

# Summarised inspection findings

**Bruce Nursery**

Aberdeen City Council

5 March 2019

## Key contextual information

The Bruce Nursery is situated in the west end of Aberdeen in a converted residential property. It is registered for 71 children attending at any one time with 146 on the roll at the time of inspection. Children are accommodated in five different playrooms according to their age and stage of development. The playroom for children aged three to five years has direct access to an attractive outdoor space.

### 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

- The nursery has a long-standing set of aims and objectives, which broadly reflect key principles of early learning and childcare (ELC). These do not yet accurately reflect the current context and uniqueness of the setting. The manager has correctly identified the need to involve children, parents and partners in refreshing and developing their vision, values and aims. This will help to lead the work of the setting and ensure all stakeholders have shared expectations and high aspirations for their children.
- The management team work effectively with practitioners to support the delivery of ELC. Practitioners meet regularly and engage in a variety of self-evaluation activities. They now need support from the management team to engage more effectively in self-evaluation processes. This should include deepening their understanding and use of the national improvement framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to inform and support change. In turn, this should create a meaningful cycle of rigorous self-evaluation, including the identification of relevant areas for improvement. Recent ideas for improvement, such as the introduction of intergenerational work and the 'tinkering table', have not been considered in this way. It will be important to ensure that priorities taken forward are based on sound self-evaluation. This will ensure they are the most relevant and will have maximum benefit to children's learning.
- The management team encourage and support practitioners to access a range of relevant professional learning opportunities. A number of practitioners are undertaking initial and further qualifications, including Modern Apprentices. Practitioners appreciate the commitment made to supporting continued study. Across the nursery, practitioners should continue, as planned, to share and identify good practice with colleagues in other settings. This will include looking outwards to support self-evaluation and improve outcomes for children.
- A few practitioners are beginning to lead improvements within their individual playrooms, for example, reviewing snack and meal times and developing sensory areas. The manager is aware of the potential benefits of encouraging and supporting distributive leadership across the

setting. This should be taken forward as a priority to support an increased pace of change that involves everyone in driving improvement.

- The same improvement priorities have been in place over the last two years. These include focusing on developing observation and tracking children's progress, developing the environment and opportunities for outdoor learning. Improvements are now evident with positive impact on the quality of children's experiences. Examples include extending and developing the use of floorbooks to record children's learning and introducing loose parts to support imaginative and creative play. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that improvements are embedded at an increased pace of change. Shared responsibility needs to be developed for the implementation and evaluation of improvement priorities to ensure they have maximum impact on continuous improvement.
- Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. There is, however considerable scope to give children a stronger voice and extend their early leadership skills. This will support and encourage children to contribute to improvements as fully as possible, allowing them to realise their potential and be challenged more appropriately.
- The manager regularly monitors different aspects of provision both formally and informally. This now needs a clear focus on the quality of learning and teaching to ensure ongoing improvement and consistently high quality experiences for children.

## 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 aged under two years

- Babies and toddlers benefit from very responsive and nurturing interactions with the adults who care for them. They engage well with the developmentally appropriate range of learning experiences. These encourage children to explore using their senses. Resources are well considered and used to support individual children to progress in their development.

### Children aged two to three years

- Children aged two to three years also benefit from caring interactions with their key adults. Practitioners have a developing understanding of how children learn and this is supporting them to plan responsively for children's learning. They could now consider how best to use space to ensure quality experiences for all children across the day, for example, during sleep times.

### Children aged over three years and over

- Children come to the setting enthusiastic and ready to learn. For most of the day, most children engage well with the range of experiences provided. Children are confident and make decisions about where they want to play. Almost all children access outdoor play at some point in the day. The introduction of loose parts materials has supported children to lead their play more effectively. Practitioners give children the time and space to develop their ideas and interests and support their play with interesting resources. Children play cooperatively with each other and work together to develop their ideas such as creating a ski slope with ski jumps. We have asked practitioners to ensure learning experiences and resources provided are suitably challenging to enable all children to sustain purposeful play. We have also asked practitioners to review and refresh the nursery day. This should include consideration of the balance of planned, spontaneous and real-life play opportunities to ensure an appropriate pace to the day for all children.
- Positive relationships are evident between practitioners and children. Practitioners are responsive to children's needs, views and ideas. Interactions with children are positive and in the best examples, good use is made of questions and conversations to support and extend children's learning. As recognised, practitioners will benefit from professional learning to develop further their skills in interaction and use of questions. In turn, practitioners will become more confident and be able to support children to learn in depth with a consistent and suitable level of challenge.
- Practitioners observe children at play and increasingly identify significant learning and the skills developed. They record these achievements within electronic journals and overall, demonstrate the progress children are making in their learning. Practitioners use these

observations well to identify next steps in learning for individual children. Most children can talk about their learning experiences with a few sharing their learning in greater detail. This mostly occurs through their engagement with floorbooks. We have asked practitioners to consider ways to enable children to have greater ownership of their electronic learning journals. This will help children to engage in learning conversations with practitioners and be fully involved in identifying what they might learn next. Practitioners will benefit from opportunities to engage in professional dialogue to enable them to reach a shared understanding of children's progress.

- Planning for children's learning evolves from practitioners' observations of learning and children's ideas and interests. Floorbooks demonstrate well how children have been involved in planning. They clearly show how practitioners have taken children's ideas, combined with practitioners' knowledge to provide quality learning experiences for children. Floorbooks demonstrate how children have experienced breadth, depth and challenge in their learning. Children engage well with the floorbooks and talk confidently about what they have learned through different contexts. This includes learning about different materials to build homes and more recently, hedgehogs.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners working with the youngest children demonstrate an appropriate understanding of national guidance to help them plan for learning. They plan on an individual basis to help children make progress at their own developmental stage. Building on the positive start to understanding how children learn in particular ways, there is scope for practitioners to deepen and extend their learning.
- The curriculum within the pre-school room is firmly based on play and children access a range of experiences supporting learning across the curriculum. This includes indoor and outdoor play. Increasingly, the management team and practitioners are aware of, and make use of, national guidance to support their practice. However, they are not yet making full and effective use of this to ensure consistently high quality learning experiences for children. As identified, practitioners should continue to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the seven design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This will support practitioners to reach a shared understanding of how these principles influence planning and the evaluation of learning. As their knowledge and understanding develops, it will be important for practitioners to provide children with consistent and increasing depth, challenge and progression in their learning. A rationale for the curriculum is required based on a refreshed vision, values and aims reflecting the context of the setting and the setting's aspirations for children.
- Transitions into and across the setting are managed well and are sensitive to the needs of children and their families. Practitioners share helpful information with parents as children start and move through the setting. This gives parents an insight into what children may experience in their new playroom. Key workers supporting children's transition share important information in relation to care and learning needs to ensure needs continue to be met.
- We discussed with the management team the benefits of making contact with local primary schools to develop further the process for transition. This will provide opportunities to develop communication and partnership working across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. As a result, practitioners will be able to support children more effectively in their move to school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents and carers value the service they receive from the Bruce Nursery. They report that practitioners are very caring, approachable and helpful. Stay and play sessions allow families an opportunity to share nursery experiences with their child. Parents told us that effective communication helps to keep them informed about their child's learning. This includes opportunities for daily informal chats and opportunities to discuss children's learning and care at a time that suits them. The use of an online application, which shares newsletters, messages and a range of information, is well used. A few parents would like more support with ideas of how to progress learning at home. There is scope for practitioners to work with partners and families to design and develop relevant family learning programmes.
- A range of partnerships within the community enrich and enhance children's learning experiences. A few of these are at the early stages of being developed and should be implemented as planned. This will help realise the potential that exists for partnership working in the immediate community.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting 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

- There is a warm and supportive ethos within the setting. Practitioners have developed positive and caring relationships with children and families. They are aware of the importance of nurturing children's wellbeing and respond appropriately to children's needs. Children appear confident, relaxed and well settled.
- Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of 'Getting it right for every child'. They use the wellbeing indicators effectively when completing care plans for individuals. Children have an understanding of what it means to be safe and healthy. Practitioners and management should continue with their plans to work with children and families to develop understanding of the wellbeing indicators in meaningful ways. A visual representation of the wellbeing indicators within the playroom may enable children to engage with them more meaningfully.
- Children have recently been undertaking risk assessments of the outdoor area and are beginning to understand how this helps keep them safe in their play. At snack time, children are encouraged to try a range of healthy fruit and vegetables. They take part in hygiene routines and are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. Children's independence and self-help skills, for example, dressing themselves for outdoor play, are recorded and celebrated through a display. Regular access to a large outdoor area and visits to a local park impact positively on all aspects of children's health and wellbeing.
- Positive behaviour is promoted and practitioners work hard to support children develop the skills they require to play well together. Children are developing friendships and almost all are able to take turns and share resources with each other. Practitioners should continue with plans to introduce a 'Thinking Book', which will support children to discuss and manage their feelings and emotions. There is scope to develop children's responsibilities within the playroom, particularly in relation to caring for and respecting their learning environment and resources. This could meaningfully link to early work started on raising awareness of children's rights.
- Overall, statutory duties are met. Practitioners understand the requirements of care planning and work with parents to gather relevant information to help them meet the needs of children. It is important that all plans are consistently reviewed and dated. Practitioners are confident about their responsibility to keep children safe.
- Practitioners treat children and their families with respect. Parents report that they feel welcome and included. The setting should continue, as planned, to monitor how effectively they promote inclusion and equality across the setting. This will allow the richness of the

setting community to be celebrated and used as a context for meaningful learning. We have asked practitioners to monitor gender balance and children's participation across learning experiences. This will ensure practitioners are confident that all children have equal access and there are no artificial barriers to learning.

### 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 aged under two years

- Babies are secure in their environment, which supports them to develop well socially, emotionally and physically. The stimulating range of resources and learning experiences offered allows them to gain confidence, exercise their curiosity and develop their investigative skills. The effective use of song, rhyme and commentary supports the development and acquisition of language and promotes a sense of enjoyment. Older babies enjoy the challenge of negotiating the steps of the climbing frame and exploring their bodies as they manage risk on the chute. They are sensitively encouraged to develop independence, including washing their hands after being changed and feeding themselves.

#### Children aged two to three years

- Children aged two to three years enjoy exploring their learning environments and making independent choices in their play. They are supported well by practitioners to decide where they want to play. Children enjoy the process of baking a cake and exploring a range of fruits as they help prepare snack. They are developing their physical skills well as they run, climb and explore in the garden and manipulate a range of materials to spoon, fill and pour. Children are developing an interest in story as they readily share books with adults.

#### Children aged three years and over

- Overall, evidence within electronic journals, developmental overviews and floorbooks demonstrate that over time, children have made good progress in their learning.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. A recent focus on being independent has resulted in most children developing and improving their skills in dressing for outdoors. During snack and mealtimes, children can identify healthy foods. They confidently talk about and understand the importance of toothbrushing, healthy eating and personal hygiene. A few understand what it means to be active. During outdoor play, children develop their physical skills such as throwing and catching and balance and coordination. Fine motor skills are developing well through a range of interesting experiences both indoors and outdoors.

- In communication and language, children are making good progress. Most children are confident communicators and engage in extended conversations with practitioners, their friends and visitors. A few children confidently talk about their involvement in recent learning experiences. Children listen well and enjoy when practitioners spontaneously read stories. They can recall key events and characters from stories and recite familiar rhymes. Most children recognise their name around the room and make good attempts to write their name. A few will write captions around the nursery. Children explore letter sounds through their play. They can identify letter sounds within their name and identify other words beginning with the same sound. A few children are particularly skilled in early literacy. They would benefit from a suitable level of challenge through real-life and meaningful experiences to ensure they continue to make progress in their learning. Practitioners now need to ensure that learning environments both indoors and outdoors, continue to promote early literacy.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics with a few making very good progress. Almost all children count beyond ten and recognise some numerals. They count from different starting points and a few are beginning to do simple addition and subtraction. They demonstrate a keen interest in larger numbers up to 100 and beyond. Learning contexts such as, 'houses and buildings' support children's recognition of shape and understanding of properties of three-dimensional objects. Most children are developing their skills in information handling, for example, gathering and recording views on the best material to build a house. Practitioners should now ensure children are encouraged to develop their mathematical language more readily through play. Children will benefit from access to a wider variety of play and real-life experiences that will develop further their skills in time and money.
- Children develop early science skills as they learn about hedgehogs, their environments and hibernation. Practitioners have made good use of the local environment to enable children to explore buildings and discover the range of material to build homes and other structures. A recent experiment enabled children to develop an understanding of the benefits of shaped roofs.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements through praise and encouragement, wall displays and achievement stickers. Children are confident and increasingly, are becoming independent learners. Practitioners know children well and because of improving their skills in observation and assessment, they are becoming more knowledgeable about children as learners.
- There is a supportive and inclusive ethos within the setting. Practitioners take good account of the varying needs of children and ensure all children have the opportunity to access to the range of experiences provided within the setting.

## Choice of QI : 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
- Role of practitioners and leaders
- Identification of learning needs and targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

- Across the setting, practitioners are committed to providing a nurturing and caring environment for children. They are knowledgeable and responsive to children's individual needs, interests and wellbeing. Relationships are consistently warm and nurturing between practitioners and children. The very positive relationships between families and practitioners provide a strong foundation for providing personalised support.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals and use their relationships with families to build a strong picture of each child's experiences and interests. This is supported by detailed plans established for all children. As discussed, there is potential for these to be created and reviewed even more collaboratively with parents and families. Consideration could be made to ensuring age appropriate recording formats are used for all children.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are supportive. Children have regular interactions with their key worker and other adults who know them well, promote their wellbeing and encourage their progress in learning. Practitioners identify next steps for all children based on where they are in their learning. As identified, there is potential for children to be more involved in reflecting on and talking about their learning. This will help children to understand themselves better as learners and the progress they are making.
- Overall, tasks, activities and resources are at the right level to help most children make sustained progress over time. Practitioners correctly identify where children need to be challenged in their learning and recognise that they need support in order to take this forward. There is scope for further challenge for a few children through the maximisation of learning opportunities that engage, sustain and extend interests consistently. We discussed the potential benefits of developing links with local schools where children will transition to. This may support a deeper and meaningful understanding of progression across the early level as a three-year programme.
- Appropriate links with partner agencies and professionals ensure that any factors, which may present as barriers to children's learning, are identified and addressed quickly.
- Practitioners make effective use of observations and the national wellbeing indicators to assess the needs of individual children. Where appropriate, plans are in place for children who require additional and targeted support to help them learn and maintain their wellbeing. Overall, children who face barriers to their learning are well supported. There is scope for evaluation and analysis of information gathered on children's progress to be more robust. This will help ensure that the correct interventions are in place and the very best outcomes are consistently achieved.

## 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.