

# Summarised inspection findings

**Heron House Early Years Killearn**

Stirling Council

06 March 2018

## Key contextual information

Heron House Early Years Centre is a private establishment in partnership with Stirling Council. It is located in a detached house in Killearn, Stirling. There are nine practitioners. The owner has two establishments with the other one based in Glasgow. There are three separate rooms for the different age groups which are 0-2, 2-3 and 3-5 years. There are also two out-of-school care rooms in which there are children before school, after school and during the holidays. The roll for Heron House Early Years Centre is 50.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

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 manager and practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to the setting's vision, values and aims. These were reviewed last year within the setting. There are plans in place to review the setting's vision, values and aims this year. This review should include a wider range of participants to reflect the setting's strong community links within the village.
- The team work very well together and are focused on delivering a quality service which meets the needs of children and their families. Their strong relationships lead to a warm and happy ethos within the setting which in turn ensures almost all children are secure and confident. The manager has created leadership opportunities for practitioners by allocating roles as champions for curricular areas. This has increased enthusiasm and ownership of the curricular area they are taking forward leading to enriched learning experiences for the children. For example, in the enhanced numeracy and literacy areas both inside the playroom and in the outdoor areas. There is scope to increase children's leadership responsibilities to ensure they play the role they are capable of within the setting.
- Practitioners access a range of professional learning opportunities to increase their knowledge and to continually improve their practice. The manager and practitioners look outwards to determine good early learning and childcare practice. This is further promoted by the work with colleagues from other early learning childcare settings on validated self-evaluation, initiated by supportive local authority staff. As discussed, a research project between the setting and the early year's setting in the local primary school would continue to build on existing professional learning opportunities.
- The managers and practitioners are reflective about their practice and strive to improve the service they provide for children and families. They are developing their understanding of national guidance, How good is our early learning and childcare? and how this supports self-evaluation. They are also beginning to use the challenge questions to support professional dialogue and when undertaking self-evaluation activity. However, they would benefit from a more structured robust approach to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. The manager continually audits playroom areas effectively. Building on this work

the manager would benefit from having a more focused approach to monitoring learning and teaching to ensure children's experiences fully meet the needs of all children.

- The setting's improvement plan clearly sets out key development priorities relevant to the setting. The success of the plan is monitored to ensure progress continues to be made.

## 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

- Relationships between children aged birth to two years and practitioners are nurturing and caring, as a result children were observed to be settled, safe and secure in their environment. Routines are flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children, taking account of information shared from home. Children use their senses as they play, investigate and explore a wide variety of natural materials. Outdoor experiences are provided on a daily basis, through playing in the garden and going for walks in their local community.
- Children aged two to three years have positive and nurturing relationships with practitioners, this supports them to feel valued, safe and secure. Responsive approaches to play and learning allow children to develop as confident, successful and responsible individuals. A range of stimulating resources both indoors and outdoors motivates and engages children in their learning. Practitioners know children well and plan taking account of their individual stage of development. Children experience outdoor play on a daily basis, alongside walks exploring their local community.
- Practitioners have developed positive and nurturing relationships with children aged three to five years and this was evident across the setting. As a result, children were observed to be safe and secure as they explored indoors and outdoors. Most children aged three to five years confidently engage well in play opportunities, making choices and leading aspects of their learning. Children were observed interacting positively with each other, offering praise and displaying respectful and considerate behaviour to their peers. As discussed with the setting, further opportunities for children to lead their own learning should be implemented.
- Children have opportunities to engage in a wide range of planned and spontaneous learning experiences, as a result, children are developing their independence, creativity and resilience. Overall, children were observed to enjoy the experiences offered both indoors and outdoors, for example, as they explored the properties of snow outdoors and indoors. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their use of skilled questioning to promote curiosity and inquiry learning.
- Practitioners know individual children well as learners and use their observations to inform next steps in learning. Information is captured in children's learning journals and used to create individual child's learning intentions and success criteria. A few children were observed to confidently reflect on their learning, using their journals as an aid. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the journals and share wider achievements. Parents have daily dialogue with practitioners and have two planned parents' evenings to discuss children's progress. As planned, the setting should continue to explore ways to engage parents in their children's learning.

- Transitions between playrooms are carefully and sensitively considered. Children are introduced to their new environment and practitioners share information on learning and care needs, engaging parents in the process.
- A new approach to planning, tracking and monitoring has been introduced with practitioners receiving effective support from the local authority. Planning is developed using children's interests and recorded on the learning wall, making learning visible for children, parents and practitioners. As discussed with the setting, they should build on the positive start and further embed this approach, as a result securing positive outcomes for children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Across the setting, planning for children's learning takes account of national guidance. For children aged three to five years, practitioners make use of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence and local authority guidance to plan for children's learning. For children aged birth to three years, planning is based on Pre-Birth to Three and Building the Ambition. As the process for planning develops, practitioners should ensure they are planning for progression across all curriculum areas.
- Visits to the local care home and surrounding areas such as 'the local glen' extend children's learning well. Practitioners should continue to develop the positive learning experiences that exist within the local community. The setting should ensure that these opportunities develop children's understanding of the world locally and provide worthwhile and relevant contexts to learn.
- Transition arrangements with local primary schools, for example, Killearn Primary School, support continuity in progression and learning for children. Effective partnership work between settings supports practitioners to build on prior learning and begin to have a shared understanding across the early level. Transition arrangements into and across the setting are managed sensitively taking account of individual needs of children and families.
- All children experience outdoor learning on a daily basis, ensuring children have access to daily fresh air and exercise. The outdoor space provides opportunities to learn a range of skills, for example, swinging on swings, climbing up and sliding down chutes, preparing food in the mud kitchen and arranging materials on the construction site. Opportunities for children to risk assess their environment could be further explored.

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

- The close working relationship with the parents contributes to the development of the setting. There is a range of ways for parents to be involved in the setting. This includes fundraising, supporting outings and sharing skills and talents to enrich children's learning experiences. Formal consultations with parents provide an opportunity for practitioners to share children's achievements and progress in learning. Parents access their child's individual journal throughout the year. As a result, parents are aware of their child's experiences and the progress they are making.
- Parents are fully involved in identifying their child's learning intentions, allowing them to work in partnership with the setting to support children's learning and development. Overall, parents who completed the inspection questionnaire and spoke with the inspector were extremely happy with the work of the setting in supporting their child's confidence and learning. Practitioners should continue to consider ways to increase their home-link resources to enable families to play and learn together. As discussed, they should also consider ways, including social media, to ensure that parents who do not drop off or pick up their children are fully informed of their children's progress.

## 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 **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

- The ethos and culture of the setting is nurturing and respectful. There are very strong caring relationships in the setting. The warm, caring and professional interactions of practitioners are enabling children to feel settled, safe and secure. Practitioners recognise the central importance of relationships in supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing. Supported by the well-established team, a strong sense of community with shared values exists. Children's behaviour is appropriate to developmental stages. Where necessary, individuals are supported sensitively to develop the necessary skills to show consideration for one another and develop positive relationships. Feeling cards are used well by practitioners to promote discussion with children on their emotions. Practitioners are attuned to the various needs of children and their families and are committed to improving their outcomes.
- Getting it right for every child wellbeing indicators are embedded throughout practice. Wellbeing indicators are used to inform regular planning for children. The manager and practitioners now need to support children and parents to develop an awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included in meaningful ways. Plans for the senior practitioners to use social media to promote wellbeing indicators should be put in place to support this aim. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. They now need to continue to encourage children to express their choices and opinions. They should also encourage the children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This could be implemented in conjunction with the development of the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners recognise that they need to expand the ways that children are involved in both leading their learning and taking on leadership roles such as snack helpers.
- The manager and practitioners are aware of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the delivery of early learning and childcare. However, as discussed, the manager and practitioners would benefit from attending appropriate training on current legislation to further build on their knowledge of statutory duties. Relevant policies and procedures are in place to guide practitioners in their practice. Children's individual care plans give useful information on children's care and learning needs. There are six monthly review meetings with parents to review plans. Parents are involved in deciding on individual learning intentions for their children. Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. This allows them to suggest appropriate support for families. They identify appropriate help at an early stage from other agencies for children with additional support needs. Where children, who have left the setting, did have additional support needs appropriate planning ensured that they make the best possible progress. Parents were extremely positive about the support they receive from the manager and practitioners to overcome any concerns they have with their children.

- Inclusion and equality is promoted throughout the work of the setting. The manager is aware of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation of the setting and what this means in supporting the community. The setting values and celebrates diversity in a range of ways. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos where children are nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children in continuing to learn about equality and diversity in a way that is age and stage appropriate. A Polish mother read stories to the children to encourage their understanding of the sound of different languages. Commendably, the library has several appropriate books celebrating diversity.

## 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 aged birth to two years enjoy warm and nurturing relationships with practitioners which supports them to develop their emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills well. Children explore a variety of sensory experiences and demonstrate increasing confidence and a sense of independence within their carefully considered environment. Spontaneous singing during play engaged children to listen and join in the actions. Children are developing their physical skills well through playing outdoors and are encouraged to take risks in their play.
- Children aged two to three years show increasing confidence in their play and in communicating their needs to others. They play well together and are developing their physical skills through regular outdoor play. Opportunities to sing songs, listen to stories and engage in conversations with practitioners and peers are contributing to their individual learning and development. Practitioners should continue to use national practice guidance Building the Ambition as they develop their practice further.
- Overall, children are making good progress in communication and language. Most children engage in conversations with practitioners and peers during free play and planned opportunities. For example, children playing with snow were observed sharing their experiences from home with their peers in a confident manner. Opportunities for mark-making were available with a few children confidently writing their name. Practitioners should continue to build on opportunities for all children to express themselves vocally and creatively, thus allowing children to expand their early literacy skills.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics with most counting confidently to ten in routines and when exploring natural and open ended resources. There are opportunities both indoors and outdoors for children to further develop their skills in numeracy and mathematics, for example going for number walks in 'the glen'. Early numeracy skills are encouraged in the setting, for example as children confidently count the number of children having snack. Practitioners should continue to build on children's prior skills and knowledge to support all individual children to achieve positive outcomes in their learning.
- Most children age three to five years are making good progress in health and wellbeing, with children appearing happy and settled in their environment. Children are caring and considerate of each other's feelings, with positive engagement evident between peers. Children were observed to make healthy choices for snack and engage in tooth brushing at lunchtime, displaying an awareness of responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. The

opportunity for children to develop their physical skills is supported through daily outdoor play, children were observed exploring and taking risks in the well-resourced garden area.

- Children's individual achievements from home and nursery are captured and celebrated in a range of ways, for example in the monthly newsletter, in playroom displays and in the three to five years 'Wonder Wall' display board. Practitioners use praise and encouragement to promote positive attitudes and effective cooperation and independence.
- Equity is promoted across the setting with a supportive and inclusive ethos, as a result, there is a climate of mutual respect and trust. Continued partnership work with local authority colleagues will support the setting to take forward information and data handling to support improvements.

## Setting choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
  - The promotion of partnerships
- The setting is viewed as an important part of the community. Partnerships are enhancing children's experiences and promoting literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Visits within the community are enabling children to become familiar with their local surroundings. Children are developing early citizenship through fundraising and visiting regularly an old residents' home to entertain and learn from the residents. The families have been actively involved in the setting, for example, a garden group, pop in for a coffee Friday, family barbecue and the Beatson cancer charity fundraiser. Practitioners, parents and children also got together as a team for the local Gala day enhancing the community strength of the setting. At the suggestion from a parent, a baby garden, with help from parents, was established enhancing children's learning experiences. Parents are also involved in the selection of new staff members.
- The setting has promoted and sustained effective partnerships to enhance positive outcomes for children. For example, Music and Movement class, visits to the library van and working with the Forest Ranger. There is an effective partnership between Out of School Care and the setting ensuring close transition. An extremely close link with the local primary school enhances shared learning events including attending the Christmas Concert and sports day. The setting should continue with the plans to work closely with the local nursery on key curricular areas such as the development of the learning wall. Parents visit the setting to share their knowledge and experience of work which enhances the children's knowledge of the life of work.

## 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.