

Summarised inspection findings

Denny Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class

Falkirk Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

Denny Primary School Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) class is situated within the grounds of Denny Primary School, in the town of Denny. The setting consists of large indoor play spaces on two levels and an enclosed spacious outdoor play area. The ELC class was temporarily housed in alternative nursery accommodation within the town on two separate occasions recently, due to drainage safety issues. Practitioners and children returned to the school grounds three weeks prior to the inspection. The ELC class operates from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm daily during the school term. The setting is registered for 56 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. There are currently 45 children on the roll and almost all attend on a full-time basis.

The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the management of the ELC class. A local authority early years teacher provides additional guidance across the year to develop and improve practice. The ELC class is staffed by a senior early years officer and a team of full-time and part-time practitioners. This includes a number of supply staff, as the setting is currently experiencing staff absence.

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

- All practitioners have created a warm and inclusive environment where children and families feel welcomed and valued. As a result, children settle quickly and feel safe and secure while in the ELC class. All children benefit from the nurturing ethos, which is underpinned by the school's vision, values and aims. Practitioners take children's views and ideas into account. This informs the learning experiences on offer both inside and outdoors. Most children confidently engage with the interesting and appropriate range of activities that build on their interests. They concentrate for extended periods of time, especially in self-chosen activities. Practitioners are responsive to children's learning throughout the day. As a next step, they should review group time at the end of the day to ensure that this meets the needs of all children.
- All practitioners have established meaningful and caring relationships with children. They know children and families very well. Practitioners' effective and positive interactions fully support children's wellbeing. These help children to develop respectful friendships with others and co-operate imaginatively in play. Practitioners' engagement in play extends children's learning and promotes curiosity, creativity and independence.
- Practitioners have continued to develop the learning environment since their return to the setting, with a focus on the outdoor environment. Children's developing skills in language and mathematics are well supported as a result. Going forward, children's learning would be further enriched through increased use of digital technology.

- Practitioners make good use of information about individual children's development gathered through care plans. They offer visits to children and families in their home as part of this process prior to children starting in the ELC class. The information they record includes 'what matters to me' which values the views of children and families. Practitioners use this as a starting point to plan strategies for individual children. They work effectively with partners to overcome barriers to learning where this is needed.
- Practitioners make useful observations of children's learning linked to skills. They share these with families through online journals. Children enjoy sharing their learning folders with others. They would benefit from more opportunities to reflect on their learning. Practitioners focus on groups of children and have a collective understanding of individual needs through their regular and effective staff 'huddles'. This ensures consistent approaches to supporting children in their learning.
- Practitioners are continuing to review and develop their approaches to planning with support from a local authority early years teacher. They plan across early level through continuous provision and take children's interests into account. This makes learning experiences meaningful and relevant. The headteacher and practitioners make good use of the local authority assessment and progression framework to track and monitor children's progress. Going forward practitioners should make better use of this informative data to ensure that next steps for all children are planned for more carefully.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They talk confidently with adults as they play and during mealtimes. Overall, children listen well and enjoy retelling and creating their own stories. Children show an interest in books and with support, use texts across different play contexts. Most children are beginning to recognise their names through self-registration routines. A few children write their name and add detail to their drawings. Children should be encouraged further to mark-make in a variety of contexts.
- Overall, children are making good progress in early mathematical skills through relevant experiences. Most children recognise and use colours, shapes and pattern through their creative play. They use the language of position, size and measure for example, through construction and outdoor play. Most children are developing an awareness of numbers and counting as they play games and sing songs and rhymes. A few children count beyond 20. As identified, children's skills in numeracy should be further developed to ensure appropriate challenge and progression in learning.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Almost all children share and take turns as they play. A few children are supported well to manage their 'big emotions' and show resilience. Children are developing a range of physical skills and how to keep safe through managing risk as they play outdoors. They are learning about healthy eating and show increasing independence at mealtimes. A minority of children need continued support to keep clean and healthy. They would benefit from further opportunities to develop roles and responsibilities across the setting.
- Practitioners articulate well the progress children make over time. They have begun to track and monitor progress using the local authority assessment and progression framework. As planned, this should be developed to better inform individual children's next steps to ensure all children make the best possible progress.
- Practitioners praise children for their successes as they play. This increases children's self-esteem and confidence. Families are beginning to share children's individual achievements from home. Practitioners now need to celebrate and build on these skills in the setting.

- Practitioners know children and families well and take account of different cultural and socio-economic circumstances. They are well placed to develop further children's knowledge of their rights and to explore further diversity within the community.
- Children who require additional support are making good progress because of the inclusive and supportive ethos in the nursery. Practitioners are aware of where support is required and put effective interventions in place where needed. These strategies are having a positive impact for example, in 'closing the vocabulary gap'. Practitioners should continue to ensure equity through working closely with families and partners.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.