

Summarised inspection findings

Gledfield Primary School Nursery

The Highland Council

14 May 2024

Key contextual information

Gledfield Nursery is based within Gledfield Primary School in Ardgay. It serves the communities on the south side of the Kyle of Sutherland. The nursery operates from 8.30 am to 2.30 pm every school day during term time.

The nursery is registered for up to 15 children aged between three to those not yet attending school to attend at any given time. At the time of the inspection there were four children on the roll. The manager is a cluster headteacher for Gledfield Primary School and a neighbouring school. Gledfield Primary School and Nursery has experienced significant staff changes and absences in recent years. The headteacher took up post in January 2023 and has provided stability.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. They make use of the environment surrounding the school, including a wooded area.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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 was included in the school's recent review of vision, values and aims. Practitioners bring the values of kindness, honesty, respect and determination to life through the very positive ethos and the day-to-day experiences they provide within the nursery. They should continue to talk to children regularly about values in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way. The headteacher and practitioners should embed further their vision, values and aims to help families to understand better what the nursery wishes to achieve.
- The headteacher provides effective leadership and direction to practitioners. Her knowledge and experience of early years pedagogy enables her to play an active role in the nursery. She ensures that children and practitioners are involved fully in the life of the school. Practitioners comment positively on the leadership of the nursery and appreciate recent stability in staffing following a period of changes. Early years officers from the local authority also provide valuable, additional support and guidance to practitioners.
- Practitioners are enthusiastic and strongly committed to continuing to improve the early learning and childcare they provide for children and families. They work well together, continually extending children's interests and engagement in their play. Practitioners show a strong culture of reflection within the nursery and recognise the importance of professional learning. They share ideas with colleagues at network meetings and during visits to other early years settings. As a result, they have made recent improvements to their practice, such as introducing 'planning in the moment'. As planned, practitioners should work more closely with school staff, for example to review play pedagogy across early level.
- The nursery is included in the whole-school improvement plan. Practitioners also consider more detailed actions to address priorities specific to the nursery. The headteacher has

introduced a calendar of monitoring and evaluative activity to take place this session. Practitioners are beginning to evaluate their practice at their 'Week 40' staff meetings. They should build on this positive start and use quality indicators from national frameworks more regularly to support self-evaluation. Practitioners should continue to seek the views of children and families as they continue to make improvements.

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

- Practitioners have created a warm and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning both indoors and outdoors. Children show interest and enthusiasm as they explore the range of stimulating stage-appropriate activities across the nursery. They access an appropriate balance of adult and child-initiated learning experiences. Practitioners empower children to follow through their own lines of enquiry. For example, they look for information together on a tablet. Children are given time and space to develop new skills, while promoting their imagination, creativity and curiosity. They concentrate very well for extended periods. Children enjoy relaxed mealtimes and engage well during story time.
- Practitioners interact with children in a calm, nurturing way. Their interactions are caring and responsive. Practitioners engage children well in conversations during play and at mealtimes. They are skilful in providing well-timed interventions to support and extend children's learning. Practitioners use questioning and commentary well to support individuals. As a result, children's confidence and communication skills are improving. Practitioners should continue to provide children with increased responsibilities, roles and talk to them about their rights. This would develop further children's confidence, interactions and leadership skills.
- Practitioners observe children as they play to help inform their 'planning in the moment'. They extend further this learning by building on children's interests and also through intentional planning approaches. These effective approaches help to engage and motivate children in their play and learning. Practitioners involve children meaningfully in planning using floorbooks. They record aspects of children's learning and progress through photographs and captions on a digital platform. Practitioners should use this online platform to enable children to revisit and share their learning.
- Practitioners use well their detailed observations and stage-appropriate developmental overviews to assess and record children's progress. The headteacher recently introduced an online tool to track children's progress. Staff have started to use the local authority progression frameworks for literacy and numeracy. They also track early level experiences and outcomes to ensure children access all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners should use these pathways to help them to identify better what children need to learn next.
- Practitioners work effectively to plan meeting children's needs in the nursery. Due to the small number on the register, practitioners are able to provide individual support. This helps practitioners to sensitively meet the needs of individual children requiring additional support when needed. When planning, practitioners consider how the nursery can be adapted. They put interventions in place, for example providing a calm, quiet space and providing emotional check-ins.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use national guidance to plan the curriculum. It is based on play and linked strongly to children's interests. They use developmental overviews to support children's learning and wellbeing and recently introduced local authority literacy and numeracy progression frameworks.
- Practitioners plan meaningful contexts for learning both indoors and outdoors, for example exploring life cycles and signs of Spring. Children become familiar with their local area through walks in the community and visits to the local Trust larder and community growing spaces. Practitioners should continue their meaningful links with partners, including inviting visitors into the setting, to develop further children's skills in real life contexts.
- Practitioners plan activities well to support children as they first move into nursery. They encourage parents to stay in the playroom to support their child to settle. Children are supported well when moving into P1, for example by regular visits to the class and joining in weekly assembly. Staff should consider developing this further, with a curricular focus across the early level that extends across the school year prior to children starting P1. This would help to support progression and continuity in children's learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have strong positive relationships with parents who appreciate the very caring and supportive approaches used by staff. Parents are welcomed into the nursery where the headteacher and practitioners provide an 'open door' policy. The nursery arranges termly 'stay and play' sessions and encourages parents to take part in play experiences with children. The headteacher and practitioners keep parents well informed through helpful information on display in the entrance area, newsletters and daily dialogue at drop off and pick up times. This includes useful information about nursery routines. Parents volunteer their assistance, for example, in accompanying children on a recent visit to a neighbouring nursery.
- Practitioners and children take photographs as they engage in daily play activities at nursery. Practitioners make effective use of an online platform to share these experiences with parents. They find that this helps parents to understand and extend further their child's learning at home. Parents share information from children's experiences and achievements at home with practitioners. Children enjoy having their achievements from home displayed in the nursery and included within their profiles.

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

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

- The headteacher and practitioners have a strong focus on supporting children's wellbeing. Practitioners know each child well and are responsive to their individual interests and needs. As a result, children are settled and happy in the nursery. Practitioners recognise that caring relationships are at the heart of children's learning and development. Parents speak positively about these relationships and the way this supports their child. The nursery provides effective enhanced settling-in programmes for younger children who require additional time and support as they begin in nursery. Practitioners also invite parents to 'stay and play' sessions to join their child as they engage in their play. This helps children and families to become familiar with nursery routines.
- There is a warm, welcoming ethos in the nursery. Practitioners model kindness and respectful interactions, which children in turn show towards other children and adults. Children are confident, co-operate well with one another and share resources as they play. Practitioners encourage children to discuss their feelings and emotions in a range of ways. Practitioners have made a positive start to using the wellbeing indicators with children. They should regularly reinforce these and the school's values in a stage appropriate way. For example, using characters to help children understand the language of wellbeing. Children are beginning to learn about rights when they join whole school assembly. As a next step, their understanding of inclusion, diversity and equality should be explored further through stories within the nursery.
- Practitioners are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe and meeting their care and learning needs. They have attended appropriate training to ensure they understand procedures and policies. Practitioners ensure that children's personal care plans are reviewed with parents at least twice a year. They are aware of how to request additional support where a child may benefit from support with their learning. Practitioners should continue to refresh their knowledge of codes of practice and statutory Guidance collaboratively with colleagues as part of their ongoing professional learning.

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

- Children are making good progress in early communication and language. They are developing well their language and vocabulary due to quality interactions and questioning by practitioners. Children talk confidently and explain their thinking as they play. They listen attentively to stories and show an interest while finding information in books and on a tablet. A few are beginning to form letters in their name as they self-register and on drawings they make. Skills in mark-marking should be developed across play contexts.
- Overall, children are making good progress in early mathematics and numeracy. A few count numbers beyond 10 and identify and write numerals to five. Children are increasing their knowledge of mathematical concepts as they fill containers by the water tray and weigh and measure as they bake. They use mathematical language as they compare their heights which they record on a wall chart. Children are beginning to talk about times in their day using a timetable with pictures.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They act as helpers by taking turns in preparing fruit for snack. Children's independence should be developed further during mealtimes. Their hygiene skills are used while toothbrushing and hand washing. Children are developing well their physical skills and understanding of risk through being outside, for example as they investigate frogspawn in the garden pond. Children are active and develop a range of skills, for example during activities led by partners. They benefit from regular access to spaces in their local community. Children talk about how they are feeling and show concern for others who are not present in the nursery.
- Practitioners record what children learn in a range of ways. The information gathered from developmental overviews and on planners indicates that all children are making good progress in their learning since starting in nursery. The headteacher and practitioners have recently introduced a tracking tool which will help to show progress children make over time. This will support progression for children at early level as they move into P1.
- Children are proud to share their learning profiles and talk about the 'star' certificates they receive for successes such as attending their first swimming lesson and zipping their jacket. Their achievements are well displayed throughout the nursery for example, on a star of the week board and a kindness tree. Parents are encouraged to celebrate and share children's achievements from home.

- The headteacher and practitioners know children and families well. They take account of any barriers to learning that exist and put interventions in place where additional support is needed. This helps to ensure that all children make appropriate progress from prior learning. Practitioners should consider ways of encouraging and supporting children's attendance where attendance is low, and children are at risk of missing out on their full nursery entitlement.

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.