

# Summarised inspection findings

**Raigmore Primary School Nursery Class**

The Highland Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

Raigmore Nursery Class is on the campus of Raigmore Primary School. It is situated within the Raigmore Estate, Inverness. The nursery includes a large playroom and outdoor area. In 2021, an additional nursery building was erected to support the expansion to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare (ELC) and accommodate an increase in numbers of children attending the setting. Currently, the additional building is used for children's lunchtime provision, due to the roll reducing to 26. The roll is expected to increase again throughout the year. A minority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) one and two.

The nursery operates from 9.00 am – 3.00 pm during term time. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. Almost all children reside in the local area or in Cameron Barracks. The nursery is registered for 54 children at any one time.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. The depute headteacher has been delegated the responsibility for leading the nursery class on a day-to-day basis. In the past year, the team have experienced changes in staffing. This includes a change in the leadership of the nursery due to the depute headteacher becoming the acting headteacher for a few months. In addition, recent changes have been made to the learning environment and daily practice. Practitioners have found this challenging.

### 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

- The vision and values have been established across the school and nursery for a few years. Practitioners use the language of the values in relevant contexts to support children to understand their meaning in a developmentally appropriate way. They now need to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the team to help embed the values in the life and work of the nursery.
- There are significant weaknesses in the leadership of change, which is impacting on the quality of early learning and childcare that is provided. Senior leaders need to provide clear strategic guidance and direction on a number of important areas for the practitioner team to ensure continuous improvement of the nursery. Along with practitioners, they should revisit national practice guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020)*. This should support understanding of current thinking in early learning and childcare. Practitioners will need support and further professional learning to make the improvements required to provide high-quality learning experiences and improve outcomes for all children.
- Senior leaders have created a helpful quality assurance calendar with a range of self-evaluation activities. Their approach to evaluating the quality of provision is not rigorous. Practitioners require support to reflect on their practice at a deeper level to identify key

priorities for improvement. It will be important for practitioners to have ownership of future changes within the nursery. Senior leaders should develop further their monitoring and evaluating practice across the nursery to ensure it leads to sustained improvement.

- The school improvement plan priorities include a few specific tasks for the nursery. Senior leaders have created an action plan specific to the nursery. Future action plans should outline key priorities in greater detail. Senior leaders in consultation with practitioners, should agree tasks as a result of rigorous self-evaluation. The plan should also detail relevant timescales and those responsible for taking tasks forward. This should support a more focused approach to leading and sustaining change.
- Practitioners welcome the opportunity to meet with senior leaders twice per year to reflect on their practice and discuss their professional learning needs. They have found training sessions with partner agencies, such as speech and language therapists, particularly helpful. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to prioritise professional learning that will have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children. This should include looking outwards to other settings to understand what high-quality early learning and childcare looks like in practice.
- All practitioners have responsibilities for specific areas of the nursery. These roles are not yet having the desired impact on children's experiences. Senior leaders and practitioners should work together to agree leadership roles that will make the biggest difference to children's learning. In doing so, this should increase the pace of change and nursery improvement.

## 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

- Practitioners are caring, kind and nurturing in their approach. They ensure children are happy and settled in the nursery. Children have access to both indoor and outdoor play. Most children spend a short time at learning experiences. They often move on when they are not motivated well by experiences. Practitioners need to create more inspiring learning spaces for children. The lack of natural, open-ended resources is restricting the potential for children's curiosity and creativity to develop.
- Children access the large outdoor learning space in all weathers. They use the natural environment to develop their problem-solving skills when climbing trees and gathering rainwater to care for the vegetables. Practitioners should place higher value on the sustained learning the environment outdoors provides to add depth to children's experiences.
- Practitioners plan adult-initiated activities across the day. Most practitioners need to ensure sufficient time to engage and respond to children's play. This is an important aspect of high-quality practice that should be improved. In doing so, this should create a sustained level of interest, and give practitioners the opportunity to extend children's thinking. Children have the capacity to lead their own learning with practitioners supporting these opportunities. Practitioners need to address the balance of child-led and adult-initiated opportunities. They should revisit national practice guidance *Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020)* to deepen their knowledge and develop their skills further to provide higher quality learning experiences.
- Practitioners capture observations of individual children's learning. The quality of these observations is not consistent. Practitioners should always capture significant learning within a context for every child. Practitioners require support to improve their observation skills and identify and record children's individual progress and achievements in learning. They should use this information more effectively to track children's learning and plan for their next steps in learning. Practitioners need to have greater expectations of the potential of what children can achieve.
- Practitioners use a tracking tool introduced by the local authority. They complete children's individual achievements using the observations gathered. Practitioners set individual targets for children's learning. They do not link targets well enough to the skills children need to help them make progress in their learning. The planning of learning and assessment within the nursery is not robust enough. Senior leaders should ensure they are consistent in their frequency of reviewing and setting children's learning targets.
- Practitioners should review and continue to develop planning for children with additional support needs in line with local authority policy. Children's learning targets must be set to

reflect their individual learning needs, with their progress assessed and monitored in a timely manner. The inconsistency across the nursery could hinder the support and challenge needed to ensure all children achieve their full potential in their early years.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan for children's learning using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They track coverage of the curriculum. Practitioners need to ensure that all children have opportunities to learn and develop a wider range of skills across all areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to make increased use of local authority progression frameworks to better support the planning and assessment of children's learning. A minority of children would benefit from greater challenge in their learning. Currently, the experiences on offer are not providing sufficient levels of support or challenge for children. Senior leaders and practitioners should review the range and quality of resources available. They need to ensure resources support the wide-ranging learning needs within the nursery more effectively.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a well-planned transition programme. They organise transition visits for children and families prior to children starting nursery. Practitioners meet with parents to gather information on children's previous experiences, cultural backgrounds, and health and wellbeing needs. Prior to children moving onto primary one, a series of visits take place to enable children to become familiar with the school building and classroom. Children who require additional support to make the transition to school have an enhanced programme throughout the year. Practitioners tailor this to meet individual children's needs. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue with their plans to increase collaborative working across the early level to support continuity and progression in the curriculum and learning.

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

- Practitioners have positive relationships with most parents. They welcome parents to stay and play along with their child throughout the year. Parents report that they enjoy these sessions. They also access their child's folder, which contains photographs and observations of nursery activities. Practitioners use these opportunities well to share information about children's experiences and progress. They should continue to seek ways to engage parents to be more involved in the life of the nursery. This should include asking parents their views on ways they could contribute to their children's early learning experiences.
- A few parents engage with the online platform that practitioners use to keep parents informed of their child's nursery experiences. In addition, practitioners provide opportunities for parents to meet their child's keyworker during stay and play sessions. This enables parents to hear about their child's progress within nursery. Practitioners share information about the nursery and community events through newsletters and noticeboards.

## 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.



### 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

- Children are happy and settled while at nursery. They benefit from the caring relationships they share with practitioners and with each other. Most children play well together and are developing friendships.
- Senior leaders recognise that practitioners are at the very early stages of introducing children to the national wellbeing indicators. Almost all children are not yet familiar with the language of the indicators. When taking this work forward, practitioners should ensure that they support children effectively to become aware of the indicators through meaningful and real-life contexts. This should help children to use and understand the language of the indicators to talk about their wellbeing.
- As planned, practitioners should introduce children's rights in a way that is relevant to nursery children's stage of development. Practitioners should now work with school staff and pupils to support nursery children to become early leaders. This should help children to see themselves as citizens within their community.
- Senior leaders and practitioners must ensure they follow national and local practice guidance consistently. Children who require additional help with their learning could make better progress, with improved individualised planning. Practitioners communicate with partner agencies. They should develop further collaborative working to ensure they access the necessary support to implement strategies to best support children with additional support needs. Practitioners create a personal care plan for each child that includes information on children's care and welfare needs. They update these regularly in consultation with parents. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities for keeping children safe and access relevant training to support them in their role.
- Practitioners have recently reviewed lunchtime practice and have put new strategies in place. The space where children eat requires the children to have their lunch served to them. Practitioners sit with children at the table for support and to encourage independence. They should continue to evaluate the quality of the lunchtime experience to ensure they meet the individual needs of all children.
- Children learn about a few cultural festivals throughout the year. Children's understanding of culture and diversity is not well developed. Practitioners need to develop this work further, with children and families, to recognise and celebrate the community's rich diversity. Practitioners need to review and update their resources to reflect the world in which children and families live.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

weak

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

- Almost all children are capable of making better progress in their learning. Practitioners could not reliably describe children's individual progress over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There needs to be a robust and consistent process in place to identify where children require support or challenge in their learning. The current approach to documenting children's learning does not illustrate children's progress over time.
- Almost all children should develop a wider range of early literacy skills during their play. Most children listen well to simple instructions. Most children enjoy a story or participating in a song or rhyme. A few children can retell a story using visual prompts and mark make with purpose. Overall, children need to develop and apply all aspects of their early literacy skills across all areas of learning including real-life contexts.
- Almost all children need to develop further their numeracy and mathematical skills. A minority of children are beginning to learn about measurement and are experimenting with rulers and tape measures. A few are comparing sizes using mathematical language, such as bigger, smaller, longer and shorter. A few children count blocks up to 30 with the minority of children confidently using numbers up to 10. A few children share their knowledge of colour, pattern and shape. Children's skills in information handling, time and money were not evident. Almost all children could develop further the skills they have and should have the opportunity to apply them consistently during their play.
- Most children are becoming confident and relaxed in the nursery environment. Most children need to develop further their skills in health and wellbeing. A few children are beginning to understand about healthy foods when making soup with potatoes they grow in the nursery garden. The majority of children develop gross motor skills well when using the large space available in the nursery garden. A few children are at the early stages of describing their emotions. Practitioners should help children to become more confident to talk about how they are feeling.
- Practitioners share children's achievements with parents using an online platform. They should continue to encourage families to share children's achievements from home. Children would benefit from developing their skills in the use of digital technology. This should provide children with ownership of sharing and celebrating their achievements instantly with their families.

- Senior leaders and practitioners know children’s individual circumstances. While developmental overviews are in place, practitioners need to improve how they identify gaps in children’s learning. They need to improve tracking and monitoring processes. This should help senior leaders to analyse the data more effectively and ensure practitioners continue to implement appropriate interventions consistently. Senior leaders and practitioners should review these interventions regularly. This will enable practitioners to support all children to make the best possible progress in their development and learning, ensuring equity for all.

## 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.