

Summarised inspection findings

Caol Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

10 March 2020

Key contextual information

Caol nursery has two large rooms and an outdoor area within the joint school community campus in the village of Caol near Fort William. It is registered to provide care to a maximum of 60 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery is managed by the depute headteacher of Caol Primary School. The nursery has gone through a period of change in the last few years. However, it is now much more settled and focused on improvements.

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

- The nursery's vision, values and aims are reviewed annually. They were developed in partnership with the children, parents, management team and practitioners. They are appropriate and, through inspection activity, were evidenced in practice as practitioners talked confidently about their aspirations for children. The vision, values and aims should continue to be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis including with all stakeholders.
- The nursery is managed by the depute headteacher who communicates well with the senior practitioner and practitioners in the nursery. There is a strong culture of reflection within the nursery. Both the senior practitioner and the depute headteacher and practitioners responded positively to professional dialogue during the inspection. As a team, practitioners are committed to improving their practice to make a positive impact on learning outcomes for children. This practice of reflection and commitment to do the best for children is supported and fostered by the senior practitioner and the depute headteacher.
- Distributed leadership is enabling all practitioners to have leadership roles. Practitioners have taken on roles of leadership and development within the team according to their interests and strengths. A range of training opportunities and professional learning should now be accessed by the practitioners in order to support these leadership roles. As these roles develop over time, it would be beneficial to monitor their impact in supporting continuous improvement. Practitioners should also continue to develop opportunities for children to adopt more leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the nursery. Practitioners should continue to look outwards in the sector to familiarise themselves with current thinking and research in early learning and childcare. This will support continuous improvement and early learning pedagogy. The senior practitioners and the depute headteacher encourage practitioners to attend further training and acquire additional qualifications. They should continue with the early level working group to share ideas and good practice.
- An improvement plan has been developed with practitioners, which includes relevant key actions to continually improve the nursery. An example of this is improving digital technology. There is a range of monitoring and evaluative activity taking place in the nursery, for example, analysis of developmental overviews. However, consideration should be given to streamlining these activities to ensure that it is leading to positive impact on children's

learning. The depute headteacher, senior practitioner and practitioners have worked well together to manage the implementation of the 1140 hours.

- The depute headteacher, senior practitioner and practitioners should continue to gather evidence from all stakeholders on the quality indicators in 'How good is our early learning and childcare?'. As previously evaluated and agreed, activities should continue to have a prioritised focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching and gathering evidence on children's progress in their learning. This will continue to help practitioners reflect on what they are doing well and what they could review and improve.

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 strong welcoming, nurturing ethos with very positive relationships evident between practitioners, children and families. Practitioners are implementing a range of strategies from recent training to ensure their interactions support positive communication outcomes for children. They use quiet, calm voices and interact sensitively with children during their play. They listen attentively to what children have to say and make good use of the 'I wonder' strategy to extend children's thinking. Children are given time to process their own thoughts and ideas and are supported to know these are valued.
- The indoor learning environment is well organised. Resources are clearly labelled and accessible which enables children to make choices and be independent. The majority of children show an appropriate commitment to their chosen tasks with a few demonstrating extended concentration. Practitioners should continue to develop the provision of natural, open-ended and real life materials to support further children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity. The outdoor area provides a variety of opportunities for children to investigate, solve problems and challenge themselves. Regular visits to the loch shore are enriching children's experiences, for example, as in the recent project to build a bug hotel.
- Children use the interactive board to consolidate learning through the use of digital games and use tablets to research interests and to take photographs. They also use programmable toys to explore programming. As detailed in the school improvement plan the nursery should continue to develop the range of digital learning experiences. This will enable children to begin to develop digital skills that will equip them for the digital world in which they live.
- Practitioners know the children very well as individuals. Learning profiles contain information on children's learning including observations, photographs, tracking sheets and personal learning targets. Practitioners should ensure there are clear links between the observations of significant learning and personal targets. Parents have access to their child's folder at any time and these are sent home termly. This provides parents with opportunities to review and comment on their child's learning. The nursery should now review tracking to ensure that all children are challenged and supported in a way which matches their stage of development.
- Planning is responsive and based firmly on children's needs and interests. For example, the learning around healthy foods and making soup was planned to support children who access the school dinner hall. Practitioners keep an overview of planned learning to ensure there is breadth in learning. As discussed they should now consider ways to simplify the planning paperwork and to make the learning more visible for children. This will enable children to have a better understanding of their learning and will allow planned learning to be shared more effectively with parents.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum rationale recognises that children learn best through play, supported by sensitive and engaged practitioners. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the importance of play and use their knowledge of child development to ensure they are offering appropriate experiences.
- The curriculum takes full account of children's interests and Curriculum for Excellence design principles. Practitioners use the experiences and outcomes across curriculum areas to ensure children receive a broad and balanced curriculum across the year.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local environment to enrich learning and extend children's awareness of the world around them. They buy snack from the local shops, they have visited the local café for snack and they make regular visits to the nearby loch shore. The nursery should as planned build links with the local care home and the lunch club to enhance children's learning through intergenerational working.
- The nursery's transition programmes support children well and are tailored to meet individual needs. Children have the opportunity to visit with their parents before starting nursery. This allows opportunity for practitioners and parents to share information and complete the 'All About Me' book. Transitions into school are very well planned and start from the beginning of the academic year. Practitioners and teachers across the early level engage in ongoing professional dialogue to support learners. Information on children's progress is passed on to the school to support continuity and progression in learning for all children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have strong positive relationships with parents. The strong relationships also encourage parents to discuss any concerns about their children as early as possible. Effective partnership working with health visitors, speech and language therapists and other professionals allows for appropriate support to both children and their families.
- Practitioners increase parental involvement and communication in the life and work of the nursery by having monthly 'stay and play' sessions, newsletter, emails and an open door policy. Parents are regularly asked their views to improve aspects of the nursery. Parents attend formal progress meetings twice a year and receive yearly written reports on the progress their child is making.
- There are positive examples of parents sharing their occupations and interests. In order to support and extend children's learning and provide opportunities to learn in real-life and meaningful contexts there is scope to build on partnerships in the local community. This could also have a focus on developing an awareness of the world of work.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 very strong, caring relationships in the nursery and the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners know each child very well and are highly attuned to their needs. Practitioners and children are at the early stages of using the wellbeing indicators in practice with the children. Practitioners now need to continue to build on their practice to support children and parents to develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators in a more meaningful way. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. The leadership team and practitioners need to continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These could be implemented in conjunction with the development of understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- There is a warm, welcoming ethos in the nursery, and children are kind and caring towards each other. Parents speak very positively of their relationship with practitioners. Children have a healthy snack in the nursery and are well aware of healthy food choices. Snack helpers confidently engaged in making snack, by chopping fruit. They are developing their personal hygiene skills, for example, by hand washing prior to snack. Outdoor learning opportunities encourage children to be healthy and active. Children are developing their social and emotional skills by using resources and activities, from a social and emotional programme, which encourages kindness. An emotional check in is used well each day to encourage children to express their feelings. Star of the day awards encourage children's positive behaviour.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. This allows them to provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and their families. The management team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe and meeting their care and learning needs. However, they should continue to ensure that the personal plans are reviewed and signed by parents at least twice a year. Individual needs of children with additional support needs are responded to in a sensitive and caring manner.
- There is detailed and robust planning using the local authority staged intervention process for children with additional support needs. Individual plans are monitored effectively and reviewed to ensure each child makes appropriate progress. Positive partnership working with other professionals helps ensure the needs of all children are met. Practitioners communicate well with other nurseries for children who are on part-time placements.
- Inclusion and equality is promoted well throughout the work of the nursery. Children with English as an additional language are also well supported by practitioners. Recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year is also enabling children to develop an awareness of diversity. As planned, gender equality should be explored more deeply to ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

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

- In early language and communication almost all children are making satisfactory progress as a result of their nursery experiences. Practitioners use a range of strategies to engage and support children with their spoken language and as a result children talk confidently to adults and their friends and share their own ideas. The weekly visits to the library support children to read for enjoyment and most listen well at group story times. A few children were using the story corner. Practitioners should consider ways to use soft furnishings to create an inviting space for reading and extend the range of factual books to support children to read for information. A few children recognise their own name. This could be developed further through self-registration routines. The writing area is resourced with a variety of writing materials to encourage children to engage in early writing and mark-making activities. Most children are at the early stages of mark-making with a few drawing recognisable pictures and attempting to write familiar letters. There is potential for increased opportunities for children to explore and apply their developing skills in a wider range of meaningful and exciting contexts.
- Overall most children are making satisfactory progress in their understanding of number and mathematical language. Children have opportunities to develop their counting skills and number recognition through daily routines and experiences. The provision of open ended materials in the outdoor area supports children to develop mathematical language to describe size and shape. They are developing an awareness of money through buying snack at the local shops. Children's experiences should now be strengthened to ensure children are challenged appropriately and are developing a good awareness and understanding of number values in meaningful real life contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are happy and settled at nursery. They are making friendships and are supported to share and take turns in their play. Practitioners should now consider ways to further promote children's independence skills, for example, serving own food and pouring own drinks at lunchtime. Children are developing their physical skills through daily outdoor play and weekly access to the school gym hall. The outdoor environment provides opportunity for children to manage risks when climbing and to challenge themselves physically.
- Observations and tracking sheets in children's learning profiles provide some evidence that children are making progress in their learning during their time at nursery. The tracking sheets do not capture the progress that children are capable of and so the nursery should now review

tracking systems that will enable practitioners to evidence appropriately children's progress over time.

- Data on children's progress is gathered and analysed and is used to support children with identified gaps in their learning. The nursery should now review systems to identify the children who require extra challenge to ensure their learning does not plateau but continues to make good progress.

Setting choice of QI: 2.5 Family learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

- The nursery values the contribution all parents make to children's learning. Positive relationships support the work of the nursery. Practitioners offer support to all parents and are responsive to the individual needs of children and parents. Positive parental feedback show that parents are more involved in their children's learning. Children's personal learning journals are available for parents to engage in and reflect on their child's learning. Children are proud of their learning and are keen to share this with parents, practitioners and visitors. Practitioners are sensitive to individual family circumstances and work alongside them to reduce any potential barriers to engagement. The nursery are keen to maximise parents' engagement in learning and continue to seek opportunities to engage parents in the life of the nursery. We discussed with practitioners practical examples, which may further support parents engagement in their child's learning.
- Practitioners recognise that they are at very early stages in developing strategies to support family learning. There is a commitment to supporting families and practitioners are proactive in accessing advice and support from partner agencies to enable them to meet the needs of children and families. Practitioners have organised and run very helpful Curriculum for Excellence and induction workshops. There are also learning to bake sessions which were initiated by practitioners.
- The nursery should continue with plans to provide a variety of home link activities for parents to encourage them to support their children's learning at home. Practitioners should continue to work well with parents to gather suggestions for workshops to enhance children's learning at home. This could involve work with outside agencies to develop appropriate parental workshops within the nursery.

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.