

# Summarised inspection findings

**Lochnell Primary School Pre Five Nursery Unit**

Argyll and Bute Council

29 October 2019

## Key contextual information

Lochnell Pre-Five Nursery Unit is situated within Lochnell Primary School. It offers both morning and afternoon sessions. At the time of the inspection, children only attended morning sessions. The nursery has 15 children aged three to five years. It has four early years practitioners, one full-time and three part-time. Building work is planned before the expansion of the nursery to cope with the increase to 1,140 hours.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 school, nursery practitioners and the Parent Council created the vision, values and aims over two years ago. These are not yet embedded in a meaningful and practical way to make them live for the nursery children. They should be refreshed. The process of developing these should include parents, children, all of the early years team and relevant stakeholders.
- Practitioners responded positively to the opportunities for professional dialogue during the inspection. As reflective practitioners, they are committed to improving the standard of their work, and delivering an early learning and childcare service that meets the needs of their children. Practitioners have attended appropriate professional learning and implemented changes that have had an impact, for example, the introduction of loose parts play and increased outdoor learning. Practitioners need to continue to develop their professional knowledge, understanding and confidence. This will support effective leadership at all levels with a sharper focus on the leadership of learning. Exploring pedagogy together will support the team to develop a shared, consistent way of working and inform improvements. Regular opportunities for professional dialogue and collegiate learning with other early learning and childcare settings should also aid further improvements. Practitioners should also continue to develop opportunities for children to adopt more leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the nursery. The children in the nursery enjoy being part of the school's Eco committee.
- Practitioners would benefit from support by senior leaders in order to improve continually the early learning and childcare service in the nursery. At present, practitioners have had little support to manage effectively the direction and pace of change. Practitioners require senior leaders to create conditions where everyone feels confident to initiate change. Rigorous monitoring and quality assurance is needed in order to implement fully an effective approach to self-evaluation. Using the self-evaluation framework 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' (HGIOELC) would help guide thinking. This should enable practitioners to look more critically at their practice in an informed way.
- The nursery and school improvement plans are developed as one whole plan. However, only a few specific actions relate to improving the nursery. Improvement planning processes need to identify more clearly the key priorities of the nursery and target more specifically aspirational outcomes for children. It also needs to set out the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders

and practitioners in taking forward identified improvements at an increased pace. A focused series of visits to other establishments would also help with the implementation of improvements.

## 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

- The majority of children are engaged in their learning and interactions with practitioners are extending their thinking. However, a few children are not engaged in their learning. Children's engagement should be improved by building on the language of learning, appropriate to the age and stage of development. Practitioners need to ensure that all children are involved in high quality learning experiences, using skilful questioning to deepen children's level of understanding. Practitioners also need to raise their expectations and aspirations for learning to ensure they provide appropriate support and challenge for all children. Practitioners should ensure their interactions enable children to develop their ideas and suggestions fully and engage children in shared problem-solving activities.
- Children are happy and relaxed within the setting. Practitioners are consistently nurturing and supportive in their interactions with children. They create a warm, welcoming learning environment and take a genuine interest in all children. Practitioners should continue to explore ways in which children can access the available digital technology more. Outdoor learning is becoming a key feature of the nursery. The introduction of loose parts is enriching children's play. Children confidently access their immediate outdoor play space and the nearby beach weekly to engage in learning activities. Practitioners should ensure that children are engaged in high quality learning experiences in their outdoor play.
- Individual learning profiles include observations, photographs, examples of children's work, progression trackers for literacy and numeracy, developmental milestones under the wellbeing indicators, progress reports and achievements. Practitioners use this information to help identify what children need to learn next. However, these next steps do not always align with the most relevant steps required for children to make meaningful progress. Practitioners need to develop skills in observing and recording evidence of children's learning. For each individual child, practitioners should identify and record, in a manageable way, the most significant learning. This will enable next steps in learning to be clearly identified and supported more effectively. The information on children's next steps should be shared with both children and their parents in order to strengthen and build on children's successes. Parents have regular access to the learning profiles, daily informal dialogue, in addition to twice-yearly formal parent's nights to discuss their child's individual progress.
- Planning begins with the use of floorbooks which support the documentation of experiences. These help involve children to have an active part in leading their learning. This includes providing a vehicle to talk to children about their learning and areas they would like to explore in more depth. Practitioners are tracking children's progress using progression trackers and developmental milestones. However, the outcomes of this tracking is not yet clear enough to allow practitioners to make confident judgements about children's progress and learning achievements.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- See choice QI.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Almost all parents are very positive and happy with their child's experience at Lochnell Pre-Five Nursery Unit. Parents are involved in 'stay and play', daily informal engagement and twice-yearly formal parents evening. They also receive end of topic evaluations and posters outlining the key learning for the day. Opportunities for parents and children to learn together are offered, for example, Bookbug and monthly invitations to stay and play in the nursery during the day. The new development of activity bags to take home will allow parents and children to engage in learning at home.

## 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

- The setting has strong, caring relationships between staff and children. Practitioners are attuned to children's needs. The children are polite and well mannered. Practitioners use praise and language effectively to reinforce their expectations of behaviour. Children are happy and settled in the nursery and parents comment positively on the support and experiences they receive.
- Practitioners are at the early stages of making use of the national wellbeing indicators in the routines of the nursery. The children are enjoying discussing "Healthy Hector" and ways to keep him healthy. They now need to continue to build on their practice to support children and parents to develop a greater awareness of the indicators in meaningful ways. Practitioners need to continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This could be implemented in conjunction with the development of understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- At times, practitioners involve children in expressing their choices and opinions. However, this practice could be developed further. Children could also be involved in risk assessment of the outdoor area and weekly trips to the beach. They then could share their knowledge with practitioners. Children are involved in the daily routines, which are developing their independence such as selecting and preparing fruit for snack.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. This allows them to provide appropriate support for their families. Practitioners work with other agencies such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists to support children with barriers to their learning. Personal plans are updated regularly and contain relevant information. A range of policies and procedures are in place. However, the most up-to-date versions of these should be accessible and shared with all practitioners.
- Inclusion and equality are promoted throughout the work of the nursery. Practitioners have an understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do. Recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year is enabling children to develop an early awareness of diversity. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children, and themselves, in relevant learning about diversity and equality. Exploring gender more deeply would help ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

### 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 communication and language. They listen to stories and confidently answer practitioner's questions. Children particularly enjoyed the books about dinosaurs and engaged in opportunities to talk about and retell the story with adults and peers. Children engage well in conversations with peers and practitioners during free play and planned experiences.
- Recently, children have been given an opportunity to write for a purpose, for example, self-registration. However, children have too few opportunities for mark making available across the nursery, both indoors and outdoors. Children need to explore mark making more regularly to support them to develop and apply their skills. A few children are able to recognise their name and can identify other letters and words that are important to them.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children are not yet engaging in learning in numeracy and mathematics across the setting. Children count to ten, with a few confidently counting beyond ten, for example, counting the number of dinosaurs. Most children identify colour and shape as they explore their environment. A few children displayed a good awareness of mathematical concepts when using measure to discuss the length of rulers.
- Almost all children appear happy and settled in their environment. Most are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. Children are kind and considerate with their peers, for example, sharing toys. They make healthy choices at snack and are developing independence as they serve themselves. Daily opportunities to participate in outdoor play are supporting children to be healthy and active. Outdoor play and weekly trips to the beach allow children to develop a range of fine and gross motor skills.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress over time. However, practitioners do not have a clear picture of children's progress in learning over time.
- Practitioners capture children's individual achievements from home and nursery and celebrate them in a range of ways, for example, in displays and learning journals. Children value their 'proud cloud' display which celebrates their achievements. Practitioners use praise and encouragement to promote positive attitudes and effective cooperation and independence. Practitioners should further develop ways to capture and track children's achievement.

- Equity is promoted across all aspects of the work of the nursery. Staff provide a supportive and inclusive ethos and as a result, a climate of mutual respect and trust exists. Practitioners know children, their families and their backgrounds well. They use this understanding well to support children and families in a way that meets their needs and promotes equity. They are proactive in identifying and reducing potential barriers to effective learning for all children. Practitioners should ensure they have a deeper understanding of factors that influence equality, particularly around gender equality.

## Choice of QI : 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
- Development of the curriculum
- Learning pathways
- Skills for learning, life and work

- Practitioners plan for children's learning, taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. They make appropriate use of experiences and outcomes and guidance from the local authority. Literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing are promoted at times throughout the setting. The increase in the time that children spend in an outdoor learning environment has improved opportunities for children to be increasingly independent. The curriculum offered in Lochnell Pre-Five Nursery Unit is based firmly on play. It takes account of children's interests, for example, a recent focus on dinosaurs. Moving forward, practitioners should work together to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum. This should take account of the context of the setting, reflecting parents' aspirations for children and up to date research in early learning and childcare. All practitioners should continue to develop strategies and experiences that support children to lead their learning, develop their own solutions and deepen their play.
- Children's health and wellbeing is a priority in the setting and practitioners provide a variety of experiences to support children's development in this area. Building on this positive start, practitioners should now develop further their knowledge and understanding of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This would help to support breadth, challenge and depth in children's learning across the curriculum.
- The nursery transition programme supports children well as they move on to school. The nursery shares a space with Primary 2/1. This allows children from the nursery and Primary 2/1, to take part in shared experiences. These include dancing, French and joint visits to the beach to work on the topic 'under the sea'. As almost all children from the nursery move onto Lochnell Primary this allows for a streamlined transition from nursery to P1. The teacher from Primary 2/1 supports planning in the nursery. Staff from across the early level should continue to be encouraged to work together to share expectations and their understanding of early learning pedagogy.
- Parents and members of the community who have particular skills, for example, a chef and vet, visit the setting to share their skills and knowledge and highlight the world of work. Practitioners should continue to maximise real-life opportunities for children to develop and apply their skills.

### 1. Quality of care and support

Staff were working hard to provide a warm, nurturing and inclusive environment that supported children's wellbeing and development.

Their interaction with children was positive and caring. They understood the importance of developing trusted and loving relationships with children to nurture and help them feel valued, safe and secure.

They were kind, respectful and welcoming to all the children, families and to us. Children were happy and settled and able to make choices and decisions about what they wanted to do and play with throughout the session. For example, free flowing outside to dig for dinosaur fossils in the sand, practise their balancing skills on the mini climbing frame and their cooking skills in the mud kitchen.

Staff valued and were taking account of parents' knowledge and views of their child's development needs, interests, preferences and personality when gathering the information they needed to develop and review each child's personal plan and support their transitions. They knew the children and their families well.

A personalised learning log framework was being used to track children's progress and celebrate their achievements, with a learning journey being regularly shared with their parents.

Following discussion with staff and sampling children's personal plans we found that further work needed to be done to streamline and revise how they reported and recorded on children's progress.

We spoke with staff about the importance of making carefully observed assessments, that were meaningful and reflected children's development and learning. This was to further support their planning, establish clear progression pathways and ensure learning experiences had sufficient breadth, depth and challenge, with next steps focussing on areas to extend children's learning and help secure and sustain their progress over time.

The acting headteacher agreed staff would benefit from training on the long term impact that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have on outcomes for children and their families. Wellbeing risk assessments should be a key part of their support planning, review and assessment process to further enable staff to provide warm, nurturing and responsive care. We also discussed how staff could support children to lead on their own learning. For example, planning individually with each child in their key working group at a pace that suited them best, developing topics and strands of learning that were responding to their specific needs and interests. Children could also create their own record/interest book where they are able to capture and investigate their ideas, reflect on their learning and identify what they would like to learn about next, sharing their fun and progress with their families.

Staff had undertaken recent training in child protection. The acting headteacher was in the process of updating their child protection statement for parents to accurately reflect the local and national guidelines they followed along with the relevant contact numbers.

This would be displayed on their noticeboard as soon as completed. A further refresher training on the local authority's most up-to-date child protection policy and procedures would also be undertaken with staff.

We recognised the acting headteacher was only very recently in post. She understood the importance of having a well-motivated staff team who felt valued and respected, worked well together as a team and were being given the support to be the best they can be.

We discussed how weekly planning meetings could be used to support and develop staff's practice, giving them regular opportunities to self-evaluate and critically reflect on their work and share the impact that training has had on their practice and learning outcomes for children. A programme of staff support, supervision and development that included formal observations of staff's practice would also build capacity within the team, support their continuous improvement agenda and positive outcomes for children.

**Care Inspectorate grade: adequate**

## 2. Quality of environment

They were committed to embedding the Health and Social Care Standards My support, my life into their practice to achieve the best outcomes they could for children and their families. For example, staff knew about the positive impact of outdoor play on children's development and learning. They had plans to further develop their setting and children's experiences both inside and outdoors. They had started to introduce more open ended materials, resources and loose parts play to help promote children's independence and natural curiosity, develop their physical agility and help build their resilience. We joined the children on 'Welly Wednesday'. They enjoyed the adventure of walking along the cycle path to have snack time on the beach and had fun jumping in puddles on the way.

Although we were able to see children playing happily together, the opportunities for them to explore, discover, experiment and be challenged were limited at times. Staff could have been more responsive when children became distracted and less interested in their play. Staff needed to be more child-led, better organised and plan more carefully to create excitement, stimulate and inspire children's creativity and extend and deepen their learning experiences.

The acting headteacher was in full agreement their plans now needed to be driven forward at a greater pace. Staff should use their skills and expertise to create a richer learning environment that inspired children to be creative, curious and inventive, absorbed and purposeful in their play, enabling them to flourish and have fun with a range of high quality play experiences that enriched, deepened and challenged their learning.

For further reference we signposted the service to our guidance 'Our Creative Journey' which could also be used to help support the development of their setting and children's experiences both inside and outdoors, enabling them to follow their curiosity, solve problems and make sense of the world.

Staff knew the importance of managing risk positively to promote children's independence and empower them to make safe decisions, develop their knowledge and self-awareness, as well as provide opportunities for them to contribute more of their ideas and experiences to their learning.

We discussed how implementing the balanced approach of a risk benefit model could further support children's learning, promote their independence and build their resilience, self-confidence and enjoyment of risky play.

The toilet facilities available for the early learning and childcare children to use were also shared with the Primary 1/2 class.

The acting headteacher was able to confirm the local authority's plans to meet the Scottish Government's expansion in early learning and childcare entitlement to 1,140 hours had been revised for their setting. This included separate toilet and nappy changing facilities for the early learning and childcare along with a new boot room and secure entrance to the side of the building. The work was scheduled to be completed for the start of the school session in August 2020. A notification would be submitted to us in due course to update the changes to the planned alterations.

In the interim, they would continue to have protocols in place that were sensitive to and took account of all the children's privacy, dignity and safety and monitored standards of cleanliness appropriately. If needed, arrangements would also be made for supporting children with their personal care, that promoted their independence, as well as protected their rights to privacy and dignity and minimised the spread of infection. They would remain vigilant on security and make sure risk assessments were regularly reviewed. They had also started to think carefully about how they would manage lunchtimes and support children to have a positive eating experience and enjoy well-balanced, nutritious food.

For further reference, we signposted the service to the updated guidance 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings', our guidance on 'Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services: information to support improvement' and the 'Space to Grow' design guidance for indoor/outdoor settings, early learning and childcare settings and out-of-school care settings. 'Food Matters nurturing happy, healthy children'.

### Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

## Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two recommendations.

### Recommendations

Children's personal plans should be further developed and consolidated to fully reflect what they are learning and achieving as well as enable them to capture and investigate their own ideas and lead on their learning.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:

1.15 My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.

1.19 My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.

1.23 My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected.

Staff should provide children with more challenging opportunities to discover, explore, experiment, problem solve and wonder.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:  
2.27 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 suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

## 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.