

Summarised inspection findings

Eday Primary School Nursery Class

Orkney Islands Council

10 December 2019

Key contextual information

Eday Nursery Class is part of Eday Community School, on a small remote island that is part of the wider Orkney Isles. At the time of inspection there were four children on the roll of the nursery, aged from two years of age. Five morning sessions are available for children, with an extended day on a Thursday. A lead early learning and childcare practitioner works with the teaching headteacher to provide a service for families of the island. Recently, a new practitioner has been recruited to support the future expansion of the service to offer full day provision. There is one main playroom that connects to the primary classroom. The children in the nursery have direct access to a separate, well-resourced outdoor play space. The nursery has access to the facilities of the school including the gym hall, poly-tunnel and wider school grounds.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The newly appointed headteacher has rightly identified the need to refresh the vision, values and aims of the school and nursery. The nursery team are enthusiastic and dedicated to continuing to improve their work. Staff have involved parents in exploring shared values to begin to reflect the work of the nursery. As planned, the nursery should work with children, the school, local community and parents to co-create a statement of vision, values and aims that informs practice. It will be important to use language that is meaningful and accessible to young children.
- There is a new improvement plan in place for the nursery that forms part of the wider school improvement plan. Specific, appropriate improvement priorities have been identified including developing a coherent approach to self-evaluation and planned work with a focus on developing early literacy. The nursery staff team have made a positive start in documenting their reflection on the quality of their service. This includes feedback from parents and children on the things they would like to improve and enjoy within their nursery. There is not yet a strategic approach to self-evaluation that is focused on key priorities. Working with the school, the staff team need to develop their experience, skills and confidence in measuring the impact of improvements on outcomes for children. For example, they could focus their self-evaluation and gather evidence to demonstrate the difference changes make for children's learning and development.
- Practitioners are motivated and beginning to reflect more deeply on the quality of their work as a result of a good range of professional learning opportunities. The team responded positively to professional dialogue throughout the inspection. Recent professional learning on supporting language development, pedagogy and outdoor learning is beginning to support the development of the pedagogy in the nursery. Regularly attending cluster meetings has been beneficial for the nursery team to begin to develop a wider knowledge of practice from other settings. Practitioners appreciate the opportunities for professional dialogue from working with the visiting early years teacher. This shows early positive signs of supporting a culture of

deeper reflection on practice. As a result, practitioners have been able to begin to improve aspects of their work, for example the quality of observations. As this partnership develops, it will be important for this informal dialogue and reflection to inform self-evaluation and measure how it impacts on outcomes for children.

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

- Relationships between practitioners, children and their families are very positive. The responsive and nurturing approach of the team means children are confident and secure in their time at nursery. Most children are motivated and concentrate for extended periods of time, for example, as they build and explore their marble run. Practitioners should continue to adapt experiences to suit children who are new to nursery or at an earlier stage of development. The team should now enhance opportunities to facilitate children's imaginative play. Practitioners should continue their work to review and develop further the use of for example, the book corner in the indoor playroom.
- The interactions of the team are informed by the interests, needs and stage of development of each individual child. Practitioners know each child well and understand what will motivate children to, for example, try new sensory experiences. Vocabulary and commentary is adapted well to suit the age and stage of each individual child. Recent professional learning on language development is beginning to support practitioners to identify how they can develop further interactions with each child. This will support practitioners to build on, extend and challenge children's learning consistently throughout all experiences.
- Practitioners have made some changes to the learning environment. Children are involved in making decisions about the layout and type of resources in their playroom and outdoor area. There is considerable scope to improve opportunities for a more empowering, challenging and creative learning environment. In particular, it will be helpful to raise the profile of experiences with a focus on developing children's schemas. Increasingly, open-ended materials are used in the playroom and outdoors. Good use is made of interesting natural materials from the local area. Moving forward there is scope to increase the use of technology to extend and document children's learning.
- Practitioners plan learning for children based on their individual interests and preferences. Attractive floor books and regularly updated learning stories document their wide range of experiences. Most children and parents enjoy commenting on these. Children's folders include observations, photographs, individual next steps and comments from parents. Work to improve the quality of observations has been helpful to make these more focused. This valuable record of children's time at nursery does not yet reflect the progression of children's skills and significant learning over time. Planned training on the use of floor books will support the team to document the progression of children's skills. The team should continue their work to improve their use of next steps to ensure children are challenged to deepen their learning and apply their skills. As the cycle of assessment, planning, tracking and monitoring develops, this will ensure the team build effectively on children's prior learning. Practitioners are beginning to develop an awareness of early level National Benchmarks. Working across the early level, the team will be able to better understand and moderate the progress made by children.

Opportunities to engage with colleagues in the local cluster will support and inform this work further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum in the nursery is flexible and responsive to children's individual interests and life events. There is a clear commitment to play-based learning. Practitioners are making reference to the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to plan for children's learning. As planned, the team need to work together with the school to develop a curriculum rationale which reflects their unique, island context. This should incorporate their early work with parents on shared values. This will ensure a shared understanding of the curriculum. There is not yet a progressive approach to delivering their curriculum across the early level. A focus on ensuring depth, challenge and progression in children's learning would be helpful in this shared work with the school.
- Children's learning in early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is promoted throughout daily interactions with the team and a wide variety of indoor and outdoor experiences. There is free-flow daily access to outdoor play as an integral part of the session. The team should continue with their work to support those children who are reluctant to access this area. Planting and growing activities help children to learn about the environment and natural world. Interesting planned work to develop a food project with children, parents and the local community will make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. It will be important to ensure approach is integrated into the development of the new curriculum rationale.
- The unique context, frequent shared experiences and carefully planned transition activities result in a positive transition for children who move into P1. There is considerable scope to develop and improve continuity and progression across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Warm, trusting, close relationships are evident between the team and families. Parents value the daily informal discussions they have with the team. They regularly share information about children's development, likes, dislikes and behaviour. A well-used online platform allows parents to view and comment on frequent examples of activities their child has enjoyed. As a result, parents feel well informed about their child's learning.
- Parents know their views are important to the work of the nursery. They share their views about the nursery and a few suggest ideas for changes or improvements. Recently, practitioners have discussed with parents the possibility of an annual meeting to discuss children's progress in learning. Weekly 'stay and play' sessions involve parents and younger siblings in sharing experiences and learning together in the playroom. Parents appreciate the informal and relaxed atmosphere of these sessions. These opportunities enable parents to feel more involved with their child's learning. Parent helpers assist with trips and outings. The team should consider ways to build on and extend this positive parental involvement. As this work develops, practitioners should reflect with parents on the impact this has on children's learning.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

3.1 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

- There is a welcoming, supportive and encouraging atmosphere in the nursery. Relationships between children and practitioners are caring and positive. Children are respected as individuals and supported to respect others. In particular, older children are well supported to develop an understanding of the specific needs of younger children. Practitioners use their in-depth knowledge of children's personal circumstances, interests and needs to plan their work. Children participate in decisions about what they would like to learn about and reviewing the layout of their playroom. The team should continue to build on and develop further approaches to developing children's participation and consider how to link this with children's understanding of their own and others rights.
- Practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of the wellbeing indicators. There is a need to consider how to develop a more progressive, integrated and meaningful approach to supporting children to develop their understanding of their own wellbeing. This could be done by increasing adult-initiated work on, for example, exploring children's feelings and emotions. Practitioners should support children to make more connections during play activities. Children could take a more active role in risk assessing the outdoor area. Children's interest in caring for the natural world could be linked to exploring the concept of nurture in a way that is accessible to young children.
- Senior managers need to develop further their understanding of their statutory duties. This includes making improvements to recordkeeping procedures regarding children's care needs and maintaining chronologies of significant events. Planned training and professional development for staff is necessary to secure these improvements. Practitioners liaise closely with parents and where necessary, link with other agencies to support children and families. When working with parents or other agencies on a specific next step or strategy, it will be important to document progress in achieving any agreed targets.
- Practitioners are inclusive in their approach and apply their knowledge of child development to identify potential barriers to learning for children. There is an inclusive approach that builds on the strengths and capabilities of each individual child. All children and families are treated fairly and with respect. Practitioners have a good understanding of their responsibility to promote equality through their interactions with families. As planned, practitioners should continue with this work in order to expand children's own awareness of equality and diversity in a meaningful way.

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

- Overall children are making satisfactory progress in early language and literacy. A few children are making good progress from their prior learning. The majority of children listen well to instructions as they play games together in the gym hall. Most children enjoy discussing topics of interest in detail with practitioners, as they share their in-depth knowledge of, for example, dinosaurs. Planned development of the book corner will support and encourage children to access fiction and non-fiction books more frequently in their play. Most children are developing an awareness of initial letters and their associated sounds. The majority of children recognise that writing has a purpose and enjoy mark making in floor books and in labelling drawings. Children's early literacy skills could be extended through making books, the use of story sacks and by encouraging more regular opportunities to apply skills in real-life experiences. This will ensure all early literacy activities are suitably challenging and engaging for all children.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are making satisfactory progress, with a few making good progress. Children count to ten with a few counting to 20, as they roll marbles and sort them by colour. Most children use appropriate mathematical language, for example, as they discuss full and empty as they play with water sprays. Most children show a good understanding of positional language as they play outdoors. Whilst there are examples of children using numeracy and mathematics skills in daily routines and during free play, there is potential for this to be developed further. This includes ensuring activities build on prior learning and provide appropriate challenge for all children.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are developing an awareness of safety, as they balance on planks or help to make hot chocolate on a fire pit. The planned use of the school grounds and poly-tunnel provides children with frequent contact with the natural world. This supports children to develop further their skills in problem solving. Most children are developing independence skills as they get ready for outdoors and help prepare their healthy snack. There is potential for children to be more independent and responsible throughout all activities in their session. Children's physical skills, including fine motor skills, are developing well through a range of experiences both indoors and outdoors. It is important to ensure there is progression during play activities.

- The learning journey folders are starting to show children's progress in learning. Evidence shows that children are making satisfactory progress in their learning over time, appropriate to their stage of development. Practitioners need to consistently build on what children already know and have achieved, to ensure they make the best possible progress. Children's achievements are celebrated through frequent praise and encouragement and between staff and parents on the online platform. As their system to track children's learning develops, this will provide more robust information about children's progress. With development of quality of observations and identification of next steps, practitioners will be better placed to provide an accurate and clear overview of children's progress.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression

- Practitioners effectively support children and families to make a positive transition into nursery due to their effective focus on positive relationships. Time is taken to build trust and meet the needs of children and parents new to the setting. Settling in processes are flexible and adapted to the temperament and needs of the individual. Home visits are used well to develop a holistic picture of children at home and nursery. As a result, children settle well into their nursery experience and parents feel well supported through this process. Positive relationships are established and build upon to ensure frequent, open communication between families and practitioners.
- Highly effective pastoral transitions support children well to move into the primary classroom. Frequent contact, joint activities, shared lunches and contact in the playground mean that children feel confident and secure in the school space. Good communication ensures children's individual interests and skills are shared between staff. A next step is to ensure there is better continuity of learning across the early level to support children to build more effectively on their prior learning. The team should continue with their work to improve the quality of record keeping, for example when working with other agencies to support children's development.

1. Quality of care and support

The children were cared for in a supportive setting where they felt safe and secure. Home visits to families new to the island helped them feel welcomed and included and supported children to form close attachments with staff. As a result, children were settled and happy to attend nursery.

Staff knew the needs of the children well and worked closely with parents to support children's health and wellbeing. Children's personal plans were current, up to date and contained information to enable staff provide children with the care and support they needed. This led to good outcomes for children.

Staff treated children with kindness and patience. They encouraged children to share, play together and make choices. This meant children were listened to and their opinions valued. Opportunities for literacy and numeracy development was promoted through games and activities, helping children to achieve and progress.

The manager and staff had a good knowledge of how best to safeguard and protect children. However, recording systems and procedures were not robust to effectively protect children from harm or neglect. We supported the manager on how best to record information and the authority advised that they were enrolled on child protection training level two. Information recorded in the children's chronologies was not always a significant event impacting on the wider world of the child.

The document to support staff can be found at:

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/3670/Practice%20guide%20to%20chronologies%202017.pdf>

Staff were knowledgeable and well informed about children who required medication. However, best practice procedures were not followed when storing medication on the premises. This was addressed immediately. The document to support staff can be found at:

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/1427/Childrens%20service%20medication%20guidance.pdf>

Committed staff were working closely with the local authority to develop their skills in observation, planning and assessment. Children's progress was recorded through learning stories and through the Seesaw app, helping to keep parents informed and supporting children to achieve.

Children were provided with healthy snack and meal choices they enjoyed eating. At times, some children ate snack and lunch with the school, supporting their transition into P1. Children less confident were able to eat snack in the familiar nursery environment. This helped children feel safe and more able to try new foods.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

The small school community setting meant children were familiar and happy in their environment. Children were able to access the hall and community facilities, providing them with opportunities to run around and keep fit. The linked door to the classroom supported staff and the children's safety with immediate access to help if required. This also helped the children feel part of the whole school community and promoted a culture where everyone felt included.

The nursery environment was bright and welcoming. The new kitchen area and child height sinks looked attractive and supported children's independence. However, some of the resources looked less inviting and would benefit from being replaced or cleaned to ensure they are safe for play.

The indoor learning environment promoted children's choice and independent play. Children enjoyed playing with dinosaurs in the sand and with the wooden train on the floor. There were some natural resources, loose parts and wooden blocks promoting opportunities for open-ended and creative play. However, there was not enough challenge or differentiation to fully meet the developmental needs of the children attending. Areas such as the role play corner would benefit from the addition of real life resources for young children to explore their emotions and learn through familiar play. Staff discussed how they hoped to develop the book corner with comfy cushions and soft fabrics, providing children with a safe and attractive place to play quietly (see recommendation).

Children were able to free flow between outdoors and indoors throughout the session. This allowed them to access fresh air and keep fit and well. The nursery garden was an attractive natural space where children could explore freely and develop their understanding of the world around them. Some loose parts such as wooden planks provided opportunities for problem solving and working together.

The children were able to access and explore the wider school environment. This provided opportunities for building relationships with the older children, contributing to a culture of belonging and helping each other. Other opportunities to visit the island shop and beach will help the children grow into responsible citizens and be a valued part of their community.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and two recommendations. As a result of this inspection one recommendation has been met and one has been carried forward.

Recommendation

- To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare, the provider should ensure all children are able to access a range of resources which stimulate their imagination, curiosity and creativity.
This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

Supporting documents include:

My Creative Journey

www.thehub.careinspectorate.com

The Loose Parts Toolkit

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/405223/loose-parts-play-toolkit.pdf>.

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.