

Summarised inspection findings

Broomlands Primary School Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

16 May 2023

Key contextual information

Broomlands Nursery Class is located within Broomlands Primary School. It is the designated local area early years hub offering extended day provision. The nursery is registered for 60 children aged two until starting school. A maximum of ten children can be two years of age. The nursery includes several interlinked open-plan playrooms and a large outdoor area accessed directly from the playroom. It operates for 50 weeks each year and children can access their 1140 hours entitlement in a variety of attendance patterns between 8am and 6pm each day. Most children attend during school hours only. While the headteacher has overall responsibility, a senior early years officer manages the day-to-day running of the nursery. She is supported by an early years officer, and 12 early years practitioners. An early years teacher visits one day every two weeks to support the implementation of the nursery improvement plan.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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 senior early years officer works well with the headteacher and depute headteacher to fully integrate the nursery with the school. This ensures a consistent experience for children, practitioners, and parents. The senior early years officer leads and manages the nursery very effectively. Practitioners have a range of leadership roles and responsibilities across the nursery. This is leading to improved learning experiences and positive outcomes for children. For example, leadership of mark-making and 'funky fingers' has resulted in a noticeable increase in children's engagement with early writing.
- The nursery team, together with the primary school staff, have developed a set of values to guide the work of children and practitioners. The values of courage, compassion and connection are displayed in the nursery and made meaningful and age-appropriate through 'values characters' such as Clara Compassion. Practitioners use a photographic display of children displaying the values to reinforce their meaning and importance. Children can talk about these values and how to show them as they play with their friends. Practitioners are very good role models for children and display compassionate, respectful approaches where children feel safe, settled and secure.
- The senior early years officer supports practitioners to access a wide range of training opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of early years issues. They are committed to their professional development and willingly share their new learning with colleagues at 'spotlight on professional learning' sessions. There is strong and effective teamwork and collaboration across the setting.
- The nursery improvements are included within the whole-school plan. Practitioners have also identified helpful additional priorities which are specific to the nursery. The senior early years officer, working with the nursery team, has developed a range of processes to ensure that improvements are implemented at a manageable pace. Practitioners use the national

guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me* (2020), very well to focus on interactions, experiences, and spaces. They make effective use of *How good is our early learning and childcare?* to evaluate aspects of their practice and to plan improvements. School senior leaders and local authority early years staff support the nursery team by offering 'learning walks' where they observe practice together and discuss strengths and next steps. This is encouraging practitioners to be reflective and is leading to noticeable improvements in the overall quality of provision.

- Children have opportunities to lead aspects of their learning by deciding where they would like to spend time, which resources they will use, and with whom they will play. There are a few opportunities for children to undertake leadership roles as star of the week, outdoor play risk assessor and snack helper. Practitioners are exploring ways of extending leadership opportunities for children.

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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners have created a positive, respectful and calm ethos which supports children very well in their play. As a result, children are successful and responsible, and are confident in the nursery routines. Practitioners plan spaces which include a range of real-life materials, resources and open-ended tasks. All children have freedom to explore, make choices and follow their own interests. Feedback from 'learning walks' reflects the high levels of sustained engagement and positive learning spaces, demonstrating the principle that all children have ownership of their nursery.
- All children enjoy spontaneous and planned play opportunities where adults facilitate their learning. Practitioners are developing open-ended questioning and differentiated experiences to provide support and challenge for children as they play. They should continue to differentiate resources further to meet the wide range of developmental needs of children.
- The nursery team have introduced a planning system which takes full account of national guidance. They track and monitor children's developmental skills, and their progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners record observations about the progress children make across learning. This is evident in children's learner journals, floorbooks and planning sheets. The intentional and spontaneous planning approach is responsive to children's interests and takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes well. Practitioners ensure that judgements about progress are used effectively to plan children's next steps in learning.
- Practitioners seek children's opinions about what they would like to learn. This is a strong feature of the early level curriculum. This approach is facilitated by practitioners remaining in a nursery area for a full term so that they can fully develop children's ideas over time. They offer a very good balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led learning experiences. This approach meets children's learning needs effectively.
- Practitioners share children's learning with parents through a digital platform, individual children's folios and parents' meetings. These approaches provide robust and detailed information that clearly demonstrates progress in learning. Children confidently share their learning experiences through discussion and reflection, at times using their folios well for reference. Practitioners are increasingly engaging in effective moderation activities with other early years centres which supports further the consistency of their professional judgement and quality of learner experiences.
- The nursery team builds on children's individual talents and interests, using knowledge of the children and families to build strong relationships. Children enjoy visiting local woods where they explore, investigate, and build connections with nature. The 'Our World Tree' promotes learning and achievements at home.

- Learning is enriched and supported by effective use of digital technologies. Children enjoy playing digital games on the interactive whiteboard, recording videos and voice notes, and enjoy viewing their learning on their online journal. Practitioners have plans in place to further enrich learning experiences using digital technologies.
- Practitioners should develop further the potential of group 'bubble time' and make more use of their knowledge of children to provide targeted support and challenge. This would support further depth in learning through intentional and responsive planning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners offer a curriculum that is play-based and linked to children's ideas and interests. Children are able to make choices from a wide range of contexts. They have free access to a very well-resourced outdoor area. The nursery team skilfully set up a wide selection of interesting materials to encourage open-ended creativity and investigation. Practitioners should increase the range of resources and tools in the art and design space to support children to express their thoughts and ideas creatively. Children are highly engaged and many show very good concentration on their chosen activities.
- The nursery team make regular use of the school gym hall, the local forest, shops, and numerous community facilities to enhance the curriculum. Children have good opportunities to learn about literacy and numeracy in real life contexts.
- Practitioners plan activities very well to support children as they move into P1. They work successfully across early level to implement a shared approach. Pre-school children visit the P1 play zone every week and the P1 staff spend one day each week in the nursery to support children for the move from nursery to school. This approach enables school staff to ensure that new learning in P1 is increasingly challenging and builds successfully on prior learning in nursery.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners work effectively to keep families well informed of the life and work of the nursery. As well as informative newsletters and noticeboards, they share children's learning through photographs using a digital platform. This helps parents understand their child's learning journey and enables them to support learning at home.
- Practitioners undertake home visits and invite parents and families to 'stay and play' sessions which encourage parents to share in the playroom activities. This is helping families to support their children's learning at home, for example using similar activities or building on new learning through family trips and experiences.
- Partnerships with the community support children to enjoy opportunities to explore and develop intergenerational links. Children benefit from regular visits to a local care home where they interact with residents. Practitioners are committed to involving families further in nursery life, and to seek their views and involvement through a partnership approach. It would be helpful to develop a shared understanding of family learning to support the planning of groups and experiences.

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

very good

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

- Positive relationships are a key strength of the nursery. Practitioners deliver very high standards of care and actively promote wellbeing for children and their families. Each child has an identified 'responsive adult', which is helping children to form secure attachments. Practitioners' interactions with children are consistently nurturing, responsive and caring. This supports children to settle well and to feel safe and secure. Children and practitioners are proud of their nursery and there is a strong sense of community. Parents spoke very positively about the ways in which they and their children are welcomed and supported.
- Practitioners effectively use a values-based approach within the nursery which underpins their focus on wellbeing. They support children to develop an understanding of their own feelings and emotions through both universal and targeted approaches. This is made meaningful for very young children through stories, puppets and wellbeing characters, such as Harry Healthy and Sally Safe. All children have opportunities to develop their confidence and independence through serving food at snack and lunch times, and by helping to set out and tidy areas of the playroom.
- Practitioners show a sound understanding of wellbeing indicators and use them effectively to plan for children's needs. Children are learning more about wellbeing indicators by taking part in real life experiences such as baking, shopping trips and outdoor activities. They demonstrate a clear understanding of how to be safe, active, and healthy. They can talk about how fruit and vegetables, and regular exercise, are an important part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Children benefit from healthy cooked lunches within the school dining hall. They enjoy their food in a calm and relaxed environment where adults support children to develop independence, social skills, and table manners.
- Practitioners are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe. The senior early years officer has comprehensive audits, checks and processes in place to ensure practitioners implement and review policies. The nursery team receive regular child protection and safeguarding training. As a result, they are aware of, and comply with, statutory requirements in relation to early learning and childcare. Practitioners ensure all children have care plans and for a small number of children they create enhanced well-considered care plans to support their needs.
- The nursery team promote inclusion and equality well and children benefit from caring, calm and respectful interactions. Practitioners have a very good understanding of children and the local context. They are proactive in addressing potential barriers to learning. They work very well with partner agencies to implement strategies for children who require additional help with their care and learning. This ensures children have sensitive and highly effective support from practitioners who understand their unique needs.

- Practitioners value and respect diversity. Children are developing their understanding through the nursery team's skilled use of a range of resources and activities. Global education is a positive feature of learning and children are developing their knowledge of the world around them well through displays, books, stories and puppets. They are becoming more aware of different faiths and cultures as they celebrate a few festivals.

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

- Almost all children are making very good progress in their literacy skills. Children talk confidently and expressively and listen well to stories and instructions. They enjoy a wide range of mark-making opportunities, both indoors and outside. These help children to develop early writing skills and fine motor skills. Almost all children can identify their name and a majority can write it. All children enjoy listening to and reciting songs and nursery rhymes.
- Almost all children are making good progress in numeracy. Most demonstrate a high level of interest in the woodwork bench, block play and loose parts, which promotes their skills in early mathematical development. They can sort, match, and identify numbers to ten. They take part in measuring activities and enjoy 'paying' for their snack using real money and counting out pieces of fruit for their group. They show a sound understanding of mathematical language such as more than, heavier than, and taller than. They take part enthusiastically in number songs and rhymes. A few children are now ready for more challenging experiences to further extend their skills in early numeracy.
- Children engage very confidently in self-registration experiences, such as signing in and ordering lunch. Practitioners reinforce the language of wellbeing when relevant and children participate in progressive learning experiences to explore the full range of wellbeing indicators. Children are able to talk about how to resolve conflict through dialogue and can describe strategies to use if they are feeling sad or angry.
- Children confidently explore and investigate early science concepts such as floating and sinking, using magnifying glasses, and identifying birds and minibeasts. They enjoy planting gladioli bulbs in the garden. They are developing a range of physical skills using climbing and balancing equipment outside, and when using hoops and bean bags in the gym.
- Children are making very good progress since starting nursery, building well on their prior learning. Almost all children are confident and continue to develop their independence skills well.
- Practitioners make very effective use of local authority developmental overviews which offer a holistic way to track skills development, early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing experiences. They make good use of their knowledge and professional judgement to assess whether the child has reached a developmental stage. This helps the nursery team to support and challenge children in their learning.

- Senior leaders and visiting teachers support practitioners to make accurate judgements about children's progress in learning. They meet throughout the session to review and monitor children's individual progress using a range of data. The nursery team continue to enhance further their approaches to capturing and recording children's progress over time. This is supporting them to provide well-timed interventions to challenge and extend children's learning.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The outdoor area is very large and exceptionally well resourced with a wide range of spaces and materials. Staff spend one full term in the outdoor area so that they can fully develop depth in learning and take forward children's ideas and interests over time. Staff have skilfully planned to address all curriculum areas outside. There are reading and writing areas, numeracy opportunities, numerous science and investigative experiences. Children have opportunities for exploration of large loose parts. They can access a music and sounds wall and an extensive range of physical activities including bikes and wheeled toys. If children opt to play outside, they can access a separate outside snack area so that they can remain outdoors if they wish. Children risk assess the outdoor area and show a very good understanding of safe practice outside.

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.