

# Summarised inspection findings

**Freuchie Primary School Nursery Class**

Fife Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

The accommodation for Freuchie Nursery Class is within the main school building. The playroom has direct access to an attractive, secure outdoor area. Children also have use of the wider school campus, including outdoor spaces. The setting is registered for 20 children, aged 3 years old to those not yet attending school, to attend at any one time. At the time of inspection, there were 31 children on the roll. A peripatetic nursery teacher supports practitioners in learning and teaching during regular visits and took up post in August 2018. Practitioners also benefit from input from a visiting development officer.

### 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 vision, values and aims, developed for the nursery class, have been in place since 2017. These are evident in practice with children being encouraged to be 'independent', 'confident', 'creative' and 'curious'. The team recognise that it would be timely to review and refresh these to ensure that they fully reflect the aspirations of current stakeholders. In doing so, they should be expressed in language that will be accessible to young children.
- The headteacher and visiting staff from Fife Council work with practitioners to provide a range of input that supports the leadership of change. Working together, and with increasing use of self-evaluation, an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs to improve further is developing. Alongside daily operational responsibilities, practitioners have some leadership roles. These include supporting student placements, mentoring Modern Apprentices and leading the development of new approaches linked to whole school improvement priorities. Building on this approach, children and parents could be more fully involved to develop a shared leadership of change.
- Practitioners work very well together and support each other in many aspects of their work. They are keen to continue to improve the work of the nursery class, as evident in their engagement in the inspection process. To support leadership of change, they would benefit from increased strategic support alongside support for operational aspects. Professional learning has strengthened particular aspects of the nursery, including support of individual children. Recent collaborative working with a local setting is supporting the beginning of an outward-looking approach. Practitioners are keen to develop this further to increase their knowledge and understanding of current thinking and practice. There is potential for this to be developed further to look beyond the immediate cluster network, including exploring what is happening nationally and further afield.
- The use of the self-evaluation framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' is beginning to support more meaningful and structured reflection on practice. Supported by more strategic leadership, this should continue to promote an increasingly robust cycle of

self-evaluation that consistently leads to improvement. This cycle of self-evaluation should increasingly be evidence-based, for example, recording monitoring of practice. Using simple approaches, the views of parents are gathered and, where possible, taken forward. There is scope for children and families to be more involved in evaluating the work of the nursery in a planned and structured way. As part of the self-evaluation cycle, it will be important to measure the impact of any developments on improving outcomes for children.

- Whole-school priorities for improvement are shared with the nursery class. Care should be taken to ensure that these are the most appropriate priorities to impact positively on the youngest learners. Some positive impact is evident because of identified priorities, including the increased use of digital technologies to support and extend learning.

## 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

- A welcoming ethos and positive relationships between children, practitioners and families are key features of the setting. Development of the playroom and outdoor area has resulted in attractive, stimulating learning environments. The very recent addition of resources has enhanced this further. Effective use is also made of the school campus to support learning, for example, the wider playground and the church hall. Almost all children demonstrate a high level of independence in the nursery environment. They choose where and with what to play, often directing their play without adult support. Children have access to a range of interesting resources within an enabled environment.
- Most children show an appropriate commitment to their chosen tasks with a few requiring support to maintain concentration. Through their interactions, all practitioners are respectful, attentive and supportive of children. They know children well as individuals and increasingly as learners. In most interactions, the use of commentary and questions supports and extends learning effectively and promotes higher order thinking. As identified, to promote consistency of approach, it will be useful for continued development of skills in effective questioning to support and challenge learning.
- The use of digital technologies has been an identified area for improvement. As a result, a range of technologies is now used to support and extend learning. To maximise opportunities for learning, practitioners should develop increased confidence and skills in the full range of technologies available, including the interactive board.
- Children all have a personal learning journey folder (PLJ), which records their nursery experiences through photographs, comments and observations made by practitioners. These provide a stimulus to support children to reflect on and talk about their nursery experiences. As identified, practitioners should continue to develop the quality of their observations to ensure the sharpest focus on the significant learning of individuals. Over time, observations should provide a basis for assessment that identifies progress and application of skills across the curriculum. This, in turn, will support the identification of focused, individualised next steps, which support children to make the progress that they are capable of. This could also provide a means to developing a meaningful language of learning with children. There is scope for children and parents to be even more involved in the documentation of children's learning.
- Local authority formats are used to track the progress that children make in their learning. Robust moderation of this tracking now needs to be implemented to ensure an accurate view of each child's progress is evidenced.
- Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and take forward learning, often on an individual basis, for example, researching areas of interest on the internet. This approach is supporting children to have increasing ownership of their own learning. Blending this more

effectively with planning for learning that better reflects individual next steps will support children to make the progress that they are capable of. The use of 'learning walls' is being developed to support children's ongoing involvement in, and ownership of, their own learning. Practitioners establish what children already know and what they would like to learn about to progress learning. This developing approach should now be embedded with careful monitoring of its impact on learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Overall, the curriculum provided reflects national guidance. It would be useful to develop a rationale to underpin the curriculum provided. Core elements, including the promotion of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, are included across the playroom and outdoors. The curriculum is delivered through play with increasing emphasis on children directing their own play. It would be helpful for planning for children's learning to be evaluated using the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This would help identify what is working well and what needs to improve. It would be useful for practitioners to explore national advice on curriculum frameworks for younger children.
- There is a focus on developing an awareness of developing the young workforce through exploring children's aspirations and a range of occupations. The nursery class vision, values and aims have helpfully been extended to include skills linked to this agenda.
- The development of the outdoor area, regular visits to local woodland and use of the community enrich children's experiences. Children have opportunities to be creative, develop resilience and apply skills in problem solving in these stimulating contexts.
- A fluid arrangement between the nursery and the early level primary class allows children many opportunities for shared learning. This supports transition well allowing children to become confident and familiar with the different learning environments. Establishing robust developmental pathways and a shared pedagogy will support this arrangement further.
- Exploration and review of creativity has supported the development of a shared understanding. This includes how children can be supported to develop the necessary creative skills for life and learning.

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

- Positive relationships, which engender partnership working, are a strength of the nursery class. Partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect. Parents and families are encouraged to play an active role in the life of the nursery class in a range of ways. This includes supporting regular visits to woodland, events and contributing to children's PLJs. This could be increased through stay and play sessions, the planned development of a parents group and, for example, the use of social media.
- Practitioners have developed positive working relationships with the local playgroup. Regular shared sessions, with a literacy focus, support transitions into the setting and improve outcomes for children and families beyond the nursery.
- The nursery makes good use of the local community to support and enhance opportunities for learning. This includes links with 'Freuchie in Flower', the Church Guild, local shops and businesses and settings within the cluster.

## 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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.



### 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

- There is a clear commitment to supporting and developing children's wellbeing because of their nursery experiences. Nurturing relationships are evident between practitioners and children and underpin the caring and inclusive ethos of the nursery class. There is a shared sense of purpose to get it right for every child. The supportive relationships secure a partnership approach and a strong sense of community. Positive behaviour is actively promoted with children supported to show consideration for others and develop positive relationships with each other and trusted adults. When necessary, practitioners intervene in a way that is calm and supports children to reflect on their actions. Children are supported, where appropriate, on an individual basis to interact as part of the nursery community. This includes children supporting their peers in a mature way.
- Children are encouraged to contribute their views in a developmentally appropriate way. This includes choosing the story to be read and making decisions about the purchase of new resources. Children are now ready for increased participation in meaningful decision-making. They need further opportunities to develop leadership skills across a broader range of experiences.
- The language of wellbeing now needs to be developed and embedded to help children be more able to talk about their own wellbeing. As planned, the language of wellbeing should be linked to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to support children to understand their rights.
- Practitioners collate a range of information to meet the care and learning needs of children. We discussed how better use needs to be made of this information to consistently meet legislative requirements and help secure positive outcomes for children. This could include the introduction of chronologies to record significant events in the lives of a child. The headteacher and practitioners need to develop and consolidate their understanding of the full range of statutory duties relevant to early learning and childcare. To ensure these duties are consistently met robust monitoring should be undertaken. A review and refresh of approaches to record accidents and incidents and risk assessment needs to be undertaken to ensure suitable rigour is applied.
- Practitioners correctly identify where children may experience barriers to their learning and strive to provide effective support to individuals. They work together with management, parents and other professionals to implement strategies to support children. Planning to meet individual needs should be regularly and robustly recorded and reviewed. This will help measure where interventions are having positive impact. The use of targeted interventions needs to be increased, particularly to help challenge children who are more able in their learning. All available data and information should be made full use of to help secure positive outcomes for children.

- Overall, children and their families are observed to be treated equally and fully included. To value diversity and challenge any potential discrimination children need to be introduced to wider range of cultures and backgrounds. Practitioners should develop their awareness of factors that may reinforce stereotypes or create artificial barriers to participation. This should be used to review and further develop the curriculum and daily practices.

### 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 come to Freuchie Nursery Class with a range of skills, developed abilities, knowledge and experiences from home. The nursery adds value to children's experiences and learning, however all children are not yet making the progress they are capable of because of their nursery experiences. There is scope for children to make increased progress, through increased challenge in their learning.
- In communication and early language, children are making satisfactory progress. Most children are able to follow instructions and listen well to stories being read to them. Most children initiate and enjoy conversations with known adults where they share and reflect on their experiences using a well-developed range of vocabulary. The majority of children confidently recognise letters, which are important to them, such as their initial, and its associated sound. Mark-making using a range of media is of interest to the majority of children. A few children enjoy the challenge of typing familiar words using the computer keyboard. They challenge themselves to create their own books on chosen subjects, independently sounding out and writing less familiar words. A few children are reading unfamiliar words and would benefit from increased support and challenge to develop their skills further. To increase the progress that children make in their learning, there is scope to offer opportunities that are more challenging. These should be differentiated to suit individual abilities and provide a wider range of relevant contexts to apply skills. This could include a more structured introduction to learning French to promote an early start to learning across the early level.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are making satisfactory progress. Most children recognise numbers in context and count, applying their understanding in real-life contexts such as checking the fruit order for snack. A few children demonstrate well-developed skills including counting in twos, simple addition and using larger numbers. To support increased progress children should have clear next steps in learning identified in order to consolidate and challenge their developing abilities. Experiences such as handling real money during visits to the village shop are helping children to recognise notes and coins. Voting for their preferred story every day introduces children to simple data handling such as tally marks. To extend this, other ways of collecting and displaying data could be introduced.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. During weekly outdoor learning experiences in local woodland, most children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This includes, the importance of following rules, understanding how plants can be poisonous and how to negotiate uneven terrain safely. Children are observed to

use a range of tools safely, including screwdrivers, hammers and knives. The majority of children are developing the skills required to pedal a two-wheeled bike and are proud of their achievements. Links with community police help to support children's understanding of 'stranger danger'. Linked to the national indicators, children could be developing a deeper understanding of all aspects of their wellbeing.

- How information about children's progress is gathered over time needs to be developed to evidence clearly the value added by nursery experiences. This needs to be consistent for all children. The identification of next steps in learning, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and subsequent measurement of success, would support this.
- Wider achievements are celebrated. Processes are in place to record these within PLJs and this now needs to be done more consistently. Information about achievements needs to be used to promote progress across areas of learning through exploring the skills being developed. By monitoring wider achievements robustly, practitioners could use information to ensure no child is at risk of missing out.
- Assessment data is available for aspects of children's learning. Using this data to inform future planned interventions could ensure equity for all children. A range of targeted interventions could be introduced to secure greater progress for more children. Measuring impact will ensure the correct interventions are in place to secure children's progress and ensure equity.

## Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

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

- Children's transition from home to nursery is very well supported. This includes home visits, storytelling sessions and ongoing opportunities for children to visit the nursery with their families to play before they start. Commendably, the nursery class has established very strong links with the local playgroup. Their shared literacy programme, facilitated by nursery practitioners, is supporting children's development beyond the setting. Together, these approaches ensure the nursery is a welcoming and familiar place where children and families feel happy and welcomed.
- Nursery to P1 transition has been a strong focus for Freuchie Primary School and nursery class. The P1 teacher and nursery practitioners have worked well together to develop the learning environment in Primary 1/2. As a result, children are beginning to benefit from a more play-based approach to learning. A flexible and fluid approach to transition has been developed this session. This allows children from the nursery class and P1 to visit each other's learning spaces in order to share their learning experiences. As a result, transition has moved away from being isolated events to a more holistic experience across the early level. A helpful next step would be to track this movement between the learning spaces. This will allow teachers and practitioners to track children learning and development and develop joint planning opportunities.

## 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.