

Summarised inspection findings

Dennistoun Early Years Centre

Glasgow City Council

1 November 2022

Key contextual information

Dennistoun Early Years Centre opens for 50 weeks of the year and operates from 8 am – 6 pm. There are three playrooms and attractive outdoor areas. Children can attend from six weeks of age until starting primary school. The centre is registered for 79 children with a current roll of 98. The senior leadership team consists of a head and depute head of centre, a team leader and a lead practitioner for attainment (LPA). This role is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to closing the attainment gap. The majority of practitioners have been employed in the setting for a number of years.

The past two and a half years have presented significant challenges for practitioners, children and families. The centre has experienced a high percentage of absence. Senior leaders recognise the impact of the pandemic and have been proactive in signposting practitioners, parents and carers to local services. There has been a clear focus on nurture and wellbeing to provide varying levels of support, reassurance and consistency for practitioners, children and families.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 centre 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 centre and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The centre's vision, values and aims are agreed and shared across the setting. Senior leaders consult with practitioners, parents, carers and children to ensure they remain relevant. All who work in the centre bring the values to life in their daily interactions with each other, practitioners, children, parents, carers and partners. Senior leaders and practitioners know their community extremely well and work in genuine collaboration with a wide range of partners. Together, they demonstrate a strong commitment to achieve the best outcomes for children and families.
- Senior leaders provide very good leadership. They value practitioners and have led the centre positively and very effectively during recent challenging times. All who work in the centre have had to be flexible and responsive to changing situations. Teamwork is strong. Senior leaders are extremely supportive, both personally and professionally, to individual practitioners. They are visible within the setting and provide useful feedback to practitioners to enable them to carry out their role to a high standard.
- Regular professional learning opportunities support senior leaders and practitioners to continue to extend and deepen their knowledge in areas appropriate to their practice. This includes learning on nurture, digital technology and adverse childhood experiences. Senior leaders and practitioners benefit greatly from these opportunities and use their knowledge to continually improve their practice. They have a sound understanding of the challenges children and families can face when there are barriers to learning and inclusion. All members of the team demonstrate a high level of empathy, care and compassion. Practitioners have achieved an award in digital technology. They have used this learning very well to develop skills in the use of online applications to support learning and teaching. Practitioners assist and encourage

children well to engage with their online profile and use the resource to communicate very effectively with parents and carers.

- Practitioners lead in a variety of ways as part of their daily practice. This includes leading on key areas of improvement as well as tasks to ensure the smooth running of the centre. These roles result in improved outcomes for children such as supporting children's wellbeing and early communication and language. Senior leaders should continue to raise the profile of leadership for all. This should help practitioners recognise how their valuable contributions support the delivery of high quality early learning and childcare.
- Practitioners, parents, carers and children take part in a wide range of self-evaluation activities. They know the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. Senior leaders and practitioners use a range of approaches including voting, questionnaires and mind maps to gather all stakeholders' views. Practitioners reflect regularly on their practice to seek ways to improve further.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Across all playrooms, practitioners have created a nurturing learning climate. Almost all children are happy, motivated and engage very well with the wide range of learning opportunities provided.

Children under three

- Babies and toddlers are content and secure within the environment. They are learning to share toys and take turns with close responsive attention, encouragement and skilful support from practitioners. Babies and toddlers enjoy using their senses to explore interesting learning opportunities available to them. They explore physical resources with increasing confidence and independence. Practitioners plan learning experiences appropriate to children's developmental stage.

Children aged three to five

- Relationships between practitioners and children are friendly, caring and respectful. Almost all children play very well together and develop resilience and independence. Children make choices about their learning and choose which experiences to share with parents and carers through their online profile. Positive intervention from practitioners supports almost all children to sustain interest for extended periods of time.
- Practitioners have a very good understanding of how young children learn and develop. They use their knowledge of early learning pedagogy very well to support all children including those with additional needs. This is helping to build children's self-esteem and confidence. Almost all practitioners' interactions skilfully extend children's thinking. Practitioners are beginning to implement approaches from recent professional learning to improve further, their practice in this area.
- Children regularly choose to play in the very well-resourced and stimulating outdoor area. They have access to a wide range of blocks, loose parts and natural materials to support them as they play. Practitioners plan for a wide range of interesting experiences to develop children's early literacy and numeracy skills. They make very good use of the wider community for outdoor learning. Children regularly visit the local adventure play park and enjoy woodland experiences with a neighbouring nursery. Practitioners plan a range of fun and challenging opportunities to develop children's skills in the use of digital technologies. The wide range of experiences provided support children very well to lead their own learning and develop curiosity, enquiry and creativity.
- Practitioners record and share children's progress and achievements with parents and carers using an online application. Children use this tool very well to share and reflect on their learning. Practitioners track children's progress in several ways. This information assists practitioners to make sound judgements about children's progress. They respond skilfully to

ensure learning opportunities meet the needs of individual children and offer the right amount of support and challenge. Senior leaders and practitioners have rightly identified the need to streamline documentation. They recognise the need for a manageable and proportionate approach to planning, monitoring and tracking children's progress. This is a key priority within the centre's improvement plan.

- Senior leaders and practitioners support children extremely well who require additional help with their learning. They work closely with partner agencies to implement individualised programmes, which are making a positive impact on children's learning experiences and overall progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Children experience a curriculum firmly based on play. Practitioners use national and local guidance along with their very good knowledge of children and the local community to enrich the curriculum. There is a clear focus on developing children's skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Post pandemic, senior leaders and practitioners have made significant changes to the centre's transition programme. The programme is now more personalised to the needs of individual children and their families. Practitioners create video recordings of the centre and provide a children's handbook with helpful images for parents, carers and children to use together. This is supporting children's confidence and wellbeing as they make these important moves into and across the centre.
- Practitioners share important information on children's progress with receiving primary schools. This includes information on children's health, wellbeing and the progress they have made within the centre. Increasingly, since the pandemic, visits take place for children to become familiar with their new classroom and for P1 teachers to visit children in the centre. Senior leaders, in partnership with local schools, could consider ways to increase collaborative working across the early level to support more effectively continuity of the curriculum.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners work extremely well with a wide range of agencies and community partners to support children and families. This enables all children to be fully included in experiences and the local community. Very effective two-way communication is leading to improved outcomes for children and families including children making very good progress in their learning.
- Practitioners use the online application very well to share activities to enable parents, carers and children to enjoy experiences together at home. This includes bedtime stories and useful recipes. Practitioners ensure all parents and carers feel included in their child's learning by making effective use of interpreters and online tools to translate for parents and carers. This enables parents and carers to access easily information on experiences and the progress children are making in their learning. Self-evaluation demonstrates a high percentage of parents and carers engage with this application.
- From the earliest stage, practitioners respond positively and sensitively to children's individual needs and interest. They adapt their interactions and experiences to ensure children are fully involved in the life of the centre. This is contributing towards children feeling a sense of belonging.

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 centre'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

- The wellbeing and getting it right for children and families is paramount. Practitioners support children very well to feel safe, secure and confident within the centre. Positive, honest and respectful relationships are evident between senior leaders, practitioners, children and families. There is a strong sense of community within the centre. Parents, carers, partners and the practitioner team share the positive impact these relationships have in supporting the wellbeing of all.
- Senior leaders and practitioners support and encourage children well to share their thoughts and ideas on decisions that may affect them whilst in the centre. They observe and listen to children and respectfully act on their views. Significant changes take place that positively influence children's wellbeing. This includes children voting on adapting the layout of the playroom to give them a larger space to explore and play with their friends.
- Practitioners know children and their families very well. They view children as unique individuals with their own needs, personalities and interests. Partners and practitioners plan jointly to support children who may require additional support. Practitioners use partners' expertise and work closely with parents and carers to ensure tailored interventions for children continue to have successful outcomes. Parents and carers appreciate this support, advice and guidance. In discussion with inspectors, they share the positive impact this has on their own wellbeing as well as their children's development and learning.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are clear about their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They know their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe and planning to support children's health, care and wellbeing needs. Senior leaders should now review a few children's individual targets that are too broad. They need to be more specific and achievable within appropriate timescales.
- Children and families benefit greatly from the inclusive ethos within the centre. Practitioners work extremely hard to reduce barriers to learning and involvement within the centre. This includes making appropriate adjustments to ensure all children can access a wide range of experiences. Recently, senior leaders secured funding to provide a space where children can choose to access experiences in a quiet, peaceful and homely environment. Practitioners' observations demonstrate a few children choose to use this space at various periods in their day. Children enjoy time with practitioners in a less busy environment to explore a range of sensory experiences and resources that they are particularly interested in.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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 under three

- Babies and toddlers develop confidence, independence and resilience because of the caring and sensitive interactions of practitioners. They spend time looking at books, babbling on the phone in the home corner and singing familiar songs. They are increasingly able to listen to and follow simple instructions. Children develop mark-making skills when exploring a wide variety of resources. Babies and toddlers count with practitioners as they build towers and join in with counting songs. They investigate early number, volume and shape through their exploratory play.

Children aged three to five

- Children make very good progress in communication and early language. They confidently express their thoughts and communicate well with each other and practitioners as they play. Almost all children access books independently and enjoy sharing the book of the month together in the attractive book area. They show high levels of imagination and apply this in their role-play and when playing games. They develop their mark-making and early writing skills very well. Practitioners collate drawings for each child, which demonstrates their very good progress over time.
- Children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They show confidence in counting for a variety of purposes and demonstrate good number recognition skills. Children are developing awareness of shape and mathematical concepts. They use remote-controlled devices skilfully to explore direction. Children develop their understanding of volume, weight and measure while making playdough and prepare snack.
- There is a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing across the centre. Children learn to manage risk when going outdoors and increasingly take responsibility for their own safety. Almost all children understand the importance of being active and keeping healthy. They are confident when talking about their feelings and explore these further using a range of storybooks and puppets.
- Practitioners capture and celebrate children's progress and achievements in a variety of ways including online profiles and displays across the centre. Gather times and individual conversations with children are used well by practitioners to highlight the value of achievements. Parents and carers use the online application to share information about children's achievements beyond the centre. Children's online profiles and discussions with

practitioners demonstrate that children are making very good progress since starting the centre.

- Practitioners use a range of information and data gathered about children very well to identify and reduce potential barriers to learning. Lead practitioners for attainment work with groups of targeted children to deliver interventions in literacy and numeracy. This work is having a very positive impact on children's progress. All practitioners promote high aspirations for every child.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The use of the online profile to record and track children's progress in learning across the curriculum.

Practitioners and children regularly record evidence of learning and progress. This includes photographs, observations and videos. Oral recordings from children enhance these. Children with English as an additional language record comments in their home language to support the understanding of parents and carers at home. Practitioners make very effective use of all functions offered by the resource. By filtering the information, practitioners gain a clear picture of children's progress over time. Practitioners' professional learning resulted in them all gaining a digital technology award. This is supporting them very well in the use of the online application. They are confident and skilled and they are supporting children very well to take increased ownership of their own online profiles.

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.