

# Summarised inspection findings

**Brae High School Nursery Class**

Shetland Islands Council

5 November 2024

## Key contextual information

Brae High School Nursery is located within the primary school department in Brae High School. It serves the villages of Brae, Voe, Muckle Roe, Sullom and surrounding rural areas. Children can attend the setting from the age of two until starting primary school. The setting provides early learning and childcare for 43 children at any one time during term-time. It provides early learning and childcare for 23 children at any one time during the school holidays. Currently, 38 children attend the setting during term-time and a few all-year round. Children have a range of attendance patterns across the week, with places offered between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm.

The setting was decanted to a local hall in October 2021 to allow for the refurbishment of the nursery building. The refurbished setting opened in February 2022. There is one playroom, and children have direct access to a large outdoor area and several smaller outdoor areas. The headteacher of Brae High School has overall responsibility for the leadership of the setting. The setting manager is the registered manager of the setting and has day to day responsibility for the setting. She has been in post for two years. The setting manager is supported by a part-time nursery teacher and two acting senior practitioners who share one full-time equivalent (FTE) position. In addition, there are two FTE practitioners, 3 FTE support workers and a modern apprentice.

### 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

- All staff and almost all children demonstrate the whole school and setting values of creativity, positive relationships, aspiration and equality well as they participate in the life of the setting. Children in the school created characters successfully which help younger children to understand the values fully. Practitioners use the value characters well to help children to identify confidently what the values mean to them as learners in the setting. For example, children describe effectively that 'Relationships Rabbit' reminds them to invite other children to play and be kind to each other. As planned, senior leaders should involve children, parents and staff in a review and refresh of the vision, values and aims. They should continue to develop the values in child friendly language appropriate to the age and stage of children attending the setting.
- Senior leaders have developed and use regularly a calendar of activities for evaluating the work of the setting. This includes regular meetings for practitioners to self-evaluate the work of the setting using quality indicators in 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' They use data gathered through this self-evaluation well to help them identify key priorities for improvement. This helps senior leaders to ensure the pace of change is brisk and change is embedded. Practitioners and senior leaders discuss their progress towards achieving the key priorities identified in the setting improvement plan regularly. Senior leaders informally observe the quality of learning and teaching and have regular conversations with practitioners to improve practice. This is helping practitioners to develop consistency in learning and teaching.

Senior leaders need to formalise methods of monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in the setting in order to embed fully these approaches.

- All practitioners engage fully in regular professional development and review meetings with senior leaders. They use data gathered during these meetings effectively to identify action points for each practitioner linked to personal interests and the setting's improvement plan. All practitioners feel empowered to lead improvement in the setting and take full ownership of the changes they are making. For example, practitioners lead on developing the construction and mark-making areas. As a result, children engage fully, for extended periods of time, in learning environments which are attractive and well-resourced. Practitioners develop activities which are well-matched to children's needs and interests.
- Senior leaders ask parents for their views on the setting annually via a questionnaire. They discuss areas for improvement with parents informally during setting events such as 'stay and play.' They are beginning to use data gathered in these activities to inform key priorities in the setting's improvement plan. For example, they developed the outdoor area following suggestions made by parents. All children are fully involved in helping develop a few areas for improvement, such as for growing vegetables. Senior leaders should improve further their approaches to gathering the views of children and parents about the setting's improvement.

## 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

- There is a caring, supportive ethos across the setting. All practitioners know children very well as individuals and are highly responsive to their needs and interests. There are very positive, respectful relationships between practitioners and children, and between children and their peers. Almost all children engage well, for extended periods of time, in a range of well-planned, purposeful play experiences. These play experiences are well-matched to children's interests and needs. All children are developing their skills of curiosity, creativity and problem solving effectively as they play and learn with a wide range of open-ended and natural materials.
- Children benefit from regular opportunities to play and learn outside and in the local community. For example, they visited the fire station to learn about the role of the firefighter. Children are developing their skills successfully in using digital technology as they play with programmable toys and manipulate objects and mark-make on an interactive board. Practitioners ask mostly open-ended questions and children answer and explain their thinking well as they play. Practitioners give children time to explore and be creative in their play before interacting. This is helping all children to develop their confidence and resilience successfully.
- Practitioners identified a need to improve observations and engaged well in professional learning about high-quality observations. This is helping them to make careful observations which identify the skills children are developing. They link these observations well to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas. Practitioners record their observations effectively in children's individual learning journals. Parents welcome opportunities to share these journals at any time with their child. Children enjoy sharing their journals with adults and a few talk about the skills they are developing. Practitioners use data gathered in observations to identify a few next steps for all children. They need to share these explicitly with children and help children to celebrate their success when they achieve their next steps. This should help children to understand what they already know and what they need to learn next.
- Practitioners moderate their professional judgements about children's attainment and progress in whole team meetings. They now need to engage in moderation activities with colleagues working across early level in the school and in other settings to develop a shared understanding of national expectations.
- Practitioners plan a range of adult-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences. They support children to lead their own learning by listening carefully to what children would like to learn next and facilitating this well. For example, recently children became interested in planting and growing. Practitioners asked parents for any donations of resources to support children to develop their gardening skills. Children use these resources effectively and

independently to grow and care for a range of fruit and vegetables and talk confidently about plant growth.

- Practitioners meet regularly to track children's progress effectively using developmental milestones and CfE experiences and outcomes in literacy and numeracy. They record children's progress in wellbeing successfully using the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners, supported by senior leaders, need to use data better to identify gaps in children's learning and provide planned targeted support to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children. Practitioners need to develop tracking across all curriculum areas.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan effectively children's learning using progression pathways in literacy and numeracy, linked to CfE experiences and outcomes. They use an annual overview of early level experiences and outcomes for all curriculum areas to ensure children are experiencing a broad and balanced curriculum. They now need to use progression pathways across all curriculum areas to plan children's learning more effectively and responsively.
- Practitioners work effectively with a range of partners to enhance children's learning experiences and understand the world of work. For example, children visit the local care centre regularly to share stories with visitors and residents. Children enjoyed learning about the work of firefighters and dentists during visits to the fire station and health centre.
- All children benefit from free-flow access to the well-resourced outdoor area. They also have regular access to the P1/2 playground, mud kitchen area and wooded area within the school grounds. They are developing their skills of curiosity and creativity as they build dens, explore the growth of plants in the garden area, and design recipes and make 'lunch' in the mud kitchen.
- Practitioners support children very well as they move from home to the setting and from the setting to P1. Children moving into the setting benefit from a planned programme of visits with their parents before they start attending. Children moving to P1 enjoy regular visits to the school library, play sessions in their new classroom, and outdoor experiences with older children. This helps children to settle well at different points of transition.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners welcome parents warmly when they bring their child to the setting and collect them. Parents value daily opportunities to view the planning floor books with their child to share successfully what their children have been doing and learning in the setting. Practitioners share regular updates about the life and work of the setting via a closed social media group. Parents say this keeps them informed effectively about what is happening in the setting.
- Parents benefit from regular 'stay and play' sessions where they can support their child's learning. Practitioners provide regular updates about children's learning in 'learning snapshots' for each individual. They share 'two stars and a wish' which informs parents well of their child's progress and their next step for learning.
- Senior leaders seek the views of parents annually via a questionnaire. During special events, such as sports day or 'stay and play' sessions, practitioners gather parents' views informally. Senior leaders need to develop a more robust, formalised approach to gathering parents' views more regularly to ensure that all parents have equal opportunities to be heard.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners 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

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 are warm, nurturing relationships between children and adults and between children and their peers. Practitioners have created a highly inclusive setting in which children learn and play together happily and safely. Parents share information about children's wellbeing needs when they bring their child to the setting. This helps practitioners to support children successfully as they come into the setting each day. As a result, almost all children settle quickly and engage well in their learning.
- All practitioners use praise effectively to promote positive behaviour. There are clear plans in place for a few children who find regulating their emotions challenging. All staff use agreed approaches to support these children discreetly, whilst protecting the child's dignity. This is helping all children to behave well and be fully included almost all of the time.
- Most children identify successfully which actions and behaviours help them to have good wellbeing. They demonstrate well how to play safely on large apparatus such as climbing frames and bikes. Children brush their teeth regularly after snack and explain clearly the importance of toothbrushing to keep their teeth healthy. They invite others to join them in their play without prompting from adults. Children share resources very well to ensure all children are fully included in play activities. All children benefit from an unhurried, calm lunchtime and snack experience. They develop their social skills well as they chat with other children as they eat. Practitioners are beginning to link children's wellbeing to a few children's rights, such as the right to relax and play. Practitioners need to help children to develop their understanding of their rights further. They need to develop approaches to support children to articulate their own wellbeing better.
- Practitioners demonstrate a sound understanding of their statutory duties with regard to keeping children safe. They meet with parents regularly to develop individual care plans to support children's learning. A few children who require additional support with their learning have multi-agency plans. Practitioners need to refine individual children's targets to support their progress in learning more effectively. Practitioners should ensure that the targets they set for individual children are specific and measurable and that children know their targets for learning. This should help practitioners to demonstrate more clearly children's progress against their individual targets.
- Children access a few books and resources which represent the diverse nature of society and a few protected characteristics. This is helping them to begin to talk about diversity in families and communities. Children need access to more opportunities and resources to help them learn more fully about the diverse nature of the global society.

### 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

- There are very few children under age three. Due to the small size of the roll at each stage, progress will be expressed in overall statements.
- Most children are making good progress in early communication and language. Most children enjoy mark-making using a wide range of materials, such as chalk and pencils or on the interactive board. Older children are beginning to draw recognisable figures and a few children are beginning to copy individual letters from their name. Almost all children listen carefully and follow simple spoken instructions well. Children enjoy looking at books individually or in small groups or listening to stories read by an adult. Children need more opportunities to develop their understanding of rhyme, such as more regular singing and discussion of nursery rhymes.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They are developing their knowledge of time through following the daily routines, such as snack and lunch. Children count to 10 and beyond, appropriate to their age and stage of development. Most children identify a range of two-dimensional shapes, such as squares and triangles. They need to develop their knowledge of three-dimensional objects. Children are developing their understanding of size and capacity as they make direct comparisons between objects and play in the sand and water.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are developing their independence skills well. They dress themselves confidently for outdoor play and tidy their plates, cutlery and cups away for washing after lunch and snack. Children are developing their gross motor skills well as they run, jump and climb in the outdoor area individually and in group games. They assess risk appropriately as they decide how high to climb or how fast to run. Almost all children share resources effectively almost all of the time and take turns well in simple games. All children would benefit from greater choice at snack time and more regular, planned opportunities to help prepare snack. This should help them make healthy choices and develop their fine motor skills further.
- Practitioners celebrate and share children's achievements in the setting in the learning journals and wall displays. Practitioners are at the early stages of finding out and celebrating children's achievements out of nursery. They should develop further ways to support parents to share children's achievements from home. Practitioners should consider how they identify and track the skills children are developing as a result of their achievements.

■ Practitioners have a good understanding of the social and economic context in which their families live. They ensure all children have equal access to all learning opportunities and no one is at risk of missing out. For example, they provide outdoor waterproof clothing and footwear for all children. Practitioners need to use data gathered in tracking of children's progress better. This will help them to identify gaps in individual children's learning and between cohorts of children. This should help practitioners plan further targeted support to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

## 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.