

# Summarised inspection findings

**Mossbank Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class**

Shetland Islands Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

Mossbank Early Learning and Childcare Class is based within Mossbank Primary School, Shetland. It serves the communities of Mossbank, Firth and Toft. The provision operates during term time and is for children aged two to those not yet attending school. The nursery is registered for 25 children to attend at any time, when two-year-olds are present, or 28 if all children are aged over three. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children on the roll.

The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the setting which is managed on a day-to-day basis by a senior practitioner. A part-time early learning and childcare teacher and a dedicated team of full and part-time practitioners support her.

Children have free access to an enclosed outdoor play area and make use of a wooded area adjacent to the setting.

### 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 early learning and childcare (ELC) team worked in consultation with the headteacher, school staff and parents to refresh the vision, values and aims for the school and ELC setting. Practitioners bring these to life through the very positive ethos in the setting. They talk confidently about their aspirations for children and families. As a result, there is a strong culture of respect between children, practitioners and parents.
- The senior practitioner is responsible for managing the setting. She is an effective leader and supports practitioners well. The headteacher and part-time visiting ELC teacher provide her with valuable support. All practitioners comment positively on the leadership of the setting. All staff work well together as a team and are enthusiastic and keen to take on leadership roles.
- The ELC team and headteacher are strongly committed to continuing to improve the early learning and childcare they provide for children and families. They have worked collaboratively to improve the environment used by the children indoors and also to create an open plan space for parents to use. The changes they have made within the setting are having a positive impact on children's experiences and learning. Practitioners plan to make further improvements to their environment outdoors. Their recent successful online fundraising auction will make this possible sooner than planned. Practitioners should continue to involve children in decision making when planning improvements to spaces across the ELC setting.
- The whole-school improvement plan identifies priorities which are appropriate for the ELC setting. For example, developing approaches to play and increasing opportunities for parental engagement. There is a strong culture of reflection through dialogue by practitioners in the setting. Practitioners discuss developments, operational issues and evaluate their practice at staff meetings. They readily seek the views of parents and partner agencies as part of this

process. The ELC team should adopt more rigorous and regular self-evaluation processes within the setting, using quality indicators from national frameworks.

- The ELC team recognise the importance of professional learning. Practitioners undertake relevant professional development training and share their learning and improvement ideas with colleagues on an ongoing basis. As a result, their understanding of early years pedagogy is well embedded. Practitioners should continue to engage in professional collaborative learning to support moderation, as well as to share effective practice, beyond their own setting.

## 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

- Practitioners have created a warm and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning both indoors and outdoors. Children new to the nursery settle quickly due to the caring and nurturing ethos. Practitioners encourage children to reflect on how they are feeling as they start their day. Children are interested and enthusiastic as they explore the range of stimulating experiences provided. They access an appropriate balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences. Children concentrate very well for extended periods while leading their own play. Most respond and engage well during together time activities and when listening to stories. As planned, practitioners should continue to promote the use of digital technologies within the setting.
- Practitioners' interactions are caring and responsive. A majority of children develop friendships and play cooperatively with others in the wooded play area. Practitioners are skilful in providing well-timed interventions to support and extend children's learning. They engage children well in conversations as they play to encourage curiosity and imagination. Children's confidence and communication skills are being developed well as a result. Individual children have responsibility to help prepare daily snack. Practitioners should introduce other opportunities to develop further all children's leadership and independence skills.
- In the past year, practitioners have been reviewing and amending their approaches to planning for children's learning. Practitioners involve children meaningfully in responsive planning using floorbooks. These contain photographs and children's comments. Each child also has a 'Take a Look Book' that includes photographs, practitioners' observations and samples of children's work. Children enjoy discussing these to share their learning story. Parents may access these at any time. They are also invited to engage in 'Family Fridays', twice a term, which are well attended. Practitioners should continue to work with agencies to promote effective partnerships with all families which impact positively on learning.
- The leadership team have developed systems for recording, tracking and monitoring children's progress. They record progress on recently revised progression planners for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners observe learning, keep age-appropriate developmental overviews and record relevant next steps for individual children. They use care plans to produce helpful 'What matters to me' cards for all children and create passports with set targets for any child requiring additional support. These keep all practitioners informed and ensure individual needs are being met. Practitioners should look at ways of streamlining their tracking systems to ensure these are manageable and sustainable over time.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners take account of children's interests through responsive planning. They ensure a good balance between adult led, adult initiated and child led play. They place a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing and promote the development of literacy and numeracy well within the experiences provided. As the outdoor provision develops, children will have greater opportunities to extend these experiences further. Practitioners should continue to maximise opportunities to promote curiosity and investigation outdoors.
- Practitioners use developmental overviews and progression pathways to inform learning. They identify skills and learning opportunities that children experience within nursery contexts. These contribute to enriching children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum. The setting shares the school's curriculum rationale. An illustrated format would make this more meaningful for younger children.
- Practitioners plan activities well to support children as they first move into nursery. They encourage parents to stay in the playroom to support their child to settle. Practitioners share an information booklet with families, and a 'Welcome to Mossbank ELC' book with children to help children settle into their new environment. The setting has effective links with the local Under 5s group who share regular visits, for example storytelling sessions, and occasional outings.

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

- Practitioners have established very positive relationships with children, parents and families. Parents are welcomed into the setting and may stay and view their child's 'Take a Look Book' and floorbooks within the refurbished open plan parent area. Practitioners also invite parents to share in their child's learning during well attended 'Family Fridays' planned twice a term. Parents comment positively on these opportunities. They value the support they receive and feel that practitioners work well with them as partners. Moving forward, practitioners should ensure 'Take a Look Books' and floorbooks have a clearer focus on next steps.
- Practitioners keep parents well informed through helpful information displayed in the parent area, information booklets and daily dialogue at drop off and pick up times. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning through sharing information from children's experiences at home. The ELC team recognises that there is scope to make increased use of digital technology as a tool to inform individual parents of their child's learning and share achievements.

## 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

- The headteacher and all practitioners have a strong focus on supporting children's and families' wellbeing. They recognise that caring relationships are at the heart of children's learning and development. Practitioners are responsive to children's individual needs and, as a result, children are settled and happy in the ELC setting. Practitioners provide effective, enhanced settling-in programmes for those children who require them. They encourage children to talk about their feelings within different contexts. Practitioners help children to understand about healthy eating during conversations at snack and lunch times. Children's rights to keep their bodies safe are well promoted by practitioners through the 'Wir Ain Peerie Bodies' programme.
- There is a warm, welcoming ethos in the ELC setting. Parents and families speak positively of their relationship with the headteacher and practitioners. The whole ELC team have strong relationships with children and treat them with respect. They model caring behaviour and encourage children to be respectful. As a result, almost all children co-operate well, share resources and are kind towards one another. Practitioners should continue to reinforce the importance the school places on children being 'ready, respected and safe'. As planned, they should introduce recognisable characters to help younger children's understanding of these and other aspects of wellbeing.
- The ELC leadership team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe and meeting their care and learning needs. Practitioners attend appropriate training to ensure they understand procedures and policies. Practitioners use a local authority audit tool to ensure that children's needs are identified. The setting engages parents prior to consulting with agencies. Children with additional support needs have individual passports and individualised educational plans are in place where applicable. These are monitored and reviewed to ensure appropriate progress is made. Practitioners need to ensure that personal care plans for all children are reviewed with, and signed by, parents at least twice a year.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. This allows them to provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and families. Practitioners are aware of procedures to follow where a child may benefit from support with their learning or families require input from other agencies. The ELC team work collaboratively with organisations to support families and the Pre School home visiting team. As a result, an inclusive ethos exists throughout the setting.



### 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 early language skills. They use language with increasing confidence as they play. A few children show a keen interest in listening to stories and access books as they play freely. Children form age-appropriate drawings and a few mark-make within the floorbook. Most children recognise their names through self-registration routines. A few are attempting to form letters in their names. Almost all children join in songs at together time and a few sing in their imaginative band and Viking galley. As planned, children should benefit from a more literacy rich environment outdoors. This should develop further their vocabulary and understanding of print.
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Most count the number of children present each day and identify numbers within five. Children's understanding of numbers in meaningful real-life contexts should be strengthened. This would ensure more appropriate challenge for a few children. A few can name and match colours and two-dimensional shapes correctly using an online shape game. Most children show limited measurement vocabulary during play.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. The majority of children play well with others. Most children identify how to keep safe. Almost all children are developing physical skills as they use bikes and play outdoors. Children show understanding about feelings and respect through stories they hear. They now need to develop an awareness of diversity and rights. All children are developing their skills in hygiene, for example, they wash their hands prior to snack and lunch. Children develop social skills and learn about the benefits of eating certain foods during these experiences. They would benefit from taking on more responsibilities within the setting.
- Children's developmental overviews, 'Take a Look Books', floorbooks and children's care plans provide evidence of progress children are making. The recently introduced progression planners will help further to show progress individuals make over time.
- Children's achievements are displayed on 'Wir Wonderful Work' wall and the school's achievement wall. Parents share their children's achievements from out with the nursery, for example, when children play rugby or learn to cycle. Children are proud that their achievements are celebrated in this way.

- Practitioners are aware of the need to ensure equity for all and take account of any barriers to learning that exist. Their interventions are beginning to positively impact on levels of engagement within the setting.

## 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.