, children and parents are caring, warm and respectful. Children new to the setting develop confidence as they explore and investigate resources, learn routines and make friends. Most returning children are independent as they get ready to play outside or enjoy a sociable snack. A few children concentrate for longer periods of time as they cut vegetables, roll tyres or make play dough. The team should prioritise work to improve the learning environment. This should ensure they maximise opportunities to enable children to lead their own learning.
- Practitioners understand children, their individual interests and needs well. They make some use of this information to plan enjoyable experiences in the setting and local community. Most of the team engage in relaxed, comfortable conversations with children. In the best examples, practitioners make use of songs and open-ended questions to support children's learning. The team should develop further their use of commentary, gesture and picture cues. This will support the high number of children who have English as an additional language. Experiences and interactions need to build consistently on children's skills and prior learning more effectively. This will ensure all children have the challenge and support they need. The team recognise that there is not yet a shared language of learning.
- A few children enjoy using the touch screen computer. There is considerable scope to develop the use of digital technology to enhance learning in the nursery class.
- The team recognise that approaches to the cycle of planning, observation, assessment, tracking and monitoring need to be significantly improved. At present, observations do not provide a current or accurate picture of children's progress and achievements across their learning. As a result, there is not yet effective use of observations to inform future learning or to identify the progress of individual children. New approaches to focused observations

introduced in recent weeks should now be used to inform more responsive planning of learning.

- The principal teacher has identified an urgent need to work with the team to develop their skills, confidence and recording of significant aspects for learning for children. Almost all children do not yet have a learning profile with a current or reliable record of their progress over time. As a result, there is no evidence of how the team have ensured they have built upon children's prior learning. Keyworkers need to develop a shared understanding of the purpose and use of these learning profiles. The team need support and guidance to introduce, sustain and evaluate a manageable approach to using next steps to inform learning. The setting does not yet have an effective system in place to track and monitor children's developing skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The senior management team has made a plan for improvement.
- Practitioners are attentive, responsive and notice when children need additional support with their learning or development. They regularly share relevant information across the team and with a wide range of professionals. They agree plans to support individual children and work closely with parents. The team should now include this work in their new approach to self-evaluation and assess the impact of strategies implemented on outcomes for children.

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

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

- Almost all children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. The majority of children use their developing vocabulary and gestures to communicate their ideas and feelings. A few children enjoy sharing stories with adults in the book corner and writing their name. A specialist team provides valuable individual support for children where English is an additional language. As identified in the improvement plan there is significant scope to increase the focus on communication and early language across the early level. The team should challenge children to make the very best progress they are capable of.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Practitioners use everyday opportunities such as getting ready to play outside and snack time to count for a purpose with children. The majority of children enjoy exploring concepts of volume and shape in their play in the sand and water area. A few children are developing their understanding of a range of 2D shapes and count beyond ten. Practitioners need to ensure activities and interactions enable children to apply and develop further their skills in play and real life contexts.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. Children are developing their understanding of how to keep healthy through everyday routines such as handwashing. Practitioners take time to explain the importance of keeping safe as they explore open-ended and natural materials in the outdoor area. Practitioners prioritise opportunities to support children to develop their understanding of their own and others feelings where there are conflicts over sharing resources. Children develop their gross motor skills as they play ring games in the school gym hall or roll tyres in the school playground. Planned work to develop approaches to outdoor learning will make an important contribution to work to develop health and wellbeing. The team recognise children's achievements through praise. There is significant scope to increase opportunities for children to develop responsibility and leadership.
- Inspection activities and professional dialogue with the practitioners and principal teacher identified that children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. However, the team are not yet able to provide valid, up-to-date and reliable evidence of children's progress over time. Children's learning profiles and records do not yet show the added value of the work done to build upon children's prior learning and skills. There is significant scope to build on and extend the progress children make across their learning.

- There is a warm, nurturing and inclusive atmosphere throughout the setting. The diversity of children and families is recognised and valued. Practitioners use their knowledge of children's needs, preferences and any barriers to work together to meet their care and emotional needs well. Through professional dialogue with the team and reviews of children's care plans and records of meetings children are being supported effectively. This is ensuring positive outcomes for children particularly when there are changes at home or barriers to learning. This work should now be tracked and monitored to ensure that these children make progress across all areas of their learning. There is scope to work with colleagues across the early level on whole-school approaches.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1. Quality of care and support

Children experienced supportive, sensitive and individually planned transitions to help them become familiar, confident and included within the setting. Staffs' warm and caring nature towards children created an environment where children felt nurtured, happy and secure.

All children had a personal plan which included supportive information to ease their transition from home to nursery. Senior staff had identified more detailed information was needed to fully support children's care and as a result, had arranged individual meetings with parents to ensure their current support needs were fully supported.

Effective partnerships with parents and other professionals supported the good quality of care children received to help them achieve their potential.

A system for the management of medication was in place, however needed to be reviewed and updated to reflect best practice guidance. Medication consent forms did not include all the necessary information to support staff to safely manage medication. For example, confirmation the first dose of medicine had been administered by the parent. Medical information needs to be consolidated so that staff can respond quickly to children's care to keep children safe and well.

All staff attended regular child protection training to effectively safeguard children. Staff were clear about the signs and symptoms of abuse and who to report concerns to. Chronologies were in place for each child to record and track significant events experienced by the child. This supported staff to meet children's wellbeing needs and provide the right support at the right time. We suggested training be extended to nursery volunteers, with serious case reviews added to the training programme for their increased understanding and awareness.

Children shared sociable and unhurried snack times with their friends and staff. They were involved in developing healthy menus which respected cultural beliefs. Children were familiar or becoming familiar with the routine, with increasing involvement to build independence and practice life-skills, for example, through food preparation and self-serving.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

Children's daily free-flow play was interrupted by a safety issue on the first day. However, on the second day staff improvised and set up a safe play area in the enclosed playground. Children were well supervised without their play being adult-led. Children's curiosity and imagination was aroused as they explored the capacity of water and played cooperatively.

The garden was a focus area for improvement. Children, their families and staff were included in the development along with community involvement. The improving outdoors would provide children with enhanced experiences to support their creative, imaginative and investigative skills.

A staff member's interest and training for the outdoors resulted in the service securing a safe wooded area where children could experience rough terrain, loose coverings and natural

obstacles. These would enable children to experience suitable levels of risk and challenge, to develop their motor skills and balance as well as encouraging them to solve problems.

The service made good use of the local community and amenities. This ensured children were getting to know their local environment, helping them to grow into responsible, confident individuals.

Children clearly enjoyed child-led play and were overall, engaged in their activities. Children were helped to make choices by supportive staff. We found staff to be responsive to children's individual interests.

The indoor environment was a focus for improvement. The recent provision of real life, everyday objects allowed children to be creative and act out life experiences. There was scope to increase opportunities for open-ended play using sensory and natural resources. Management and staff should continue to create more enabling environments and build on the work already carried out to ensure children experience sufficient challenge and sense of wonder.

Infection control procedures were in place. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. However all children should be encouraged to follow the displayed pictorial hand washing guidance to help reduce the spread of infection.

Children were not given the opportunity to assess risk as staff was doing this for them. Children should be given more responsibility in assessing risk in order to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents. We asked the service to ensure that these were consistently signed and dated by the adult collecting the child at the end of the nursery session. The service should ensure any risks posed to children are reviewed following any accident.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

We recognised the staff team had undergone significant changes over recent months. Staff recognised the impact this had taken on the team and the day to day running of the nursery.

The principal teacher had again been deployed to the nursery to lead in the absence of a senior practitioner.

Staff interaction was positive throughout our visit. Staffs' kind, caring and respectful nature towards children built strong attachments and created an environment where children were nurtured, happy and secure. They were motivated and worked well together as a team. Staff we spoke with knew children well as individuals and as some had only recently started with the service were getting to know about their individual care, learning and development needs.

All staff were appropriately qualified. All but one staff member (who was undergoing re-registration) were registered to practice with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) or the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

Appraisals provided opportunities for staff and management to discuss achievements and areas for development and identify training. Staff had attended a variety of training opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. They were in the early stages of implementing their learning from training into practice to ensure it impacted positively on children's learning experiences. Support with this will enable staff to be more evaluative and reflective practitioners and drive forward improvements within the nursery. (See Recommendation 1)

Staff had limited knowledge of best practice guidance for example 'How good is our early learning and childcare?', 'Building the Ambition' and the new Health and Social Care Standards. Better knowledge of these would enable staff to use these to build on the quality of learning experiences and good outcomes for children.

Staff attended regular meetings, providing opportunities to share information and discuss ideas. Records evidenced how the improvements needed within the nursery were shared with the team for their information and progression to improve the quality of children's experiences and outcomes.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

Management, staff, children and their families were evidently establishing good relationships. Parents were included in the service and commented positively on the quality of environment, staff and care their children received. Management recognised that children and families needed to be more involved in progressing new ideas and gather feedback to support self-evaluation and improvement. Staff were able to lead on aspects for improvement, for example, the outdoor developments. Staff shared information effectively to support the smooth running of the service and ensure children's needs were met.

The service was in the early stages of implementing effective quality assurance systems. The principle teacher spent time in the nursery and had a good understanding of some of the strengths and areas that needed to be developed. However, more formal quality assurance systems would support the principal teacher and staff in identifying all the areas for development. (See Recommendation 1)

Improvement planning had been carried forward by the principle teacher. Staff were clear about the improvements they were working towards and had taken ownership of progressing these. The improvement plan however, needed more specific detail and clear success criteria to effectively support the service to move forward. More focused improvement plans would support the principle teacher and staff to be clear on how to make the required improvements. Effective systems were not in place to monitor children's profiles and their progress. The principal teacher had recognised this and was in the processes of implementing systems to address this. The quality of the information recorded in children's profiles was variable. Some profiles contained very limited information, which did not give parents a clear picture of their child's progress. Some observations provided meaningful information. However, this was not consistent. Some observation and identified next steps were not focused on significant learning and did not identify meaningful progression. There were missed opportunities to identify and provide sufficient depth and challenge in some children's learning. As a result some children were not adequately supported to progress and achieve their potential. (See Recommendation 2)

Management were in the process of updating the service's policies to ensure they met best practice guidance. We suggested additional information be added to the child protection policy, as it did not name the Child Protection Officers or state that if abuse was suspected staff may refer the concerns on to police or social work without first notifying parents.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and two recommendations. From these one recommendation has been met. Outstanding issues relating to Care Inspectorate are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and three recommendations.

Recommendations

Quality of staffing

- To improve the quality of children's experiences staff should be supported to reflect on their training and development opportunities and implement the learning from these into practice.
This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes'. (HSCS 3.14)

Quality of management and leadership

- To ensure children receive high quality care and early learning experiences management and staff should ensure an effective quality assurance system is developed and implemented in the service.
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)
- In order to ensure all children are supported to achieve their potential, effective systems should be implemented to monitor children's progress, learning and development.
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.

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