

# Summarised inspection findings

**Locharbriggs Primary School and Nursery Class**

Dumfries and Galloway Council

28 August 2018

## Key contextual information

Locharbriggs nursery class provides early learning and childcare for children aged three to school age. At the time of the inspection there were 27 children on the roll. There have been significant changes to staffing in the setting since the last Care Inspectorate inspection in June 2017. Key staff including the headteacher, nursery class teacher and fulltime practitioner are new to the setting. The headteacher joined the school in February 2018, the teacher moved to early learning and childcare from P2 in August 2017 and a new permanent practitioner was appointed in October 2017. There is one main playroom with direct access to a secure outdoor learning space. The grounds of the school provide scope for significant further development of outdoor learning.

### 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

- Practitioners demonstrate values of trust and respect in their interactions with children and families. Together with senior leaders, they have begun to develop a clear statement of the vision and aims of the setting. As planned, they now need to consult more widely to ensure this statement reflects the aspirations of families, the school and the wider community. In doing so, practitioners should have appropriately high expectations of children as leaders of their learning.
- Practitioners are committed to improving their practice. They are a newly formed team and work together very well. Professional reading and visits to other settings is helping them begin to develop a shared understanding of how they want to improve their practice further. As a team, they now need support to enable them to develop the professional knowledge and skills required to meet children's needs fully.
- Practitioners are beginning to use the national improvement framework How good is our early learning and childcare (HGIOELC?) to gain a clear picture of the strengths and areas for further development of the setting. They are at an early stage of this important work. Senior leaders now need to support practitioners to build confidence in using this and other relevant national guidance more effectively. Practitioners have correctly identified the need to involve children and parents more in evaluating all aspect of the life and work of the setting.
- An improvement plan addressing a number of key areas for development is in place. We were able to observe early indications of the positive impact of changes that practitioners are taking forward. For example, we saw how the introduction of loose parts play and work to improve learning environments is leading to better experiences for children. Practitioners have successfully created an ethos where parents and carers feel confident of their welcome and are encouraged to join in children's learning.
- Practitioners and senior leaders are strongly focused on building further on the positive start they have made to improve the setting. They recognise the need to continue to develop

strong leadership of learning and teaching at all levels. In doing so, it is important that senior leaders ensure that assessment and tracking provide a clear picture of children's progress and how well the setting supports children to learn and develop.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Children are developing good friendships and play together well. It is clear that they feel safe and secure and are happy to be in the setting. Children enjoy opportunities to help prepare snack and take on small roles of responsibility in the playroom and outdoors. There is significant scope for children to develop their leadership skills further through more active involvement in contributing to the life and work of the setting and school.
- Children concentrate well during free play. They are becoming more confident in making choices and selecting from available resources to support their learning. Recently improved access to a range of open-ended materials is resulting in children being more engaged and motivated in their learning. As planned, practitioners should now build on the good start they have made to improving learning experiences. As they do so they should include more opportunities for children to explore the very rich natural resource of the grounds of the setting.
- The delivery of planned adult-led activities does not yet allow children sufficient scope to lead their own learning. Too much time is taken up with these activities and they are not sufficiently responsive to children's interests. Practitioners now need to work with senior leaders in the school to develop a shared understanding of high quality early learning pedagogy. Further professional learning informed by current research and thinking about how children learn will be helpful in taking this forward.
- Practitioners record observations in individual learning journals. These describe children's participation in learning activities and include photographs and some samples of children's work. Practitioners now need to develop their practice in gathering observations to recognise and evaluate significant learning for each child. Senior leaders should work with practitioners to ensure that approaches to capturing children's progress are manageable and enable practitioners to make more effective use of assessment to support planning. This will help ensure appropriate individualised next steps in learning are identified and planned for on a regular basis.
- Children are keen to share their learning journals. They should be encouraged to talk about and reflect on their learning more. This should include the learning that children bring to the setting from home experiences. This will help ensure children are encouraged and enabled to develop their sense of themselves as successful and resourceful learners.
- Floor books are used to encourage children to share their feelings and interests. This currently provides limited scope for children to make decisions about their learning and should be developed further. Overall, approaches to planning learning are too adult-led. The positive start to developing the use of exploratory play has the potential to offer children increased scope to lead their learning in meaningful ways. Practitioners should work together to develop

more responsive approaching to planning for learning. As this evolves they should ensure that children and parents are active participants at all stages of the learning cycle. This will help ensure that experiences build directly on children's interests and provide opportunities for greater depth and challenge in learning.

- Children's progress is not yet monitored systematically. As planned, senior leaders should now put in place approaches to support practitioners in making confident judgements about children's progress and learning achievements. Over time, moderation activities within and beyond the setting will support this further. This will help ensure continuity and progression within and across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners continue to develop their use of national guidance to deliver learning for children. This requires significant further development in order to ensure high quality learning experiences with an effective balance of adult supported and child initiated learning.
- The setting should now develop a curriculum rationale reflecting the principles of curriculum design and taking account of the distinctive character of the setting and its children and families. Personalisation, challenge and progress in learning should be a focus for continuing evaluation of learning provision.
- Practitioners need to increase further their expectations of learners as leaders of their learning and of change and improvement in the setting.
- Wellbeing, early literacy and numeracy are planned for, indoors and out. Practitioners now need to ensure children are able to develop and apply skills in motivating and challenging experiences of play.
- Children enjoy daily access to outdoor experiences. Practitioners should take forward their plans to maximise the use of the very good outdoor spaces available to support and challenge children in their learning.
- Transition arrangements provide positive and flexible support to children and families as they join the setting. A buddy system with children in Primary 6 provides good support for children as they move to primary. Practitioners are in the early stages of developing working partnerships with primary school colleagues. This should be developed further to support a shared understanding of what quality learning looks like across the early level. This will support children better in their transition into Primary 1. Transitions for children who may require additional support need to be planned for, monitored and managed more effectively.

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

- Children and families are made to feel welcome in the setting. They are involved in the life of the setting through stay and play sessions, open sessions, Children and Parents Enjoy Reading (CAPER) and educational visits in the community. Monthly newsletters update families on events and information about the life and work of the setting.
- Parents and carers are involved in the review of their child's personal plans. The next step is to share information about children's progress and achievement. This will help ensure parents and carers are aware of the difference their involvement is making to their child's progress
- Parents and carers have contributed to the curriculum by sharing their skills with the children. A whole school Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) afternoon provided the opportunity for parents and carers to share learning with the children. Practitioners should build on the success of these and similar recent initiatives to encourage parental engagement in the life and work of the setting.
- Practitioners have developed partnerships with Active Schools, the local library and a charitable organisation promoting physical play, all of which enhance learning experiences for children. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop partnerships within the community to further broaden the range of experiences for children.

## 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 for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion **weak**

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

- Relationships with children and families are positive and caring. Practitioners are nurturing and attentive and work hard to meet the emotional needs of all children. They have been successful in creating an inclusive ethos in the setting where everyone is made to feel welcome. This is leading to an improved sense of community and enhanced participation of parents in the life of the setting.
- Practitioners encourage children to show consideration and develop positive relationships with each other. They now need to make more effective use of the wellbeing indicators, developing meaningful ways to deepen children's understanding of how the indicators apply in their daily experience. There is scope for more developmentally appropriate activities to enable children to engage in decisions that affect them. This will promote children's self-regulation and develop their sense of themselves as responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- Practitioners demonstrate a developing awareness of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) in aspects of their practice. They now need support to develop this further. Personal plans with a focus on the wellbeing indicators have recently been introduced for all children. Practitioners are at the early stages of using the wellbeing indicators to support planning for individual children. Information about children's care and wellbeing now needs to be collated in individual personal plans more systematically to ensure consistent high quality support. Senior leaders should now work with practitioners to ensure that plans are monitored regularly and children's needs are understood and met.
- Practitioners work with parents and where necessary link with other agencies to request additional support. This is leading to targeted interventions to support children and families. We found that, in a few cases, practitioners were not confident when discussing arrangements to support children who may require additional support. Senior leaders need to establish robust approaches to ensure timely assessment and effective planning and monitoring of support to meet the needs of all children.
- The setting has recently introduced a key worker system to improve support for children's wellbeing. Senior leaders now need to ensure that all practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the range of statutory duties required. Practitioners will benefit from further professional learning with a focus on the management of high quality provision for children with additional support needs.

- Practitioners are aware of the importance of a shared understanding of the individual needs of children who have split placements. Increased focus should be placed on managing this effectively to ensure children's needs are met fully.
- Appropriate experiences enable children to learn about a range of celebrations and cultures from around the world. There is scope to develop opportunities for children to learn more about equality and diversity in meaningful ways. More could be done to develop children's awareness of gender equality, through careful selection and use of appropriate resources.

### 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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Children are confident when exploring the playroom and learning spaces outdoors. Practitioners now need to improve their use of assessment and responsive approaches to planning. This will help ensure experiences build on what children already know and have achieved to ensure they make the best possible progress.
- Most children are keen to share their experiences and are becoming more confident in talking about their play. Children enjoy taking part in singing and rhyme sessions. This is helping most children to begin to develop their awareness of patterns and sounds in spoken language. Children are learning some spoken French. Most children enjoy sharing stories and are learning to listen well. The experience of looking in more detail at individual stories is helping children to develop awareness of the role of the author and illustrator and how to handle books appropriately. A few children enjoy looking at books independently. Children are learning to recognise their printed names and use mark-making tools at the writing table. Children now need to further develop communication and language further through more relevant and meaningful opportunities to apply skills through play.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, most children can sort and match objects by shape and are beginning to develop their awareness of pattern. The majority of children are developing confidence in early counting skills and are beginning to explore measure in their play. Children are becoming aware of money and are beginning to use a range of appropriate mathematical language to talk about experiences.
- Overall, there are missed opportunities to promote early communication, numeracy and mathematical thinking in meaningful ways through play indoors and out. In planning more responsive learning experiences, practitioners should carefully consider how they can enable children to apply and deepen their knowledge and skills through play.
- Children are supported to form good friendships, which help them with their learning. They are developing appropriate fine motor skills through play with a range of mark making tools. Outdoor experiences provide increasing scope for children to challenge themselves and to develop confidence in physical play. Adult supported physical activities should be reviewed to allow more scope for children to shape their experiences. A travelling bear is helping families

to support children's understanding of wellbeing. Practitioners should develop further their use of the wellbeing indicators. This will to enable children to deepen their awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy and active.

- Practitioners have been successful in creating a supportive ethos with a climate of trust and mutual respect. As a result, practitioners are developing a better knowledge of children and families and are sensitive to potential barriers to effective learning. Celebration of wider achievement and learning at home is in the early stages. Practitioners should continue to develop ways to capture and use information about learning beyond the setting to shape and extend learning experiences and support children's progress.
- As assessment and tracking improves, practitioners should seek to use information and data about children's progress to monitor the impact of strategies to ensure equity and plan future interventions.

## Setting choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
- Roles of practitioners and leaders
- Identification of learning needs and targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

- Practitioners have significantly improved the ethos of the setting. Parents feel welcome and readily participate in a range of opportunities to join children in their learning experiences. Practitioners and senior leaders are committed to further involving parents in planning and evaluating children's learning.
- A range of learning experiences and recently introduced individual personal plans provide universal support for children. Practitioners now need to deepen their understanding of high quality early learning and childcare. This will enable them to provide more responsive learning experiences, reflecting children's individual interests and learning dispositions. This will ensure tasks, resources and experiences support and challenge children to make best possible progress in their learning and development.
- The children have daily access to a large outdoor area. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop the use of the outdoor spaces to enrich the curriculum. Recent developments, including growing food and increased access to open-ended materials, are a positive start to developing this aspect of the work of the setting.
- A key worker system has recently been introduced and practitioners are beginning to develop confidence in their role in supporting children. Practitioners and senior leaders recognise the need to develop this approach further to respond to individual needs and to promote and support children's wellbeing.
- Practitioners have begun to use the wellbeing indicators to identify the support required by children. Further training in GIRFEC will enable them to provide high quality provision for all children including appropriate targeted support. Senior leaders need to establish robust approaches to ensure timely assessment and effective planning and monitoring of support to meet the needs of all children.

## Care Inspectorate evidence

### 1. Quality of care and support

The staff team were developing their approaches to supporting children's leadership of play to support positive outcomes. Staff supported children in making choices about their own learning by providing opportunities for experimenting with play resources. This included: working out how to transport water using guttering and watering cans; working together to build a waterproof den from pallets, tree branches and tarpaulins; navigating their own transport routes using wheeled toys. We observed staff support children who were less confident in expressing their views' and preferences. This helped children to become increasingly confident when interacting with others. Children were given opportunities to recognise their achievements for example when reflecting on photographic records of their play displayed in learning journals, big books and wall displays. These approaches encouraged children to learn new skills and promoted confidence and self-esteem.

Since the last inspection and with support from a local authority development officer the staff had begun to review planning systems to support children's care learning and development. Through discussion, staff recognised that planning to support play was a key area of their performance that needed to improve. The service had made progress in recording children's experiences and outcomes covered across the curriculum and engaging parents in discussions about children's progress. We discussed with staff observation approaches that could help identify and evaluate play experiences that children found particularly engaging and challenging. We highlighted how this could help staff to efficiently update and maintain children's personal plans as well as foster meaningful discussion between children, parents, and staff about play and development. We discussed with staff how this would enhance the systems already in place for recognising children's achievements as well as promote children's sense of ownership and leadership of play.

Staff were knowledgeable about the service's child protection procedures and their roles and responsibilities. Through discussion, all staff demonstrated an understanding of indicators that might suggest a young child is suffering or at risk of suffering harm. Annual training and regular reviews of these practices supported staff in keeping their knowledge up to date on how to safeguard children's wellbeing.

**Care Inspectorate grade: Adequate**

### 2. Quality of environment

We found the nursery environment was effectively organised to help maximise children's safety. Staff kept all play equipment clean and well maintained and took effective measures to control the spread of infection. Through observations and discussions we found that children were knowledgeable about safety in the playrooms and outside. Risk assessments were in place and regularly updated for all areas of the premises including the outdoor area. The service effectively implemented relevant health and safety legislation and removed or minimised any potential playroom hazards. Staff told us of approaches that they had begun to adopt that supported children to be actively involved in assessing risks they may encounter during play activities. These approaches helped children to take ownership of their play and learn about being responsible for their own and other's safety.

The service made effective use of the available outdoor play space to create a motivating

environment for children to investigate, explore, and play together. Staff and parents told us that outdoor learning was central to children's experience of play and learning at the nursery. Staff have been involved in evaluating play environments and had introduced a free-flow system to ensure children's flexible access to the nursery outdoor area. Loose part materials and resources had been introduced to the indoor and outdoor environments that encouraged children to actively learn and be creative. We found resources available to children in the outdoor environment had increased opportunities for teamwork, problem solving and negotiation.

**Care Inspectorate grade: Good**

### **3. Quality of staffing**

Staff told us relationships within the newly formed team were based on increasing familiarity, honesty, and mutual trust. We found that the team worked well together and morale among staff was positive. Team meetings and protected planning time provided opportunities for staff to share their ideas and support each other.

Staff were committed to continuing professional development and had engaged in professional reading and reflection directly related to the nursery improvement priorities. This included team discussions based on national guidance such as 'Building the Ambition'. Staff told us this self-evaluation toolkit had helped provoke reflective discussion about their practice to support improvements. 'My World Outdoors' and 'Our Creative Journey' national guidance documents had been used to provide opportunities for more challenging play outdoors as well as children's creative expression. Overall, we found professional learning supported staff interact with children in ways that built confidence and encouraged and valued their contributions. Staff told us they appreciated professional visits to similar services and were reflecting on how they could adapt observed practice to their own context. Training in core topics such as child protection, safe food handling and paediatric first aid were central to staff supporting children's health, welfare and safety.

The head teacher should continue to build on the enthusiasm and motivation of staff to engage in continued professional development. Building expertise within the nursery team to sustain improvements is a key area of performance that needs to be resourced and progressed (see recommendation 3). Opportunities for staff to lead curriculum developments within the service should be further developed. For example, we discussed the value of fire, ropes and tools training in line with forest kindergarten practices that encourage children to experience greater challenges during outdoor play. The staff team should consider how current initiatives, for example, in loose parts play, shared reading, science, engineering and technology can be further consolidated within the service and how their learning can be used to inform future parental involvement activities. The head teacher agreed that they now needed to ensure professional development review systems focused on addressing gaps in staff understanding and expertise in relation to future service priority areas for development arising from this report. This will contribute to positive outcomes by increasing the range of approaches available to meet children's individual needs.

**Care Inspectorate grade: Adequate**



#### **4. Quality of management and leadership**

We looked at quality assurance systems within the nursery and how these were used to enhance the experience of children and families using the service. The recently appointed head teacher demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and was developing approaches to including staff and parents in that journey. He had supported staff to take forward agreed improvement priorities and was committed to resourcing professional learning to help staff take action as needed. He had ensured that improvement actions by staff had focused on addressing the range of requirements and recommendations made in our previous inspection report. We recognised this an area of significant recent improvement that had helped to enhance outcomes for children.

The service improvement planning records and monitoring calendar showed that the head teacher was at an early stage of introducing HGIOELC. HGIOELC is a national tool that supports services in self-evaluation so that outcomes for children can be measured and improved. We discussed with the management team how leadership roles for staff could be extended using quality indicators from this tool. This leadership approach can ensure that improvement planning processes monitor and evaluate all aspects of service delivery. It can encourage staff to be confident in using self-evaluation to progress wider developments.

Through discussion, staff recognised a need to increase the range of strategies for involving parents in the improvement planning process. Staff should consider how parents' views can be sought and the results collated and shared. This should highlight any actions that are being taken as a result of suggestions for change and/or improvement. Where suggestions have been made, but cannot be taken forward for any reason, explanations should also be given. The use of a variety of consultation approaches can support everyone involved with the nursery school to develop a shared understanding of its vision, values, strengths and improvement needs.

**Care Inspectorate grade: Good**



During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had two requirements and six recommendations. From these, two requirements and five recommendations have been met. Outstanding issues relating to maintaining personal planning records in a way that supports staff to use them effectively to care for children are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are three new recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

- The service should ensure that multi-disciplinary support meetings for children's planned care consistently review and record children's progress in relation to any previously determined short-term targets. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that as a child: 'my needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met' (HSC 1.23) and 'any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSC 1.24).
- The service should implement plans to review the location of the nappy changing facility. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that as a child: "if I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected (HSCS 1.4) and 'the premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs' (HSC 5.16).
- The staff team should continue to engage in training that strengthens their professional skills in observing and evaluating children's play experiences and environments. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'as a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSC. 2.27).

## 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.