

Summarised inspection findings

Sunnybank School Early Learning and Childcare setting

Aberdeen City Council

16 May 2023

Key contextual information

Sunnybank Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting is situated within Sunnybank School. Children attend from the local community and a few children have a shared placement with another provider. The setting provides 60 places for children aged three to those not yet attending school. The current roll is 73. Provision is across three playrooms. One playroom provides 1140 hours through full day, term time placements. The other two provide sessional term time placements through a morning or afternoon place. Families have the option of using the remaining hours they are entitled to in other ELC settings.

A deputy headteacher has responsibility for leading and managing the setting. Two senior practitioners support her. The setting is facing a period of uncertainty through a planned reduction in the provision and staffing.

The setting has a number of children for whom English is not their first language or have recently moved from another country. There are close links with the Aberdeen School for the Deaf.

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 are happy, confident, and enjoy their time in the setting. They make regular use of the outdoor area in all weathers. Children demonstrate their curiosity, show an interest in the natural world and extend their physical skills outdoors. Indoors and out, children have a high level of freedom. They are able to make choices about their play and follow their interests. Children now need to have a greater role in making decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning. This will help them to deepen their learning and make better connections across their play spaces.
- Practitioners are consistently kind and nurturing when they interact with children. They are considerate of children's preferences and notice when they need support during their play especially when they are settling in. Practitioners praise and encourage children for their ideas and achievements. They are at an early stage of enriching and deepening children's learning through their questioning and involvement in play. Practitioners now need to work together and focus on developing consistently high-quality interactions which enable children to secure progress in all areas of their learning. Children are benefiting from the work of practitioners to improve the quality of learning spaces. Practitioners need to develop further their understanding of how these spaces can be used to best effect to promote curiosity and creativity. The spaces should encourage children to make connections in their learning. Practitioners are continuing to improve how they use digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. Children benefit from the accessible games and stories using tablet computers.

- Practitioners observe children during their play and record information about their experiences using electronic learning journals which are shared with parents. They continue to develop their approaches to making observations to ensure this information captures children's significant learning consistently well. Senior leaders recognise the need to make better use of observations of children at play to inform responsive planning. This will help ensure experiences build on and extend children's interests and ideas more effectively.
- Practitioners use a variety of approaches to planning for children's learning. Senior leaders need to support practitioners to evaluate these planning processes and consider ways to make them more manageable. This should include a focus on responsive planning which involves children more in planning and evaluating their own experiences.
- In recent weeks, practitioners have introduced a new format of electronic learning journals to document children's learning and achievements. As a result, these do not yet show the progress children are making across the breadth of Curriculum for Excellence. Senior leaders have developed a helpful tracking system to check on children's progress. This needs to be developed further to help practitioners understand more clearly how well children are doing and where children would benefit from greater challenge in their learning.

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

- Children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language as a result of their experiences. Most children talk confidently with adults and each other. They have frequent opportunities to engage in conversations with interested adults and are extending their range of vocabulary through their interests. Children know familiar songs, including some associated British Sign Language signs, and participate enthusiastically in singing games. A few children enjoy sharing books independently. The majority of children listen with interest to stories during a group activity. Almost all children recognise their own name, and a few recognise the names of their friends. The majority of children create detailed drawings and a few are developing their early writing skills well. Opportunities for developing literacy should be developed further to support all children to make better progress. Practitioners should continue to enrich environments, indoors and outdoors, to support children's emergent literacy skills and provide increased challenge.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in early mathematics. Many bring skills and an interest in early mathematics from home to the setting. Staff need to support children to build on these skills. Most older children recognise numbers to five and a few are confident beyond. When supported by practitioners, the majority of children use numbers confidently in their routines. The majority of children recognise colours and a few can name basic two-dimensional shapes. Practitioners are improving the breadth of learning experiences for children in early mathematics this session. Children need more support from practitioners to use early mathematics in all of their play experiences.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children express their emotions and feelings through their conversations or in non-verbal ways such as gesture and facial expressions. Most children enjoy positive relationships with each other, and a few demonstrate very strong friendship bonds. All children are learning about their rights through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). They are at an early stage of understanding what this means to them. Most children are self-aware and keep themselves safe during physical play. They are making good progress in learning about healthy eating through their involvement in preparing and selecting their snacks and meals.
- Information available indicates that most children are making satisfactory progress across the curriculum and over time. Electronic learning journals do not yet consistently show the progress children make in their learning as a result of their experiences at the setting. As practitioners continue to develop skills in observing children's learning, a clearer profile of

progress should emerge. This will be enhanced further by developing approaches to recognising children's achievements and interests from home more fully.

- Practitioners are working well as a team to improve how they check on and monitor children's progress. In the recent past, children have moved onto school without experiencing and making appropriate progress across the breadth of the early level curriculum. Senior leaders and practitioners need to ensure they continue to improve the range, depth and accuracy of information they gather about children's progress.
- The practitioner team know families and the local community well. They are inclusive and welcome all families and children from a diverse range of countries. The recent celebration of a Polish festival is a positive start to celebrating children's different cultures and languages more fully. Practitioners and senior leaders are very aware of the children affected by poverty and take appropriate and sensitive steps to address this. They should now include data related to poverty, and other barriers to learning, when evaluating children's progress, and their overall wellbeing. This will support the team to understand any gaps that exist in securing children's progress. There are well-established partnerships with a range of professionals in the local area to support children and families experiencing challenges and potential barriers to progress. As a result, senior practitioners make timely referrals to partner agencies, including health visitors and speech and language therapists.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.