

Summarised inspection findings

Heads of Ayr Nursery

South Ayrshire Council

8 October 2024

Key contextual information

Heads of Ayr Nursery is a private setting owned by the directors of the nearby farm park. It is located in a purpose-built nursery with two spacious playrooms and access to a large, covered decking area. Children have free-flow access to a large, well-equipped, fenced outdoor area.

The nursery is in partnership with South Ayrshire Council to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. Children access their 1140 hours across 50 weeks of the year through morning, afternoon or full-day placements. Parents have the option to purchase additional hours of childcare. They are registered for 57 children aged from two to starting school who can attend Monday till Friday from 8.00 a.m - 6.00 p.m. There are currently 90 children on the roll, five who have split placements with other local nurseries. The nursery has a manager, a depute manager, a senior practitioner, 13 early years practitioners, an administrative assistant, a chef and a cleaner.

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

- All practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to children's rights. They create a warm, nurturing ethos where parents are welcomed, children feel safe and know they are valued. As a result of these positive relationships, children are happy, confident and show kindness towards each other. Children engage well in the wide range of exciting play opportunities indoors and in the outdoor area. They use the interesting resources such as, tyre swings, water pump and a treehouse very well to develop their physical skills. Children aged three to five are caring and supportive towards younger children as they play together in the deck and outdoor area. Children have time and space to follow their interests and be creative as they take part in sustained periods of imaginative and physical play.
- Practitioners know children well and provide appropriate praise and encouragement to help them achieve. Children use digital technology well, for example the interactive whiteboard, to support and consolidate their learning. Practitioners interact positively with children and use questioning and commentary appropriately to support their learning. They now need to consider how they can use their interactions more effectively to encourage children to extend and deepen their learning.
- Practitioners observe children during play and record examples of their learning in online journals using photographs and comments. This provides relevant information about children's experiences, however it does not always accurately record children's significant learning or the progress they are making. Parents access the online journals and are encouraged to comment and contribute information on children's achievements from home. As a result, parents respond positively to the online journals and have a good understanding of what children are doing in the nursery. Practitioners should continue to find ways to involve children more effectively in

recording their learning in their online journals. Children will benefit from reflecting on their learning and talking about what they would like to learn next.

- Practitioners working with the younger children plan responsively to meet the individual needs of children. Those working with children aged three to starting school plan regularly for children's learning over a longer time frame. They base the planning on children's interests and curriculum areas. This planning is at an early stage. Senior leaders have correctly identified that they need to develop this further to be more responsive to individual children's interests. They should also have a greater focus on involving children in planning for their next steps in learning. The manager has recently started to meet with practitioners to track children's progress. She should continue to develop this positive practice to ensure all children are making the progress of which they are capable.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

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

- Across the nursery children are making good progress in communication and early language. They enjoy reading stories throughout the nursery and listen attentively. Children take part in conversations with each other and with practitioners. A few children use extended vocabulary and express themselves very clearly. Most children take part in mark-making and older children can write their names and other well-known words. Children are starting to recognise rhyming words and can identify initial sounds. Practitioners use a variety of visuals to support children's language development. Children are developing confidence as they learn Spanish and enjoy reciting songs and numbers. Practitioners should find ways to encourage all children to develop an interest in mark-making.
- Children are making good progress in mathematics. They understand size and can talk about shapes and use the language of measurement as they play in the construction area. Most children can count to ten with a few showing confidence with larger numbers. Children have experience of time and understand about changing seasons. Practitioners should continue to provide real-life experiences which allow children to develop fully their mathematical skills.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing their physical skills well as they use the challenging resources in the outdoor area. All children, including the younger age group, are developing very good independence skills. They are competent serving themselves and clearing away plates during relaxed lunch and snack times. Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are starting to use puppets and books to help them understand and talk about their emotions. Children are becoming responsible citizens as they carry out their nursery jobs. They are very proud to wear their badges and can talk about their duties.
- The nursery has a strong focus on supporting children's progress in identified developmental milestones. The data shows that most children have made strong progress over the last two years. Children are becoming increasingly confident and resilient as they persevere and work out strategies during play. They are motivated to explore and learn and are benefitting from the unique setting where they have experience of a variety of animals and country life. To help children benefit fully from the experiences on offer, they need more opportunities to become more involved in talking about their learning.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements. They support children to contribute to the local community through involvement in fund-raising for a local charity. They should continue to build on this positive work and develop children's understanding of their role

as global citizens. This could help to raise their awareness of the wider world and how to look after it.

- There is a very inclusive ethos in the nursery. Practitioners work closely with partners to ensure they provide effective support to all children who have barriers to their learning. This is helping children to make good progress. Practitioners are proactive and incorporate supports into the nursery such as access to the foodbank, the lending library and the giving tree. The manager monitors children's attendance and provides individual support to ensure all children are benefitting fully from attending 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.