

Summarised Inspection Findings

Evie Community School

Orkney Islands Council

SEED No: 6002927

16 May 2017



Section One

Summarised Inspection Findings

Evie Community School

1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
 - *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
 - *Implementing improvement and change*
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- Evie Primary School's existing vision, values and aims statements have been developed in consultation with children, parents and staff. The vision statement captures the essence of what the school is all about: Everyone Valued Inspired Empowered. The set of core values are shared across the school community and understood by all staff. The school recently reviewed the vision, values and aims statements in partnership with all stakeholders. The recently-reformed Parent Council will be encouraged by the headteacher to work closely with staff on the implementation of the school's vision statement. In developing a strategic action plan for continuous improvement a shorter timeframe than that set out by the school and council would ensure the headteacher and her staff remain responsive to the needs of the school. The pace of leadership of change requires to improve to ensure the greatest impact on the current identified areas for improvement and inform the next cycle of improvement.
 - Staff are well aware of the unique context of the school, many have worked in the community for many years and they are strongly committed to supporting children and families. We agree that the school should move ahead with their revised curriculum rationale that will support the needs of all learners. We advise that this should happen timeously. We think the school could make even better use of the interesting and attractive environment which surrounds the school and involve a wider range of partners in creating a bespoke curriculum for the school.
 - Teaching and support staff have regular opportunities to be involved in reflective activities where they identify the school's areas of strength and areas for development. Children and parents also have opportunities to have a say in what is working and what needs to improve. It is important that parents and children are reassured that their views are listened to and where appropriate acted upon. Almost all teaching staff are engaged in leadership activities. Teaching staff are very receptive to new ways of working and they are keen to be further involved in improving the work of the school. We would ask teaching staff to focus on raising further their expectations of what children can achieve and increase the consistency of high quality learning and teaching across the primary classes.
 - Children across the school are offered some useful leadership experiences. For example, older children have had the opportunity to organise and run a Fair trade event. In the primary classes, the pupil council is to be replaced with improvement action groups. The pace of this intended change needs to be brisk to ensure momentum is not lost for children who are keen to be involved in the life and work

of their school. We think children could be given more leadership responsibilities and have ownership of bringing about changes to the work of the school.

- The membership of the Parent Council has recently changed. As the group becomes established we would agree with the headteacher that there is scope for the Parent Council to be more involved in leading improvements in for example developing the outdoor learning environment. Parents we spoke to were positive about their involvement in their child's learning. We are aware that many parents make valuable contributions to what children learn and we think that this way of working in partnership could be improved further. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection online questionnaire indicated their satisfaction with the information they have received from the previous Parent Council.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
 - *Quality of teaching*
 - *Effective use of assessment*
 - *Planning, tracking and monitoring*
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- Across the school children are very well behaved and show consideration to each other around the school. There is a strong climate of mutual respect. Across the school children benefit from a caring and nurturing environment. The school places a high priority on children's health and wellbeing. Most children are motivated, engaged and are enjoying their learning. Across the school the children are happy and enjoy being at school.
 - In the majority of lessons observed, children are given elements of choice about the tasks and activities they do. In the majority of classes observed, digital technology is used to motivate and enhance learning. Most children use laptops with confidence. In almost all classes observed, the teacher is leading the learning. The school should develop strategies to encourage children to lead the learning. The majority of children are aware of the purpose of the lesson and can discuss this, most with confidence.
 - The school has consulted with the children over the vision values and aims. The school does not have a pupil council at the moment. The school has plans to implement three groups which the children will lead. The school should now look to place a greater emphasis on pupil voice and ways to facilitate this.
 - Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, explanations and instructions are clear. The staff would benefit from working collegiately to develop a shared understanding of what good learning and teaching looks like across all stages. The staff have recognised the need to further develop their questioning skills to promote the development of higher order thinking skills in all learners.
 - The school has developed learning journals across the school. The children set targets for their next steps in learning. In the best practice, the children reflect on their learning and set appropriate targets. The staff recognise the need to improve the quality of their feedback and the frequency of target setting to support children understanding themselves as learners.
 - The staff are at the early stages of developing their understanding of using a variety of assessment approaches to support children to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes across different context of the school. The school has been involved with another school to discuss moderation approaches and has plans to fully develop moderation processes within the school and across the two schools. The assessment process does not yet provide robust

and reliable evidence. The assessment evidence is based on scheme based assessments, assessing one aspect of learning and is not yet allowing children the opportunity to demonstrate their application of learning.

- The school has recently reviewed its planning format. The staff select experiences and outcomes and define success criteria. The school also has in place weekly planning. In most cases this is outlining learning intentions and success criteria. The school recognised the need to revisit its planning to enable this to be more streamlined, effective and to include more differentiation. It should also focus on assessment and evaluations to inform next steps in learning. In the majority of classes, children are involved in helping to plan their topics using a what we know already and want to know next approach.
- The school uses standardised assessment information to monitor and evaluate children's learning. The school has been developing systems to understand and use the data more effectively to monitor progress and identify areas for support. The school has correctly identified more work is required in this area to support next steps in learning.
- The school has a large proportion of children on staged intervention (stages 2-5). Additional planning is in place for all of these children and, in a few cases, review meetings have taken place for children who have a Child's Plan. The plans include short term targets which would benefit from being "smart" targets to lead to more effective monitoring and reporting on progress. There is a large number of support assistants and a part time support for learning teacher within the school providing support. The school is considering reviewing how the support staff are utilised to maximise the impact of support for all learners and support raising attainment for all.
- The headteacher reviews planning, carries out classroom visits and provides feedback. This feedback outlines areas for development for the school and for the individual staff member. The feedback would benefit from being more streamlined and clearly focused on aspects which will inform improvement.
- The school is at the early stages of developing a tracking system. Further work can be done to develop this to enable robust tracking of children's progress. This will lead to informed conversations to target support and challenge for all children to enable them to achieve well.
- The school is at the early stages of developing children's awareness of the world of work and skills for employability. It recognises the need to further develop this area.

2.2 CURRICULUM: theme 2: Learning Pathways

- Curriculum pathways are in place for most areas of the curriculum. Revised pathways for listening and talking, science and health and wellbeing are in place. However all curriculum pathways would benefit from further review. The school is developing a social subjects pathway that will focus on the Magnus 900 project. This pathway has the potential to strengthen children's local knowledge and extend their citizenship skills. It will be important that the school looks to the wider community and beyond to ensure children get the best possible benefit from links with businesses and others who can develop children's skills for learning life and work.
- Teachers plan interdisciplinary (IDL) topics. They bundle together experiences and outcomes from a number of curricular areas. A review of IDL is suggested to ensure that staff have a shared understanding of how to make natural links between areas of the curriculum.
- There is evidence of collaborative working across the early level involving children in the nursery class and children in primary 1. Information provided by staff working in the nursery class could be better used by staff working in primary 1 as they plan learning opportunities. We strongly suggest that children in primary 1 are given relevant opportunities to build on the learning they bring with them from nursery to school at points of transition. Across the early level, learning needs to be coherent and progressive, building firmly on prior knowledge and skills.
- A recently introduced resource for health and wellbeing has the potential to provide appropriate opportunities for progression as children move through the school. The school has provided children with a range of planned activities which are designed to build resilience. The time is right to shift the focus onto building learning pathways that develop children's leadership, citizenship, enterprise and creativity skills.
- The school is aware of the need to develop better approaches to delivering health and wellbeing across the curriculum to ensure that all children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to keep them safe, healthy and achieving. In doing this, it will be important for parents, children, partners and staff to agree on a shared rationale for health and wellbeing that best meets the needs of its community and reflects the school's vision, values and aims. There must be clear and coherent links across learning and the various programmes in place to clearly identify the impact on improving outcomes for all children.
- Prior to moving to the new school building children had regular outdoor learning experiences. As the school grounds are developed it will be important that children continue to extend their problem solving and enquiry skills. While it is accepted that this will take time, we suggest that the school seeks timely ways to use the wider community around the parishes of Evie and Rendall to support learning outdoors. It will be important to ensure children's learning is planned across the four contexts of learning. Children's wider achievements need to be more effectively tracked.

2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: theme 3 Impact on learners – Parental Engagement

- Almost all parents feel that the move from the old building to the new one was handled well and that there was minimal interruption to the children's education. Parents we spoke to feel there is a positive ethos in the school. Parents are enthusiastic about the school which is seen as being inclusive, where parents and teachers and children all know each other well.
- Reports on the progress of pupils are issued once each year and there are two parents' evenings. A few parents feel they would prefer two written reports. However, the majority take the view that there is plenty of interaction between parents and teachers anyway, so that difficulties can be ironed out at any time.
- Some parents feel that there is a certain amount of inconsistency of teaching methods between the three classes. The Parent Council have been discussing homework, and take the view that a more focussed homework policy would be appreciated, so that parents could have more of a handle on where children are academically. Parents indicated that they feel that homework should generally be 'academic' in nature.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's 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 every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- The school's core values which include, respect, being included, friendship and being safe are clearly upheld by all staff and children. This results in a happy, friendly ethos. Staff demonstrate caring interactions with children. A shared school charter is on view in classrooms. In a focus group children were not aware of the school charter.
- Most children talk proudly about their school and how they are encouraged to be themselves. Most feel included and safe in school. In the responses to the Education Scotland questionnaires almost all parents feel their child is safe, cared for, and respected and included. Across the school, children behave very well, they are polite and respectful of each other's views and they are increasingly resilient. Almost all have a positive attitude to learning. Children are more positive about themselves as learners, engaging in activities suggested through mindfulness and positive coaching techniques has helped them adopt a 'can do' attitude to learning.
- A strong focus on the wellbeing of all children is shared by all stakeholders and is reflected in the school vision and values. Children feel that staff listen to them but the school should ensure that children are aware of how they receive feedback following activities where they have given their views, ideas and suggestions. Not all children expressed confidence that they would talk about worries or concerns with their teachers. Staff are familiar with the wellbeing indicators. Support staff and teaching staff respond very well to issues that arise in the lives of children and their families. Parents talk about the school being, 'one big family'. Most partners who work with the school agree they have suitable opportunities to network, share practice and participate in joint training and that they are kept informed of any changes in the school that may affect the service they provide. Overall, we suggest that partners could be more involved in evaluating the impact of the service the partner provides.
- The school provided information on how they identify additional support needs of children. This session the staged intervention model has identified almost half of the children require varying levels of support. This can vary from providing short term pastoral support from staff or support from the visiting support teacher and or one to one support for children who have more significant needs. Support staff provide support which is too often provided outwith classrooms. Children should be supported in class and occasions for extracting children from the classroom environment to work either in small groups or in a one to one situation should be carefully considered.

- Children in most classes are involved in regular setting and review of targets for literacy and numeracy and PE. At P3/4 children reviewed their handwriting targets. As yet the majority of children are not setting challenging enough targets across the curriculum. As a priority, children should be setting health and wellbeing targets.
- In reviewing the school's vision, values and aims, the school should now work with children to explore aspects of equality and diversity and provide better opportunities, through the curriculum for children to gain a clearer understanding of what this means.
- The school is developing its strategic approach to wellbeing building on earlier work done around Children's Rights, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), promoting positive relationships and the school's vision values and aims. Staff understand GIRFEC in relation to targeted children and they now need to begin to use the language of the wellbeing indicators more fully with all children, and as an integral part of school life for children to reflect on their learning and progress in health and wellbeing. Too often children do not understand the bigger picture so are not making connections between what they view as often isolated pieces of work or recognising for example work on Children's Rights and the school values as making a difference in the life of the school.
- Children understand the importance of daily physical activity and a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle and are aware of how good they feel following opportunities for exercise outdoors. This is enhanced by their training as young leaders focusing on how they can support active play at break times. Many children recognise that the decisions they make about food and drinks do not always reflect what they know and that their choices are influenced by many factors. Practical food activities re-enforce learning on safety and hygiene. As a result of learning how to relax their minds and bodies they recognise how this helps prepare them for learning. Work on the importance of being well hydrated is well recognised as important for the brain and for health generally and children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day.

3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

Attainment in literacy and numeracy:

Data provided by the school indicates the following:

- **Reading:** Overall the majority of children have achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- **Writing:** Overall the majority of children have achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- **Numeracy:** Overall the majority of children have achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- **Listening and talking:** no information was provided.
- Evidence gathered as part of inspection activities concurs with the school's judgements in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment over time:

- The school provided analysed data based on standardised assessment results for reading, writing and numeracy/ mathematics. The school recognises that making comparisons with small cohorts is challenging.
- The school does not yet have a clear picture of children's progress across the curriculum. Staff need to further develop their approaches to assessment to ensure that they are able to make more robust and reliable judgements about children's progress.

Progress in literacy:

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in literacy. To secure the best possible progress, all children would benefit from greater levels of challenge in their learning.
- **Listening and talking:** Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in listening and talking. Across the school, almost all children listen and follow instructions well. Children listen to each other as part of their group discussions. At the lower stages of the school, they make an attempt to take turns when listening and talking in a variety of contexts. In the middle school they take turns when listening and talking and are beginning to build on the previous persons point of view. At the upper stages, children are able to demonstrate understanding of spoken texts.
- **Reading:** Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in reading. At the early level, they are developing confidence in reading aloud and can use

relevant context clues. At the middle stages, children are using appropriate strategies to understand the meaning of words. At the upper stages, children's reading skills are enhanced by the use of literacy circles and this is supporting their understanding of more complex themes in their reading books. Across the school, the focus on reading has enhanced children's enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading. Most children are able to discuss the books they are reading at home and recommend books to each other. The introduction of audio books has particularly engaged the boys in P5/6/7. The children in the middle and upper stages read to the younger pupils which they enjoy. A few children have highly developed reading skills.

- **Writing:** Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in writing. At the early stages, children are writing in simple sentences. At the middle stages, most children are using full stops, capital letters and linking sentences appropriately. At the upper stages, most children are aware of how to use appropriate punctuation and use this in their writing. Children are given the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, for example, in Primary 5/6/7 the children created their own Burns poetry and in P3/4 the children created tongue twisters.
- **Numeracy and mathematics:** Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in numeracy.
- The majority of children are making good progress with time. In the early stages, children are able to order the seasons effectively. In the middle stages, most children are able to tell the time using quarter to and quarter past. In the upper stages, the majority of children are able to convert between digital and analogue. A few are able to calculate time durations effectively.
- Across all stages, children have a good understanding of measure. Children at the early stages are able to measure using non-standard units. As they move through the school, most children are able to estimate the height of common objects, by P7 children are able to calculate the perimeter of 2D shapes accurately.
- Across the school, a few children were able to apply their skills in numeracy. The school recognises that should provide children with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding in numeracy in new and unfamiliar situations and provide the children with opportunities to experience more challenging work in context. In a few classes observed, children were able to apply their numeracy knowledge skills in context, for example, pancake making in P1/2. The school should continue to seek out appropriate opportunities to develop numeracy across learning opportunities.

Achievement

- Children take pride in their achievements and those of others and enjoy seeing these recognised and celebrated in displays. The school recognises the value of such achievements and the contribution these make to a child's confidence and wellbeing. This now needs to be made clearer to all children.
- The headteacher has rightly identified the need to introduce a way to systematically track and monitor the achievements of all children in order to capitalise on the impact of the associated learning. This would also allow staff to identify those

children who would benefit from planned opportunities to achieve in particular aspects of their personal and social development or to develop particular skill sets.

- The school is aware of the opportunities but has not yet taken steps to capitalise on learning resulting from a residential experience in the senior stages or from environmental activities like 'Bag the Bruck', to gain an accredited award for example with the John Muir Trust.
- Too many activities are adult led and do not allow children to build their capacity, to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. Children make some contribution to the life of the school and have some recognition of the positive impact they can bring about by working together, for example, organising school events and fundraising activities. They believe they are capable of doing more. To do so they need further support and guidance to fully recognise their strengths and the range of skills gained as a result of these activities and greater opportunity to apply learning in real and meaningful contexts.
- Active pupil groups are not currently in place which would allow children to develop skills in a planned and supported way. The school should continue to explore how best to maximise the opportunities provided for example by the development of the community play area, the creation of school vision, values and aims and the Active Schools leadership training to develop children's leadership and citizenship skills. Older children positively describe facing a range of challenges during a residential trip which has for many of them contributed significantly to building problem solving skills and confidence in their abilities to successfully face new challenges. Older children respond well when given responsibility, for example, they worked well together when serving meals to the senior citizens and nursery children.

Equity for all learners:

- The school need to further develop systems to promote equity of success and achievement for all learners.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI 1.1 SELF-EVALUATION

- **Theme 1 collaborative approaches to self-evaluation**
 - **Theme 2 analysis of intelligence and data**
 - **Theme 3 impact on learners' successes and achievements**
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- At the inspection scoping meeting the headteacher provided a self-evaluation summary which outlined areas for improvement or further improvement. These areas have been determined through evaluative activity which audited the work of the school and included consulting stakeholders and children. We agree that there are a number of areas for improvement that are well developed, some that need to continue to develop or are at any early stage of development and a few areas where improvements need to have more demanding timescales. The areas that require more demanding timescales are, improving tracking and monitoring, and making better use of up-to-date data to determine how well and how much progress children are making. The analysis of data by the school is not currently bringing about the desired progress in literacy and numeracy for the majority of children.
 - Staff in the primary classes are involved in a range of evaluative activities, they engage in professional dialogue that focuses on improving key aspects of the school's work such as raising attainment and developing the curriculum and looking at ways to improve the consistency of teaching methods. They demonstrate a willingness to reflect on their practice and they are beginning to see the benefits of working and planning and monitoring learning together to improve their teaching approaches and children's learning experiences. Staff seek out practice in other schools and they work regularly and closely with the linked primary school. The support for learning teacher has an allocation of almost two days in school. She is reflective and keen to work with teaching staff to develop new ways of supporting children who have additional support needs.
 - Parents are invited to offer their views on the work of the school mostly through informal arrangements. Parents, the newly reformed Parent Council and the wider community should have a greater involvement in on-going self-evaluation activities. Children have some opportunities to voice their opinions on what happens in school. A few children felt they wanted to be more involved in making decisions. They believed they could take on more challenging roles and responsibilities for improving their school and that too often adults made decisions for them which means they do not have shared ownership of projects or events that are planned. Adopting a 'you said' 'we did' approach would help children see the impact of their opinions.
 - Currently the volume of documentation for planning learning is overly time-consuming and needs to be refined. We have suggested that teachers review planning to ensure they reduce the amount of time spent on completing documentation and that curriculum plans are fit for purpose. Self-evaluation processes should show a clear picture of improvement in attainment and children's wider achievements. As yet the school is not engaging in evaluative activity that is bringing about change at a fast enough pace.

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- The headteacher who is responsive and sensitive to the support needs of all children. She is supported by a hardworking and positive staff team who work well together to improve aspects of the work of the school.
- Support staff, visiting staff, parents and others who make valuable contributions to the positive school environment and welcoming ethos.
- Children in the primary classes who are happy, friendly, polite and well behaved and who benefit from learning in a caring, nurturing environment.
- Children in the nursery who are motivated, engaged and thriving on the high quality interactions and experiences provided by effective, skilled practitioners. Staff working in the nursery place a strong and successful emphasis on children's wellbeing and in providing an environment where children confidently can lead their own learning.

AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- Develop more effective strategic leadership to drive forwards key priorities for school improvement and implement Curriculum for Excellence at an increased pace. Improve approaches to self-evaluation to ensure the work of the school and the nursery is being effectively monitored and leads to continuous improvement.
- Within the school, encourage children to take more responsibility for their own learning and aspects of school life.
- Improve arrangements for planning, assessment and moderation including tracking children's progress in learning and achievement, ensuring that staff set high expectations and that all children in the nursery and school are appropriately challenged.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. We will ask Orkney Islands Council to provide the Area Lead Officer with a written report on how the school has continued to improve its work within one year of the publication of this report. Orkney Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.



Section Two

Summarised Inspection Findings

Evie Community School

1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

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 vision, values and aims of the school are shared with the nursery. Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to the vision of 'Everyone, Valued Inspired Empowered'. This is firmly embedded in the ethos and work of the nursery and brought to life through practitioners' highly effective practice which is leading to positive outcomes for children.
 - Practitioners report that they feel supported by the headteacher who makes regular visits to the setting. They feel empowered to be creative, implement ideas and new ways of working. Practitioners are fully included in the life of the school. The lead practitioner within the nursery has responsibility for leading learning and curriculum development and provides a very good role model to colleagues. There is scope to develop the leadership skills of all practitioners to take forward key areas of the curriculum or areas identified within the improvement plan.
 - Within the setting, professional enquiry and creativity is encouraged and supported. This is having a positive impact on children's experiences. Many decisions taken in the nursery are based upon research and collaborative working with colleagues within and outwith the setting. As a result, positive changes have taken place, such as, the implementation of programmes to support children's early communication and language skills. This has improved the quality of practitioner interaction and intervention and resulted in children making good progress in this area of their learning. Practitioners are reflective and use the knowledge gained from professional learning opportunities to continually improve their practice.
 - The move to the new building has been managed well. Careful consideration has been given to creating the stimulating environment for learning to ensure children are able to be independent learners. This included consultation with children on the development of the outdoor area.
 - The nursery improvement priorities are included within the school improvement plan. Practitioners look inwards, outwards and forwards to support their practice and improvement. The headteacher now needs to ensure a robust and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery. It will be important to fully embed this in practice and involve all stakeholders in the process.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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.*
-
- Most children within the nursery are confident, motivated and engaged in both free play and adult led activities. They arrive at the setting enthusiastic and ready to learn. The positive relationship between practitioners and children is supporting children to feel confident and secure. Children confidently make choices and decisions about their play. The effective use of natural materials and everyday objects is encouraging children's curiosity, creativity and inquiry.
 - There are a few examples of children using digital technology. This includes using digital cameras to record their work and exploring games on the interactive whiteboard. Children will benefit from increased opportunities to use digital technology to support their learning.
 - Practitioners interact with children very well. They time their interventions appropriately to support and extend children's learning and encourage sustained interest. The use of open-ended questions is supporting children's thinking skills and deepening their learning. Practitioners know children's developmental stages and adjust their interactions accordingly to ensure children are supported in a way that effectively meets their learning needs.
 - Each child has an individual learning journal. Practitioners record their observations of children's learning to demonstrate their involvement in experiences and to identify learning. As recognised, further work is required to develop skills in recording significant learning in order to demonstrate the progress children are making across all areas of learning. Assessment for learning approaches are used in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way. As learning journals develop, it will be important to provide opportunities for learning conversations to enable children to reflect on their learning and achievements and be more involved in planning what they might learn next. Practitioners meet regularly to review children's individual learning journals and to discuss the progress children are making. Further developing the way children's learning journals are reviewed would help practitioners identify where additional challenge is needed and would enable children to make the best possible progress.
 - The headteacher, along with practitioners, should consider reviewing and amending the system for monitoring and tracking children's progress. The current system does not demonstrate clearly enough the progress all children are making in their learning. It will be important for practitioners to work with colleagues within the setting and through cluster work to reach a shared understanding of the

assessment of children's progress.

- Planning for children's learning is consultative and responsive to children's interests and ideas. Its flexibility gives children the time and space to learn in depth about specific learning contexts. Children who may have a barrier to their learning are readily identified and are being well supported. Their progress against specific targets is monitored and evaluated effectively.

2.2 CURRICULUM: theme 2: Learning and Development Pathways

- The curriculum takes into account the importance of play. Children experience a broad range of interesting and relevant experiences across all areas of the curriculum. The design principles of Curriculum for Excellence underpin the planning process. Practitioners plan for children's learning taking into account their individual stages of development. They use the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence and guidance from Orkney Council to support progression in learning. Practitioners track coverage of the experiences and outcomes to demonstrate that they are taking full account of all that children are expected to learn during their early learning and childcare experience.
- The outdoor area continues to be a work in progress since moving into new premises. Children freely access outdoor learning on a daily basis. They are encouraged to extend their interests and ideas into the outdoor area. As the area develops, it will be important to ensure children can develop and apply their early literacy and numeracy skills during outdoor learning.
- Home visits and a flexible approach to settling children into nursery are enabling children to experience a smooth transition from their home. Helpful information from parents gives practitioners an insight into children's previous experiences. This information is used well to build on children's prior experiences and interests. Transition from nursery to primary 1 is managed well. During particular terms of the year, nursery children and pupils from primary 1 and primary 2 have opportunities to play and learn together. There is scope to develop this further throughout the year. By increasing these opportunities, practitioners and primary 1 staff will be able to share methodologies in teaching and different approaches to planning. This will be important to support continuity and progression in children's learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: theme 3 Impact on children and families – Parental Engagement

- Regular communication with parents enables practitioners to share what children have been learning about through specific learning contexts. Helpful information provided on aspects such as early language and literacy is enabling parents to support their child at home through play-based activities. There is scope to increase opportunities for parents to play and learn together through home-link resources. The 'stay and play' sessions that are planned will be a positive way of enabling parents to play alongside their child and observe their learning within the nursery setting.
- Information on children's learning and progress is shared both formally and informally. Daily 'reflection time' for children is observed by parents, giving them an insight into their child's experiences during the nursery session. Parents' meetings provide an opportunity for two-way dialogue with practitioners to discuss the progress children are making in their learning.
- The setting engages with a few partners. There is scope to broaden this and include parents to give children access to a wider range of experiences and begin to develop an awareness of the world of work.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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*

- Children and their family's wellbeing is firmly at the centre of the setting's work. Children are valued and viewed as unique individuals with their own needs, personalities and skills. Relationships within the nursery are extremely positive and built on trust and respect. The playroom is a relaxed and calm learning environment where children are thriving. Positive behaviour is actively promoted through positive role modelling and sensitive interaction. Children show consideration for others and most resolve minor conflict situations independently.
- The very respectful ethos enables children to confidently share their ideas and suggestions. Their views are valued and used to influence planning and activities within the nursery. Very effective use of praise and encouragement is developing children's confidence and instilling a 'can do' attitude. Practitioners have a clear understanding of the Getting it right for every child wellbeing indicators. They have begun to introduce them to children through relevant activities, to develop children's awareness of how the indicators relate to themselves as individuals.
- Practitioners make very good use of professional learning to develop their skills and improve practice in order to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. They use well-planned and structured approaches to work in partnership with families to support children's development and wellbeing. A few parents have commented positively on the impact of the support received through the setting. Changes to the routine of the day are now enabling practitioners to be available to parents at the beginning and end of the nursery session to ensure two-way exchange of information.
- Practitioners have a clear understanding of the statutory duties required to ensure children's wellbeing and to deliver high quality ELC. Very effective planning for children's care and learning needs is ensuring children receive the right level of support from within the setting or, when necessary, from a partner agency.
- The nursery has responded positively to consultation with parents in relation to the ELC entitlement. This has resulted in a more flexible approach with a few parents choosing to access an afternoon session which includes lunch. Not all parents are making use of their entitlement to 600 hours of ELC. This is as a result of parental choice.
- Practitioners are professional and respectful of each other. Together, they have

created a culture where inclusion and equity is promoted. They fully support children to access all experiences and make progress in their learning. Practitioners make very effective use of play situations and interactions to enable and encourage children to value and celebrate differences.

3.2 SECURING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

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.*

- Discussions with practitioners and observations of learning, suggests that overall, children are making good progress in their learning. In health and wellbeing, most children are progressing well. They are developing an awareness of the importance of good health and what they need to do to keep healthy. Most children are developing good physical skills through outdoor play and activities within the school hall. Independence skills are encouraged through experiences such as helping to prepare snack and tidying resources. There is scope to develop further children's leadership through various tasks in and around the school.
- Most children are making good progress in early language and literacy, with a few children making very good progress. Most listen well to instructions and follow them to carry out a task. They are becoming confident communicators and will readily engage in conversation with their peers and adults. Most children are developing their early mark making and 'writing' skills through meaningful contexts such as 'writing' letters. Most older children, recognise their name as they self-register. A few demonstrate an interest in letter sounds.
- In numeracy and mathematics children are making good progress. Most children count with confidence. They are beginning to recognise numbers through different experiences such as using number games on the interactive whiteboard. Most children use appropriate mathematical language when estimating and making comparisons. Children will benefit from increased opportunities to explore 3 dimensional objects, use money in real-life contexts and gather and record information in different ways.
- Children's achievements are celebrated well within the nursery. Practitioners encourage parents to share children's achievements from outwith the setting. Children confidently share these achievements with their peers. Specific skills are built upon to ensure children experience sufficient challenge and continue to make progress. There is scope to explore opportunities for children to contribute to the local and wider community. Practitioners should consider ways to increase links with the community groups who make use of the school facilities.

- Practitioners know children and their families well. There is a strong commitment to removing any barriers to learning by working closely with parents and other agencies to ensure positive outcomes for all.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI 1.1 SELF-EVALUATION

- **Theme 1 Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation**
 - **Theme 2 Evidence-based improvement**
 - **Theme 3 Ensuring impact of success for children and families**
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- Practitioners are using national guidance to support reflection and self-evaluation. This has resulted in improvements such as creating an enabling learning environment where children actively lead their learning. The headteacher works with practitioners to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They use individual quality indicators and challenge questions from national guidance to support self-evaluation in relation to specific areas of their practice. To develop this further, the headteacher, along with practitioners, could consider ways to deepen their evaluative work. It will be helpful to gather evidence across the three categories of Leadership and Management, Learning Provision and Successes and Achievements, to support a more robust evaluation.
 - Parents are encouraged to share their views with the nursery through questionnaires and daily 'chats'. We have discussed with practitioners, other ways to engage parents in the self-evaluation process. Children are encouraged to evaluate their experiences throughout the nursery day. They confidently share their likes and dislikes about particular activities and stories. As planned, practitioners should continue to seek ways to fully involve children in the development of the setting.

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- The headteacher who is responsive and sensitive to the support needs of all children. She is supported by a hard-working and positive staff team who work well together to improve aspects of the work of the school.
- Support staff, visiting staff, parents and others who make valuable contributions to the positive school environment and welcoming ethos.
- Children in the primary classes who are happy, friendly, polite and well behaved and who benefit from learning in a caring, nurturing environment.
- Children in the nursery who are motivated, engaged and thriving on the high quality interactions and experiences provided by effective, skilled practitioners. Staff working in the nursery place a strong and successful emphasis on children's wellbeing and in providing an environment where children confidently can lead their own learning.

AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- Develop more effective strategic leadership to drive forwards key priorities for school improvement and implement Curriculum for Excellence at an increased pace. Improve approaches to self-evaluation to ensure the work of the school and the nursery is being effectively monitored and leads to continuous improvement.
- Within the school, encourage children to take more responsibility for their own learning and aspects of school life.
- Improve arrangements for planning, assessment and moderation including tracking children's progress in learning and achievement, ensuring that staff set high expectations and that all children in the nursery and school are appropriately challenged.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. We will ask Orkney Islands Council to provide the Area Lead Officer with a written report on how the school has continued to improve its work within one year of the publication of this report. Orkney Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.