

Summarised inspection findings

Holytown Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Holytown Nursery Class operates from within Holytown Primary School and provides early learning and childcare for children from the Holytown area. The setting is registered for 50 children at any one time aged from three until starting primary school. The current roll is 53. In the last year, there has been a number of staff changes resulting in most of the current early learning practitioners being in temporary positions. The Depute Headteacher has had responsibility for the nursery since January 2019.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They are becoming more confident when making choices from available resources and are developing friendships and trusting relationships with adults.
- Practitioners have begun to provide children with increased opportunities to explore the potential of open-ended materials indoors and outdoors. This is leading to improved levels of engagement and motivation in play. Practitioners now need to build on this positive start to encourage children to develop their imagination, curiosity and creativity further. They should continue to review the balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences. In doing so, they should focus on providing increased opportunities for children to make decisions and to lead their learning as fully as possible.
- Interactions are positive and caring. Practitioners now need to continue to develop their use of listening, questions and comment, to extend children's thinking and engagement in their learning. They should look for frequent opportunities to support children's engagement and learning during spontaneous play. Currently, there are too many missed opportunities.
- A few children need more targeted support to enable them to engage fully in their play throughout the session. Senior leaders should work with the nursery team to ensure more consistent and effective use of visual cues and signs to support children's communication where appropriate.
- Practitioners record observations of children in their individual online journals. The nursery team have identified correctly the need to improve the quality and consistency of these observations. We have asked senior leaders to support practitioners to develop their shared understanding of high quality observation as part of effective assessment. This will enable practitioners to capture important information about the skills that children are developing as a result of their experiences in the nursery.

- Practitioners need to revisit national guidance to deepen their understanding of the planning cycle. Alongside improvements to observation, this will enable practitioners to plan more effectively to meet children's individual learning needs. They have made a start on exploring how they can involve children in planning experiences. This is at an early stage. We have asked practitioners to improve further the range of strategies used to engage children in appropriate, frequent conversations about their learning and achievements. This will enable children to develop confidence to talk about themselves as successful learners, and plan and lead their learning in purposeful and imaginative ways.
- The nursery team should ensure that parents and carers are involved fully in their children's learning. This needs to include them working with parents to support children's learning at home and in the community.
- Senior leaders now need to develop manageable and effective approaches to track and monitor children's progress at appropriate intervals throughout their time in nursery. This will help to ensure that all children, including those who require additional support with their learning, make the best possible progress in their learning and development. It will also enable senior leaders and practitioners to measure the impact of interventions and change more accurately.
- As the school continues to develop play-based learning at P1, practitioners should build on their existing positive links with early level teachers to engage in joint moderation activities. This will help practitioners to develop higher expectations of children's progress in 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

weak

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

- The recent improvements to the environment and the provision of quality resources are supporting children in their play. Children demonstrate a range of skills. However, there is no system in place to monitor and track children's learning. As a result of the limited information available on children's learning, there is not a clear picture of the progress children have made across the curriculum since starting nursery.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are making satisfactory progress. They develop physical skills such as co-ordination, balance and climbing during outdoor play and visits to local woodland. However, children would benefit from greater challenge and engagement in play that offers an appropriate level of risk. Fine motor skills are supported through the use of tools, natural materials and the use of loose parts. Most children are independent in their personal hygiene, in dressing for outdoors and at snack time. During snack, a few children talk about foods that are healthy. Children also have opportunities to talk about the benefits of exercise when taking walks in the local community. They can talk about how to keep safe when crossing the road and during woodland visits. As planned, practitioners should continue to support children to talk about emotions and develop an awareness of how emotions affect how they feel and respond.
- In early language and literacy, and numeracy and mathematics, children's progress is weak. The recently purchased resources are of high quality and have the potential to support children's early literacy and numeracy experiences. However, these experiences need to be supported by high quality interactions. This will give children the right level of support and challenge during play and adult-led activities. As a result, children will be supported to develop and apply their skills across learning and make appropriate progress.
- The majority of children are confident to engage in conversations with their peers and adults. As part of the literacy programme, a few older children enjoy listening to stories and recall key characters and events. They ask and answer relevant questions to understand and interpret the story. Children engage in mark-making experiences using a range of media. They are beginning to add detail to their drawings. A few children are now forming recognisable letters to write their name and to create signs and labels around the nursery. Practitioners now need to support children more effectively to develop early writing skills naturally through play and real-life contexts. A few children know the initial letter sound of their name. They would benefit from increased opportunities to develop phonological awareness during play.

- Children are developing an awareness of number. They recognise basic shapes and a few use appropriate mathematical language as they make comparisons of size and weight. A few are becoming aware of time through nursery and home routines. The pretend garden centre and visits in the community are providing children with the opportunity to become aware of how money is used. Children now need increased opportunities to develop and extend important numeracy and mathematical skills through nursery routines and play. For children who are ready, this should include exploring 3D objects, pattern, and gathering and recording information.
- Children's achievements are celebrated through praise and encouragement and practitioners record these on learning walls and within electronic journals. It will be important to develop a shared approach to recording achievements, particularly from outwith the setting. As this develops, practitioners should look at ways to build on children's achievements from home in order to continue to develop children's skills and talents within the setting.
- Practitioners are building their knowledge of children and families. There is a developing awareness of the linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds of families. The current approach to gathering information during transition needs to be reviewed and refreshed. The personal-planning process should also be reviewed to enable practitioners to gain a better, more comprehensive understanding about the child. This will support them in planning for children's care and learning needs more effectively.
- Senior leaders recognise that they need to gather information more systematically on children's progress in the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners should ensure that they use this information well to evaluate children's progress regularly. This will help them to ensure that children's learning needs are met effectively. Closer partnership working with support agencies will help staff to support children well in a range of ways.

1. Quality of care and support

We received eleven completed care standard questionnaires from parents and carers of children attending the service, and spoke with three parents during the inspection. All people commented that they were happy with the quality of care their children were receiving. In particular, they spoke positively about the improvements within the environment and the friendly staff.

Children were happy to be at nursery. They were shown care and kindness by staff who welcomed them warmly and provided them with cuddles and one to one support if required. This contributed to children feeling loved.

Children's wellbeing needs were well supported through their transition from nursery to primary one. A positive focus was placed on staff across the nursery and infant department working together to gain a better understanding of children's needs. Nursery children also had the opportunity to engage in the life of the school, for example during assembly and planned play sessions with primary one peers.

Children could have been better supported to participate in freely chosen extended play. We found that rules, limited opportunities for children to assess their own risks and extended adult led activities created some barriers to play. See recommendation 1.

Staff should consider their approach to managing children's behaviour. We observed children being reminded of a number of unwritten rules throughout the session. We also viewed recordings that time out was used as a way to manage behaviour. We discussed with the service the importance of involving children in creating boundaries, and agreeing a code of mutual respect between staff and children. This would support children to feel safe and nurtured.

Children's personal plans should be developed to give a clearer picture of their individual needs and progress. See recommendation 2.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

Recent refurbishments to the environment had helped create a bright, welcoming and stimulating play space. The recent addition of natural open ended materials provided children with opportunities to build their imagination and creativity during free-play time. For example, children created a magical cake shop and monsters built with blocks and loose parts. During these experiences children were developing their thinking, communication, problem solving and imagination.

Children accessed outdoors every day for fresh air, exercise and play. The door from the playroom to the garden was left open, and children accessed outdoors independently on a free-flow basis. This allowed them to make choices about where they wanted to play. Materials in the garden had been improved and enhanced the quality of children's experiences. For example, children enjoyed playing with the mud kitchen and outdoor tap.

We asked the service to consider reviewing some procedures to minimise the spread of infection within the children's toilets. For example, ensuring soap is readily available at all times and that appropriate changing facilities are in place.

To ensure the safety of children, the service should update procedures to address any safety issues. In particular we asked the service to consider the security of the gate in the children's garden.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and three recommendations. From these, one recommendation has been met. Outstanding issues relating to CI to provide details are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two additional recommendations.

Recommendations

- We recommend that children are better supported to participate in freely chosen, extended play, which is stimulating and incorporates problem solving, creativity, positive risk taking and imagination.

To achieve this, consideration should be given to:

- the adults role in observing and scaffolding play
- time available to play
- rules that create barriers to play
- opportunities for positive risk taking
- opportunities to freely transport equipment

This is to ensure that children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, "my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials" (HSCS 1.31), "I make informed decisions about the risks I take in my daily life, and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life" (HSCS 2.24), and "as a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources which are suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural learning, curiosity and creativity" (HSCS 2.27).

- We recommend that the service develops children's personal plans which identify their needs and demonstrate how these will be met. Personal plans should be in place within 28 days of a child starting at the service, and should be reviewed every six months as a minimum with parents and cares (more if needs change).

To achieve this consideration should be given to:

- Children's prior experiences before starting nursery
- Accurate completion of 'all about me' records
- Regular review's with parents and carers about children's needs
- Development of individualised strategies to meet children's needs
- Monitoring children's progress

This is to ensure that children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, "my personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15), "my care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19),

and "my needs, as agreed within my personal plan are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

Outstanding Recommendations

Recommendation made on 9th November 2016

Some play experiences should be reviewed. The time children spend outdoors should be extended. Staff should further involve the children in managing risk during their play.

National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16, standard 5: quality of experience and standard 13: improving the service

Progress

Positive steps had been taken to improve children's access to outdoors. We observed children to be independently accessing the garden, making choices about where they wanted to play. The equipment in the garden had also been improved, ensuring that it was a stimulating play space for children.

Staff were in the very early stages of involving children in managing their own risk. Some riskier play equipment had been added to play, for example, wooden planks for balancing. We found however that there was scope to develop this further. We discussed with the service the role of staff in encouraging children to manage risks, and in particular highlighted risk positive language that would help children to progress their own sense of safety. We will follow up on this at the next inspection.

Therefore, this recommendation is not met.

Recommendation made on 9th November 2016

All accidents should be recorded and contain relevant information thus enabling staff to identify triggers and minimise risk.

National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16, standard 12: confidence in staff and standard 14: well-managed service.

Progress

Accident records had been updated with space for appropriate information. We found however that there were some inconsistencies in the way that records were completed. We also found that there was repetition of incidents. The accidents and incidents were not audited.

We spoke with the service about auditing accidents and incidents carefully and take action to prevent reoccurring incidents. We will follow this up at the next inspection.

Therefore this recommendation is not met.

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.