

Summarised inspection findings

Todholm Primary School and Early Learning Childcare Class

Renfrewshire Council

21 May 2019

Key contextual information

Todholm Primary School Early Learning Childcare Class is situated within the primary school. It is a purpose built, spacious playroom with access to a secure outdoor area. The setting is registered to provide 48 early learning and childcare placements for children aged three to starting school. The setting is currently piloting 1140 hours for a group of eight children. They also provide the option of five morning or afternoon sessions or two and a half day places to meet the needs of parents.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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 headteacher is very knowledgeable and well informed about all aspects of the early learning and childcare class (ELCC). Her high standards are reflected in the early years provision. She meets regularly with the depute headteacher who has responsibility for the strategic management of the ELCC. The senior officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of the setting and is very well supported by the local authority early years teacher. Together they provide very good support and direction to the early years team. As a result, all practitioners work well together and share high aspirations for children and families. Current thinking and research about quality in early learning and childcare underpin continuous improvement in the setting and influences their daily practice. All practitioners demonstrate a personal and collective commitment to providing a high quality service. Led by the depute headteacher they have developed a clear rationale to guide their practice and ensure a shared understanding of the quality service they aim to provide for children in Todholm ELCC.
- Practitioners were involved with the school in creating a shared vision and values which are displayed in the setting. As planned, they should continue to explore how they can work with parents and children and involve them fully in creating a vision, values and aims for the setting. This will help to capture the views and aspirations of children and families and make it more meaningful for them.
- Senior leaders encourage and support practitioners to be innovative and creative. This supportive ethos enables practitioners to use their skills and interests to try out new ideas and develop interesting learning opportunities for children. The recent addition of chickens to the setting has been very successful and this practice is being shared with other settings. All practitioners are clear about their responsibilities in the setting and are keen to develop their leadership roles. They are reflective and continually explore how they can continue to develop their practice.
- There is a very strong commitment to professional learning and high levels of participation by all practitioners. Practitioners who are undertaking additional qualifications are well supported by the team. Students and new practitioners comment positively on the quality of support and mentoring they receive from colleagues. All practitioners are keen to share learning and take

part in regular professional dialogue. As a result, there have been positive changes and developments in the learning environment, including the introduction of loose parts and an increase in child-initiated play. This is leading to increased opportunities for children to develop their creativity and problem solving skills.

- The depute headteacher works with practitioners to agree appropriate priorities for improvement that lead to positive outcomes for children and families. They share this information with the parents through the digital platform. Moving forward, there is scope to involve practitioners, parents and children more fully in this process.

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

- In the setting, warm and positive relationships are evident between practitioners and children. This has resulted in an environment where children are happy, settled and engaged in their play. The well-organised resources, both commercial and natural, and the inviting learning environment enable children to make decisions about their learning and promote sustained play. Children are able to develop their creativity and curiosity through the wide range of natural and open-ended experiences available. Most children engage well in a range of indoor and outdoor play experiences.
- Children are kind and caring towards one another and most children interact well and play collaboratively. For example, when 'making' soup in the home corner and mixing sand in the construction zone. There is an appropriate mix of adult-initiated and child-led experiences that take account of children's interests and their stage of development. Practitioners interact in a responsive way to promote independence and confidence in children. For the most part, practitioners use questioning and commentary effectively to prompt and extend children's play. However, there were periods during the session where children's levels of engagement varied. It would be beneficial for practitioners to re-visit the flow of the session and explore how they can ensure their interactions meet the needs of all children.
- Children access a good range of digital technologies in the setting. They use these well to support learning, for example, using the interactive board to draw and to interact with games that develop maths skills such as matching 2D shapes. Children use programmable robots to develop their understanding of position and movement. They confidently use tablet devices to take photographs to evidence learning. Practitioners should continue to build on this positive practice.
- Practitioners know the children very well as individuals. As a team, they make good use of observations to identify significant moments in children's learning. They share these with key workers at weekly meetings to assist them to make informed judgements on children's learning. Practitioners are at an early stage of using 'Learning Stories' to document children's learning. Personal profiles are in place for all children to document their experiences and progress. The team meet weekly to plan for children's learning and link this to experiences and outcomes. They take good account of children's previous learning. As planned, the setting should continue to develop and refine their processes for assessing and tracking children's learning and development.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning weekly and link this to the experiences and outcomes. Short-term planning takes account of previous learning and observations by practitioners. There is scope to involve children more and support them to talk about their learning and plan next steps. This will help practitioners to take account of children's interests and to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based on play and is very responsive to children's interests and stage of development. Practitioners have a good understanding of how young children learn and share high expectations for learners. There is a strong focus on the essential aspects for early learning including literacy, numeracy and digital technologies. Opportunities for early reading are prominent in the setting and children are developing a love of reading. The environment and available resources are stimulating and support children to develop curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- Opportunities for children to access Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are widely available and well supported by practitioners. Children are able to investigate, try out ideas then build on their developing skills.
- Children have a high level of freedom and access the outdoor area independently. They take part in a wide variety of experiences where they can develop skills, learn to take risks and learn how to care for chickens. Regular trips to the local woods enhance children's learning and help children to develop a wide variety of skills including working collaboratively and developing their awareness of the local environment.
- There is an appropriate balance of real-life and imaginary contexts to stimulate children's interests and practitioners are responsive and flexible in their interactions. The interesting, well-planned curriculum is helping children to make sustained progress in their learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are well informed about what their children are learning and are encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways. Regular 'Play Dates' are organised and parents are invited to stay in the playroom and learn alongside their children. Practitioners post regular photographs and information on the digital platform. Parents spoke very positively about this as they feel it keeps them informed about how their children spend their time in the setting. We discussed with the team how they could focus the 'Play Dates' to help raise parents' understanding of current early years developments such as using loose parts.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer as parent helpers and spend time accompanying children on their walks to the local woods. The setting provide a backpack with resources to enable children and parents to build on this work at home. Parents enjoy participating in this and record their adventures in the 'Family Fun Forest Book' book.
- The setting provide progress reports for parents and encourage them to share children's folders. Parents have the opportunity to comment on their children's learning and highlight any concerns they have. There is scope to explore ways to involve parents more fully in contributing to their children's folders. This will help to involve them more effectively in the learning process.
- There is an active parents group who meet regularly. They are consulted on aspects of the setting and organise fund-raising events. The setting should consider how they can develop the role of this group and encourage them to become more involved in planning for improvement in the setting.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

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

- Positive relationships are a significant strength within the setting. Practitioners work well together to develop and maintain caring, nurturing relationships with all children and parents. This focus on relationships underpins the work of the setting and enables practitioners to provide very good support to children and families. The senior officer and the child's key worker carry out a home visit before children start the setting. They take time to get to know and understand the child and their individual family circumstances. Parents spoke very positively about the impact of the visits and felt it helped both them and their child to settle and feel valued in the setting. Practitioners support children very well throughout the settling in process, which is individualised and unhurried. As a result, almost all children appear to be happy.
- Children's wellbeing is a high priority. Practitioners model positive behaviour and encourage children to treat each other with kindness. They show an understanding of children's age and stage of development and interact appropriately to support children to manage their emotions and deal with conflict. As a result, children behave very well. They are able to share resources and take turns during play. Practitioners support children to develop their awareness of being safe and healthy in meaningful contexts. Children demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of carrying out risk assessments during visits to the forest and can talk about the importance of hand washing and tooth brushing. They enjoy being active in the outdoor area and are learning about keeping fit. There is scope for practitioners to consider how they can introduce other wellbeing indicators to the children in a meaningful way.
- Practitioners show a sound understanding of their statutory duties and are clear about the part they play in keeping children safe. They comply with legislation and regularly complete and review children's care plans. This helps to ensure they identify and record any changes in children's needs. All practitioners take part in appropriate professional learning to enable them to provide quality early learning and childcare and meet the requirements in relevant codes of practice.
- There is a very inclusive ethos within the setting and practitioners work well together to support the individual needs of all children and families. They know children very well and quickly identify any specific support they need. Practitioners meet regularly to discuss individual children and the progress they are making. They seek advice and training from professionals and put in place effective strategies to use with children who require additional input. As a result, all children are included in the setting and are very well supported to make appropriate progress.
- All children and families are treated fairly and with respect. Practitioners understand the importance of providing gender-neutral play experiences and encourage children to access all areas in the setting. They make very good use of available data to ensure they understand the

socio-economic pressures children and families may be facing. This helps them to be responsive and provide targeted support when required.

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
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- The setting is interesting and stimulating and promotes children's emotional, social and physical wellbeing very well. Almost all children are able to learn independently and there are many opportunities for them to express themselves creatively, for example, in their detailed line drawings and creative artwork. Almost all children are confident, thriving and able to communicate articulately with other children and adults. The range of free play activities such as block play, loose parts and technology allow children to express themselves and make deeper connections in their learning. Almost all children show a high level of interest in the world around them. Their learning is contextualised in real-life examples linked to the wider life of the setting, for example, caring for the chickens or exploring the local forest. Children enjoy revisiting learning experiences they are familiar with to make deeper connections across their learning.
 - Almost all children are making very good progress in early literacy. They listen attentively and can follow instructions. They have developed a love of books and read stories regularly with practitioners and each other. Children are able to retell the main parts of familiar books using props and toys. Most children engage in mark-making and a few engage in emergent writing regularly, for example, making strip books of the stories they read and making plans for their technology projects.
 - Almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They recognise numbers during their play and in the local environment, for example, when walking to the forest. They count and sort items during play and use mathematical language appropriately to discuss weight and balance, for example, when using scales in the water trough. They show a very good understanding of shape and can build complicated structures using a variety of resources.
 - Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children develop physical skills during outdoor play and when using the school hall for physical activity. Children manage risk and make decisions about keeping safe during risky play both indoors and outdoors. They develop their fine motor skills using, for example, woodwork tools, scissors and when making detailed line drawings. Children are able to follow routines in the setting and are developing independence as they dress for outdoor play.
 - Children's learning is tracked through observations and professional dialogue at weekly planning meetings. The setting celebrates children's writing success through the 'Star Writer' wall where children's work is also included in the school display. Children's achievements from

home are celebrated and displayed on the 'Proud Wall'. Staff track children's progress over time and identify areas to build upon. This information could now be used to inform next steps when planning adult-initiated learning experiences.

- Practitioners demonstrate a very good awareness of the needs of individual children and families. The early years teacher provides targeted support to identified children to help them make progress. Practitioners are sensitive and work with parents to provide personalised support to individuals to overcome barriers and improve outcomes for children. They provide flexible supports and strategies that effectively meet the different needs of the children.

Choice of QI: 2.5 Family learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

- The setting place a high value on the contribution parents and families make to children's learning. They have developed very positive relationships with families. As a result, families are becoming increasingly confident and enthusiastic about taking part in family learning. Practitioners work hard to ensure quality family learning opportunities are embedded into their practice. Commendably, the setting take a lead role in the Early Years Local Learning Community (EYLLC). The aim of the EYLLC is developing opportunities for family learning through setting fun challenges for families. At the end of the most recent challenge 'Listen, Talk, Read, Write, That's the stuff that makes you bright' the setting liaised with other agencies and organised an exciting family celebration in the local sports centre. This work is reaching into the local community and having a very positive impact on children and families. Practitioners are rightly proud of the work they do with families and continue to explore innovative ways they can involve them in learning with their children. Extended family and grandparents are also enthusiastic about taking part in the learning opportunities on offer.
- Practitioners recognise the positive impact family learning has on improving outcomes for children. They provide a wide range of opportunities to meet the needs and interests of all families. This includes a variety of universal activities such as home-link bags linked to the curriculum and parenting courses. They organise a 'family fun club' which provides interesting experiences to help parents promote literacy and numeracy with their children. During these sessions, parents can access experiences such as cooking, planting and bed time reading. These sessions are very well attended and parents' evaluations are very positive.
- Where required, practitioners also provide more targeted interventions for individuals and identified groups of parents. Practitioners ask families for their views and evaluate the impact of the courses they provide. Parents are very positive about the impact of family learning and report that it helps them to support their children's learning. Regular family and community 'Book Bug' sessions are well attended and encourage parents to read to their children. This is complemented by the lending library where children can borrow books to read at home. Practitioners are very skilled and demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting opportunities for family learning.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff in the setting take a lead role in the Early Years Local Learning Community (EYLLC). The aim of the EYLLC is developing opportunities for family learning through setting fun challenges for families. This work is reaching into the local community and having a very positive impact on children and families.

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.