

Summarised inspection findings

**Glass Primary School (primary school
nursery class)**

Aberdeenshire Council

SEED No: 5226422

26 January 2018

Key contextual information

The nursery class is registered for 16 children at any time. At the time of inspection there were four children on the roll. Accommodation is in a designated room within Glass Primary School and is staffed by a lead practitioner and a practitioner under the management of the head teacher. The service operates a morning session only.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 are strongly committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. This is demonstrated by their on-going professional learning which is supported by the visiting principal teacher. However, systematic reflection on how this is transferred into practice and its impact on the quality of learning experiences now needs to take place.
- A vision, values and aims statement is shared across the school and displayed in the setting. This needs to be reviewed to create a vision that reflects the unique context, aims and core values of the setting. This should be suitably ambitious for all learners and include current thinking about best practice. Practitioners should now work towards involving stakeholders fully in this process.
- Practitioners are aware that the setting is on a journey of improvement. Strategic direction is now required from the senior leadership team to ensure that the setting is effectively supported to deliver high-quality early learning and childcare.
- Practitioners and the headteacher receive on-going advice and support from the visiting principal teacher on various aspects of early learning practice and guidance. This has had a recent focus on improving the learning environment. Practitioners have benefited from a range of training opportunities including raising awareness of key national drivers such as How good is our early learning and childcare?, and Building the Ambition. This is at the early stages of helping practitioners to develop their understanding of current thinking and best practice in early learning and childcare. When a new initiative is agreed they need to develop a clear rationale and decide how the impact will be measured.
- There is no formal monitoring of the setting to support practitioners in recognising what is working well, areas for improvement and the impact of changes. The principal teacher provides a useful summary of her visits with links to the improvement plan and next steps.

The headteacher is informed of work undertaken but must now take a more active and informed approach in the quality assurance process. This will ensure practitioners are supported to deliver high quality learning experiences.

- Overall, effective self-evaluation across the team is at early stages of development. It is beginning to enable the team to look more critically at their practice in an informed way. Priorities have been identified using a collegiate approach and are outlined in the current Improvement Plan. There is a need to regularly and robustly monitor this to identify where effective progress has been made and where additional planning is required. This should include, where appropriate, the views of children, families and other partners.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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 mostly enthusiastic about their learning and clearly enjoy their time at nursery. They are motivated to learn and most show an interest in the world around them. They benefit from a range of learning experiences. Practitioners recognise that they need to maintain a more appropriate balance between supporting and scaffolding children's learning and allowing independent exploration, particularly given the small number of children. There is yet unrealised potential to maximise the individualisation of learning and teaching. We discussed with practitioners how this could be taken forward and they are keen to build on what they already do to further improve.
- Children benefit from positive relationships with practitioners. Interactions are based on a warm, caring and respectful approach. Children are observed to feel safe, secure and confident in the setting. They make choices as to what and where they will play and confidently share their ideas. In the best examples, questions are used to help children to extend their thinking. It would be useful for practitioners to explore approaches to promote higher order thinking. This would help ensure that there is increased consistency in the quality of questions and greater depth and challenge in learning is promoted.
- As an identified priority for improvement, practitioners have worked with the visiting principal teacher to review and refresh the learning environment. Using national guidance to support their improvements they have begun to develop a shared understanding of what a quality learning environment looks like. This is at the early stages of supporting children to make increased choices and increasingly lead their own learning.
- Observations are made of children's play and learning. This is recorded within each child's profile, including local authority formats for recording individual learning. Practitioners use observations to identify aspects of significant learning for children in order to plan for what they want to learn next. What children already know and the specifics of what they want to learn about now needs to be established more explicitly through discussion and recorded. This should build on the positive start that has been made through the use of the learning wall. Increased ownership of and involvement with Individual learning profiles or talking and thinking books would be a useful tool to support learning conversations and the development of a language of learning. Practitioners would benefit from development of their skills in the framing of next steps to ensure that they have the sharpest focus on what children need to learn next. This should consistently build on previous learning and support children to make the very best progress in their learning.

- Approaches to planning for learning continue to develop with a clearer focus on learning rather than activities and resources. The tracking and monitoring of children's progress needs to be monitored more strategically. Moderation needs to be developed both within and beyond the setting to ensure a shared understanding of progress and achievements and ensure that professional judgement is suitably robust.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The curriculum framework continues to develop. Appropriate account is taken of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes in planning. There are opportunities for children to develop skills in health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy across their play. Building on this, these now need to be developed and enhanced to ensure children experience a range of meaningful contexts to develop and apply their knowledge across the curriculum. Full account should be taken of curriculum design principles with particular reference to depth, personalisation and challenge.
- The setting benefits from extensive outdoor grounds which are attractive and offer considerable potential for rich learning experiences. This now needs to be capitalised on more fully to realise the learning potential across the curriculum, for example developing an awareness of risk.
- The setting has a helpful link with the local toddler group who share accommodation. This supports a smooth transition as children go on to start nursery in the same environment. Split placements with other settings are well supported with practitioners taking time to visit other services that children attend. There is considerable scope for the development of a shared pedagogy across the early level within Glass Primary School to support continuity and progression in learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families - parental engagement

- Parents responding to inspection questionnaires report that they receive helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing. This includes regular informal contact and more formal events such as open days. Along with informal feedback, parents have access to information online which documents some of the activities and experiences children have had at nursery. There is scope for this to be more coherent if coupled with other information which would allow parents an insight to children's progress in a more holistic way. More information could be provided to parents about how they might support learning within the setting, at home and in the wider community.
- There is scope for an increase in the number and range of partners engaged with to support and motivate learning. This will require creative thinking and a solution focused approach to access the wider community from the rural setting. A focus on the world of work will support the promotion of high aspirations 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 of urgency.

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.

- There is a warm, welcoming atmosphere within the setting and children quickly choose where they would like to play when they arrive. Children are happy and they enjoy the company of their friends and adults. They have a growing sense of fairness and demonstrate this through sharing toys and resources. Practitioners model and encourage respectful behaviour and use a variety of strategies to resolve conflicts and promote a caring ethos.
- Practitioners are developing their knowledge of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). They are aware of the importance of nurturing children's wellbeing and respond appropriately to children's needs. They should now use the indicators more effectively in their daily practice with children to ensure a developing awareness and understanding.
- The wellbeing of children is promoted through a range of learning experiences. They enjoy the large and varied outdoor space and this is supporting children's sense of wellbeing. Parents spoken to during the inspection recognise the learning potential of the outdoors and would welcome further development of the use of this valuable learning resource.
- Management should now develop a full understanding of their role and responsibilities in fulfilling the range of statutory duties required. During discussions practitioners recognised the need for information to be collated in an individual personal plan with associated legislative timescales. They are increasingly aware of the need to have a robust and coherent system that collates and tracks. This will support planning for individual children's care and learning. This now needs to be developed to better reflect the support they provide for children and families.
- There is considerable scope to develop the children's early leadership skills further. Children take on the role of daily snack helper and are observed to be capable and enthusiastic. Local and national guidance on healthy eating such as Setting the Table should be further explored and implemented. The setting has scope to encourage children to express their choices and opinions in a more individualised way. This would better realise their potential and allow them to take a more active role in the life of the setting.
- Management and practitioners should monitor the strategies used to promote inclusion and equality. Through the development of a deeper understanding practitioners would be enabled to raise awareness and promote the relevant aspects of the Equality Act (2010).

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.

- Children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. They demonstrate developing fine motor control, for example through the use of tools such as scissors and tongs. In the extensive outdoor environment children explore the physical environment as they climb, run, jump and balance. Through increased access to resources children could choose to develop and apply their physical skills more spontaneously. There is scope for increased risky play which would support children to manage risk and their personal safety. Overall children have an understanding of what it means to be healthy and enjoy sharing their personal experiences from home of, for example healthy diets.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in early communication and language at their own developmental stage. There is scope for the setting to be richer in literacy opportunities both indoors and out to help children make better progress. Most children show interest in stories and enjoy books being read to them. They recognise the purpose of the 'blurb' and roles of the author and illustrator. A few enjoy the challenge of developing subject specific vocabulary related to their learning. Children are developing listening skills and understand the need to take turns in conversation. A few children choose to mark make and are developing their understanding of letter names and sounds.
- In numeracy and mathematics children are making satisfactory progress. They are beginning to use number, for example to count in routines and recognise numerals. Opportunities to use number should be maximised. Mathematical language is being developed and used to compare and describe height and weight. Real-life experiences such as visiting the school tuck shop provide opportunities to develop an awareness of money. Such experiences should be further developed to ensure that children learn in meaningful contexts, for example ordering snack shop online would provide a wealth of learning as well as promote the use of digital technologies.
- Children demonstrate a range of skills and developed abilities across the curriculum. However, it is not yet evidenced robustly enough what the value added is from experiences provided in the setting over time. Practitioners know children well and can readily identify their strengths and the direction their learning needs to take. We discussed with them how this can be documented more effectively to support children to talk about their learning.

- Children's wider achievements are captured on the achievement tree. These now need to be added to the individual profiling of children's learning to ensure a holistic view of learning is captured and wider achievements built on through nursery experiences. Wider achievements should also have a clearer focus on how children are contributing to the setting, the wider and global community.
- There is a supportive and inclusive ethos in the setting where potential barriers to children's progress are identified. By gathering a wider range information about children's learning and achievements, intervention strategies could be identified more readily, for example where working with professionals from other agencies could be beneficial. Once utilised the impact of strategies should be routinely monitored and the evidence of impact on children and families tracked.

Setting choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

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

- Practitioners work hard to develop positive and trusting relationships with families. As a result they have a sound knowledge of the needs of children. In order to successfully build on these positive relationships the setting would benefit from the development of a shared understanding, rationale, vision and aims for family learning and what it needs to deliver for the community of Glass. This should include consultation with parents and families to determine what they would find useful and to ensure the engagement of the maximum number of families. Family learning programmes are at the earliest stages of being developed. This provides an opportunity for parents and families to be involved in the design and delivery of programmes, for example consideration should also be made to how family learning opportunities are accessible to all, including working families.
- Parental involvement and engagement has correctly been identified as an improvement priority. In order to establish a bespoke approach to family learning, partnerships with home should now be consolidated by involving parents more fully in the day to day life and work of the setting. This could include, for example more regular stay and play sessions where families develop a shared understanding of the learning in the nursery class.
- There is scope to continue to develop partnerships with the full range of relevant local agencies and professionals such as health visitors, educational psychology, community learning and development and speech and language therapists to agree and implement strategies to support learning. This would promote the delivery of a preventative and a more targeted approach to supporting families that meet individual needs at any given time in a responsive way.
- Over time, practitioners need to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to evidence the impact of family learning activities on children's learning in order to measure and celebrate their achievements.

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.

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