

# Summarised inspection findings

**Shiskine Primary School Nursery Class**

North Ayrshire Council

29 August 2023

## Key contextual information

Shiskine Early Years Class is based within Shiskine Primary School, which is a small rural school on the Island of Arran. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged three until they begin primary school. The setting is open from 9 am until 3 pm. Children attend for full days during term time. The current roll is seven, with capacity for 20 children to attend at any one time. There is one playroom with temporary arrangements to allow access to a small, covered outdoor space. Children and staff also use a large outdoor area behind the school. The headteacher has responsibility for six schools and four nursery classes on the island.

Responsibility for the nursery class is delegated to the depute headteacher who is supported by a peripatetic senior early years practitioner (SEYP). The SEYP also provides leadership and support to another five nurseries on the island. One full-time and two part-time early years practitioners and an early years assistant work with children. A local authority quality improvement officer (QIO) also provides support to the nursery through regular contact.

Last year, planned building works to create direct access to the outdoor area was delayed. Practitioners committed their own time to make significant improvements to the playroom and outdoor area. Recruitment of staff continues to be a challenge in the rural island context.

### 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

- Children are motivated, curious and engaged in the attractive and stimulating learning spaces. The small group of learners spend extended periods of time in the covered outdoor space. Children enjoy exploring the properties of sand and water or mark making with chalk. There is a keen sense of community and co-operation between members of the small group. Most children are engaged and purposeful throughout their day. Senior leaders and practitioners should develop further the positive changes they have made to build on children's prior learning and skills. A few children would benefit from more challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners use facial expressions, tone of voice and open-ended questions well to engage and interact with children. They respond quickly to children's interests as they learn more about volcanoes or look up recipes together. Practitioners adapt their vocabulary appropriately to support children in making positive choices and to take turns. Staff are patient and respectful as they involve children in interesting discussions and encourage them to try out their own solutions. The team should continue to develop their skills and confidence in using higher order questioning. This will support children to explore their ideas and interests in more depth.
- Practitioners plan how to respond to children's interests and develop their skills in different learning spaces. They have short- and long-term plans. The team are beginning to apply ideas from professional learning to improve approaches to planning. Practitioners should continue to

develop their skills in how they use their observations of children's learning to inform how they plan for spaces and experiences.

- Practitioners share and report on children's experiences using an online learning platform. Children are proud of their attractive journals that include drawings and paintings from their first day at nursery. Practitioners record helpful, regular, short observations of children's learning in personal learning plans. Parents meet with staff to agree termly targets for children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff record children's progress on a tracker provided by the local authority. The team need to ensure all observations focus on each child's individual skills and significant learning. This will help build a clearer picture of children's learning and development over time.
- The team record valuable information about children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. Senior leaders use their in-depth knowledge of families well to agree and implement strategies to support individuals. The senior leadership team advocate for services to support children and their families. Parents work well in partnership with staff to secure good outcomes for children who need additional help.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

### 3.2 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's individual learning plans, online records and trackers show that since starting nursery, children make good progress in their learning.
- Children make good progress in early communication and language. They enjoy listening to, and talking about, stories with their friends in a den outdoors. Children seek out and explore stories in the inviting book corner. Children are building their vocabulary well as they engage in extended conversations with adults. Most children can recognise their own and other children's names. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to write for a purpose and to create and document their own stories.
- Children make good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Most children recognise, name and form circles, squares and rectangles in their play. A few children develop an early understanding of fractions as they divide objects. Children confidently sort, count and order natural materials using their own criteria. They use mathematical language well as they follow instructions to make playdough. Practitioners should support children to apply their skills in their play and new contexts.
- Children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are supportive to one another as they share, co-operate and learn to be respectful to one another. Children play and put away their toys as they look after their resources. Children are responsible and independent as they help clean up at lunch and snack time or care for plants in the outdoor area. They make good progress in gross motor skills as they climb and swing or transport water to make soup in the mud kitchen. Children are ready for increased leadership and opportunities to share their views.
- Children share their interests and experiences from home in enthusiastic conversations with practitioners. Children and their families know that staff are interested in children's achievements and learning at home. The team notice, praise and celebrate these achievements. Practitioners should build on this positive start to increase the ways they use this information to plan for spaces, experiences and interactions.

- Senior leaders and practitioners know children and families very well. The team are aware of, and respond promptly to, any potential barriers to learning. Practitioners agree strategies with parents for children who may require additional support with their learning. The team adapt their language, strategies, or resources to ensure all children are included and supported. Practitioners should continue to build their skills and confidence in using data to evaluate the impact of strategies on children's progress.

## 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.