

Summarised inspection findings

Townhill Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

17 September 2019

Key contextual information

Townhill Nursery is located in the grounds of Townhill Primary School, Fife. The nursery offers a choice of sessions for children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. The nursery can accommodate 35 children at any one time. At the time of inspection, there were 67 children on the roll.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the setting, relationships between practitioners and children are very warm and caring. As a result, children are safe and secure in their environment. The well-developed outdoor space supports children in their learning. They develop their independence and confidence as they freely move their play between the indoors and outside. Almost all children are observed to engage fully in their learning, inviting practitioners to join them when necessary. Children are happy and clearly enjoy their time at the setting.
- The well-considered learning environment supports children to participate in a range of stimulating and engaging experiences. Most children sustain interest in experiences for an extended period of time, for example, children making a drainage system outdoors. Children learn through spontaneous and well-planned, purposeful play opportunities. Practitioners know when to intervene skilfully, to enable or support learning. The increasing use of open-ended resources, natural materials and real-life objects enables children to develop their skills in curiosity, inquiry and creativity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Relationships between practitioners and children, as well as children and their peers, are respectful and considerate. Practitioners listen carefully to children, supporting them to talk about their interests and ideas. Most practitioners use open-ended questions well to support children's learning. In the best examples, practitioners' use of higher order questions encourages children to think through solutions for themselves. Children use the learning wall to share their interests and capture learning, for example, through 'talking tubs'. Practitioners should continue to develop a language of learning with all children. Digital technologies support children's learning, for example, a laptop and an interactive whiteboard. Practitioners should continue to provide opportunities for learning through digital technology.
- Practitioners know individual children very well as learners. As a team, they observe and regularly discuss all children's progress and achievements. Observations are captured in personal learning journals, on the 'learning wall' and in 'learning wall' folders. In the best examples, observations inform next steps, planned interventions and targets in children's learning. Children use their learning journals to reflect confidently on their learning, sharing these with adults and peers. As discussed, practitioners should continue to develop further children's voice and contributions to their learning journals.

- The depute headteacher of the school has responsibility for the nursery and meets with practitioners on a fortnightly basis to discuss planning, assessment, self-evaluation and improvement priorities. She has supported practitioners well to develop leadership roles, curriculum planning and early learning pedagogy through professional learning and practitioner enquiry. This has had a positive impact on the learning experiences offered indoors, outdoors and in the woods behind the setting. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's personal learning journey and comment on learning through the nursery's social media platform. Daily dialogue, 'stay and play' sessions and formal opportunities to discuss children's progress are also offered.
- Transitions into and from the nursery are effective, leading to children making continued progress in their learning. Practitioners track literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for all children. A practitioner works across the nursery and P1 supporting approaches to play and enquiry based learning throughout the early level. Planned improvements to enhance the transition process will continue to support seamless progression and continuity of learning across the early level.
- Planning for children's learning links to experiences and outcomes and takes account of children's interests. Practitioners are responsive to children's spontaneous learning and record this to inform future plans. Evidence of learning is shared on 'learning walls' which helps children to evaluate and contribute to planning. Approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring have been developed over time and practitioners continue to reflect on these in a systematic manner.

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

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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

- Across the setting, a strong focus on health and wellbeing has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Children are supported to thrive in a nurturing environment, which allows them to settle quickly. Practitioners have developed their approaches to supporting children's emotional wellbeing. This includes a summer house outdoors where children have a quiet space to participate in sensory experiences and loose parts play. As a result, the development of children's social and emotional skills is supported very well.
- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in language and communication. Most children share confidently in conversation with their peers and practitioners during free play and through discussions relating to their previous and current learning. Most children engage confidently in dialogue with visitors and are proud of their nursery and their achievements. Practitioners engage sensitively with children who require additional time to talk and share information.
- Opportunities for mark-making are freely available indoors and out. A few children engage in writing for a purpose, for example, designing and completing a passport. Most children recognise their name and select their name sticker confidently to put on their artwork. Children have access to, and engage with, a range of fiction and non-fiction books across the environment. They enjoy reading stories independently and listening to stories read by practitioners. Children use books and the laptop to research information on their chosen interest, for example, aeroplanes. As planned, practitioners should continue to embed opportunities to develop literacy across the setting.
- Practitioners provide a range of experiences to develop children's skills in numeracy and mathematics. As a result, most children are making very good progress in their learning. Most children count confidently to ten, with a few counting beyond ten. Children display a good awareness of shape and other mathematical concepts such as length, as they engage in games on the interactive whiteboard and during block play. Loose parts provide opportunities for children to learn about size, measure and weight, in particular outdoors. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) experiences provide children with opportunities to develop their problem solving skills. In line with the school, children talk about the skills they are developing. They are beginning to relate these to the world of work as part of the whole school skills progression framework. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop further their approaches to STEAM.

- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Daily outdoor learning and weekly visits to the woods are developing a healthy sense of risk for all children. Children climb steep hills confidently and navigate bridges and trees in the woods, developing their independence and resilience. They access healthy snacks in the setting, preparing and serving themselves. Children are developing their hygiene skills, for example, tooth brushing. They are developing their physical skills well, riding bikes outdoors with confidence and developing their balancing skills in the school gym hall.
- Through inspection observation, children's learning journals, 'learning wall' evidence and dialogue, children in the nursery are observed as enthusiastic learners who are making very good progress in their learning. Curriculum overviews and tracking evidence support the identification of gaps in learning. Using early literacy data, practitioners have made a positive start to identifying individual literacy targets for all children. Practitioners should continue to develop this approach across learning to ensure all children make the progress they are capable of. Children's achievements are captured and celebrated across the nursery and with parents. Practitioners use a variety of approaches to recognise and share success, for example, praise and encouragement, the achievement tree and on the 'we will climb the hill to success' wall display.
- Equity is promoted across all aspects of the work of the setting. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos. As a result, there is a climate of mutual respect and trust. The setting takes good account of the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children, for example, using visuals to support learning.

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.