

Summarised inspection findings

Mount Cameron Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

1 October 2019

Key contextual information

Mount Cameron nursery classes are situated in a self-contained playroom within the primary school. The morning session operates through the medium of Gaelic, with the afternoon session through English. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 children in Gaelic Medium Education(GME), with 17 in English Medium Education (EME).

There is direct access to an enclosed garden area.

The setting is registered for up to 20 children to attend at any one time. The provision is for children aged between three to those not yet attending school.

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

- In both GME and EME, practitioners have created a welcoming environment for children and families. Relationships between children and practitioners are positive and nurturing. As a result, children are happy, safe and secure. They are developing confidence in exploring their setting. Children are forming friendships and are learning to play cooperatively with others. Children are independent in making choices from the available resources. However, children could be better supported and encouraged to take care of resources and their learning environment.
- In both GME and EME, most children engage well with their learning. They enjoy learning through free-play, in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Most children sustain interest and can concentrate well for extended periods in purposeful play. Examples of this include when children are modelling with dough, exploring mud, and designing and making kites. As planned, practitioners should expand the use of open-ended resources and natural materials. This will enable children to develop further their skills in curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- Children when learning through the medium of English and Gaelic are particularly motivated by outdoor learning experiences. They enjoy imaginative play with ribbons, experimenting in the mud kitchen, mark-making with chinks and filling and emptying water containers. However, there is considerable scope to make use of the local community, including parks and woodlands, to extend children's learning.
- In GME, almost all children engage enthusiastically in a range of free-play activities. They particularly enjoy singing Gaelic action songs, and investigating and describing their pet snails. Practitioners should extend the range of strategies used for immersion, and avoid translating information and instructions into English. They also need to monitor that individuals are not left too long without hearing Gaelic. A policy has been developed on GME and immersion, based

on the Advice on Gaelic Education. All staff delivering 3-12 GME should have regular opportunities to collaborate to discuss effective implementation of this policy.

- Practitioners of GME and EME are caring and supportive in their interactions. They engage appropriately with children during play. Practitioners support children to manage their behaviour by giving praise and encouragement. Practitioners know children well as learners. They respond appropriately and sensitively to children's different stages of development. Practitioners use effective open-ended questions to encourage and support children's concentration and engagement. However, on a few occasions interactions could be used more effectively to extend children's thinking and deepen their learning.
- Children in playing through the medium of English and Gaelic have some opportunities to explore digital technologies. They paint and draw using digital packages on the interactive board. They use tablet technology to access digital programmes. Practitioners should now, as planned, develop and extend their use of digital technologies to support children's learning. This should include the use of online resources for Gaelic.
- Practitioners of GME and EME observe children as they play and learn. They make some use of these observations to support the assessment process. Practitioners should continue to plan how they will evidence children's significant learning through their high-quality observations. They should use the information from observations to identify relevant next steps in learning for individual children. Each child has an individual care plan, with findings from observations based on national wellbeing indicators. Children also have online digital profiles, which parents may access. Profiles exemplify children's involvement in a range of activities. In GME, digital profiles could be used more effectively to promote and share relevant phrases and vocabulary for Gaelic, which are linked to children's learning experiences. Across the nursery, practitioners have identified the need to review care plans and profiles to ensure they capture a comprehensive picture of each child's progress and achievements.
- Recently, children learning through the medium of English and Gaelic have set 'happy cloud' targets. A few children can talk with confidence about their targets and identify where they have been successful in achieving them. There is scope to increase opportunities for children to reflect and talk about their own learning. This should result in children having greater ownership of and involvement with their digital profiles. Additionally, this will support children to be fully involved in leading their learning, and recognising themselves as learners.
- Practitioners use a variety of long and short-term planning formats, including a yearly overview, which identifies seasonal events. All practitioners contribute to the weekly planning of the curriculum. This includes identifying what children will learn linked to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Practitioners should now review their weekly planning to ensure a clearer focus on learning, assessment and skills.
- Responsive planning formats for GME and EME, such as mind maps and floor books, could be used more effectively. Children's voice, and their engagement with planning and evaluating their learning, could be much stronger. As discussed, practitioners should also consider developing approaches to make learning more visible by, for example, using learning walls.
- Practitioners of GME and EME have a number of different systems in place to track and evaluate progress of literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. This should now be simplified to ensure clearer lines of progression across the early level. The introduction of the new local authority tracking tool should be used to give this clarity. In GME, practitioners should track children's levels of understanding and their use of the Gaelic language.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Securing children's progress

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

- In EME, most children are making good progress in communication and early English language. They listen well to stories and are learning to follow instructions. Children confidently engage in conversations in which they enjoy sharing personal experiences with other children and adults. Children express their thoughts and ideas well during play and group times. They are developing a wide range of vocabulary related to their topics, which they are supported to use during play.
- In GME, most children are making good progress in literacy and Gàidhlig. This was particularly evident during storytelling and singing sessions. Almost all children listened well to songs and showed a good understanding when their names were integrated within verses. A few children are beginning to use common words during adult-led activities.
- In both GME and EME, practitioners support and encourage children to access factual books to extend their knowledge of particular subjects. For example, children were accessing text on garden birds and weather. Practitioners should now support and encourage children to independently access the book corner, and develop confidence in sharing and retelling stories. Children enjoy mark-making in a range of different contexts, for example, contributing to floor books and using brushes, water and chinks in the garden. Most children can recognise their name in print. Practitioners should provide increased opportunities for children to extend and apply their early reading and writing skills in play and real-life contexts.
- Children learning through English and Gaelic are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They are developing their skills during free-play and adult-led activities. They can sort, match and group objects by colour. Most of the older children can count to 10. Children use mathematical language when comparing the sizes of snails, and when filling and emptying different containers with water. Children should now be developing and applying their early numeracy and maths skills in a wider range of meaningful and challenging contexts across nursery.
- Children learning through Gaelic and English are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Practitioners provide a supportive ethos in the setting. They encourage children to be caring, kind and respectful to others. Most are good at taking turns, and sharing and cooperating when playing. Children are learning about healthy lifestyles through discussions about snacks, as well as the importance of handwashing and tooth brushing. Children have daily access to energetic play in their large garden, through which they are developing good

physical skills, including running, jumping, climbing and balancing. Staff should continue to make use of the gym hall and local community to provide more challenging physical activities.

- Children in EME and GME make choices in their play. Through this, they are developing responsibility and independence. Practitioners recognise and praise individual children's achievements within the playroom. They should now continue to encourage parental participation and the celebration of wider achievements from home. There is scope to increase opportunities for children to contribute more effectively to the life of the nursery, wider school and local community. Children in GME would also benefit from increased links with classes and groups for GME within the school.

- There is an inclusive and supportive ethos within the playrooms. Practitioners take good account of the varying needs of children and families. They support children well and ensure they all have access to the range of experiences provided within the setting.

1. Quality of care and support

Children were happy, confident and caring. Children helped each other with tasks, such as changing shoes and jackets. Groups of children played well together and planned complicated role-play. For example, the mud kitchen was used very well to create pretend meals using the soil, water, twigs, fir cones and real herbs growing nearby. This helped children practise pouring skills, and talk about smells and textures. Children particularly enjoyed outdoor play. We asked staff to consider the possibility of leaving the door to the garden open to allow free-flow between indoors and outdoors. This would assist in providing more continuity in children's play. Children took part in role-play, arts and crafts, measuring and weighing, and physical challenge activities. In all of this, children practise life skills. Independence was promoted throughout the day as children prepared to go outside, made choices, washed hands, set the table and tidied up. Staff were starting to develop more loose parts play, which will help children develop their problem-solving and decision-making skills. Staff used praise and encouragement effectively, which helped support children's wellbeing.

Staff were caring and consistent in their interactions with children and each other. This helped promote a nurturing ethos. Staff knew children very well and worked as a team to develop plans that would support each child. However, tracking records did not always reflect information recorded in personal plans or written observations. We talked to staff about ways they could record more effectively to ensure personal plans set out how they would support children's health, welfare and safety needs and link to other written information. We also asked staff to consider ways to make personal plans and floor books more accessible to children. This would encourage children to contribute to these and reflect on their own learning.

Snacks were currently being prepared by staff in the school's kitchen. We asked the headteacher to consider the benefits of children planning, buying and preparing their own snacks.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4. Quality of management and leadership

There was a positive ethos within the nursery. Staff were happy at their work. They worked well as a team and felt supported by the headteacher. Staff felt valued in the service and able to use their initiative within the nursery. They told us training opportunities were good. Recent training on South Lanarkshire Council's new document, *Together We Can and We Will* had helped them evaluate their service and identify areas for improvement. For example, staff were working on ways to involve parents more in the life of the nursery, as well as considering how they could develop a nurture area that would benefit some children.

The headteacher monitored staff interactions and written work. She uses this information to provide feedback to staff about their practice. Staff told us these discussions were supportive and useful. We discussed how children's personal plans and written observations could be improved. We asked the headteacher to monitor these until improvements were embedded. Information from audits and monitoring was used effectively to develop the school and nursery improvement plan. Staff in the nursery were confident that they could contribute to this meaningfully.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, there were no recommendations or requirements. As a result of this inspection, there are no recommendations or requirements.

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.