

# Summarised inspection findings

**Crosshouse Primary School Early Childhood Centre**

East Ayrshire Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Crosshouse Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is part of Crosshouse Primary School and is situated in the nearby Crosshouse campus. It is registered to provide early learning and childcare to sixty children aged three to starting school. It is a spacious, well-resourced centre. Children can access morning or afternoon sessions with a small group of children accessing their entitlement in compressed hours over three days.

### 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 setting have an appropriate vision, values and aims, which were created in consultation with families and have been in place for a few years. We discussed plans to re-fresh the vision, values and aims to reflect the developing service moving forward into expansion of entitlement in 2020. While doing this they should work closely with children and families to ensure they are reflecting the aspirations and views of the local community.
- The headteacher has overall responsibility for managing the setting. She has a sound knowledge of early years practice and a clear overview of the provision. The headteacher visits the playrooms regularly and provides helpful support and advice to the senior early learning and childcare practitioner (SELCP) when required. The SELCP has a high level of responsibility and provides positive leadership to the early years team on a daily basis, carrying out her role efficiently. She is highly committed to providing a quality service for children and families and works well with the team. Together they discuss self-evaluation and make changes in the setting as appropriate. This has resulted in improvements to the environment for numeracy and creating guidelines for children's profiles. Moving forward, the setting will benefit from a greater level of strategic support from the senior management team. This will help to ensure monitoring leads to consistent, well-planned improvements which impact positively on children.
- The early years team meet regularly to discuss issues and plan for children's learning. They take part in professional learning and this enables them to take on leadership roles effectively. This is impacting positively on the provision for children's language through the input of the communication champion and developing the opportunities available for numeracy throughout the playroom.
- Practitioners are aware of the priorities in the school improvement plan and understand how the early years contribute to this. They have worked with Psychological Services to review the number of transitions children are having across the session and how this impacts on learning. As discussed, there is still scope to continue to improve this to ensure children have time and space to develop their learning and follow their interests.

## 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

- Relationships throughout the ECC are caring, nurturing and respectful. Children feel valued and secure as they undertake their group times and play. As a result, they are successful, confident and well-behaved. The interesting, well-planned and very well resourced experiences available within the playroom and outdoors motivate children and encourage them to explore and try out their ideas. For example, children enjoy investigating the properties of mini-beasts through activities that are both real and imaginary. Practitioners should continue to review the flow of the session and minimise the disruptions to children's play. There is also scope to consider the balance between adult-led and child-led activities. A more balanced approach will allow children time to develop their creativity, investigation and inquiry skills.
- Practitioners have a sound understanding of child development and know each child well as an individual. They are developing their knowledge of children as learners. Practitioners listen carefully to children and interact in a sensitive way which promotes children's self-esteem and confidence. The team continue to build on their use of questioning techniques to encourage children's curiosity. They support children to make decisions about their learning and share their ideas. Children are confident to approach practitioners and ask for support in their play. We observed a few practitioners encouraging children to ask questions and explore possible answers and solutions. Practitioners now need to develop greater consistency in their interactions to help children to extend their learning.
- Children have access to a range of digital technologies such as computers and programmable toys. They use recorded voice disks to support learning the rhyme of week. With the support of practitioners children are beginning to use tablet computers to record aspects of their learning. As planned, the setting should build on this positive start and continue to explore how they can support children to use digital technologies to extend their learning.
- Practitioners make effective observations and have a good understanding of the progress children are making. They involve parents in setting targets for their child which are recorded in children's profiles and gathered into the transition report at the end of term. Practitioners should consider how they can personalise children's profiles to ensure they capture the progress individual children are making. Children and parents participate in the reporting process at regular intervals throughout the year. As a result, parents feel well informed about their children's learning in the setting.
- The team plan for children's learning over different timescales and provide a wide range of learning experiences across the curriculum. Practitioners have made a positive start to capturing children's voice through the use of floorbooks. They should continue to develop this and start to move from activity-based content to have a greater focus on children's learning. This will help children to plan and participate in learning experiences with greater breadth,

depth and challenge. Children regularly self and peer assess and reflection time is built into their daily routines. This is helping children to begin to reflect on their learning. Practitioners use a range of tracking systems to monitor children's progress over time. These are beginning to demonstrate children's learning and inform future planning and interventions.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan a broad curriculum based on play and linked to national guidance. Overall, it is well matched to the stage of development of most children, however at times younger children would benefit from accessing more sensory and investigative experiences. There is a strong focus on developing the essential aspects for early learning including wellbeing, communication, mathematics and inquiry. Children take part in a wide range of interesting experiences. They are able to choose from a very good selection of resources to practice and develop a range of skills. Practitioners should review the planned activities they provide to ensure they meet the needs of all children and allow individuals to investigate and develop creativity.
- Outdoor learning experiences enable children to explore and solve problems and develop their physical skills using open-ended resources. Children also have the opportunity to collaborate, negotiate and take part in role-play. Practitioners plan regular visits to a nearby care home where children take part in a variety of experiences with older adults including cooking and physical exercise programmes.
- The structure of the sessions allows children time, space and freedom to follow their interests. Small group time enables children to come together and spend time with their key worker. They also have the opportunity to reflect on and share what they have been doing. Practitioners should continue to evaluate the content and timing of small group times to ensure it provides the right amount of challenge and support for all children.

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

- Practitioners have developed very positive relationships with parents and consult them regularly to find out their views about the setting. In response to recent consultation practitioners provided a notice board to keep parents informed about events in the setting. Parents are enthusiastic about attending organised events and participate in planned events including regular stay and play sessions. As planned, the setting should continue to develop parental engagement and organise opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- Practitioners make very good use of drop-off and pick-up times to engage with parents and share valuable information about children. They also invite parents to attend organised meetings where they have the opportunity to look at children's profiles and discuss and comment on their transition reports. Parents appreciate the information and feel they are well informed about their children's learning and development.

## 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

very 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

- Practitioners recognise that developing meaningful relationships are central to everything they do. They have worked well together to develop strong and effective relationships with children and families. Their high level of commitment to inclusion enables them to improve outcomes for all children and families. As a result, children are thriving and starting to develop the necessary skills for lifelong learning. Practitioners work well together to create a nurturing ethos where wellbeing is paramount. It is obvious that children are valued as individuals and their personalities and strengths are celebrated. Daily check-ins help to ensure all children feel welcomed and important. Children participate enthusiastically and appear to be happy, settled and developing confidence. Practitioners are developing a shared knowledge of the national wellbeing indicators. They should now work with children to support them to understand what the wellbeing indicators mean to them.
- Practitioners model positive behaviour. They worked with children to create a set of appropriate rules and remind and encourage children to consider the rules on a daily basis. Children demonstrate a clear understanding of the rules and a pictorial 'high five' documents their agreement with them. Overall, children behave very well. They are kind, considerate and caring towards each other. We observed children supporting and helping each other during play and learning as they shared resources and successfully negotiated challenging situations. Children enjoy earning a 'golden ticket' for positive behaviour and acts of kindness.
- Practitioners demonstrate a very sound understanding of their statutory duties and show a high level of commitment to ensuring the safety of all children. They quickly identify children who have barriers to their learning and support them very well through targeted interventions and close liaison with external agencies when required. They are pro-active in seeking support and information to help them meet the needs of individual children very effectively. Parents commented very positively on the level of support their children receive from all practitioners. Children who attend full days enjoy their lunchtime experience. They are developing independence as they help by setting the table. There is now scope to consult more effectively with all children and help them to become more involved in making decisions and developing their early leadership skills.
- Practitioners have a deep knowledge of the families attending the setting and are aware of any factors that present challenges. They use information very effectively and are sensitive in their approaches to meeting the needs of families and improving outcomes for children. Practitioners demonstrate a very good awareness of their responsibility to promote inclusion and equity in all the work they carry out.



### 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

- Almost all children are making good progress in communication and early language. They confidently express their thoughts and communicate well with each other and practitioners as they experience group times and play. As a result of a recent focus on initial sounds and patterns in language children are making good progress. Children who need additional support to develop communication skills benefit from targeted input from the 'communication champion'. Children enjoy sharing stories together in the attractive 'story' area where they listen attentively and take part in a home lending library. The addition of writing tools in the outdoors supports children to apply their early writing skills. Practitioners should consider how they could provide more opportunities for children to take part in mark-making in real-life and imaginary contexts throughout the playroom. This will help them to develop their skills in an appropriate play-based way.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They show confidence in counting for a variety of purposes and demonstrate good number recognition skills. Group times support rote learning and number recognition as well as calendar routines. Children who require more challenge are identified and access bespoke interventions. This is supporting children to develop their individual skills. A few children are able to use their skills to set the table for eight at lunch time. They are developing awareness of shape and mathematical concepts in play, artwork and in the outdoor area. Children would benefit from taking part in regular experiences to support their developing understanding in other mathematical concepts such as measure, money and information handling.
- There is a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing across the setting. As a result, children are developing their confidence, independence and resilience. They are learning to manage risk when outdoors and take increasing responsibility for their own safety. Children show familiarity with routines such as hand washing and tooth brushing and can describe the benefits of healthy choices at snack time and lunch. They are developing their physical skills well as they climb and balance in the outdoor area. There is scope to focus on developing other skills such as throwing and catching.
- Children's achievements are celebrated well through praise and displays. Children are very proud of their 'golden tickets' awarded for keeping the golden rules. Achievements are also collated in attractive floorbooks, which are used effectively by practitioners to plan for next steps. A positive start has been made to gathering children's achievements from their home and community partnerships. There is scope to develop this further.

- Children are curious and show an interest in the world around them. Through their outdoor learning experiences, children are learning about garden insects, recycling and litter. They use a wide range of loose parts to enhance their play.
- Staff are proactive in identifying potential barriers to children's learning and work in close partnership with parents and families to overcome these together.

## Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Transitions from the setting into primary one are very strong. Practitioners from the setting, the Communication Centre and the school work very well together and have put in place an extensive plan to support effective transition for all children. Throughout the year, children take part in visits to the primary one class and become familiar with the setting and surroundings. They engage in a variety of experiences including listening to stories and joining primary one to make decorations for the Christmas fayre. There is a very successful 'buddy' programme in place and children from the older class develop very positive relationships with the younger children before they start school. Where required, children have an enhanced transition to support their individual needs. In response to feedback from parents, the school increased the number of visits to the school for children. Parents are also invited to share a school lunch with the children. The setting ensure that children who are starting school who attend other early years settings are included in the transition programme. As a result of this well-planned programme, children settle well into primary one and are relaxed and confident when starting school.
- In preparation for transition early learning and childcare practitioners and the primary one teacher take part in a well-planned 'early level learning loop'. This involves them working together to plan appropriate joint play experiences and younger children join the P1 children and take part in activities with a focus on literacy and numeracy. This is very successful and allows the teacher to observe children interacting in the new environment.
- Practitioners share information on children's learning and development with primary one and pass on detailed transition reports including assessment information. This helps to ensure children's learning is identified and built on. As discussed, practitioners should continue to develop this strong practice and develop opportunities for joint planning and moderations across the early level.

### 1. Quality of care and support

During this inspection we considered the effectiveness of arrangements to ensure children and their families had access to the right support at the right time. We found that practice in this area was very good.

Staff had developed a warm, welcoming and inclusive setting. Staff valued working in partnership with parents and carers and communicated respectfully and warmly with them. This resulted in strong and positive relationships, which underpinned effective information sharing and approaches to meeting children's individual needs. Staff and management demonstrated kindness, warmth and compassion for the children in their care.

Personal plans for all children were current and included information about how the setting would meet their health and wellbeing needs. Children's learning and development was effectively assessed, and plans to provide additional support were implemented within appropriate timescales. Where children would benefit from support from partner agencies, plans to provide this were clearly documented. This demonstrated that care and support was well co-ordinated and consistent because people worked well together.

Personal plans included some information about the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators which are: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible, Respected and Included (SHANARRI). Further reference to these within plans would help raise awareness of these and support consultation with children and their parents.

Effective arrangements for managing medication meant that staff could meet children's health needs safely and effectively, for short and longer term conditions. Staff training in first aid ensured that they could provide appropriate treatment to promote children's health and wellbeing.

Staff were familiar with the centre's child protections policy and procedure and the action that they would take if they had concerns about a child. This helped to ensure children's safety and welfare.

Parents were very happy with the care and support provided for their children. They felt well informed about their children's learning and development. Parents commented positively about the setting's assistance with accessing additional support for their children when necessary. They felt that this had been invaluable to their families.

**Care Inspectorate grade: very good**

### 4. Quality of management and leadership

We considered how quality assurance processes supported a culture of continuous improvement that resulted in positive outcomes for children. We found that practice was good in this area.

The head teacher, senior early learning and childcare practitioner (SELCP) and staff had established good communication and positive working relationships. The head teacher valued the work of the setting, and provided welcome support and guidance to staff, although this was limited by time constraints. The SELCP had worked hard to drive improvements in the setting, along with the staff team. This had resulted in improvements to the organisation of sessions and experiences for children. Everyone involved in the setting was positively anticipating changes to the

management structure and staffing arrangements planned for August 2019. They recognised that further work was needed to robustly monitor and evaluate the work of the setting to support development, and felt that the plans would increase capacity to do so. We concur with this view.

We made a recommendation in our previous inspection report that the head teacher should review quality assurance monitoring procedures and focus on areas for development identified within the report. The head teacher had addressed this by devising a monitoring calendar, which was implemented by the SELCP. Whilst this recommendation was met there was potential to further develop quality assurance and monitoring processes to provide more in depth evaluations to support improved outcomes for children.

Parents felt well informed about the work of the setting and felt they had good opportunities to influence change. An appropriate range of policies, procedures and written information for parents was in place. We felt that some of this, particularly the information shared at the onset of the care arrangements, could be developed to better reflect the aims and good work of the setting and promote partnership working.

### Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one recommendation. This recommendation was met. As a result of this inspection, there are no recommendations and no requirements.

## 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.