

Summarised inspection findings

Sgoil Àraich Sgoil an Rubha

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

8 October 2019

Key contextual information

Sgoil Àraich an Rubha is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children, age two years to those not yet attending primary school. The sgoil àraich (nursery) provides learning through Gaelic (GME) and English (EME) in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. There are two playrooms, and a shared area for playing in the outdoors. At the time of inspection, there were 30 children on the roll. The sgoil àraich offers full day, morning and afternoon sessions.

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

- The ethos in the GME and EME playrooms is welcoming, supportive and nurturing. Children and practitioners enjoy positive relationships. As a result, children settle quickly into their play. They feel safe, secure and ready to learn. For children in GME, this is an important basis to be underpinning their immersion experiences. Children enjoy role-play, which enables them to develop their imagination while absorbing Gaelic language. They respond well to questions and prompts from practitioners to develop their stories. Practitioners' development of role-play is a strength. In GME and EME, children are forming friendships. They use early negotiation skills to play cooperatively and share. Children show responsibility in keeping their playroom tidy.
- In GME, children engage enthusiastically with a range of immersion approaches. They particularly enjoy singing songs and reciting rhymes. Children choose the songs to be sung, for which they request their preferences in Gaelic. Practitioners engage in quality interactions through Gaelic. These are not yet regular enough, with children left too long without hearing Gaelic. Staff across the 2-12 provision should now develop a policy on immersion to inform their approaches to learning through play. All staff delivering 2-12 GME should have regular opportunities to collaborate and discuss effective implementation of this policy.
- Children regularly use the interactive whiteboard to consolidate learning and have opportunities for mark-making. As planned, practitioners should maximise the potential for using technologies in a progressive way to consistently enrich, support and extend learning.
- Children are confident in exploring their large outdoor area, which affords a range of opportunities. These include physical activity, sensory play, and growing a variety of plants and vegetables. The development of loose parts and block play would support children to develop further their ability to lead their own learning. This is while sustaining children's play and levels of engagement. Free-flow access to the outdoor area should be considered. In so doing, account should be taken of immersion and how this area is shared to promote the needs of both mediums of learning. Some group games through the medium of Gaelic attract participation from children in EME. They are effectively included, with practitioners rightly retaining Gaelic as the language of learning for these group games. At other times, sharing the

space dilutes total immersion experiences. There are times when no children are using the outdoor area. A more strategic approach to sharing this area should be developed, while respecting total immersion. Practitioners should continue to add to their knowledge of how to develop children's creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills, both indoors and outdoors.

- Practitioners in EME and GME need to review the structure of the session to encourage children to be more independent and lead their own learning. In GME, routines such as those for snack are not yet fully utilised to encourage children to use the language they are acquiring.
- Practitioners in EME and GME know children and families well. They use this knowledge to build on children's interests and skills. Practitioners have an awareness of approaches to promote higher-order thinking. They should develop further their knowledge and skills to effectively question children. The improved use of questioning techniques will build and extend children's thinking.
- Practitioners in both playrooms observe children playing. Increasingly, they are using their observations to plan interesting opportunities and experiences to support children's learning. Children's learning is recorded in profiles through photographs, comments and observations. Children enjoy telling their learning stories using these profiles. Staff should use the National Benchmarks to make observations of what children can do. There is scope for more of children's understanding of Gaelic through immersion to be documented. The use of developmental overviews to track progress is not fully based on GME and, as such, is not fully effective. As observations embed, practitioners should develop moderation as part of reliable and valid assessment. Practitioners are introducing electronic profiling. Transition to electronic profiling should ensure continuity in capturing all of children's significant learning and next steps in learning.
- Planning of learning entails a variety of timescales. Coverage of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes is recorded. Approaches to emerging literacy are being established. Practitioners are committed to developing further learning experiences to support pre-reading and writing skills, which are linked to real-life contexts. Learning walls have recently been introduced. These are supporting practitioners to be more involved in planning learning, as well as in sharing and displaying children's interests. As responsive planning develops, children should be supported to lead their own learning. This approach, alongside the introduction of curriculum progressions for literacy and numeracy, will help to ensure depth of learning and increased challenge for children. There is scope to be more explicit about intended learning and how contexts build children's fluency in Gaelic.
- Practitioners use established tracking documents to identify secure and emerging skills. These include the use of local authority progression pathways in drawing, scissor skills and physical activity. As these processes to secure children's progress embed, practitioners will better identify progress over time and strengthen their professional judgements.

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.

- In GME, most children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early total immersion through Gaelic. Children's progress is constrained by the slow pace of progress in developing the curriculum. Children listen well to adults as they use commentaries, model Gaelic language and ask questions as part of language acquisition. Most children engage readily in conversations in which they share personal experiences and retell events. Children have memorised a range of songs and rhymes, which supports their developing fluency. Almost all children use common words and phrases when in routines such as clàradh (registration) and snack. There is potential for routines to be richer language activities.
- A majority of children in GME independently access books, with others using technology to find information. There is much scope for Gaelic language to be more visible in the environment. Children enjoy mark-making, with a few writing letters as well as their names. Practitioners should provide increased opportunities for children to extend and apply their early reading and writing skills in play and real-life contexts.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics through Gaelic. Children are developing their skills in sorting, matching, grouping and constructing. Most of the older children can count to tell how many are present in the sgoil àraich. They hear mathematical language as they fill and empty different containers with water.
- In EME, most children are making satisfactory progress in early English language and communication. They are developing vocabulary, and can express their thoughts and ideas with practitioners. Children are confident. They communicate well with each other, particularly during imaginative play. They readily and confidently engage in conversation with visitors. Children enjoy exploring books, both independently and with an adult. The majority of children listen attentively. Children engage with mark-making in a variety of ways. For example, through the use of a variety of materials and by using the interactive whiteboard. The majority of children can recognise their name through self-registration. Practitioners should now encourage children to express themselves for real-life purposes. This would help children build on their learning and ensure appropriate challenge. Children in EME are interested in learning Gaelic, which should be taken forward as part of a 1+2 Approach to Languages.
- Most children in EME are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. There is a strong focus on number recognition and counting. Children use mathematical language to describe height, and make comparisons using the terms taller and shorter. Children are developing their understanding of the days of the week through daily discussions.

Children apply their understanding of number and measurement through setting up for snack and during baking activities. The majority of children recognise shapes, patterns and colours in the world around them. Children need to develop further the relationships between 2D shapes and 3D objects. This could be supported with the increased use of the outdoor area to solve problems, and with the use of loose parts.

- Across the sgoil àraich, there is scope to provide richer literacy and numeracy. This should be a focus of professional learning to improve further the quality of learning and teaching.
- Overall, children in GME and EME are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. Children are developing their awareness of emotions and feelings through reflecting on their daily experiences. They are aware of healthy foods, with most children trying new foods during snack time. Most children are developing self-help skills. They dress themselves to go outside. Children are learning the rules of personal hygiene. Children's awareness of how to stay safe is also developing. Children confidently climb, and use outdoor physical equipment and resources. Children would benefit from more access to outdoor learning, including for more physical activity. This would also assist children in developing their awareness of their place in the local and wider community. Children are very enthusiastic about taking on the role of 'snack helper'. Practitioners should extend and build on this by involving more children in playing an active role within their setting. Creating opportunities to be involved in groups or committees would support the development of children's skills.
- Assessment information and inspection activities evidence that children are making satisfactory progress over time. Practitioners now need to ensure that collated assessment information robustly demonstrates the progress all children are making as a result of their experiences at Sgoil Àraich an Rubha.
- The display, 'Special Moments at Home' exhibits achievements. Practitioners should continue to encourage all parents to regularly share achievements, skills and interests of their children from outside the setting. This will help practitioners build on the knowledge and experiences children bring with them from home. As discussed, an overview of children's wider achievements by senior leaders will support the identification of any potential barriers to learning, and how the whole school community can help reduce these.
- The acting headteacher and practitioners have a clear understanding of delivering equity for all children. They value the individual circumstances and family lives of all children. Senior leaders and practitioners contact and work with other agencies, such as speech and language therapy. The need for more rigorous recording of information and support given by practitioners to minimise barriers to learning, will better reflect the levels of support and commitment provided by the nursery team.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff led effective family learning events to inform parents of the benefits of GME. As a result, there is an increased number of children enrolling in Primary 1 (P1) GME in the forthcoming session. These events were led by parents' voice and what they wanted to learn about GME. Children demonstrated to parents how their fluency had developed in the course of P1. This exemplifies good promotion of GME as required by the statutory Guidance of Gaelic Education, 2017 and should be considered for other transition points.

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.