

Summarised inspection findings

Newtonhill School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

The nursery class operates from one main playroom with a separate cloakroom and entrance. Children now have daily access to a dedicated outdoor area. Security arrangements for access to the nursery have been reviewed over recent months. To prepare for expansion of the setting, plans are in place to create direct access to the outdoor area. The team have worked through a period of changes in staffing and in roles and responsibilities. The depute headteacher now has responsibility for managing the work of the nursery. The team are supported by the visiting principal teacher who provides valuable advice to the team. At present, there are two classes with children attending a mixture of morning and afternoon sessions. At the time of inspection there were 57 children aged three and above on the nursery roll.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Positive relationships between children, practitioners and families are clearly evident. All practitioners have a supportive and nurturing approach. As a result, most children settle quickly into their play. Children who require additional reassurance are sensitively included. Most children are developing their confidence and independence very well. They dress themselves for outdoor play and work together to build a tower. The team have worked well together to begin to improve the learning environment. Practitioners should now focus on developing further the quality of interactions. This will ensure the team consistently build on children's prior learning and skills.
- Practitioners are playful, respectful and responsive to all children. The team value and listen to what children are interested in and would like to learn more about. Over the last session, the team have improved their approaches to planning learning. Planning is now responsive to children's own interests and is linked to experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. In the best examples, children investigate their own questions about the post office, deliveries and their local community. Children are to applying and developing their skills well through recent increased use of the community. This has increased motivation and engaged children in more relevant, meaningful learning experiences. As these new approaches are embedded, practitioners should continue to ensure interruptions to children's play are minimised.
- Working with the principal teacher, the team have rightly identified the need to develop further the cycle of observation, planning, tracking and monitoring of learning. Floor books and displays are now beginning to show children's questions, experiences and early mark making. We discussed with practitioners how to link these investigations to children's own individual progress. As planned, the team should now work with children to support them to develop a language of learning. This will support children to reflect on their developing skills with practitioners in a meaningful way.

- Children enjoy accessing the internet to research topics they are interested in. For example, how to grow vegetables or see how letters are processed by the postal service. There is scope to develop children's more independent and progressive use of a fuller range of digital technology to enhance learning.
- All children have an electronic diary of their development and experiences. Diaries contain a range of photographs and some observations of children's learning. The team have rightly identified that they need to work together to improve the focus, frequency and consistency of their observations. At present, these records are not currently accessible to parents. Parents require more regular information about the progress children make across their learning. We have asked practitioners to improve how they use diaries to support children to reflect on their skills and progress. The team recognise that next steps noted in these diaries are currently not always specific, personalised or linked to the progression of significant learning. The very recently introduced approaches to tracking and monitoring are at a very early stage of development. As planned, the team should now work with families to develop and share a manageable record of children's progress over time.

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

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

- Almost all children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. The majority of children enjoy extended conversations, particularly when engaged in imaginative play. Children enjoy sharing their book of the week and favourite nursery rhymes. In the best examples, children enjoy making simple books and retelling favourite stories. Most children are developing good listening skills as they follow instructions in the forest or share ideas with their friends as they mix paint. A few children are very interested in writing for a purpose. They confidently write their name and a few familiar words as they label their drawings or write addresses. Children now need to develop and build on their skills in a progressive way in meaningful and challenging real life contexts.
- Almost all children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children are developing their understanding of volume as they fill, empty containers and transport water in the outdoor area. The majority of children use the language of measure appropriately, as they compare the height of towers or lengths of sticks. A few children count beyond ten, sort and match objects and show a developing understanding of one to one correspondence. Recent work on bird watching and travel surveys has provided a motivating context to develop children's skills in information handling. Children are developing an early understanding of money as they use coins in their 'shop'. Children now need to develop and build on their skills in a progressive way in meaningful and challenging real life contexts.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are respectful, kind and understand the nursery rules they have worked on together. They share space, resources and work well together appropriate to their stage of development. Children develop their gross and fine motor skills well through a good range of well-planned activities. Children enjoy their important role of helper as they carefully cut and prepare healthy snacks for their friends. Small groups enjoy the challenge of climbing trees or sliding down the slope in their 'forest'. Increased use of open ended and natural materials is supporting children to be creative and develop their own ideas. Children explore their own feelings and emotions through planned and spontaneous activities. As a result, children are developing a good understanding of their own and others health and wellbeing. Children need to develop further their learnership skills in the nursery.
- Increased access to and development of outdoor learning environments show signs of having a positive impact of improving children's progress. Most children are independent, resourceful and creative as they make 'cakes' in their mud kitchen. A few children are engrossed as they explore colour and pattern as they paint. Children are developing an understanding of the

natural world as they plant vegetables or explore insects. As discussed, the team should reflect on and extend this work. It would be beneficial for the team to participate in some visits to other settings who have expertise in this area.

- All children are valued and respected as unique individuals in the setting. Practitioners understand children's unique needs, strengths, personalities and interests. The team notice and share where children may require additional support or encouragement. As a result, prompt action is taken to agree additional support and ensure progress is secured for specific children. Practitioners work with, for example, the English as an Additional Language teacher to agree strategies to support language development. As discussed, the team should now use their tracking system to monitor closely the progress of any children who have specific additional needs in order to ensure that they make appropriate 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.