

Summarised inspection findings

Lochside Primary School Nursery Class

Angus Council

3 October 2023

Key contextual information

Lochside nursery class is situated within the Lochside Primary School building. The nursery has undergone significant changes in context in recent years. The nursery was refurbished and extended in 2019/20 for the delivery of 1140 hours. This has resulted in major changes from a nursery which catered for 36 children, to now being registered for 72 children. Along with this, the practitioner team increased significantly in size, from six members to fifteen members. The nursery now offers early learning and childcare for 1140 hours from 9.00am – 3.00pm during the school term time. At the time of inspection, the roll was 61 children. Children attend Lochside nursery from three years old. The senior early years practitioner leads the day-to-day running of the nursery, supported in management by the principal teacher and headteacher. The nursery environment includes a large indoor area, three smaller rooms, along with direct access to extensive outdoor areas including woods.

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

- Practitioners demonstrate caring and nurturing interactions with children which are responsive to children's needs. They have developed play environments indoors and outdoors which offer quality experiences for children. Children's experiences are enhanced very positively through playing and learning in their extensive outdoor areas, which includes natural woods. Practitioners support children to gain confidence, develop their skills in assessing risk effectively and enhance their curiosity and creativity.
- Children are happy and confident, displaying well-formed relationships with adults and peers. They are excited to share their learning experiences with each other and with visitors. As a result of the caring interactions from practitioners, children's behaviour is positive throughout the day. Practitioners use questioning successfully to extend children's interests and skills observed through play. Children's drawings, examples of early writing, artwork and photographs of learning are displayed attractively throughout the nursery. Children are calm, and engaged in their play, supported by known routines. Practitioners should consider reviewing the structured approaches at the start and end of the day. This could support children's further independence in learning and maximise every opportunity to learn.
- Practitioners observe children individually and in groups during play and small group times. They come together regularly to share and discuss children's learning. Most practitioners record observations of children's learning well in floorbooks and using a digital platform. They use the digital platform effectively to share regular observations of children's learning with families. Parents value this communication and are encouraged to comment on learning journeys and share learning from home. Practitioners should extend approaches to how learning goals and targets are set for all children and shared with families.

- Practitioners plan for children’s development of skills effectively, using planned and responsive approaches. Children’s learning is influenced by planning and tracking, linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) outcomes. Practitioners are developing their approaches to capturing child-led planning, including through use of the floorbooks. Children’s voices are clearly visible on wall displays across the nursery and are evidenced effectively in floorbooks. As identified, practitioners should continue to extend further the use of floorbooks, to ensure depth of learning throughout all experiences.
- Senior leaders meet with practitioners regularly to monitor and track children’s learning. Practitioners track children’s experiences and outcomes across CfE areas. They provide children with suitable interventions when requiring additional support.

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

- Children are making good progress in early communication and language. Most communicate confidently with familiar adults and their peers. Practitioners' use of pictures and signing enables all children to communicate in their own way. Most children enjoy hearing stories and can recall key events. They are developing their mark-making skills appropriate to their stage of development. The majority of children are attempting to write their name and signs with recognisable letters. Children are drawing with increasing detail.
- Through play, children are developing their early numeracy and mathematical skills well. Most older children count beyond ten and demonstrate good number recognition skills. They sort using single criteria such as colour. Most children name and recognise two-dimensional shapes. They are now ready to explore properties of three-dimensional objects. Children use relevant mathematical language appropriately, as they compare size, weight and length of various objects. Most children could develop further their skills in using money in relevant contexts and information handling.
- Children are making good progress in their health and wellbeing. Children demonstrate confidence in balancing and climbing as they explore trees and use tree swings. Most children identify different feelings and emotions. They confidently share how they feel and why. A recent focus on 'the human body' has enabled children to name various parts of the body and explain how they work. Most children are independent during snack time as they serve themselves and pour their drink. There is scope to develop these skills further during lunchtime.
- Practitioners gather a range of information on children's development and learning. They use tracking systems well to demonstrate the progress children have made since starting nursery. Practitioners should continue to review individual targets for children who require additional support or challenge with their learning. They should ensure targets are specific and have appropriate timescales to demonstrate more effectively the progress children make over time.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements well during play and through wall displays and floorbooks. They should continue to encourage parents to share children's achievements from outwith the nursery.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of the individual circumstances of children and their families. Practitioners encourage parents to attend family learning sessions and recognise how

this can contribute to improved outcomes for children. The data gathered on children's learning identifies where individual children require further support. Practitioners plan targeted support for these children through the provision of resources during play and adult-directed experiences. For example, they use specific programmes to support children to develop their early communication and language skills. As a result of this effective approach, most children are extending their range of vocabulary, and progressing well. .This includes children who are impacted by poverty In order to further support families facing socio economic hardship , the school offer a range of supports to remove any barriers to attending nursery. The includes the provision of an easily accessible food larder as well as access to items of clothing for those children who require them.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured well through daily experiences. Staff were warm and engaging in their interactions, supporting children to feel valued and safe. At times, particularly during busier times such as lunchtimes, staff interactions focused on tasks, rather than children's outcomes. This had the potential to miss opportunities to strengthen relationships and impact on the consistency of children's experiences.

Staff knew individual children well and used their knowledge of individual needs to lead with a child centred approach. Their wellbeing benefitted from good personal planning. A range of tools and documents, such as My Worlds and an online learning platform were used to capture children's care, play and learning needs. Staff suggested possible future developments for children to help them reach their full potential. These were vague and difficult to measure, resulting in strategies to support children being unclear. Children would benefit from more focused targets to ensure everyone is fully aware of their achievements and support needs.

Children benefitted from a social experience during lunchtime. Their relationships were enriched by this opportunity to sit down and laugh and share stories of their day with friends. Two children enjoyed challenging each other about how fast they could bike ride when they went back outside. Staff were continually reflecting on the lunchtime experience to ensure it was right for children. We recognised their achievements in creating good routines. Staff did not sit with children, reducing their ability to respond quickly to children requiring their attention. Staff also served children their meals, reducing children's ability to learn life skills and have responsibility. Snack times were more nurturing and independent for children, we suggested learning from their approach during snack to build on the overall experience of lunchtime.

Children requiring medication were given safe and effective treatment. Records for all medication were in place to ensure staff had a good understanding of how to administer medication. Signs and symptoms that would trigger the need for treatment, for example a chesty cough or hives were not recorded. Whilst staff knew individual children's signs and symptoms, including this information in records would ensure everyone, including new or temporary staff were clear on when medication would be required and reduce possible delays in medication being given.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning.

Children had fun through a good mixture of spontaneous and planned play and learning opportunities. Most were fully engaged and busy exploring a good range of opportunities within their environment, especially in the outdoor area. Children took part in a music session which was led by staff. Most children were engaged during this activity, enabling them to develop their listening skills. Staff were proud of children's progress in singing and following rhythm.

At times, children were empowered within their play and learning experiences. For example, QR codes were displayed in several areas of the setting to enable them to access pre-determined additional resources, such as videos and songs, to independently extend their learning. Some elements of the day were structured in a way that minimised children's right to choose. Staff were developing ways to further uphold children's rights and ensure they are meaningfully and actively involved in their play and learning, for example through planning and floorbooks.

Children had access to a good range of opportunities to develop their language, numeracy and literacy skills. For example, a washing line outside included picture cards that could be hung up and rearranged to create stories. Children showed a good interest in this due to staff using effective questioning to provide challenge and intrigue.

As part of their improvement plan, staff were developing their understanding of child development, theory and practice to develop their skills in recording observations and children's progress. We agreed with this improvement to ensure careful observations and effective assessment of information, progress and achievements were recognised and enhanced.

Staff shared information with families effectively to promote genuine partnership with children and families. This included being invited to VIP cafes to celebrate children's successes with staff. This enhanced relationships and links between home and nursery, promoting an inclusive ethos within the setting.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were supported to feel happy and safe within the setting due to a welcoming and well-furnished environment. Staff maximised the use of outdoors to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to explore nature and risky play. This contributed to exciting and stimulating facilities for children. We highlighted to staff where lighting and soft furnishings could be reintroduced to enhance a comfortable and homely feel to the space.

Children benefited from developmentally appropriate spaces both indoor and outdoor. Staff were mindful of providing children ownership of their nursery. For example, children helped to put concrete slabs down in the mud kitchen to create a safer space. This promoted a sense of pride in their environment and valued their contribution.

Overall, the setting and equipment were safe and well-maintained. Children regularly risk assessed their environment, enabling them to identify and explore risks. One child confidently addressed concerns when they discovered their friend was climbing a tree. Staff used this as a learning opportunity to explore safe risk taking with the children involved. Staff missed some hazards we identified, such as children throwing large logs and some trip hazards. This increased potential harm for children or staff. The senior leadership team took immediate action to improve staff's awareness of these potential risks.

The regular maintenance was well managed by the school janitorial staff. The monitoring and recording of maintenance and repairs were not robust. This risked damaged or unsafe items not being removed or replaced promptly. The senior leadership team fully understood their role in managing this and agreed to action this to reduce potential risks to children, families and staff.

The safety and management of some children's personal information was not fully considered. Staff told us that, on occasions, they took some paperwork, such as pages of floorbooks, home to complete. This had the potential to compromise the security of children's personal information. We outlined the need to ensure that procedures where staff must work from home were robust. This would ensure that children's information is safe and stored in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and guidance. **See area for improvement 1.**

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children, families and staff had recently reviewed the vision, values, aims and objectives to ensure it positively informed practice. Staff told us they aimed to fully embed a rights-based approach, incorporating the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to provide a high quality of care, play and learning opportunities. They were committed to continually reviewing the changes and had plans to review wording, such as hard work, to ensure it is representative of the children's age and stage of development.

Leaders had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of using the views of children and families. Stay and play visits had been reintroduced to include families and gather their views and opinions. A display was designed to showcase the experiences of the stay and play visits. This included a poster detailing how the staff had responded and acted on their feedback. This contributed to driving change that supported the needs and wishes of children and families using the service.

Staff greeted children and families outside at the beginning of each session then brought children into the setting. This limited opportunities for families to access their child's care play and learning environment. We shared the benefit of welcoming families into the service during drop off and pick up to further enhance the setting's respectful and inclusive ethos.

Quality assurance, including a detailed quality assurance calendar, was in place and was being developed to lead to continuous improvement. Basic auditing of procedures such as, medication, accidents and incidents were being carried out. However, these were not always robust enough to identify strengths and areas for improvement. For example, most accidents and incidents in April took place in or around staff and children's lunchtime. Enhanced monitoring to highlight emerging patterns would enable the senior management team to promote continuous improvement. **See area for improvement 2.**

The service's self-evaluation was professional, honest and committed to achieving high quality outcomes for children. An improvement plan was in place and identified a priority improvement following a quality assurance visit from the local authority. We found that this did not accurately reflect all of the continuous improvements that were achieved or in progress within the setting. For example, staff told us they were proud of their progress in making mealtimes a safe and enjoyable experience for children. Staff leadership opportunities, such as digital skills and emotions work, were ongoing to improve children's experiences and outcomes. We signposted the senior management team to bitesize sessions in relation to improvement cycles to promote targeted and meaningful goals. This would enhance conditions where all people feel confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were proactive and communicated well with each other. The number of children attending, and staff team had significantly increased since the last Care Inspectorate inspection. The team had successfully created a positive working environment that supported them to work well together. As a result, children received good care and support as they remained at the heart of the service.

There was a good mix of knowledge and skills within the staff team across the whole day. Staff worked collaboratively through mentoring and peer reviews to raise standards and promote good

outcomes for children. An induction was carried out over an eight-week period to support new staff. We signposted the leadership team to the Scottish Government's National Induction Resource to ensure children's care, play and learning needs are fully considered as part of the induction process.

Levels of staffing were effective overall. Children were fully supported to move freely throughout the setting, including free flow access to outdoors. Staff were flexible when following children's interests and facilitating their needs and wishes. There was a significantly higher chance of a child being involved in an accident or incident during busier periods of the day, such as lunchtime. We asked the management team to review this to identify where gaps may be and address any issues relating to staff supervision. This would ensure children are safe and cared for by the right number of people.

A policy was in place to maximise staff attendance. Staff told us they felt well supported when returning to work. Although there had been an increase seen in absence, this was well managed to minimise disruption to children's outcomes. When appropriate, clear targets and support strategies were in place for the benefit of staff's wellbeing. This supported a positive ethos of attendance in the service.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no areas for improvements, formally known as recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two areas for improvement.

Area for improvement

1. To ensure that children's personal information is stored safely and confidentially, the provider should ensure practice fully considers potential risks. Staff should have a robust understanding of how to minimise any risks to ensure children are safe and protected from harm.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

2. To ensure children experience high quality care, play and learning, the manager should ensure that quality assurance procedures are effective and robust in identifying where gaps may be and addressed any issues.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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.