

Summarised inspection findings

Kinghorn Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

11 February 2025

Key contextual information

Kinghorn Nursery Class is situated within Kinghorn Primary School. The nursery is located in a separate building within the school grounds. It has a large playroom with access to an enclosed outdoor environment. There is access to the school to use the gym hall and music room, and dinner hall for lunches. The nursery is registered for a maximum of 48 children. There are currently 37 children on the nursery roll. The nursery is open between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm, during term time. Children receive 1140 hours of funded childcare through full day patterns of attendance.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class. A peripatetic nursery teacher visits for a week, every three weeks. There are seven early years officers, and a modern apprentice. There have been a number of recent changes to the nursery staff team.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community■ strategic planning for continuous improvement■ implementing improvement and change	

- Senior leaders and practitioners developed a shared vision, values and aims for the nursery and school in 2018. They are refreshed every year with stakeholders to ensure they are relevant and meaningful to all. The nursery shares the same values as the primary school, focusing mostly on being kind and respectful. All practitioners demonstrate and model the values to children to support their understanding of them. Practitioners encourage children to be aware of the school and nursery vision of 'sailing to success'. This is beginning to become familiar to children and their families.
- Senior leaders and practitioners promote professional learning. Practitioners recently took part in further training on pre-writing skills to offer children suitable experiences and opportunities throughout their day. This is beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. As planned, senior leaders now need to ensure all practitioners engage in planned opportunities for leading change. This will ensure there is leadership at all levels and practitioners have opportunities to take forward improvements. This will support practitioners to feel valued and empowered in their roles.
- The headteacher is an experienced leader and is visible throughout the week in the nursery. They are beginning to develop a clear strategic vision to drive forward improvements in the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners value the importance of looking outwards to learn from others. The headteacher promotes reflection and welcomes the opportunity to adopt different approaches to planning to enhance children's experiences.
- Senior leaders and practitioners would benefit from clear roles and responsibilities to guide and manage change. Senior leaders must now ensure they develop robust quality assurance systems to ensure children's learning and wellbeing needs are met. This will support them further to ensure children are reaching their full potential and given support when needed.

- Senior leaders and practitioners are beginning to develop processes of self-evaluation for improvement. They need to provide strategic leadership to support practitioners with this process. This should ensure improvements are driven at pace and are effective to lead to better outcomes for children.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners have successfully established a positive, nurturing ethos across the nursery. All children benefit from consistently warm, caring interactions from staff. All practitioners effectively model and reinforce the setting's values of kindness and respect. As a result, almost all children show awareness of others when they play. Staff know children well and share a consistent approach to supporting individual needs through recently introduced strategies.
- Most children engage well for extended periods of time in a carefully considered environment. Play experiences provide a variety of opportunities for investigation, curiosity, and enquiry. Practitioners have recently prioritised pre-writing skills as an area for development within the setting. As a result, children are benefitting from a range of mark making opportunities across the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Practitioners provide children with digital technology opportunities throughout their day. This is used to support children's learning. Children enjoy taking photographs of patterns they create and confidently used digital devices to explore learning about pattern and number.
- Practitioners are committed to ongoing professional learning and are applying this to support children's communication and early literacy skills more effectively. All practitioners use questioning well and interact sensitively to promote children's learning. They value children's opinions and preferences and build on and sustain children's interests. Practitioners should now explore high quality interactions and ways to extend and challenge children's learning.
- Practitioners record observations of learning and progress in children's personal learning journals and through an online learning journal accessed by all parents. Practitioners now need to develop a consistent approach to recording significant learning. This should allow them to clearly identify next steps for children.
- A recently introduced local authority approach to tracking is beginning to capture learning and progress in children's language development. Practitioners and the senior leadership team meet termly to review this information. This is then used to plan future interventions and assess individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These meetings now need to more effectively link to the intentional planning of spaces, experiences and interactions and analyse both individual and cohort progress. Practitioners use local authority progression pathways to track progress across the curriculum. They should now use these more effectively to provide sufficient pace and challenge. Practitioners should now continue to improve intentional planning and the recording of children's learning. This should help them to track the progress children are making across the curriculum more effectively. Practitioners are not yet effectively planning over different timescales. The curriculum overview should now more clearly record the breadth of curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan the environment well through purposeful provocations which engage children in activities for sustained lengths of time. Children benefit from a wide range of planned opportunities, based on their ideas and interests. Practitioners have a good understanding of pedagogy and play in learning. They develop well how to promote early literacy in the nursery environment. They should now continue to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. This will ensure children receive a broad curriculum.
- Practitioners provide a weekly forest kindergarten experience for all children on one day each week. Children learn about nature and enjoy opportunities to solve problems individually and with their peers. Senior leaders and practitioners recognise the need to provide experiences that will offer children greater depth and challenge in their learning in the forest. This should support children further to extend their learning and skills and make progress over time.
- Practitioners support children well during times of transition. There is a detailed and clear transition policy for children moving to P1. Children have opportunities to visit their P1 classroom, visit the whole school and playground, and meet their P1 buddies. This has a positive impact on children as they become familiar with the environment and staff. This supports children to feel more prepared to move up to P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have developed good relationships with parents at the nursery. They make good use of digital platforms to maintain communication, as well as through newsletters and regular informal meetings. Practitioners organise 'cuppa chat' sessions for parents twice per year to share information about children's learning and development. Parents have the opportunity to share information from home.
- Practitioners offer regular stay and play sessions for parents to visit their child in the nursery. They should now explore creative ways to increase the level of parental engagement. This should provide opportunities for parents to learn with their child and be involved in the life of the nursery.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Practitioners develop the value of building strong, positive, relationships with all children and their families. They are warm and nurturing in their responses and children feel safe and secure in the nursery environment. Practitioners role model respectful attitudes towards each other and offer each other support.
- Practitioners talk about being kind and showing respect with the children. They support children to identify their feelings and emotions through emotion stones. Practitioners support children to recognise when they feel happy, sad, tired, mad, silly and shy, using photos of their own faces. The majority of children are able to successfully identify how they are feeling. Practitioners should now explore ways to explicitly introduce children's rights to ensure children are becoming aware of these. They should start to promote the wellbeing indicators through conversations with children. This should help children to understand how to look after their own wellbeing.
- Practitioners have an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling their statutory duties. They know how to keep children safe during play and how to support their health and wellbeing needs. Practitioners should continue to develop their roles and access further training where appropriate.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have identified children who need extra support to reach their full potential. This supports children to make progress in an inclusive environment and reduce barriers to learning. Senior leaders and practitioners need to ensure that plans in place are regularly reviewed. The targets set need to be specific and changed when necessary. Parents and partners need to be involved to evaluate the impact of strategies or support provided. This should ensure children's learning and wellbeing needs are fully met.
- Practitioners celebrate a wide range of cultural and religious festivals throughout the year. This supports children's awareness of the world around them. Practitioners should continue to offer relevant opportunities for children to learn, explore and value diversity.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. The majority of children confidently engage in conversation with adults and understand how to take their turn in conversations and games. Practitioners use local guidance to support communication skills more effectively. Most children enjoy listening to and talking about stories and a few access stories independently. Most children are experimenting with mark making through a variety of media.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Most children can name and match numerals and describe and compare objects using the language of size. A few children can use scales and jugs to measure weight and volume. Most children engage in number rhymes and songs. Children would benefit from a more numeracy rich environment and opportunities to learn mathematical vocabulary.
- Overall, children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are confident and secure in their relationships with adults. Almost all children are developing independence, resilience and problem-solving skills through a variety of outdoor play and learning experiences. This includes outdoor risk assessments and weekly forest kindergarten sessions. Most children confidently run, climb, balance and explore the outdoor environment. Children are demonstrating independence through the snack routine. The current mealtime routines should be developed further to become richer learning experiences. Children are supported to manage their emotions and cope with situations that they find difficult. Daily routines support all children to wash their hands and brush their teeth independently.
- Practitioners should continue to develop how they track children's knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This should help them to plan more effectively to meet children's learning and wellbeing needs. Current tracking systems do not yet give a robust overview of children's progress over time.
- Practitioners now need to begin to celebrate the wider achievements of children. This should support practitioners to gain a better understanding of the child. This may help to identify any gaps in children's experiences.
- Practitioners have successfully developed an inclusive ethos across the setting built on their values. Practitioners are proud of the positive relationships they have developed with children, families and the local community. They understand the barriers faced by children and their families and actively work to reduce these. Practitioners have links with other agencies and

sensitively provide free food to those who need it. Planned interventions and data now need to be more effectively monitored, tracked and evaluated to ensure they are having a positive impact.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced a warm, nurturing and respectful approach to their care. Staff had developed positive relationships with children and families, and knew them very well. They were responsive to children's needs and wishes, and supported them appropriately. As a result, children were happy, settled and enjoying their time in nursery.

Lunchtime routines meant children with packed lunches benefitted from a calm and relaxed atmosphere as they came together to eat in the playroom. Staff sat with children and supported them to develop independence skills. For example, as they encouraged children to open packets from their lunch box and wash their dishes. Children's choice was promoted as they returned to play when they were ready.

Children ordering school lunches ate in the school dining hall. Lunch was served to them at the table by staff. This meant staff were task focused and minimised children's opportunities for choice and independence. Staff were close by to ensure children were safe, and chatted to them as they served food. They then sat with children and continued to promote a positive social experience. Children in the dining hall had some opportunities to develop important skills as they poured their drinks and tidied away dishes. We suggested ways to provide further opportunities such as, self-selecting salad items and inviting children to prepare morning and afternoon snack.

Personal plans had been developed for children and included the views of families. 'All about me' information was used, alongside information shared informally by families at drop off and pick up time, to support children's routines. Personal plans should be reviewed, updated and signed by parents at least every six months. To ensure a consistent approach and continuity of care, changes to what is important in children's lives should be recorded. This would enable all staff to respond quickly and sensitively, and ensure children's overall wellbeing is continually supported. (See area for improvement one).

Medication was managed appropriately and safely. Systems for recording medication were in place, including parental permissions, storage information and records of administration. This ensured children's medical needs were fully met.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

1.3 Play and learning

All children were busy, confident and having fun as they engaged in their play and learning. They benefitted from a range of interesting and well considered resources in the playroom and garden. For example, children experimented as they mixed petals and scented tea bags to 'make' cakes and soup outdoors. Block play, playdough and clay areas provided children with opportunities to develop their imagination, creativity and problem solving skills.

Children's play and learning was mostly uninterrupted. They chose where they would like to play as they enjoyed direct, free flow access to the outdoors for most of the day. This allowed them to become absorbed in their play and have fun. Children's choice was further promoted as staff invited them to join experiences, such as gym and rhyme time, in the school building. This meant children felt valued as their right to choose was respected.

Planning was responsive to children's needs and interests, and often evolved in the moment. Staff supported children to develop their ideas and deepen their thinking as they asked questions. They made good use of technology to research and find information together on the nursery computer. Finding ways to meaningfully record these interactions and children's learning would provide opportunities for them to revisit and share their learning.

Children's opportunities for play and learning in nature were enhanced through weekly forest visits where children spent most of their day outdoors. Staff described the rich opportunities for children to learn a range of skills as they explored nature. For example, comparing size, shape and counting as they looked at leaves encouraged children to explore numeracy in a fun and exciting way. As a result, children were learning in ways that promoted their health and wellbeing.

Observations of children's individual learning were recorded and shared with families. Children's proposed next steps were identified and evaluated by staff through professional learning discussions. The service was beginning to gather data and information to assess children's progress and achievements. Tracking children's progress and understanding where appropriate challenge and support is needed will further improve outcomes for children and support them to reach their potential.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families experienced a setting that was welcoming, comfortable and furnished to a high standard. The entrance area was laid out in a way that immediately gave them a sense of belonging. The playroom layout had been well considered. It offered children cosy spaces to rest and relax as well as areas to have fun exploring, creating and investigating. This gave a strong message to children that they matter.

Children's overall wellbeing was promoted with free flow access to outdoors. Children could mostly choose when to play outside, respecting their choices and wishes. The garden area had been thoughtfully planned to offer a variety of exciting play and learning experiences. Children told us that they liked playing outside and that they had fun playing with their friends. There was space for them to develop their gross motor skills and quiet, covered areas where they could rest. The carefully considered layout supported children to lead their play and have fun with friends.

Children benefitted from a clean, organised setting that was well maintained. The playroom was ventilated throughout the day and offered lots of natural light. Infection prevention and control practices were embedded across the service, and children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times. This contributed to keeping them safe and healthy as the potential for the spread of infection was reduced.

Daily risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised. Children were developing their awareness of how to stay safe as they undertook their own assessment of the garden. Staff supported them to understand risk and how to manage this in their play. For example, as children climbed staff asked if they felt safe and if they thought it was safe to climb further. This meant children were supported to enjoy challenging, fun play experiences. We suggested developing detailed risk assessments with staff and children. This would further support staff to understand the benefits of risk and play.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The shared vision, values and aims of the service were evident in the warm, respectful and nurturing interactions we observed. Children in nursery had a gentle introduction to the wider school values as they developed an understanding of kindness and respect. Staff positively role modelled this language as they thanked children for their kindness.

The manager and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. The manager protected time in their diary to meet with the staff team every week, and welcomed children as they arrived at the setting. Consideration was given to the timing of staff meetings and took account of their working patterns. This ensured all staff were included and had opportunities to contribute. As a result, children were cared for by a dedicated staff team that felt supported and valued.

An improvement plan that considered the reflections and observations of management, staff, children and families had been developed. Self-evaluation of the service was understood by the manager to be the responsibility of all. There was evidence of staff reflections and self-evaluation recorded within their floor book. Continuing to provide opportunities for staff to reflect together will support them to develop a greater understanding and confidence in self-evaluation.

Quality assurance processes were undertaken by the management team. For example, audits of personal learning journals (PLJ's), observations of children's learning, and learning discussions. Constructive feedback was given to staff and areas where improvements could be made were identified. Continuing to monitor these areas will promote a consistent approach and ensure outcomes for children remain positive.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

4.3 Staff deployment

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs consistently throughout the day. Staff communicated very well with each other and worked together to keep children safe and engaged in learning opportunities. They were proactive when anticipating where and when support might be needed and placed themselves thoughtfully to ensure children were able to explore freely. This created a respectful atmosphere which ensured children's experiences were positive and appropriately supported throughout the day.

Staff wellbeing was a priority for the manager. They recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Staff were flexible and breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst making sure staff had time to rest and be refreshed.

An effective mentoring process supported staff who were new to the service. Although experienced mentors had direct responsibility for supporting them, staff told us they felt well supported by the whole team and by systems that were in place. For example, important health and care information to support children was easily accessible for all staff.

Children benefitted from having opportunities to develop relationships with all staff in the service. Staff took a shared approach to ensuring all children were supported to achieve their potential and knew children and families very well. This allowed children to benefit from the range of skills and knowledge of the whole team. Positive and secure relationships had been established. Staff told us they thought this was a strength of the service. This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

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.