

# Summarised inspection findings

**Wee Scones Nursery**

East Lothian Council

19 June 2018

## Key contextual information

Wee Scones Nursery is in Partnership with East Lothian Council. The setting offers full day provision. Only a few children attend full time sessions.

The setting currently provides early learning and childcare for 26 children under three years, and 15 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. Three children will be transitioning to P1 in August 2018.

The setting has gone through a period of significant change of leadership and practitioners over the last few months. The turnover has caused challenges in the setting.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 owner is keen to provide a quality service for children and families. However, she has a clear understanding of the challenges facing the setting. She has recently appointed a new manager and during the inspection voiced her concerns about lack of continuity of practitioners in the team and the impact this has had.
- The setting has gone through a significant period of change to both management and practitioners over the last six months. At the time of the inspection, the new manager had only been in post for four weeks. A few practitioners had been in the setting less than a year with a few acting as temporary staff. Leadership of change now needs to be increased with the manager and practitioners developing confidence and establishing their role within the setting.
- The owner and manager are aware that the setting is on a journey of improvement. As part of this, the manager and practitioners are currently revisiting their vision, values and aims to ensure they reflect the views and aspirations of all involved in the setting. They have begun to involve children and parents in this process. Such consultations should be used to support the development of a vision, which reflects all that stakeholders want to achieve for children and families. Once established these should be revisited and reviewed regularly and used to inform practice.
- The new manager is keen to make improvements. Already she has implemented a few changes as part of a drive to improve the learning environment and children's experiences. As this progresses further, the manager needs to work closely with practitioners to develop a sound understanding of early learning pedagogy. Practitioners should now source opportunities for professional learning opportunities that closely link to the plans for improvement. As planned, visits to other settings would help with the implementation of these improvements.

- Strategic direction is required for continuous improvement to ensure that the setting is effectively supported to deliver high-quality early learning and childcare. The manager and practitioners are receptive to the on-going advice and guidance from the local authority teacher on ways to improve. With this strong support, an early childcare plan, which identifies appropriate immediate actions, has been agreed to promote necessary improvements. The teacher also provides a useful summary of her visits with helpful next steps for practitioners to take forward. The manager and practitioners now need to demonstrate in their day to day practice how they are using this advice and support National guidance documents, Building the Ambition and How good is our learning and childcare? have also been introduced to help the manager and practitioners evaluate the setting, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. There is significant scope to develop this further to enable the team to identify clearly the key priorities of the setting and target important outcomes for children's learning.
- Overall, the absence of robust self-evaluation procedures is resulting in limited improvement. The setting has an improvement plan which sets out a number of priorities. The manager and practitioners have implemented a few changes in recent months. However, in order to demonstrate clear evidence of the impact of new developments they now need to engage in more effective self-evaluation.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Most children are settled and building their confidence within the setting. The majority of children are engaged and enjoy moving freely between the outdoors and the small kitchen area of the setting. However, they do not have consistent access to the full range of learning opportunities indoors. They can make choices from the available resources both indoors and outdoors, however not all children are sufficiently engaged in learning experiences for extended periods of time. Practitioners now need to review their provision of resources to ensure they provide sufficient challenge. Children need more opportunities to lead and develop their own learning and have access to a wider range of appropriate resources so they can independently make choices and follow their ideas.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are warm. There are a few examples of practitioners making effective use of questioning and interventions to maintain children's interests but this is inconsistent and needs to be improved. On most occasions, practitioners' interactions do not engage children in purposeful conversations sufficiently well to support and extend their learning. Throughout the session there are missed opportunities to develop children's learning as practitioners are distracted by routine tasks that prevent them engaging with children. They need to listen to children's interests better and give them more opportunities to develop curiosity, deepen their learning and make play more purposeful.
- Children spend most time choosing activities outdoors during the session. However, the outdoor space does not have access to a wide enough range of learning opportunities. Children's play outdoors was not supported sufficiently well by practitioners. Indoors, children would benefit from support to use a wider range of natural materials and open-ended resources to aid creativity and investigative play. Children need to be able to engage in a wider range of learning opportunities across the curriculum each day. They could be better supported to care for their learning environment as they move between activities.
- Practitioners make on-going observations about each child's learning and record them in an electronic journal. These include photographic evidence and samples of children's work. Practitioners now need to continue to develop this approach to ensure it reflects progress for individual children and links more clearly to planning appropriate next steps in learning. Children have regular opportunities to review their journals.
- Practitioners use a variety of formats to plan and record children's learning, including floor books. They have correctly identified the need to start to involve children routinely in formally planning and evaluating their learning. Practitioners should progress this ensuring they focus more clearly on developing children's voice. Importantly, they should also review how they plan responsively to take forward children's interests as they play. Practitioners do not yet consistently identify appropriate next stages in learning for children. They engage regularly to

discuss children's playroom experiences. However discussions now need to have a clearer focus on children's learning. Practitioners are not yet consistently tracking children's progress through their journals and plans should be made to implement this approach.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Across the setting there is scope to increase expectations of what children can achieve, by raising expectations and recognising and building on what children can already know.
- Practitioners are gaining some confidence in working with Curriculum For Excellence. They should now should take full account of the design principles to provide greater choice, depth and challenge in children's learning. Practitioners should ensure they are planning for progression across all curriculum areas. Practitioners use Pre Birth to Three Guidelines effectively to plan experiences for the younger children.
- Transition from home into the setting is managed well. Children are invited to spend time in the setting with their parents in order to build initial relationships with practitioners. Transition arrangements across the setting, for children aged from two years have been identified as an area to develop further. Practitioners give these young children the comfort they need. However, we discussed with the owner and manager the need to refresh and review the use of space across the setting to help meet the needs of a few children.
- We talked with practitioners about how they might continue to develop transitions from the setting to the local primary schools. This will ensure continuity of learning across the early level.

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

- See Choice QI

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | satisfactory

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

- Across the setting there is a friendly atmosphere where children and families are made to feel welcome and valued. Practitioners give good attention to help children settle when they are new to Wee Scones Nursery
- Practitioners are developing their knowledge of the importance of nurturing children's wellbeing. However, they are at an early stage of understanding the principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). A range of learning opportunities should be used to increase children's awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included.
- Practitioners support younger children, under two years, to be kind and caring towards their peers. Children aged three to five years enjoy the company of their friends. Most have an appropriate sense of fairness and demonstrate this through sharing toys and resources. Children should now be afforded opportunities to take on leadership roles and develop the ability to make choices and promote their ideas in making decisions about matters that affect them in the setting.
- Practitioners encourage children's independence and self-help skills as they help to prepare dress themselves for outdoor play and understand the practice of personal hygiene. However, careful attention should be paid to hand washing after outside play. Practitioners should be more aware of the importance of planning and organising some of the daily routines. This includes developing knowledge of national guidance to ensure snack and lunch times are more enjoyable experiences for children.
- The manager has an appropriate knowledge of legislative requirements. In her short time in post, she has engaged practitioners in complying with statutory duties. The manager and practitioners would benefit from attending appropriate training to build further on their understanding of current legislation and statutory duties. The manager has recently updated a range of policies and procedures to guide practitioners in their practice. She must now also ensure these procedures and policies are implemented effectively.
- The manager and practitioners place importance on getting to know children and their families well. They have an appropriate understanding of children's care needs. As part of this, each child has an individualised care plan which gives useful information on individual children's care needs. These are shared with parents and reviewed at regular intervals. Practitioners are aware of the range of professionals, including health service professionals and social work colleagues to implement individualised support where children have an identified additional need.

- Currently, there are several children with English as an additional language attending the setting. Practitioners should strengthen appropriate interventions to ensure they continue to make appropriate progress.
- All children, families and practitioners are treated fairly and with respect. Children are learning about a range of celebrations and cultures from around the world. More could be done by practitioners to promote children's awareness of equality issues and of factors that may lead to discrimination.

## 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

### Children under three years

- Babies and young children are becoming comfortable with each other and building their confidence. They are developing their ability to make their needs known. Generally practitioners use praise well to encourage children's interactions but this needs to be used more consistently. Children enjoy listening to rhymes and songs. To enhance children's early language skills practitioners should extend imaginative play and increase the frequency of their interactions with children.
- Babies and young children access a range of toys and resources to support early mathematical development and a few join in with counting games. More regular opportunities for children to investigate would be beneficial to help them gain an understanding of early mathematics and numbers.
- Children have planned access to the outdoor play space, however they would benefit from more opportunities to develop skills in climbing, sliding and building in developmentally appropriate contexts. Children enjoy engaging in sensory play and enthusiastically investigated the textures of jelly and shredded paper.

### Children aged three - five years

- Children are making satisfactory progress in early literacy. Practitioners make use visual prompts to support a few of the youngest children to communicate their needs. This approach should be used more consistently both indoor and outside. Children show a keen interest in mark making and enjoy sharing their 'writing' with adults and each other. They enjoy listening to stories in groups and can recount their favourite texts. It is important for practitioners to ensure children continue to develop these skills through meaningful contexts indoors and during outdoor learning.
- Children are making steady progress in early numeracy and can count when playing with increasing confidence. They count items for snacks and join in with counting songs and rhymes. Children are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they compare the size and capacity of containers and in comparing the lengths of carrots when making soup. However, the development of these skills can be limited, as practitioners do not provide sufficient support to build on these experiences. A few children recognise shapes in the environment when walking outside. Practitioners now need to continue to support children to

develop early numeracy and mathematical skills through a wider range of real-life contexts, both in the playroom and outdoors.

- In health and wellbeing children are progressing well. Practitioners encourage children to be caring, kind and respectful to others. Children engage enthusiastically in energetic play outdoors but this can lack sufficient challenge. They kick balls with increasing skill and are developing confidence when using the slide.
- Children help make musical instruments from junk and accompany singing games enthusiastically. They create paintings and models from the limited range of materials available, however access to a wider range of resources would support improved creativity. Children have limited access to a tablet computer. They would benefit from more regular access to a wider range of technology to support skills development.
- Most children are keen to learn and, when supported appropriately, enthusiastically explore the learning environment when engaging in free play. As the team continue to review their practice and approaches to child centred learning it will be important for practitioners to ensure the indoor and outside spaces are numeracy and literacy rich in meaningful contexts.
- Achievements are recognised through the use of praise and daily communication. The team are now considering ways in which to track children's wider achievements to contribute to an overall picture of progress. As part of this, the setting has introduced the use of an achievement wall to celebrate achievements outwith the setting.
- Within the setting there is a supportive and inclusive ethos to removing barriers to learning. Practitioners know the children and their families well and take account of family's individual circumstances. When required, they work with other partners to provide support to children and families. This ensures positive outcomes for all.

## Setting choice of QI: Partnerships

### ■ The promotion of partnerships

- Overall, parents who completed the inspection questionnaire and spoke with the inspector confirmed that practitioners worked in partnership with them to care and share in their children's learning and development. Most were aware of the recent changes to the staff team, but felt that this had been carefully managed to support children's confidence. However, a few voiced their children were finding it difficult to form attachments. Management should now focus on ensuring such changes are kept to a minimum to ensure continuity in care across the setting.
- Practitioners have useful meetings with parents twice per year to update them on the progress their child is making. Parents are at the early stages of contributing to children's journals and should continue to be supported to share children's learning and achievements from home.
- The setting invites parents to share their skills to enrich children's learning experiences and awareness of the world around them. Parents and extended family members have supported the setting with the development of the outdoor area.
- Practitioners make good use of opportunities to promote partnerships within the community to enhance children's learning. An intergenerational project is helping children gain new knowledge about their community and the people who live and work there. They have recently formed a partnership with a nearby care home. Weekly visits have been planned for children and residents to take part in a variety of meaningful experiences. At the time of inspection, a few of the older children joined the residents for Easter activities.
- Through collecting for food banks and monies for other charities, children are learning about people who are less fortunate than themselves. Through these initiatives children are developing citizenship skills.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.