

Summarised inspection findings

Arrochar Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class

Argyll and Bute Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

Arrochar Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) class is part of Arrochar Primary School and managed by the acting headteacher. The ELC class is staffed by one full-time, and two part-time childcare and education workers and a pupil support assistant. Children receive their 1140 hours entitlement by attending from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday during term time. The ELC class is registered for 17 children at any one time. At the time of the inspection there were nine children attending, with three in their pre-school year. The nursery has two playrooms and access to a secure outdoor area.

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

- Practitioners work very well together to provide a play environment that has attractive, open-ended resources and real-life experiences for children. They have made effective use of national guidance and professional reading to plan spaces, experiences and interactions that motivate and engage children. Staff plan a varied early years curriculum that strikes an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and child-led learning.
- Almost all children are calm, settled and show sustained engagement in their play. Staff are responsive to children's needs, feelings and interests. Routines are flexible, and children choose to play indoors or outside. The setting's unique outdoor environment offers a wide selection of risky play activities, loose parts, gardening, and opportunities to develop a range of physical skills. Staff are in the process of developing a newly created outdoor space that provides better free-flow access from the playroom. The learning spaces inside the playroom are very well organised and support children's independence very well and encourage exploration and creativity. A next step for staff is to extend the use of digital technologies, such as tablets and cameras, to allow children to document their own progress in learning.
- All staff are warm, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They use a skilful balance of questioning and discussion to extend children's interests and skills, and to enhance their knowledge and understanding. All children are happy and motivated by their activities. They are developing positive relationships with staff and each other. Staff support children to show care and kindness towards others. Overall, parents speak very positively about the way their children are supported by practitioners in the ELC class.
- Staff know children very well as individuals. They use children's interests and developmental needs as the starting point for planning learning. Staff's planning is responsive and takes very good account of the local context. Children's learning is enhanced by a range of visitors and visits in the local community. This includes visits from community police officers, and visits to the local mountain rescue unit, the ambulance and fire stations, and the pier at Loch Lomond.

As a result, children are developing a strong awareness of their unique setting within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

- The staff team use 'big questions' well to introduce new learning and to develop children's own understanding of things they are curious about. Practitioners document children's engagement and learning in a range of ways. They use their evaluative comments to plan children's next steps in learning. Practitioners should consider the best way to involve children more fully in setting and reviewing these next steps. Staff use floorbooks, learning journals, tracking sheets and an online platform to record their observations of children's learning. As planned, staff should continue to refine their record keeping approaches.
- Practitioners use a whole-school tracking system to link their observations of children's progress towards developmental milestones and to specific skills and knowledge across the curriculum. Increasingly, the staff team use information about children's skills in numeracy, mark making and receptive language to inform professional discussions about what children need from spaces, experiences, and interactions across their ELC class.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

3.2 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

- Almost all children are making very good progress in early language and communication in relation to their age and stage of development. They listen attentively to stories and instructions. All children show interest in books and self-select stories to share with friends. They enjoy sharing books with their reading buddies from the primary classes each week. Children are learning new words and meanings through the 'word of the week'. For example, they learn Scots vocabulary as part of their learning about Robert Burns. Children benefit from learning about rhyming words as they take part in regular opportunities to sing songs and nursery rhymes. Most children recognise their name in print, and a few are showing a keen interest in writing their names. They would benefit from more opportunities to mark make across their play and daily routines.
- All children are making very good progress in early numeracy. They count aloud and identify shapes, colours and patterns as part of their play, using natural materials, block play and loose parts. A few children demonstrate aptitude in working with numbers in complex ways, beyond their age and stage. Staff use daily routines and imaginary contexts, such as the shop and home corner, to help children learn about time and money. Children understand simple fractions by cutting fruit at snack time. They are learning about which containers hold more or less, and the difference between full and empty as they pour their own water.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are learning to talk about emotions and describe their feelings using 'colour monsters'. They are learning the skills to share and cooperate with each other. As a result, there is a calm and happy ethos in play spaces where children feel safe and cherished. All children are developing positive attitudes to their learning and most show confidence in trying new and challenging activities. Children identify healthy foods and understand that fresh air and exercise are part of a healthy lifestyle. They show independence and resilience as they dress themselves in their waterproof suits to play and learn outdoors.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements in a variety of ways, such as in newsletters, wall displays and on a digital platform shared with parents. Almost all children enjoy taking on responsibilities in their playrooms, such as snack helpers and digital leaders. There is scope for children to take on additional leadership roles.
- Children in the ELC class are included fully in the wider life of the school and they are developing a sense of citizenship and community. They participate in assemblies, concerts and shows, for example, to entertain local senior citizens in the Generation Group. Staff know

children and their families very well and put sensitive arrangements in place to promote inclusion, equity and achievement for all. They are aware of any barriers to learning that children may have and provide well-judged and timely support to help all children experience success.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Children contribute very well to the life of Arrochar Primary School and ELC class, and their wider community. They develop a broad range of skills through creative and meaningful opportunities, including high-quality outdoor learning. Practitioners work very effectively with community partners and organisations when planning and providing learning experiences linked across curricular areas. Children are rightly very proud of their achievements.

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.