

Summarised inspection findings

Kingswells Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeen City Council

30 May 2023

Key contextual information

Kingswells Nursery Class is situated within Kingswells Primary School. There is a large playroom with direct access to a large outdoor area. There is also a small sensory room. Children make regular use of a wooded area beside the school playground also. Children attend from the age of three years until starting school. The setting can provide places for 40 children at any one time. Currently, there are 59 children attending. Children can access a morning or afternoon session for 46 weeks of the year. Over the last few years there have been significant staff changes within the team.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 class shares the same vision, values and aims as the primary school. The vision, values and aims place children and their families at the heart of the work of the setting. Practitioners are supporting children to learn the values using visual prompts. They praise children when they demonstrate the nursery values. Practitioners should continue to develop this approach to enable children to relate the values more to their nursery experiences.
- Over the last few years, there have been significant changes to the staff team. Two senior early years practitioners took up post two years ago. Along with a depute headteacher (DHT), they have day-to-day responsibility for the nursery. The DHT and two senior early years practitioners have supported the development of a positive ethos across the growing staff team. Newer practitioners appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from senior leaders and colleagues. There is effective collegiate working across the staff team.
- This session, practitioners are developing new approaches to the way they plan and assess children's learning. This is at a very early stage of development and is not yet leading to consistently high-quality learning for children. The staff team need to review current approaches to planning and assessing children's learning. This should ensure children experience a curriculum which offers depth, breadth, challenge and progression in learning. They also need to ensure that they build a clear picture of the progress children are making across their learning. In taking this forward, practitioners should revisit and refresh their understanding of national guidance, including Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020).
- Practitioners take on leadership roles to improve aspects of the nursery provision. For example, they each have a responsibility to develop specific spaces within the nursery environment. It will be important that practitioners reflect continually on how well these spaces promote high levels of engagement and support children to build on prior learning. Senior early years practitioners and the staff team respond well to guidance from local authority officers. They readily engage in professional learning, and a few are working towards additional qualifications, including at degree level. The staff team have undertaken professional learning

to raise their awareness and understanding of nurture. As a result, practitioners support children appropriately when they show signs of distress or deregulation. They have developed a small sensory room, which is used in a sensitive way, for children who may require it.

- Senior practitioners and the staff team are keen to make continuous improvement within the setting. Senior practitioners have had the opportunity to visit other early learning and childcare settings to identify and share good practice. As a result, they have recently implemented new approaches to recording and sharing children's learning with parents. Positively, children are being supported to play a key role in the new process for documenting their learning. For example, they upload their photographs to a digital platform to share with their families. Senior leaders should develop a more strategic approach to quality assurance. This should include robust evaluation of the impact of new developments and the quality of the provision on children's learning.
- Practitioners are increasing ways for children to influence improvement in the nursery class. Children are encouraged to shape and develop the learning environment both indoors and out. For example, they help to choose resources for learning. Children have opportunities to take on leadership roles within daily routines, such as, snack helpers and risk assessors. Practitioners should continue to develop ways for children to develop their leadership skills. It would be helpful for them to collaborate with colleagues in P1 to explore ways for children at the early level to influence improvement across the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Children are confident in making choices in their play and they have access to a range of learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They play cooperatively with their peers and many enjoy firm friendships. Practitioners support and encourage children to be independent when they are getting ready for outdoors and during snack and mealtimes.
- The majority of children engage well with nursery experiences and are able to sustain an interest for extended periods of time. They demonstrate how they can lead their play when building structures with blocks and acting out various roles in the pretend house and veterinary surgery. There are periods throughout the day when children require adult support to help them re-engage in their play. Practitioners should continue to support and encourage children to be more respectful of the resources within the playroom.
- Practitioners engage with children in a respectful way. They are caring and responsive to children's emotional and wellbeing needs. Children benefit from these positive relationships with practitioners. As a result, most children settle well and appear happy while at nursery. As a team, practitioners should continue to develop their skills in using effective questions and commentary to support and extend children's learning.
- While children are playing, practitioners make observations and record these within individual electronic learning journals along with photographs and video recordings. The quality of observations is inconsistent. Observations do not always show the key skills children are developing and achieving. Senior leaders recognise that practitioners would benefit from further support to improve their skills in observing and recording learning. Practitioners use the information from observations to identify future learning and record children's successes within their learning journal. Children are beginning to access their learning journals independently using matrix barcodes. This is supporting children to talk about their experiences.
- Practitioners are currently reviewing and adapting their approach to planning children's learning. They are focusing on a child-led approach, which is responsive to children's ideas and interests. Practitioners need to maximise children's learning by improving the flow and pace of the day. In doing so, they should ensure an appropriate balance of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led learning. Practitioners have recently introduced floorbooks within each area of the playroom. Currently, these books are recording children's ideas for resources. Practitioners now need to agree the purpose of floorbooks. It will be important for practitioners to revisit the national guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020)*. This should help them reach a shared understanding of pedagogy and improve further their approach to planning for children's learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The staff team are developing a curriculum which is responsive, and child-centred. This is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders should work with the staff team to ensure that all children experience a broad and progressive curriculum. To support this, it would be helpful for the team to make use of progressive pathways. Children are able to direct their play and exercise choice within the indoor and outdoor environments. Practitioners should develop further their understanding of the role of the adult in supporting and extending children's learning. Senior leaders should work with the staff team to consider how well the current approaches to planning the curriculum take full account of Curriculum for Excellence design principles.
- Children are supported well as they start in the nursery class. Children who have recently started in the nursery class are already settled and forming positive relationships with the staff team and other children. Practitioners have developed effective ways to support parents new to the setting. They have established a buddy system where other parents 'buddy' new parents. Nursery practitioners work very well with colleagues across the early level to ensure continuity of approaches to learning through play.
- Children benefit from daily access to learn outdoors. They make regular use of the local wooded area. Practitioners are re-establishing positive links with the local community following the pandemic.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners have taken positive steps to welcome parents back into the setting following the pandemic. They have developed strong relationships with parents. Parents are very positive about their children's experiences in the nursery. They appreciate that the staff team have introduced new approaches to sharing information about their child's nursery experience. Senior leaders should support the staff team to improve the quality of information they share with parents about children's progress. This will help children and parents to have a clearer understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Parents welcome the opportunities they have to observe and contribute to their children's learning as part of 'stay and play' sessions and online learning journals. In response to parents' requests, practitioners have increased the number of 'stay and play' sessions.

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

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

- Children benefit from warm, positive relationships with practitioners. Practitioners are kind and caring. They know children as individuals and can talk about their particular interests and needs. Children are friendly and almost all are kind to each other. They show consideration when their friends are upset.
- Children are learning to discuss and identify different emotions. With support from practitioners, they complete an 'emotional check in' at the start of each session. A 'wellbeing chart' is helping children discuss their wellbeing and understand the different emotions they may be feeling.
- Children are beginning to understand the wellbeing indicators. They can talk about how to keep safe and be healthy. Children worked together to create their own information film about keeping safe. Positively, this was shared with the whole school at an assembly. Children also take an active role in assessing potential risks in the outdoor areas. They can identify different healthy foods. As planned, practitioners should support children to have a fuller understanding of all wellbeing indicators as they play and learn.
- Most children show high levels of independence as part of lunch and snack routines. They are developing important skills as they use real life utensils to prepare snacks. They enjoy healthy snacks and lunches within their playroom. Children can choose what they would like to have for lunch. Practitioners have developed an approach which enables children to choose when they would like to eat their lunch. A few children require support to manage the transition from play experiences to the lunch time routine.
- Practitioners are aware of their statutory duties. As children start their time in the nursery, senior staff work with parents to create a personal plan. This takes good account of the wellbeing indicators and children's particular care and health needs. There are a few children who would benefit from having an additional plan in place to support their development and learning. This would ensure practitioners have a shared understanding of how best to support them. The staff team work well with other professionals to meet children's needs, for example, health visitor and speech and language therapists.
- There is an inclusive ethos and the staff team take positive steps to promote equality and celebrate diversity. This includes ensuring resources reflect diversity and do not promote gender bias. They should continue to explore ways to celebrate diversity to reflect the wider world in the 21st century.

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

- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children develop physical skills as they jump, run and climb during woodland visits. In the outdoor area, they ride bikes confidently and a few children are developing their skills well in throwing, catching and kicking balls. Most children share and talk about how they feel and can name different emotions as they arrive at nursery. Children are developing an awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise and the effect these have on their body.
- In early communication and language, children are making good progress. Most children communicate with adults and their peers through their actions, emotions and their words. Most children listen to and follow instructions, for example, when visiting the local woodland. Children enjoy listening to stories and regularly seek out adults to read to them. Practitioners should extend the range and quality of books available in the book corner and across the playroom. Most children recognise their name in various areas of the nursery. They are attempting to write their name with recognisable letters. Most children are drawing and painting with increasing detail.
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children show confidence in counting and demonstrate good number recognition skills. A few children recognise numerals beyond 100. They use mathematical language appropriately as they measure within the construction area and investigate how scales work. Practitioners should increase opportunities for children to develop a wider range of numeracy and mathematic skills to enable them to make the best possible progress. This includes time, money, pattern and information handling.
- Practitioners are aware that they need to improve their current processes for recording and tracking children's learning over time. In doing so, this should help them to demonstrate children's progress more effectively.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements. They use their learning journeys and the achievement wall well to capture and share children's individual achievements within the nursery. Practitioners use stickers to help children recognise when they have demonstrated one of the nursery values. They should continue to build on this practice and consider ways to develop children's early leadership skills.

- Practitioners know children and their families very well and take account of their differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Their caring and respectful approach results in a supportive and inclusive ethos for all children and families. Practitioners ensure children can access all nursery experiences with no additional cost to families. In addition, they provide waterproof clothing for children to enable them to participate fully in outdoor learning experiences.

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.