

Summarised inspection findings

Tarland Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

9 June 2020

Key contextual information

Tarland Primary School serves the village of Tarland in Upper Deeside and the surrounding area. The headteacher is also the acting headteacher for Logie Coldstone Primary School. At the time of the inspection, staff and children from Logie Coldstone Primary School were co-located in Tarland Primary School due significant repairs taking place at their own school. Logie Coldstone Primary School was not included in this inspection.

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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- In the nursery, caring, nurturing relationships between practitioners, children and parents are evident. As a result, most children are independent, make appropriate choices about their play and frequently self-select and transport resources to develop their learning.
- The positive changes to the outdoor play area are encouraging children to play outside. They access a wide range of interesting learning experiences, for example, planting and growing vegetables and experimenting with pipes and water. These activities help to sustain children's interest and to expand their knowledge and skills.
- The playroom indoors is well resourced. The structure of the session enables children to take part in free play experiences. Currently, these are at a similar level for all children. A more appropriate balance of free play supported by interesting experiences designed by practitioners will encourage children to take part in small group or individual interactions. Alongside this, children would benefit from access to a quieter, calmer, cosy small space, where they can relax on their own or with friends.
- Across the team, there are some strong examples of interactions which support children's learning well. Staff challenge and develop children's thinking by noticing a child's interests and inviting children to solve problems as they arise. To improve further, practitioners need to consistently evaluate how they could improve their interactions and ensure all experiences support children's learning in interesting and dynamic ways.
- Practitioners know children in the nursery well. The staff team is now fully in place and it is making a positive start to knowing individual children well as learners. Work is progressing well to improve observations with the goal to make better judgements about children's progress in learning and development. To extend this further, it would be useful to encourage children to make connections between what they are observing and their previous experiences, following on from these in a meaningful way. This would significantly help the observation, planning, assessment and recording cycle.

- Practitioners have been working to encourage children to have a stronger voice in planning for learning and identifying their own next steps as a more regular feature of practice. Examples of child-led learning require more consideration of the depth, breadth and challenge in learning.
- Local authority trackers, developmental milestones and progression pathways are enabling practitioners to record an overview of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There is a need to streamline and reduce the range of paperwork to ensure planning is proportionate and more manageable.
- Photographs of observations are used to capture and record children's progress and achievements. These, and children's individual learning journey folders, are regularly shared with parents. This is work in progress and at the early stage of development. Children are proud of, and enjoy adding to, their individual learning profiles which they readily discuss with adults.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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
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- There is a strong nurturing focus on children's health and wellbeing. The emphasis on relationships is helping children to settle and to develop friendships. The majority can communicate their needs and feelings according to their stage of development and are kind and caring towards each other. They are encouraged to make choices and to follow their own interests. They particularly enjoy being outdoors in the garden and having the freedom to explore.
 - Most children are becoming more independent in a range of personal skills such as changing shoes, washing hands, brushing their teeth and discussing which foods are healthy. They also enjoy taking part in yoga within a story context that encourages them to move and use their body in different ways.
 - Throughout the playroom and outside in the garden there are opportunities for children to take part in literacy and numeracy activities set within a relevant play context. Early language development is being encouraged through children engaging in conversations, listening during activities and taking part in songs and rhymes. Children have a growing confidence in communicating with others. Most children enjoy reading stories with adults throughout their session. The majority of children access books independently in the book area. Practitioners promote early mark-making skills and knowledge of environmental print. Improved resources and opportunities to mark make support children to express their ideas. Some children are beginning to form letters while others write their name with confidence.
 - Most children are making good progress in early numeracy. They count naturally through routines and games. A few children are able to count on one and two confidently and subtract one and two in a practical context. This was evident as children naturally used appropriate mathematical language to compare length of objects and problem solve using measuring tapes. To improve further, a broader range of early numeracy experiences in different play contexts are required. Practitioners should raise their expectations and record children's efforts to ensure that children make the maximum progress.
 - Practitioners highlight children's successes naturally through giving feedback which helps children to understand what they are doing well and recognises their individual strengths in learning. For example, in a small number of cases children are persistent and concentrate well when tackling a difficult task.

- Practitioners are recording children’s progress over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in individual profiles. A new online tracker is showing a promising start to recording progress across the early level into primary one. At the time of the inspection, we were unable to evaluate progress over time for a small group of children. These children are very young and started attending the nursery only a few weeks prior to the inspection.
- The nursery class supports an inclusive ethos through mutual trust and respect. Plans are in place to address any potential barriers to learning. Necessary support is available and in place through partnership with parents and external partners.

1. Quality of care and support

- Staff's welcoming, friendly and sensitive interactions created a nurturing environment for children to play and learn. Children were comfortable and confident in staff's company and readily approached them for help and support.
- Personal plans were in place for all children and most were updated six monthly as required. From the sample we reviewed, we found all mandatory information was in place to effectively support the child.
- The established lead member of staff had a good knowledge of children who required extra support. Support plans were in place to ensure that children got the help and encouragement needed. The lead was supporting staff to become more familiar with this important information to become confident in effectively meeting children's individual needs.
- Effective partnerships with parents and other professionals supported the good quality of care children received to help them achieve their potential.
- The service's child protection policy provided staff with guidance to follow should they have concerns about a child. Effective procedures were in place to safeguard children. Staff had attended training and demonstrated a good understanding of child protection and the children's wider world and how that could impact on their wellbeing. They were familiar with their procedure and were clear about their roles in keeping children safe.
- Children were in the early stages of learning about the eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI). This will give them a wider understanding and ownership of them as they use them throughout their time at nursery, for example, choosing foods to keep them healthy.
- Effective systems were in place to ensure medication was safely managed and stored. Staff had very good knowledge of those children requiring medication. However, the administration information should be stored along with the medication to enable staff to act quickly. More detailed records needed to be developed to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing, for example naming the medication and if it was refused.
<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/1427/Childrens%20service%20medication%20guidance.pdf>
- Systems were in place to support children with food intolerances, allergies or dietary preferences. Children enjoyed a healthy and unhurried snack that offered them many opportunities to gain independence and practice life skills. Plans to involve children in choosing menus were near completion. We discussed the importance of snack being a sociable experience and staff sitting with the children would support this.
- Children experienced well-planned transitions from home to nursery and from nursery to school. This supported children to feel confident and included.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

- Children were cared for in a secure, safe and well-maintained environment. The bright playroom was welcoming and decorated with lovely examples of children's artwork.
- Children clearly enjoyed child-led play, allowing them to follow their interests. They could choose from an extensive range of activities, equipment, resources and experiences, including role play, to boost and encourage imagination and creativity.

- The learning environment, however, needed to be more challenging and engaging for some children, requiring more breadth and depth of learning opportunities and experiences. Some children would benefit from a quiet, calm area who wished and needed to spend time alone.
- Children's experiences were enhanced through safe, daily free-flow play where they could be active and energetic. The improved outdoor area provided children with greater choice and access to an increased range of natural, open-ended and real-life objects to support their growing curiosity, problem solving and imaginative skills. Children were encouraged to nurture nature, making fat balls for the birds. Children also had opportunities to grow, cook and eat their own food. The outdoors remains a focus for improvement.
- We discussed the structure and pace of the session and how this should be more flexible to accommodate the needs of the children, particularly at certain points of the day. This would allow children to concentrate and maintain their interests and focus on learning.
- Children were involved in community life, walking regularly to the local shop or visiting the cafe. They made good use of local parks and woods. Visits to a local care home were to be increased. These visits would encourage strong attachments with the residents and support friendships, shared knowledge, experiences and learning.
- Infection control procedures were in place however needed to be improved to fully support children's health and wellbeing. Children were encouraged to wash their hands with support from staff. However, hand-washing practices were variable and did not always take account of current best practice. We observed a staff member wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) out with the food preparation area. This practice would not minimise the risk of spreading infection.
- Risk assessments were in place and there was evidence these were being reviewed by staff. Most of these were effective in identifying the possible risks to children. However, the nursery outings assessment needed additional information to ensure children's safety. We also asked the manager to consider the children attending the service and, where necessary, develop individual risk assessments to ensure children's safety within and out-with the service. It was evident that children were informally assessing risk and supported to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour during play and their time at the service.
- Accident and Incident forms were completed and included appropriate information. Staff and parents/carers signed these. We highlighted that these forms should also be dated to confirm when information was shared. The lead practitioner audited these forms to inform the review of the service's risk assessments to ensure children have continued safety.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

- Staff were appropriately qualified. All staff who were required to do so were appropriately registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We were unable to examine the recruitment information for the new staff members. However, they confirmed having undergone a safe and thorough recruitment and induction. They also confirmed that all checks had been carried out prior to starting their new role. This contributed to keeping children safe.
- Staff interaction was positive throughout our visit. Staff's warm and caring nature towards children created an environment where children were nurtured, happy and secure. Staff were motivated, worked well together as a team, and told us they felt well supported in their roles. Staff knew, or were getting to know, the children well as individuals and were

becoming familiar with their individual care, learning and development needs. Ratios and the deployment of staff ensured children's responsive care.

- Children and staff shared good, respectful relationships. Staff's interactions and use of questions supported and extended children's learning. Staff should now consider ways to engage children further in their learning. This could include identifying specific learning targets for children in consultation with children and their parents.
- We discussed the importance of streamlining the planning to ensure that systems are effective to assess and monitor progress. Recording of children's individual progress needs to be reviewed.
- Staff had attended a variety of training opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, for example, using sign language. They were implementing their learning from training and using this knowledge appropriately to support children's learning. The manager and staff should continue to build on their professional learning, enhancing their skills and experience to support children to achieve positive outcomes.
- Staff had built on the quality of learning experiences for children using guidance such as Building the Ambition and Space to Grow. Staff should continue to build their knowledge and understanding of national guidance. This will support them to develop their knowledge and practice and further improve outcomes for children.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4. Quality of management and leadership

- The manager, together with the lead, had a shared vision of the future of the nursery and the improvements they planned to make and take forward.
- The manager and staff had made a positive start to using How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare? to help them to evaluate the work of the nursery. They had looked at the quality indicators and made use of the challenge questions to prompt discussion and to identify what was working well and what needed to improve. This was still at an early stage, although a quality assurance calendar had been created to ensure a more systematic approach. Self-evaluation needs to be organised and in-depth and should fully involve all staff, children and parents. The manager now needs to progress monitoring and tracking that will provide a clear overview of children's progress in their learning and the quality of the service overall. This should include review and updating all personal plans for all children within the legislative timescale along with audits of playroom practice, such as infection control.
- The lead had identified that they were evaluating their work informally. They need to refer to best practice guidance, for example, Building the Ambition and the Health and Social Care Standards. This would provide staff with continued confidence knowing that the quality of children's care and support was in line with best practice guidance, the standards and legislation. <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3783/self-evaluation-for-improvement-your-guide.pdf>
- The service had developed a range of policies and procedures and these were shared with parents. We suggested a small number of changes to be made to ensure they met best practice guidance, particularly the child protection and complaints policy.
- An improvement plan was in place to support the manager and staff to develop aspects of the service. The plan was relevant and targeted. It was evident that progress was being made to improve the service and outcomes for children.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

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.