

Summarised inspection findings

Arnhall Day Nursery

Stirling Council

19 March 2019

Key contextual information

Arnhall Day Nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare to a maximum of 107 children aged from three months to those not yet attending primary school. Playrooms are distributed across two main buildings. Children have access to extensive outdoor spaces including an adjacent woodland area. The setting offers extended-day provision. Most children attend the setting for full day sessions.

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 setting has in place an established vision, values and aims. Children, parents and practitioners have been involved in developing these over time. Senior leaders are working to embed the vision, values and aims across the setting. They have sought to make the language used more accessible to children. The nursery team plan to review the aims of the setting in the near future. It would be useful also to revisit the vision of the setting to reflect the strong emphasis on outdoor learning, creativity and play evident in practice. In doing so, senior leaders should involve children, parents and practitioners as fully as possible. This will provide a sound foundation and clear direction for future improvement planning.
- Senior leaders motivate and support practitioners well. They provide good role models and promote leadership at all levels. They are effective in inspiring a positive culture of professional learning and improvement in the nursery. An established mentoring system provides good support to less experienced practitioners.
- Practitioners are reflective and strive for continuous improvement. They work together well within rooms to create engaging learning spaces and experiences to support children. It will be important to develop more collaborative working across the setting. This will help to maximise the impact of future improvement work.
- Practitioners are developing confidence in using 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to identify strengths and areas of practice which require improvement. They recognise the value of looking outwards to find out how they might improve further. Self-evaluation now needs to improve further with a more robust focus on improving learning and teaching and on measured outcomes for children. Senior leaders should now improve further the management of change in the nursery, to plan, coordinate and measure the impact of planned change.
- Regular consultation, and a parent committee, help to ensure that parents can be involved in planning and evaluating change. Practitioners encourage children to discuss their ideas for improvement and act on their suggestions when making changes. Children play an active role in self-evaluation for improvement through Eco-Schools Scotland activities. There is scope to develop this further.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Children under three years of age are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy learning outdoors in the attractive nursery garden and during exciting forest experiences. We were able to see how these experiences are helping younger children develop resilience and independence well. Practitioners working with the youngest children are seeking to make playrooms more cosy and homely for babies. They should continue with this work.
- Children aged three to five years are encouraged and supported to be independent and resourceful learners. Children help to shape indoor play spaces and know how to access the materials they need for their learning. Most children are confident when making choices and sustain motivation and engagement in learning well throughout their time in the setting.
- Outdoor experiences are a particularly strong feature of provision. Children greatly enjoy the freedom afforded by the rich range of opportunities for learning outdoors. Regular forest learning experiences, linked to well-planned adult supported investigations enrich children's understanding of the natural world. These experiences are supporting children to develop important skills for life and learning including teamwork, creativity and perseverance.
- Overall, experiences of play provide good opportunities for children to initiate learning experiences across a range of contexts. Approaches to planning allow children the time and space to develop their ideas and to explore imaginative play in greater depth. Practitioners should continue to develop the use of natural materials and open-ended resources during indoor play for all children.
- Practitioners know children well. They listen attentively to children and increasingly, involve them in planning the direction and pace of experiences. As a result, children are confident when talking about experiences. Practitioners should now support children to begin to evaluate and make informed decisions about their learning. In doing so, practitioners should ensure a clear focus on the skills children are developing, in the setting and at home.
- Practitioners record children's learning in wall displays, floorbooks and individual learning journals. They have begun to work with the support of their authority improvement group to develop further their use of quality observations as part of effective assessment. As planned, practitioners should continue to work together to improve further planning and assessment approaches.
- Senior leaders should work with practitioners to develop a shared understanding of progress in key aspects of early learning across the setting. They should ensure that assessment information captures significant learning for each child in a manageable way. Together, these developments will support practitioners to confidently identify and build on children's progress more effectively.

- Practitioners and senior leaders are working to develop approaches to monitor and track children's progress. This will enable practitioners and senior leaders to plan, implement and measure the impact of change to improve learning further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Environments indoors and out provide opportunities for children of all ages to learn through play. Practitioners working with children aged under three years of age make use of national guidance 'Pre Birth to Three' in planning for children. Practitioners working with older children use the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence to plan a range of learning across the curriculum.
- 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. Practitioners should now make more use of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence to further support challenge and depth in children's learning across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support practitioners to develop further their understanding of progression in early language and numeracy as children grow and develop.
- As discussed, it will be helpful to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum. This should take account of the unique context of the setting, reflecting parents and carers aspirations for children and up to date research in early learning. In doing so, there should be a clear focus on improving further learning and teaching to secure progress in early literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local environment, and visitors to the setting, to enrich learning and extend children's awareness of the world around them. Practitioners should continue to develop children's understanding of the work that people do in the local community. In doing so, they should encourage children to make links with the skills they are learning in the setting and the world of work.
- Transitions into and within the setting are well managed overall. Practitioners should continue to develop links with receiving schools to support learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the setting through stay and play sessions. They are kept informed of their children's experiences and progress in learning through useful monthly newsletters, social media and children's individual learning journals. Social gatherings and fundraising events promote a sense of community between practitioners, children and families. We discussed how parents might now be encouraged to take an active part in recognising achievements and setting some learning goals for their children. This will help ensure parents have a clear understanding of how well children are progressing and are informed of how they can support children's learning beyond the setting.
- A few parents share their skills to enhance children's learning. For example, children were very keen to learn about bird boxes and took part in constructing them to help the birds in the forest. The setting has developed positive partnerships within the local community to enrich children's learning. These include links with the travelling library. They should continue to build on this aspect of the work of the setting.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting 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

- There is a strong focus on children's health and wellbeing across the setting. The wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child are in evidence throughout the setting and shared with children and families. Practitioners have created a warm, nurturing ethos that ensures children are happy, safe and secure. As a result, almost all children quickly engage and settle to their play.
- Practitioners understand the value of relationships and friendship to children's learning and development. They model positive relationships very well and share responsibility for creating a happy, relaxed and stimulating learning environment for all children. Where appropriate, practitioners support children to resolve any small disagreements as they arise. As a result, children play together very well and show care and consideration for each other in age appropriate ways.
- Practitioners understand and care for children's physical needs very well. The many opportunities for children to play outdoors throughout the day helps to ensure that all children enjoy the benefits of fresh air and exercise. Daily access to the extensive gardens, outdoor play spaces and the forest, provide sustained opportunities for physical and imaginative play. As a result, most children are developing independence, resilience and very positive attitudes to outdoor experiences. Siblings enjoy opportunities to play together during outdoor play. There is scope to continue to develop this further.
- The nurturing approach throughout the setting includes a strongly positive focus on healthy eating. This is helping children to develop a sound understanding of the importance of a balanced diet and healthy food choices. Most children attend the setting for full days. Breakfast, fruit, hot lunch and afternoon tea ensure children are well nourished and ready to learn throughout the day. It is evident how much children enjoy their experiences of eating together in the setting.
- Practitioners support children to understand how it feels to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are learning how to keep themselves and others safe as they set boundaries in the forest. Children take safe risks when they balance on logs and climb trees and can explain how to keep safe around the campfire. Children are developing their sense of themselves as responsible and contributing members of the setting community. Examples of this include children taking responsibility for setting the table for lunch and taking good care of rabbits and hens in the setting garden. Older children 'buddy' younger children when they are new to the playroom. We discussed how practitioners might develop children's understanding in this aspect of their learning further through an increased focus on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- Practitioners understand and respect the needs of children and their families very well. They treat all children and families with fairness and respect. Partnerships and professional learning opportunities support practitioners to understand their role in supporting children who may face barriers to their learning. Where appropriate, senior leaders and practitioners work with parents and carers to improve outcomes for children. Practitioners understand of their statutory duties and participate in relevant professional learning to keep their knowledge up to date.
- Children are learning about wider issues of equality through a range of experiences in the nursery, including the celebration of festivals, world languages and customs. They are learning how they can take practical steps to help others who face challenges different to those they face themselves. There is potential to expand this learning through, for example, the exploration of gender equality in children's play.

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

- Most children under three years of age are making good progress across learning, appropriate to their stage of development. They show increasing confidence in exploring the learning environment and are developing their physical skills well through play. Younger children are developing their concentration, particularly when supported by practitioners. Most are learning to share and play well alongside each other. They are learning how to be kind and gentle as they play. Most children use their developing communication skills to make their needs known and make choices. They are learning to listen to simple stories and engage with songs and rhymes well. Children are developing an early awareness of mathematical concepts as they play with open-ended materials.
- Almost all children aged three to five develop their emotional, social and physical skills very well through the strong focus on health and wellbeing embedded across the setting. Children are kind and caring towards each other and support each other as they play. They are developing confidence and teamwork well through play in the extensive nursery garden and adjacent forest. Children are developing their physical skills and stamina very well, for example, when they climb, balance and go for extended walks.
- Overall, most children aged three to five are developing skills in communication and early language well. Most children are developing appropriate vocabulary and talk with increasing confidence to practitioners and peers. More regular, focused opportunities for children to listen and participate in discussions would support language development further. The majority of children engage well with books as they retell, reconstruct and act out favourite stories. A few older children successfully create and sequence their own stories. Most children explore mark-making to express their ideas and the majority of older children can form letters that are important to them. Practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to extend and apply their early literacy skills in purposeful ways.
- Most children are making good progress in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts through their play. Children are developing mathematical language as they build with large blocks, and talk about heavy and light as they fill pots with sand. Children are beginning to develop their understanding of number and time through the routines of the day. They are becoming aware of symmetry and pattern through play with construction materials and experiences outdoors. Practitioners should continue to develop an increasing focus on early numeracy and mathematics.

- Practitioners make good use of praise to encourage children to persevere in their learning. Parents and carers are encouraged to share achievements from home and the community. Practitioners need to develop this further. This will ensure that experiences in the nursery build consistently on what children have already achieved and learned.
- Practitioners identify children who experience barriers to making progress in their learning. They work with professional agencies and parents to provide support when appropriate. The nursery team are at an early stage in using information in a focused way to promote equity. Improved use of assessment, tracking and monitoring will enable practitioners to evaluate how well strategies support children, and help plan future interventions. It will also enable senior leaders to measure children's progress over time more effectively.

Choice of QI: 3.3 Developing creativity and skills for life and learning

- Developing creativity
- Developing skills for life and learning
- Developing digital skills

- Outdoor experiences provide good opportunities for children to develop imagination, curiosity and problem solving skills. Children demonstrate increasing skill, confidence and independence as they explore the possibilities of a range of materials and contexts. Practitioners should now continue to develop their use of natural materials to enrich indoor experiences for children of all ages.
- Practitioners are becoming more confident in supporting children to develop vocabulary to talk about their ideas and reflect on strategies used in meeting challenges. They should now continue to develop further ways to support children to plan, design and evaluate solutions as they apply their skills across learning.
- Most children are forming good friendships and are learning to cooperate with others in their play. Practitioners understand the role of wellbeing in children's learning and support children very well through nurturing and caring approaches. As a result, children are confident and keen to participate in new experiences.
- Involvement in the Eco-Schools Scotland work of the setting encourages children to think of themselves as responsible and capable agents of change and improvement.
- Children are becoming familiar with a range of digital tools. They are beginning to use them to enhance aspects of their learning. We saw children use digital photography to capture interesting information about the natural world, and use tablets and an interactive screen to practise their developing numeracy skills. Practitioners should continue to develop a clear rationale for supporting children's skills in using and exploring digital technologies to enhance, deepen and personalise learning across the curriculum. In doing so, they should look for imaginative ways to use existing digital resources to enhance literacy and numeracy learning and teaching further. They should consider sharing their approach to using digital technology with parents and carers.

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.