

Summarised inspection findings

Bridges Pre-School Nursery Silverburn

Aberdeen City Council

15 July 2025

Key contextual information

Bridges Pre School Nursery is situated in Aberdeen Energy Park Aberdeen. It is privately owned and is in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC). The nursery consists of three playrooms, with access to outdoor areas. Children attend from the age of three months until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 59 children aged under three years and 45 children aged three until starting primary school. The current roll is 86. The nursery operates between 7.30 am – 5.30 pm Monday to Friday, across the full year. Children have various patterns of attendance, including part and full-time placements. Staffing consists of a nursery manager, two deputy managers, room leads and a team of practitioners.

The locality lead from the local authority visits the setting throughout the year offering support and guidance.

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	

- The manager recently led a review and refresh of the nursery's vision, values and aims to better reflect children's rights and the strong sense of inclusion within the setting. She consulted practitioners and parents in this process. Parents appreciate the opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting. There is a need for the manager to maintain a strong focus on the updated vision, values and aims to ensure they become embedded fully in the work of the setting.
- Across the setting, senior leaders and the staff team demonstrate a keen commitment to improving the nursery provision. Senior leaders are receptive to advice and guidance from external partners, for example, the local authority locality lead. The manager and staff team have developed very positive partnerships with parents. Parents appreciate how approachable the senior team are.
- There is a positive sense of teamwork across the setting. It is a well-established staff team. Promoted staff have clearly defined remits and areas of responsibility which help to provide consistency for the staff team. The deputy managers provide helpful support to the manager and practitioners. Recent changes in staff deployment have resulted in each deputy manager being deployed full-time in each of the playrooms. Practitioners appreciate that they are now able to seek advice and support during the nursery session. This new approach also enables promoted staff to engage in regular quality assurance activities. They should now ensure that approaches to quality assurance have a stronger focus on what children are learning and the progress they are making.
- Senior leaders have created an annual improvement plan. In the last few years, improvement planning has had a strong focus on improving the learning environment and restructuring staff teams. Senior leaders now need to ensure that improvement planning is more ambitious and is

informed by robust self evaluation. In doing so, it will be important to detail clearly the actions and timescales required to take priorities forward. Senior practitioners need to have clear measures in place to evaluate the impact of developments.

- The manager supports the team well in accessing a variety of professional learning opportunities. The depute managers also take positive steps to promote continuous professional learning across the staff team. They each provide a monthly professional learning focus for staff to explore, discuss and take forward in the playrooms. Helpfully, practitioners are able to identify and put forward suggestions for areas of focus. The local authority locality lead has recently delivered training on planning and assessment. The staff team are at the very early stages of taking new approaches forward. Senior leaders and practitioners should now revisit national guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me 2020*, to develop a better understanding of early years pedagogy. For example, to help improve the quality of interactions.
- Senior leaders have created an annual quality assurance calendar. They use this to monitor aspects of the nursery provision. They consult with the staff team to build a picture of what is working well and what needs to improve. It would be helpful for the staff team to make more regular use of self-evaluation tools to evaluate more robustly the quality of the provision. As part of this, the manager should develop ways for practitioners to have more regular opportunities to visit other settings. This will help them identify and share good practice. The setting will benefit from continued targeted support from the local authority to make necessary improvements.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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 three

- Babies and toddlers are very settled in their respective play areas. They benefit from very positive and nurturing relationships with the adults who care for them. Practitioners know children's individual needs and interests well. They are beginning to use this information to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for children. Practitioners have re-organised the playroom to create a dedicated space for the youngest children to use at different times during the session. Older children in the playroom enjoy exploring natural resources in the outdoor area. Practitioners join children in their play to reinforce and extend learning. The team have added soft furnishings in the playroom to make it cosy and home-like. There is scope to develop this further.

Children aged three years and over

- Relationships between practitioners and children are nurturing and caring. Practitioners interact positively with children, providing appropriate praise and encouragement. A few practitioners use questioning and commentary well to extend and deepen learning. There is a need for this to be a more consistent feature across the setting as there are missed opportunities to build on and extend children's learning. Practitioners respond appropriately to individual children's needs and take time to listen to their views. This helps children feel valued and have a positive experience at nursery. Practitioners are in the early stages of using Children's Rights and appreciating how these relate to children's learning.
- Most children demonstrate positive levels of engagement in their play and learning. A few children would benefit from more adult help to direct and support their play. Practitioners should review the flow of the nursery day to enable children to come together for smaller group experiences. Children choose to play indoors or outdoors across their day. Overall, they engage well with the range of nursery experiences. They have access to a variety of open-ended resources including natural materials. For the most part, children use the learning areas positively and select resources to support their play. However, children now need access to more resources in order that they can lead and develop their play more fully at, for example, the art and writing areas. Practitioners recently reviewed and made improvements to the environment outdoors. They used children's ideas and views to influence improvements, for example, they created raised beds to plant seeds. This has helped children explore how to plant and care for seeds. The staff team should continue to review learning contexts across the setting to maximise learning opportunities for children.

- Children are beginning to develop digital skills as they use tablet devices to take photographs and create videos. Children would benefit from further experiences to enrich their learning through the creative use of digital technologies.
- Practitioners are working together to develop a shared understanding of how young children play and learn. They plan and monitor a range of opportunities for children to develop skills across learning in response to children's interests and particular stage of development. Practitioners monitor children's levels of enjoyment and engagement in planned activities. They make adaptations to increase levels of engagement, for example, using textured items in messy play. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to plan for progression of knowledge and skills. There is a need for children to experience greater depth in breadth in learning, particularly in numeracy and mathematics.
- Practitioners record learning experiences and capture children's comments in floor books. They use individual observations to identify children's next steps in learning. There is a need to develop further the quality of observations to reflect accurately children's learning. Senior leaders should support practitioners to plan more effectively for progression of skills. This will also help practitioners to have a clearer picture of children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners offer a curriculum that is play based and responsive to children's interests. Children enjoy the variety of experiences offered across different areas of early learning indoors and outdoors. They are offered regular opportunities and encouraged to communicate their thoughts on their play experiences. Practitioners should continue to build on prior knowledge and learning to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Practitioners are supported by the locality lead to implement a variety of guidance that promotes coverage of curricular areas. They are aware of individual children's needs and work together to take account of these. Senior leaders recognise the need to continue embed the use of learning pathways to support children's progression and next steps in learning.
- As the staff team take forward their new approaches to planning, it will be important to ensure that they offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum which provides breadth and depth in learning across all areas.
- Senior leaders have created a summary template to share relevant information on individual's progress with schools to support a smooth transition into primary one. They should continue to work on developing a summary of where children are in their learning which can be shared with parents.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have built warm, respectful relationships with families and work well in partnership with them. Parents value the collaboration with staff to meet their children's individual care and support needs throughout the nursery. Parents appreciate opportunities throughout the year to 'stay and play'. This provides them with a valuable insight into their child's nursery experiences. Practitioners should progress their plans to invite parents to 'share a session' where parents can offer their expertise such as reading with children. This will empower parents to be more involved in the life of the nursery.
- Parents are kept up to date with regular communication including, for example, informal updates at the beginning and end of the day, weekly photos, termly newsletters, home link questions and the sharing of children's learning journals. Parents of children under three years old receive a daily update sheet of information about the care of their child throughout the day. As practitioners develop their observations of children's learning they should consider how families can contribute to this. This will also help parents to understand the progress children are making in their learning as a result of their nursery experiences.
- Practitioners have created a 'book swap' box where families can access a wide range of stories to share at home. This is widely used by parents and increases the opportunities for children to access a range of text at home. Practitioners should now consider opportunities to engage with parents as partners in their children's learning at home.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Across the setting, senior leaders and practitioners have fostered kind, caring and nurturing relationships with children. Children are settled and happy in the setting. Practitioners welcome children and their parents warmly into the setting each day. As a result, children separate confidently from parents. When children become upset, most practitioners intervene sensitively to reassure children. It would be beneficial for children to have opportunities throughout their day to identify and talk about their emotions.
- Senior leaders and practitioners demonstrate a keen commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of all of the children in their care. Practitioners know their children well. Parents appreciate the care and support their children receive in the setting. Practitioners have developed the playroom to provide children with spaces where they can rest. The staff team are familiar with the wellbeing indicators and make use of these to plan aspects of learning. Children explain how the nursery helps them to be healthy and keep safe. For example, a few children identify why they need to put on sun cream during hot weather and why they eat fruit at snack time. Children contribute to assessing risks on trips and in the outdoor area. As a next step, the staff team should now support children to have a greater understanding of the wellbeing indicators and what they mean for them in nursery and beyond.
- All children across the setting access the outdoors daily and have the opportunity to develop their physical skills. Practitioners have established positive snack and lunch time experiences throughout the nursery day. They encourage children to show good manners and be respectful of each other. Practitioners strive to make these experiences relaxed and home-like. They engage well with children and encourage children to talk to each other. Most children are independent during snack and lunchtime routines. They enjoy a wide range of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals.
- Practitioners are clear in their roles for keeping children safe and have received appropriate training. Practitioners create personal learning plans as children start in the setting. These are reviewed every six months or earlier if required. Senior staff regularly review and monitor personal plans. Moving forward, it would be helpful for practitioners to review the different layers of personal planning they have in place. This is to reduce unnecessary duplication but importantly to ensure practitioners are documenting children's learning and next steps more explicitly. A few children have additional support plans in place. Senior leaders should now take steps to put in place support plans for other children who may require them.
- Practitioners have created a very inclusive ethos where each child is welcomed and valued as an individual. They promote equity for all with everyone treated fairly and with respect and understanding. Books, resources and experiences in the setting promote inclusive practice with a particular focus on reflecting the contexts of the families represented. Practitioners should

celebrate the richness of the nursery community through relevant planned learning about equality and diversity.

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

Children aged under three

- Children under three enjoy exploring their playrooms and outdoors independently. Babies and toddlers demonstrate a keen interest in books and share them joyfully with practitioners. Children across the under threes' provision sing familiar songs and rhymes as part of their play and routines. Practitioners take every opportunity to promote children's early communication and language skills. Older children develop their physical skills well in the outdoor areas where they are learning to jump, run and balance. They enjoy using sieves and utensils in the sand area. As a next step, practitioners should explore ways to extend the opportunities children have to explore sand and water.

Children aged three years and over.

- Children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication skills. Most children talk confidently about their experiences to other children and adults. Children have access to a wide variety of texts and practitioners regularly read to individuals and groups of children, sharing stories. The majority of children are exploring letters and sounds in their name and a few are beginning to write these. Children have opportunities to engage in mark making through experiences indoors and out. The majority of children are capable of making better progress in literacy that builds on the knowledge and skills they have.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are making satisfactory progress. Children apply early numeracy skills as they count in routines and play. They use appropriate mathematical language when comparing the sizes of containers in the sand. Children explore measurement and identify simple two-dimensional shapes in play. They have opportunities to develop problem solving skills when using materials to build dens.
- Health and wellbeing is a focus for learning in the nursery. Almost all children confidently explore the outdoor environment where they engage a wide range of opportunities to develop skills in catching, throwing and kicking balls, exploring balance and climbing on obstacle courses and the climbing frame. Children demonstrate independence in considering safety in play, when using scooters and trikes. They are aware of the benefits of basic hygiene routines such as handwashing and self-serve foods using utensils. Children have opportunities to use scissors and a wide range of tools for writing which support children to develop their fine motor skills. Practitioners should now consider how children can build on their understanding of the wellbeing indicators in real-life contexts.

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in their learning for their stage of development. However, a minority of children could make better progress across a broader range of experiences. As practitioners' use of learning and developmental pathways develops, this will help them have a clearer understanding of children's progress in their learning to provide relevant challenge and support.
- Children have regular opportunities to explore the wider community through nature walks and visits to the park. They should now consider how to develop a wider range of experiences making relevant links the local community developments such as the building site and links across the city.
- Children's achievements are often shared by parents and celebrated in the nursery with certificates awarded to recognise their success. These should now be tracked to show children's progress over time in nursery and support planning for learning and development. Practitioners strive to support all children and should continue to look out for those who may face barriers in relation to their own particular context.

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.