

Summarised inspection findings

Cullen Primary School Nursery Class

The Moray Council

29 January 2019

Key contextual information

Cullen Primary School Nursery Class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged from 3 years until starting primary school. Children attend from Cullen and the surrounding areas. The nursery is registered for 20 children and at the time of the inspection, the roll was 16. Children attend nursery for morning sessions only. Most attend Cullen Play Centre (which is in partnership with Moray Council to provide ELC) in the year prior to attending Cullen Nursery Class. All children attending the nursery are in their pre-school year and almost all started attending the setting in August 2018.

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

- The positive ethos created by practitioners enables children, parents and visitors to feel very welcome in the nursery class. Positive relationships are evident and as a result, children are confident and secure within the nursery setting.
- Most children are independent and confidently make choices and decisions about their play. The wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences both indoors and outdoors motivates children. Children's imagination and problem solving skills are supported well through the range of 'loose part' resources and natural materials. There is scope to develop this further by increasing the use of these resources in the construction and role-play areas. Children engage well in their play and most are able to sustain an interest for extended periods of time. For example, when creating structures outdoors with blocks and everyday objects and when making pretend cupcakes in the mud kitchen.
- Children's rights and the national wellbeing indicators underpin the work of the nursery. Children have a developmentally appropriate understanding of how the indicators and United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child relate to them in their daily lives. There is a strong emphasis on being kind, caring and helpful and keeping safe. Children play cooperatively with each other. Practitioners make good use of the 'kindness tree' to recognise children's positive actions. They value and respect children's views and give children a range of opportunities to share their ideas and make decisions about their play and learning. This includes voting, use of questionnaires and involvement in planning.
- The nursery engages very well with parents and the local community to enrich children's learning. 'Granny helpers', Chef Doug and a local farmer are a great asset to the nursery and provide storytelling sessions, help with activities and support on outings. As a result, children are very familiar with the community and local landmarks. They develop early citizenship skills through their intergenerational work and 'community café'. The café provides opportunities for

parents and members of the community to come along to the nursery and enjoy some of the children's baking. As part of this, they share with children, information about their careers. As a result, children have developed an understanding of the skills required for certain jobs, such as a nurse, farmer, teacher and chef. Building on this good work, practitioners could now consider how these experiences may provide opportunities to develop children's skills in enterprise.

- Practitioners' interactions are respectful, nurturing and responsive to the needs of individual children. They have created a positive learning environment for children to develop and learn. Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the individual needs of children attending the nursery. They skilfully interact with children and effectively adapt their use of language and questions. Practitioners give children a good level of support and challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners observe children as they play and record children's responses to experiences. We discussed with practitioners the importance of consistently capturing significant learning for individuals rather than using generic statements to demonstrate achievements. Practitioners will benefit from developing further their skills in observation and recording. This will ensure observations provide reliable evidence of children's learning and consistently inform future planning for children.
- Practitioners have made a positive start to identifying meaningful next steps in learning for children through the identification of individual learning goals. Individual trackers for early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing demonstrate key skills that children have achieved. We have asked practitioners to revisit their transition process in order to gather information on children's prior learning and experiences. This may include reviewing and updating the "All about me" booklets and close working partnerships between Cullen Play Centre and the nursery to support more collaborative working. Using this information, along with their observations of children's learning, practitioners now need to ensure that the data they gather is used more effectively. This will be helpful to practitioners to determine the progress children make in their learning over time.
- Children engage enthusiastically in planning for specific learning contexts. Practitioners listen carefully to children's ideas and respond well by planning interesting experiences indoors, outdoors and within the local community. They make good use of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to provide children with a breadth of relevant experiences. Practitioners record children's experiences within specific learning contexts within floorbooks and on the 'learning journey wall'. We discussed with practitioners ways to demonstrate clearly the depth of children's learning. Practitioners recognise the current processes for planning and gathering evidence on children's learning need to be streamlined and a more manageable approach achieved. This will support practitioners to have a sharper focus on children's learning and use the range of information gathered to form a coherent picture of children's progress.
- Practitioners are attentive to children's needs and identify when children require additional support. They work in close partnership with parents and other support agencies. Practitioners create individual plans for children and identify clear learning targets and the support required. This is enabling children to continue to make progress in their learning and development.

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

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

- All children are in their pre-school year and almost all started the nursery in August 2018. It is difficult to determine the progress they have made over time at this early stage of the new session. Evidence within trackers, floorbooks, children's diaries and profiles demonstrate that children have developed a range of skills and have made good progress in learning. However, a few children could be making better progress.
- There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing and as a result, most children are making good progress. Most know and understand the nursery rules and are confident in routines. The role of 'quality helpers' has enabled children to become aware of what it means to be responsible. Tasks include snack helpers and looking after their friends and keeping them safe. The role of 'Responsible Robbie' is very important to the children. Almost all children can express how they are feeling and a daily 'check in' enables practitioners to support children as required. Almost all children are making good progress in developing gross motor skills. Outdoor experiences and use of the gym hall enables children to work with large apparatus and wheeled toys to develop balance, coordination and ball skills. Fine motor skills develop well as children prepare pumpkins for Halloween, create birdfeeders and thread autumn leaves to make jewellery.
- Children are making good progress in early literacy and language. Most children listen well at gathering times. They confidently share their experiences and are able to explain about recent holiday adventures with their parents and describe the contents of their 'Treasure Bags'. Practitioners introduce children to new words and as a result, children are extending their range of vocabulary. Children are developing skills in conversation, turn taking and asking questions. Most children recognise their name and can find it in various areas of the playroom. Evidence within individual profiles and on displays, demonstrates children are developing early writing skills through a variety of experiences. This includes mark making outdoors, creating captions and writing their name on their work. Most children's skills in drawing are progressing well and are beginning to include considerable detail. A few children are ready and will benefit from opportunities to increase their awareness of letter sounds.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, children are making good progress. Most children are developing their counting skills well through nursery routines, number games and the range of experiences available. Most children count to ten with a few counting beyond. They

demonstrate one to one correspondence and can identify numerals. A few children count on from different starting points, are becoming familiar with larger numbers, and relate these to numbers on a calendar. Children explore and investigate a range of natural materials and sort and group various items. They use appropriate mathematical language as they measure and weigh. A few children are beginning to be aware of making smaller amounts such as half when preparing food for snack. Most children are becoming familiar with shape and pattern during their play experiences. A recent trip in the local community, where children spotted a butterfly, provided an opportunity to extend children's awareness of symmetry and symmetrical patterns. Children will benefit from increased opportunities to develop their skills in time, money and information handling.

- Children are confident using the interactive board to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. As planned, an increase in opportunities to use digital technology will support children to become more independent, for example, taking photographs of their own work and using tablet computers independently to support their learning. Children's early science skills develop well through the range of interesting outings and experiences they have within the setting. They are familiar with their local area and develop early map reading skills as they search for 'Granny's Glasses' and go on local treasure hunts.
- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated within the setting. Parents share children's achievements from home through achievements sheets and 'Treasure Bags'. Children are eager to share their achievements with other adults and their peers. There is a 'give it a go' attitude, which is supporting children to be confident and challenge themselves, for example, during outdoor play. Positive actions such as being kind and friendly are recognised and celebrated through 'star of the week' and achievement stickers.
- The ethos within the nursery is supportive, respectful and inclusive. Practitioners work hard to ensure potential barriers to learning are reduced through effective partnership working with colleagues, parents and other agencies. The acting headteacher and practitioners have correctly identified the need to develop further the process for monitoring and tracking children's learning and achievements. As part of this, they need to identify how they will use this data to evidence improvements in children's progress and evaluate the impact of strategies used to support learning.

1. Quality of care and support

Children experienced a vibrant, receptive and nurturing environment that resulted in smiles and laughter. Children were able to make choices about their play which captured their interest through investigation and exploration. Group activities enabled children to talk together, listen and share their thinking together. Children were being encouraged to have an understanding of emotions, to share and develop a sense of fairness. Children were beginning to have an understanding of and take ownership of the SHANARRI indicators. An aspect of this was children being quality helpers within the nursery; they were proud of the position and were able to learn about responsibility.

Children's contributions were clearly valued and respected through self-directed play. Natural conversations, probing questions and engagement with staff during activities also helped to widen children's learning in their play. Meaningful involvement of parents in their child's learning and development helped with the child being central to any support, promoting their wellbeing and helping to ensure the best possible outcomes. Parents particularly liked the 'friendship' visits where they could spend time in the nursery with their child.

Children experienced sensitive and responsive care, helping to build on their confidence, resilience and self-esteem. Although the majority of the children had not been attending the service for long, staff were getting to know them well. Staff liaised closely with families, and other agency professionals, aligning with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. Where a need had been identified children were being well supported so that they gained the most from their experience. Whilst the personal care plan identified children's individual needs, streamlining recording procedures would better enhance a holistic approach to wellbeing and progress.

Children's physical, emotional and social wellbeing was being promoted at snack time where choice, independence and positive behaviours associated with eating and drinking were being promoted. During the course of the inspection, children chose to play outside in the fresh air. They went for walks in the community and a weekly session, generally over a couple of terms, promoted outdoor learning in the natural environment.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

The service was clean and free from faults and hazards; risk management procedures helped to identify known risks and appropriate action needed to eliminate or minimise such risk. We noted that risk assessments were completed for every outing. We would suggest that one for each regular venue would suffice if subject to review and is also child specific, as appropriate.

The playroom was bright, inviting and welcoming for the children and consisted of displays of their work and contributions. Space had been arranged with the children in mind so that they could choose from a wide variety of resources. Children had chosen to have a clothes shop in their role-play area; they had made models from junk and created pictures from various items collected on their walk.

Children's health was further promoted as there was always access to a trained first aider, ensuring that children were treated properly should an accident occur. Safe food practices were followed as staff had completed food hygiene training. Infection control procedures took account of good practice guidance, for example, children washed their hand before snack and after outdoor play.

Children were involved in making decisions about their own wellbeing and development through exploration, learning about and taking ownership of risk, particularly during outdoor learning experiences. Children clearly enjoyed the benefits of outdoor play and chose to be outdoors for the majority of the inspection. The play area was equipped with some real life objects such as pots and pans as well as natural and scrap materials. We noted that children worked as a team and used their imagination well when building a big wall from wooden blocks. A small group of children used a wooden tube, some string and tyres to create a machine which later became a castle. A wider variety of real life tools and scrap materials (loose parts) would further inspire creativity and thinking skills to flourish.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

3. Quality of staffing

Staff had a natural and unassuming manner when engaging with the children, creating an environment where children were confident, happy and assured. The sensitive and responsive interactions of qualified and well experienced staff meant that they worked closely with each of the children to help them achieve their potential. The motivation of the staff, their natural enthusiasm, positive role modelling and caring approach, made a real difference to the children's learning and development. Staff worked closely and effectively together, they knew when to step back and allow children to find things out for themselves but also used questions and gentle prompts to extend learning. Staff used kind words in a calm and unhurried manner so children had time to absorb information.

The small staff team felt valued and well supported by the recently appointed acting headteacher. They were fully able to influence the service and use their own initiative. Staff had participated in an appraisal where they had been able to discuss practice and identify areas for personal development. At the time of the inspection, the staff annual appraisal was due and the acting headteacher had planned to meet with individual staff as part of the Employee Development Review Programme (EDRP).

The leadership of the senior practitioner had created a culture that supported practitioners to grow, feel valued and improve their own knowledge. This had resulted in a sharing of roles/responsibilities that recognised each other's strengths and complimented a cohesive team ethos. Staff were outward looking, willing to find out what they didn't know and to experiment.

Staff were keen to further their own knowledge through training and sharing of practice, with a view to, exploring new ways of working to make a difference to children's experiences. Recording the impact of training on children's learning, would be beneficial for the purposes of self-evaluation.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

4. Quality of management and leadership

Whilst the acting head had not been in post for very long they had established an effective lead for staff. The acting headteacher considered that there was a strong team ethos and fully recognised the effective leadership and competence of the senior practitioner. Staff had been given a clear foundation in relation to planning and self-evaluation that had enabled them to maintain quality of the provision and meet the needs of individual children, despite managerial changes.

Parents/carers were involved in the day-to-day life of the nursery and contributed towards improvement by sharing their views and ideas in a number of ways. We noted that parents/carers spoke highly of their involvement in their child's learning and the shared approach. They considered that their views were valued and acted upon and the staff team was always looking to provide the best care and support to the children. Children influenced the planning and activities with appropriate direction from staff.

A discussion took place with the staff and acting headteacher in relation to planning and systems of evaluation, so that there was a better reflection of children's learning and progress and what needed to improve. We acknowledged that the acting headteacher and nursery staff had identified areas for improvement that were consistent with the findings from the inspection process.

Monitoring and quality assurance should now be re-established by the acting headteacher that enable staff to analyse and reflect on the setting, so that adjustments made lead to a better provision for children's learning. We suggest that formal meetings have a standard agenda, a detailed minute and concise action plan which can also be beneficial for the purposes of evaluation. Nursery policies and procedures should accurately reflect best practice guidance for early learning and childcare and the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS).

The acting headteacher was also advised of the Care Inspectorate notification and reporting system.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no recommendations.

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.