

Summarised inspection findings

Heriot Primary School Early Learning Childcare Class

Renfrewshire Council

21 January 2020

Key contextual information

Heriot Early Learning Childcare Class (ELCC) is based within the grounds of Heriot Primary School, Renfrewshire. The ELCC offers full and part time places to children aged three years to those not yet attending school. At any given time, 40 children can be accommodated, with 28 on the register at the time of inspection. There have been changes to the environment, practitioner team and an increase in the number of children since August 2019.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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

- Children, parents and practitioners recently reviewed and refreshed the joint vision and values. The vision 'where everyone is learning' and the values of family, honesty, respect and kindness were identified by children, parents and the community as being relevant and meaningful. Practitioners are incorporating the values into their daily practice through appropriate and meaningful language. This is supporting children to develop a clear understanding of what the values mean to them.
- The Excellence and Equity Lead (EEL) is a positive role model for practitioners in the ELCC. She shares research and current thinking linked to high quality ELCC and this is having a positive impact on the practitioner team. Practitioners demonstrate a personal and collective commitment to their role and value one another's strengths and the contributions they make to the team. Senior leaders carry out learning observations in the ELCC and engage children in conversations relating to the observed experiences. They provide constructive feedback to practitioners. This is supporting the team to take forward improvements in practice.
- Opportunities to engage in professional learning is supporting the practitioner team to develop a shared pedagogy. They have engaged in team building, social and emotional wellbeing training and practitioner enquiry. This is having a positive impact on children and parents, particularly their wellbeing. All practitioners have leadership roles, which are continuing to evolve, with children voting to join the respective leadership team. This includes the Eco Warriors, Family Fun, Happy and Healthy and Rights Respecting teams.
- An overarching school improvement plan highlights priorities for improvement for the school and ELCC. There is scope to ensure that the ELCC priorities are more explicit within the main improvement plan. The EEL has created a helpful ELCC improvement plan. Priorities are made clear and linked well to national guidance. This is supporting practitioners to engage further in leadership opportunities and take forward improvements in practice.
- Practitioners are reflective in their practice and have daily conversations to reflect on and inform improvements. The national self-evaluation framework 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' has supported the creation of an annual quality assurance calendar.

- Practitioners now need to continue to develop further and embed their processes for self-evaluation, using this to reflect on current practice and plan for future progression.

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

- The ethos in the ELCC is welcoming and friendly. Relationships between practitioners and children are positive and nurturing. Changes to the learning environment have helped to create a calm, purposeful, enabling and homely atmosphere. Children have access to a range of rich, interesting, high-quality learning opportunities. They move independently and confidently between the indoor and outdoor areas. The use of natural, real-life resources and materials, including loose parts support the development of children's skills in creativity, curiosity and inquiry well. Children make decisions about their play and follow their personal interests. The flexible daily routine and practitioners' skilful interactions ensure that children have uninterrupted time to play and learn. As a result, children are happy, secure and clearly enjoy their time at nursery.
- The ELCC team has a good understanding of early learning pedagogy. All practitioners are sensitive and supportive in their interactions with children. They engage well with children during play and take good account of children's interests and learning dispositions. Almost all children are engaged in their play and are beginning to sustain interest for prolonged periods of time. Children interact well with one another and with adults. Practitioners know children well as individuals and use open-ended questions to extend children's learning. Practitioners use praise effectively to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. The team recognises the need to develop questioning techniques to deepen and extend children's thinking further. There is scope for practitioners to develop their use of running commentary as they interact with children.
- Practitioners use observations to enhance and support children's learning. Each child has a personal learning journal (PLJ). Practitioners are beginning to document children's significant learning, and plan for possible next steps. They have benefited from recent training and support to enhance their skills in observing children and using learning stories in PLJs. Practitioners are reflective and recognise the need to continue to work together to develop their shared understanding of high quality observation and assessment.
- Planning for children's learning is meaningful and responsive to children's interests and needs. Practitioners plan on a weekly and daily basis linking well with early level experiences and outcomes. Children's learning is documented well using area floorbooks. Children have regular access to digital technologies and use a computer station, whiteboard and programmable toys with confidence.
- The ELCC online sharing app provides parents with weekly correspondence about children's learning and progress. Parents also receive a helpful written update on their child's progress and achievements annually.

- Procedures are in place enabling practitioners to carefully track and monitor children's progress across the core curricular areas. The tracking and monitoring system links well to National Benchmarks. Practitioners are beginning to engage in professional dialogue opportunities to develop a shared understanding of children's progress. As planned, the ELCC should develop further moderation activities within and outwith the setting. This will assist practitioners to develop a more comprehensive, shared understanding of children's progress and expectations of children as learners.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The ELCC makes very good use of the national practice guidance, Building the Ambition. As a result, all practitioners effectively support the development of children's skills in creativity, curiosity and inquiry. There is scope for practitioners to develop children's learning in the key areas of early literacy and numeracy further. This will assist the ELCC in achieving the best possible outcomes for all children.
- The curriculum is based firmly on play and follows national guidance. Practitioners have a shared understanding of early learning pedagogy and their role in supporting children's learning through play. The team have a very good understanding of what they are trying to achieve. There is scope for the ELCC to embed more fully the principles of curricular design. As identified, emphasis should be placed on progression, depth and challenge.
- 'Stay and play' opportunities support children and families well as they transition from home to the ELCC. A successful end of year transition programme supports children as they move from the ELCC to P1. Practitioners should now bring this programme forward to ensure all children are more fully involved in the life of the school. The effective transfer of information on children's learning to P1 is based on Curriculum for Excellence. The ELCC has identified the need to continue to work collectively with primary colleagues to embed early level pathways. Senior leaders should ensure that opportunities are created for staff from across the early level to work together to share their understanding and expectations of early learning pedagogy.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners offer a range of opportunities for parents and the wider family to engage in a programme of events throughout the year. Parent helpers support outings and regular planned visits to the local care home. Parents are welcome to be involved in play sessions throughout the year, with enjoyable ‘stay and play’ sessions offered for all.
- Communication with parents is positive with all signed up to the ELCC online sharing app. This allows two-way sharing of information, with parents able to contribute from home and share further in their child’s learning. Daily dialogue, newsletters and individual home link bags support further links to home. Children’s PLJs are accessible and parents are alerted to newly added learning observations. Parents are encouraged to contribute to these and use their skills to support learning.
- Practitioners recognise the need to engage parents more fully within the ELCC. They have taken significant steps to encourage further parental participation. Positive parent comments on artwork is a good example of this in practice.

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

very good

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

- Practitioners have created a welcoming and friendly ethos in the ELCC, which supports children to feel safe and secure. Positive relationships ensure children and parents feel nurtured and respected. Children are given time to settle well, with settling-in procedures tailored to meet the individual needs of all children and parents. Children develop strong friendships and are kind and considerate with their peers. Practitioners who act as role models consistently demonstrate positive behaviour. Children's positive behaviour is recognised and encouraged through effective use of praise.
- Children are happy and enjoy their time at Heriot ELCC. Practitioners recognise and value the contribution children make to the ELCC and meet their individual needs well. Practitioners demonstrate the importance of getting it right for all children with wellbeing and children's rights underpinning their practice. Children are continuing to develop the language of wellbeing and demonstrate the wellbeing indicators when they take responsibility for serving their own snack.
- Children engage energetically in physical activity and are becoming healthy and active, through daily free flow access to the motivating outdoor space. They demonstrate a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their completion of a risk assessment and using real tools in the well-developed outdoor space is supporting children to develop confidence and resilience. All children are developing their independence, as they increasingly dress themselves for outdoors. Practitioners should ensure children's independence and sense of responsibility is developed further through increased leadership roles.
- A positive snack and lunchtime routine takes good account of children's individual needs and stage of development. Children are encouraged to help set up a healthy snack and invite their peers when it is ready. Children who are still settling are supported well to remain for lunch in the familiar ELCC environment. The views and preferences of children are valued within the setting and practitioners are responsive to children's thoughts and ideas.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. Practitioners engage in regular professional learning, which supports them and keeps their knowledge up to date. Care plans for all children are created in consultation with parents. Practitioners review plans with parents and encourage parents to update important information on a regular basis.
- All children make good progress, with equality and inclusion a strong feature in the ELCC. Children and parents are respected and are treated in a fair and just manner. Children who require additional support with their learning are supported well and, where appropriate, benefit from input from other professional agencies. Effective strategies are in place to support all children, ensuring children receive the best possible start in life. Individualised planning supports children who may require support and encouragement to participate fully in learning experiences.

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

- Overall, children are making good progress in their learning and development. Most children are making good progress in their communication and early language. Children are becoming confident communicators and are developing their vocabulary well as they play. They readily share their thoughts and ideas with practitioners. Children listen well and enjoy stories in child-initiated and adult-led experiences. They are developing their early writing skills through mark-making in a variety of real-life and play contexts. All children are learning to recognise their name in print as they register daily. A few children are beginning to write their name and copy words for wall displays. Most children are beginning to represent their thoughts through drawings and artwork, and can describe their work. Children are beginning to learn simple Spanish vocabulary. The majority of children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop their early writing skills.
- Most children are making good progress in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts through play. Daily baking opportunities provide children with appropriate, effective real-life experiences to extend their numerical and mathematical thinking. Children are developing their understanding of shape and mathematical language well as they build with blocks and use the woodwork bench. In the block play area, children are beginning to create structures that are more complex. Children are developing their awareness of money and coins as they play in the child-initiated 'Fifi's Shop'. They are developing their counting skills well as they use computer games on the whiteboard. Most children match, count and recognise numbers from zero to ten with confidence. A few children recognise bigger numbers. Children are not yet developing skills using, tally marks and understanding simple bar charts.
- Most children are making good progress and a few are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are kind, caring and respectful as they play with peers. Children are aware of the importance of healthy eating and independently self-select snack and pour drinks. Alongside practitioners, children take responsibility for caring for their learning environment by cleaning and tidying up. Children confidently change their own clothing for outdoor play and are involved in the daily risk assessment of the outdoor area. Their fine motor skills are developing well as they use tools at the woodwork bench and manipulate a variety of small parts in play experiences. Children are developing their gross motor skills well, as they manoeuvre loose parts and ride bikes in the nursery outdoor areas. Children enjoy and eagerly engage in weekly yoga sessions. Embedding the recently introduced social and emotional programmes will develop further children's confidence and self-esteem.

- Children's achievements within nursery are recognised and displayed on the nursery achievement tree. The 'wall of pride' is supporting most children to celebrate their creative success with their peers, parents and practitioners. Children's successes and wider achievements should continue to be recognised and shared within the nursery environment. This will support all children to become successful and confident learners.
- Practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of the potential challenges children and families may face. An inclusive ethos supports children who require additional support effectively and ensures they access the curriculum fully. This is allowing all children to make the best possible progress in their learning. Parents and partners discuss the individual needs of children. Practitioners should continue to work in partnership with all stakeholders to identify and remove possible barriers to learning. Decisions about future interventions take full account of evidence gathered from identified strategies to support all children.

Choice of QI: 1.2 Leadership of learning

- Professional engagement and collegiate working
- Impact of career-long professional learning (CLPL)
- Children leading learning

- A strong ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working has led to practice being reviewed, refreshed and improved. This is having a positive impact on outcomes for children and families with particular impact on wellbeing. Team building has helped to develop a strong sense of team and support the development of effective relationships. Practitioners have been encouraged to take a lead in developing an aspect of practice, through a range of distributed leadership roles. An effective buddy system is in place in order to facilitate professional dialogue and a sharing of knowledge, skills and experience. Collegiate learning is a strong feature in the ELCC. Evidence of this includes peer learning, high quality professional dialogue and regular reflective discussions. Weekly staff meetings, led by the EEL, and fortnightly meetings attended by the principal teacher is supporting the team to reflect and take forward improvements.
- All practitioners take responsibility for their own CLPL and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. A few practitioners are working towards gaining additional qualifications. All practitioners are reflective and come together regularly to discuss practice and share their learning from CLPL. An introduction to peer assessment through 'the experience of the week' is beginning to support practitioner confidence. The EEL has been proactive in supporting practitioners to extend and deepen their knowledge through the development of an effective shared pedagogy. She has supported practitioners to look outwards, sharing her experiences and links to international colleagues. Professional learning is having a positive impact on high quality experiences and improvements in practice. Practitioners have engaged in professional review and development meetings, supporting them to take forward their learning needs linked to best practice.
- Children's ideas and interests contribute to planning the learning environment and experiences. The majority of practitioners use open-ended questions well to promote children's thinking and understanding. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their use and understanding of higher order questions and commentary. The enabling learning environment encourages children to follow their interests. Practitioners should now build on this positive start by enhancing their knowledge and understanding of all children as learners. Using this information well will ensure children begin to know themselves as learners.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The impact of the role of the Excellence and Equity Lead in driving forward effective improvements in practice. This role was created by Scottish Government to support establishments in areas of deprivation to ensure attainment for all was raised.

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.