

Summarised inspection findings

Roths Primary School Nursery

Moray Council

3 September 2024

Key contextual information

Rothes Primary School Nursery is located in a recently refurbished building in the primary school playground. There is one small playroom and a spacious outdoor garden. The nursery is managed by a part-time manager with support from a visiting Continuous Improvement Officer (CIO) from the local authority. Staffing includes a senior early years practitioner, two early years practitioners and an early years support worker. The nursery is registered for 18 children aged three to five years. There are currently 18 children on the roll. They access their 1140 hours entitlement by attending from 9am to 3pm each day during term time. In the past five years the nursery has had six changes of management, and a new manager will take up post in August 2024.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community■ strategic planning for continuous improvement■ implementing improvement and change	

- Practitioners had recently revised the nursery's vision, values and aims, in consultation with parents and carers. That revision ensured that these statements are meaningful to children and their families. Practitioners demonstrate the vision and values well in all aspects of their work. They work in a caring, collaborative and respectful way and are committed to doing their very best for children. As a result of the nurturing approaches, children are happy and settled in a calm, enabling environment.
- The team have experienced a significant number of changes of manager in recent years. This has resulted in inconsistencies in approaches, and limited progress in developing and improving the nursery. Despite this, practitioners have displayed effective teamwork, remaining focused on developing some aspects of provision. Practitioners have willingly undertaken training to enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding of early years pedagogy. Recent professional learning on inclusive practice has resulted in important improvements, in aspects of parental involvement and how staff reflect on their day-to-day work.
- Practitioners meet weekly to review playroom practice and plan changes to provision in the playroom and outdoors. To a limited extent, the team use checklists to identify changes needed to their practice. The manager now needs to introduce a more structured and robust approach to quality assurance. This should include using national quality indicators and national care standards to evaluate the quality of the nursery, and accurately identify areas which need further development. Implementing the council's quality assurance calendar will help ensure that all areas of the life and work of the nursery are monitored regularly.
- The nursery improvement plan includes an appropriate number of key priorities. Practitioners have made some progress in taking these forward. The plan has focused on developing aspects of literacy, numeracy and assessment. The manager and practitioners should ensure that work to improve literacy and numeracy focuses more on developing high-quality spaces and displays. These need to be richly resourced and aimed at developing children's skills more

widely. Practitioners are now ready to undertake leadership roles which link with the nursery improvement plan and contribute positively to nursery improvements.

- The team are committed to improving outcomes for children and families. They would benefit from clearer and more consistent strategic guidance from the manager. This would support them to prioritise, measure and analyse the impact of their work. Practitioners are enthusiastic about enhancing their professional development and leadership skills. The team would now benefit from having more regular opportunities for feedback discussions with senior leaders. This will help practitioners to build on their strengths and further develop their practice.

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 are motivated by the range of rich outdoor experiences, and by opportunities indoors. Practitioners provide a variety of open-ended activities and natural resources. These experiences encourage children to solve problems, co-operate and talk about their ideas as they play. Practitioners join with children, supporting them to work well together and to engage positively in group games such as hide and seek. Practitioners make very good use of digital devices to widen the opportunities for children to programme toys, talk about their experiences, draw, and play literacy and numeracy games.
- Practitioners actively use the language of the wellbeing indicators in daily routines and interactions. They ensure that children experience and understand these expressions in meaningful contexts, such as keeping safe during a visit to a local playpark. Practitioners work very effectively as a team and demonstrate a shared commitment to providing high-quality experiences. As a result, all children engage well in learning activities. The staff team should continue to review indoor playroom provision to maximise opportunities for children to apply and develop skills. Practitioners are aware that a few children need greater challenge in their learning opportunities.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are warm and respectful, resulting in confident, well-settled individuals. All team members know when to intervene and when to give children time and space to work things through by themselves. Practitioners use questioning and commentary very well to support children to extend their thinking and to talk about their learning. They listen carefully to children, responsive to their needs and interests. This encourages children to be leaders of their own learning.
- Practitioners know the children as personalities very well. They take steps to identify some aspects of children's progress in learning. Practitioners capture observations in 'focus child books' which are shared with children and families regularly. Practitioners encourage children to identify their own next steps in learning, alongside those assessed by the staff team. Practitioners then carefully plan opportunities for children to take this learning forward. The staff team has identified the need to streamline and improve their assessment procedures to ensure more accurate information on children's strengths and development needs.
- Practitioners are highly responsive to children's progress in their daily practice. They have begun to develop more intentional planning to provide a broader range of experiences for all children. The team now need to review the balance of planning approaches, using national guidance. This will help ensure depth and breadth of learning experiences across the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide a play-based curriculum in which children initiate almost all activities themselves. They are aware of the need to introduce more adult-initiated opportunities. These should aim to ensure that experiences, interactions and spaces fully challenge children and build on prior learning. The indoor playroom needs the addition of richer spaces and a wider range of resources. This will promote depth and application of skills across a wider range of curriculum areas. The curriculum is enhanced significantly by visits into the local community and beyond. Visitors with special skills or interests share their learning with the children. These contributions are supporting children to develop an understanding of the world of work, and life in the community.
- Transitions from home to nursery are managed well, providing positive experiences for children and their families. Children are invited for settling-in days and parents attend information sessions in which the nursery experience is explained fully. Parents appreciate the enhanced transitions provided for children who take longer to settle. Children have good opportunities to visit the primary school to use the gym, library and to attend social events and concerts. They enjoy taking part in the computer club run by primary pupils. All staff across Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) early level need to collaborate to develop a clear transition plan for children moving from nursery into primary one. This will support continuity of approaches and help ensure that new learning builds successfully on prior learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners enjoy close, supportive relationships with families. The team appreciates the support which families offer to the nursery, for example by visiting to share skills and experiences. These have included stimulating singing sessions learning Scottish songs, and a visit involving a new baby. Families have given good support for the development of the outdoors area. Events such as Sports Day, Christmas events and termly 'Stay and Play' sessions are well-attended by families. Through this strong partnership with parents, practitioners gain a clear understanding of children's strengths and challenges they may face.
- Practitioners regularly share information about children's progress. This includes meetings to discuss evidence from photographs and observations. Families are kept well informed through the nursery online platform and daily conversations with the nursery team. The manager issues a monthly newsletter. This provides information about what has been happening in the nursery and dates of forthcoming events. The staff team gather parents' and carers' views to help strengthen partnership working and support improvement.

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

very 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

- The nursery offers a calm and welcoming environment. Practitioners are cheerful and positive, helping children to feel safe, happy and eager to play. Children have opportunities to explain how they feel when they arrive each day. They can talk about their feelings and are learning how to express their emotions. Practitioners encourage children to be kind and responsible. Children are developing skills in sharing materials and taking turns to use toys. They enjoy helping to prepare snack foods and many can talk about aspects of healthy eating. Children are very independent, for example when dressing for outdoor play and making choices about their activities. They benefit from regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the outdoor garden, and weekly movement sessions in the school gym hall.
- Practitioners have successfully raised children's awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Children enjoy taking 'Shanarri Bear' home, learning about feelings of being safe and nurtured. Staff use wellbeing expressions extremely well in their everyday interactions with children. Children know that their ideas and opinions are important. They are active, responsible citizens as they take part in recycling projects and learn about sustainability. They are growing in confidence as they interview community helpers and take safe risks in outdoor play. To achieve further progress, practitioners should now promote the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. This would promote children's understanding of their rights and further enhance their wellbeing.
- Staff have undertaken professional learning on promoting children's positive behaviour. They have implemented their learning very effectively. Children are learning to regulate their emotions using a range of strategies. Almost all children resolve disagreements calmly and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. With skilled staff support and intervention, children show genuine empathy towards each other.
- All staff are clear about their shared responsibilities for keeping children safe. They engage in professional learning to ensure they carry out their roles and remits effectively. All children have detailed care plans. These are linked to the wellbeing indicators and are reviewed regularly in consultation with parents. Children who require additional support for learning are identified quickly. Practitioners liaise regularly and effectively with external agencies to ensure children receive appropriate, targeted support.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equality. As a result of staff's well-focused work, children are able to talk knowledgeably about what it means to be included or excluded. Staff have built positive and trusting relationships with families, enabling them to respond well to children and their individual needs. Practitioners show skill and sensitivity in challenging gender stereotypes. Practitioners could extend children's understanding of diversity through the celebration of a range of festivals and offering a wider range of multicultural resources.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and language. Practitioners' skilled interactions support children to learn and extend their vocabulary. Practitioners listen carefully to the children and support them to talk positively to each other. As a result, children enjoy sharing thoughts and ideas with adults and with each other. Most listen well to each other as part of daily interactions, as well as through focused games. Children make marks indoors, with adults scribing their stories when asked. Many children would benefit from daily access to a wider range of writing materials, books, stories and rhymes to enhance their progress further.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They use mathematical language accurately and build their vocabulary through effective support from practitioners. Most demonstrate an interest in numbers as they play and follow routines. They explore concepts of size, shape, and measurement as they build structures with loose parts and large construction resources. Children would benefit from further opportunities to identify and write numbers in meaningful contexts indoors and outdoors.
- Most children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They relate well to adults and to their peers, developing positive friendships. All children develop their physical skills very well as they run, balance, climb outdoors. They show very good skills during their weekly movement sessions in the school gym hall. Almost all children persevere when they meet challenges. They can share, take turns, collaborate on projects and work as part of a team. Practitioners are aware that routines such as lunch arrangements could offer children further opportunities to develop independence.
- Practitioners have some processes in place to gather evidence of children's progress. However, they do not yet have accurate information about how children are progressing through the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) or how children are making progress over time. The council has identified this as an area for improvement and has undertaken to implement revised procedures in the new session.
- Practitioners are aware of the importance of recognising children's achievements at home. They encourage families to share children's experiences with the nursery. They share and celebrate children's achievements through visual displays. Many children show a sense of wonder about the natural world, for example as they explore the life cycle of butterflies and frogs. They displayed a very good knowledge of different nocturnal animals.

- Practitioners have created an inclusive and supportive ethos. They know the families and their context very well. They are aware of those children who require further support in specific areas of learning and plan strategies to meet individual children's needs. As a result, children are making good progress. The manager actively works in partnership with parents to promote regular attendance to help close the poverty related attainment gap.

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.