

Summarised inspection findings

Abbey Mill Childcare Ltd

Renfrewshire Council

18 December 2018

Key contextual information

Abbey Mill Childcare Ltd is situated in a large business centre. It is registered to provide early learning and childcare to 85 children aged from six weeks to starting school. The setting has three playrooms and access to a secure outdoor area.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 owner, who plays an active part in the setting, has created an appropriate vision, values and aims that set the context for the service. She has correctly identified the need to refresh this and should continue with her plans to involve parents, practitioners, partners and children in the process. Through working together, she plans to create a new, more meaningful vision, values and aims that reflects the uniqueness of the setting. This will help to lead the work of the setting and ensure that their high aspirations for children and families are reflected and understood.
- The leadership team, consists of the owner, the manager and the depute manager. They work well together and provide direction and support to the team. Recent changes in the leadership team have resulted in the creation of clearer roles and more specific remits with a focus on devolved leadership. All practitioners have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and this is starting to have a positive impact. An example of this is the work being carried out to promote numeracy and improvements in the outdoor area with a focus on health and wellbeing. Positive teamwork is evident in the setting and practitioners and parents appreciate and benefit from the caring and approachable management style.
- During the inspection, the leadership team and practitioners engaged positively and demonstrated their commitment to making improvements and providing a quality service. They are however, at an early stage of using national self-evaluation guidance, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' with the full team, to support their work. They use a variety of guidance materials to help them evaluate the quality of their environment and reflect on any changes they should make. Practitioners are aware of how the work they are carrying out in their leadership roles contributes to the improvement plan. We discussed with the leadership team, how they can work with practitioners to support and develop their understanding of the process of self-evaluation. This will help to involve them more fully in the improvement planning cycle.
- The management team will benefit from reflecting on the pace of change in the setting. This will enable them to put in place more strategic planning for improvement to ensure well-planned changes lead to improvement. They have recently made changes to processes in the setting including planning and recording children's learning. They now need to monitor and

review the impact of these changes to ensure they are having a positive impact on outcomes for children.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Nurturing and supportive relationships between children and adults are a strong feature of the setting.
- Using eye contact, gesture and encouragement, practitioners' interactions with babies are sensitive and carefully address the needs of each child. As a result, babies are gaining in confidence when exploring the wide range of resources.
- Children aged two to three years are relaxed within the environment and are developing independence through play. They explore a range of experiences and are keen to play in the outdoor area. Practitioners interact well to give young children the comfort and reassurance they need.
- Practitioners have positive relationships with children and families. In the playroom for children aged three to five years, practitioners listen well to children and respond to their different levels of communication with care and respect. As a result, children are settled and secure within the setting and approach practitioners for help as needed. Children are mostly enthusiastic about their learning and are confident and happy. They use, respect and respond very well to the wide variety of high quality resources available in the playroom.
- Practitioners provide a range of experiences to engage children's interest in learning across the curriculum. They now need to ensure high quality learning experiences for all with appropriate support and challenge. A few children were observed to move from area to area without being involved in play. Practitioners did not always identify this and opportunities to help children become more purposefully engaged in play were sometimes missed.
- Children benefit from positive relationships with practitioners. Interactions are based on a warm, caring and respectful approach. Children have the freedom to make choices about where they will play and the resources they will use. There are a few examples of practitioners making effective use of questioning. It would be useful to explore approaches to promote higher order thinking. Practitioners should continue to develop their skills to intervene appropriately and consistently in children's play in order to build and extend children's learning.
- Each child has an individual learning book and online learning journal. These have both been recently updated. Practitioners observe children at play. Observations are not yet carried out and compiled in a systematic and consistent manner across the setting. Practitioners would benefit from developing their skills in observation of significant learning and identifying appropriate next steps in children's learning. This should consistently build on previous learning and support children to make the very best progress they are capable of. As planned,

the setting should continue to encourage parents and carers to contribute to their child's learning journals.

- Children would benefit from more focused conversations about their individual learning to help them review their achievements and plan for what they might learn next. This will support children to reflect on themselves as learners.
- Children's progress is not yet tracked or monitored systematically. It will be important for practitioners and senior leaders to have a more robust overview of the progress children are making within the setting as a result of their experiences. This information should ensure continuity and progression within and across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Across the setting planning starts from children's interest and ideas. Mind maps are used as a tool to find out what children already know about a context and what they would like to find out. Practitioners consult with children and take account of their views. As discussed, it will be important to consider how established approaches are built upon including the use of floor books and story walls. This should enable practitioners to achieve a clear understanding of planned learning in each of the areas in the playrooms. This will help practitioners to monitor and evaluate their work more effectively and lead to improved experiences for children. As planned, the leadership team need to continue their review of approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring of children's learning.
- Children have daily access to an interactive table and the setting has a wide range of digital resources available to support learning including microscopes, tablets and cameras.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners working with children aged three years and under make good use of national guidance to plan experiences and evaluate the learning environment. They have a good understanding of how children learn and use this to plan a range of experiences to support children well.
- The leadership team and practitioners need to continue to develop a curriculum rationale to reflect their expectations for children's learning and achievements. This should take full account of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence to provide greater depth, choice, challenge and progression in children's learning.
- Practitioners make some use of the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan children's learning. They use floor books to record the experiences children participate in over the session. As part of effective monitoring and tracking the leadership team should now develop a manageable way to keep track of the range of learning experiences available across the curriculum. This will help practitioners to identify where they need to improve to deepen and extend learning experiences.
- Practitioners now need to develop further their knowledge and understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. This will support the development of children's creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills, both indoors and outside.
- Building constraints restrict children's free access to outdoor play throughout the session. This can impact on their learning experiences. However, the importance of ensuring children have planned experiences outdoors is recognised by the setting and almost all children access the area on a daily basis. As planned and discussed, children's outdoor learning experiences now need to be an area for continuous improvement. This should include a focus on the use of materials that promote curiosity, problem solving and inquiry.
- The setting would benefit from encouraging parents, carers and the local community to share their skills and work expertise to enrich children's learning experiences and awareness of the world around them. This will add value to the quality of children's experiences and raise children's awareness of the skills for life, learning and work.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Very positive relationships with families are established and ways to involve them in the life of the setting are regularly explored. Weekend stay and play sessions are organised to enable working parents to attend. These are well received by parents. The setting should continue to explore ways they can involve parents more fully in aspects of their children's learning.
- Practitioners provide daily informal feedback to parents and organise sessions to let them know about the progress their children are making. They encourage parents to borrow books and make use of a take-home bear to develop home links. Parents are also encouraged to access and contribute to children's online learning journals. They comment positively on the journals and feel this keeps them informed about what their children are learning about and the progress they are making. A few parents would like more information on what the children are learning in the setting. Parents also access social media where they can find out about events and view information on the experiences children are having in the setting.
- Parents are regularly asked to share their opinions about aspects of the provision and the setting takes on board their views. They receive termly newsletters and informative leaflets on aspects of the curriculum. Parents are very positive about the service they receive.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

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

- Throughout the setting, there is a shared understanding of the importance of supporting the wellbeing of children and families. This is central to the provision. Practitioners caring for children under the age of three years, meet with parents prior to children starting the setting and gather important information relating to children's wellbeing. They use this information as a starting point for children and ensure their individual needs are met. As a result, children appear to be settled, happy and thriving.
- Nurturing, responsive relationships are a positive feature in the setting. Practitioners are aware of children's rights and treat them with respect in all aspects of their care and learning. They model positive behaviour and encourage children to develop friendships and care for each other. Children demonstrate an understanding of the nursery rules and are able to use them as they play alongside each other.
- Practitioners have a sound knowledge of the wellbeing indicators and provide a variety of experiences to ensure children are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured and active. As discussed, they now need to explore how they support children to develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and how they relate to them as individuals.
- Children are encouraged to make choices in the setting and practitioners support their interests and listen to their opinions. There is now scope for practitioners to explore how they can involve children more fully in making decisions about aspects of the setting that affect them. This may include deciding on how to organise the lunch rotas.
- Practitioners are aware of their statutory duties and attend regular training to support them to carry out their roles effectively. They understand the importance of keeping children safe and comply with legislation. Children who may have barriers to their learning are identified and appropriate support provided to help them make progress. Where required practitioners liaise with external agencies and put appropriate plans in place to ensure children's individual needs are being met. They should now ensure that children's individual targets are identified and shared with the whole team to support a consistent approach to children's learning and development. Parents spoke very positively about the level of support their children received in the setting and praised the practitioners' early identification of barriers to learning.
- All families are welcomed into the setting and are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. Practitioners make good use of resources to raise children's awareness of equality and take positive steps to challenge gender stereotyping. We discussed ways that the setting could develop further the understanding of diversity and how they could involve parents to support this.

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

- The information gathered from all inspection activities including observation of learning, talking to children and parents, analysis of planning and assessment information indicates that children are making satisfactory progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Babies are developing their emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills well at their own individual stage. They demonstrate that they are confident and secure in the well planned and resourced environment as they explore independently by crawling and walking. They enjoy music and song and use their communication skills to make their needs known. Babies display curiosity and use their senses to explore the range of interesting, natural resources provided. Appropriate commentary is provided by practitioners to enable and support early language and communication skills.
- Children aged two to three years are making appropriate progress in their learning and development. They are growing in confidence through exploring their environment and by making choices from the activities that are on offer. Nurturing interactions from practitioners and daily access to stories and songs is supporting their early communication skills. Children develop early numeracy and mathematical skills such as sorting and matching through exploration of different materials. A few use appropriate mathematical language during their play such as big and small. Fine motor skills develop through the use of a wide range of real-life and natural materials.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. They engage enthusiastically in conversation, sharing their thoughts and ideas. This was evident as they shared their observations of the local environment whilst on a walk to a local sheltered housing complex. The majority of children demonstrate a sound use of vocabulary and are keen to learn new words. They independently access the wide range of fiction and reference books and the majority can recall the narrative of familiar stories. Most children are able to recognise their name, for example during self-registration. The majority of children engage with mark-making resources and a few are attempting to write their name and develop their understanding of letter names and sounds. Most children are aware of environmental print and understand that text has different meanings.

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics and numeracy. They count with confidence and show developing skills in number recognition. A few children are beginning to work with numbers beyond ten and can choose strategies to help them solve problems. Children are developing an understanding of shape. Most children recognise 2D shapes and a few are able to name simple 3D objects. Most children are beginning to become aware of mathematical concepts, which they explore during art and junk modelling activities. Mathematical language is being developed and used to compare and describe height and length through block play and construction activities. Children use comparative language when playing at the water tray and show a developing understanding of weight and volume. They are also developing their information handling skills through the recent gathering of information on favourite foods to inform snack menu choices. Skills should continue to be developed across meaningful and relevant contexts.
- There is an appropriate focus on health and wellbeing within the setting which has a positive impact on children's learning and development. As a result, children are making satisfactory progress in this area. They demonstrate developing fine motor control, for example through the use of tools such as scissors and keys with padlocks. The majority are able to communicate their needs and feelings, according to their stage of development. Children are aware of healthy foods. A recent focus on favourite foods has enhanced this knowledge further through the making and tasting of smoothies and soup. Children are encouraged and understand the importance of hand washing and tooth brushing. Most children have a growing awareness of fairness, the emotions of other children and the need for the established nursery rules.
- Children benefit from weekly French lessons and are developing their use of common words and phrases in a way that is active, motivating and enjoyable. The majority of children could recall prior learning and demonstrated confidence in learning new words.
- Children's achievements are recognised through effective use of praise and encouragement. Wider achievements are at the early stages of being captured through online learning journals and individual learning books. The setting has outlined that they would like to develop their approaches to recognising children's achievements within the setting further. This will contribute to the overall picture of children's progress over time.
- The leadership team and practitioners have a clear understanding of delivering equity for all children. They value the individual circumstances of children and families as well as factors which may influence a child's participation in learning. The setting works in partnership with other services to sensitively support individual parents and carers to enable them to contribute to their children's learning.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- The setting has carried out extensive work to improve the initial transition process from home to the setting for children and families. They have researched what works well and made appropriate changes to their procedures. This has resulted in positive outcomes for children and families and as a result, children are more settled. Practitioners make use of information provided by parents and take account of individual care and support needs. This helps them to meet children's needs effectively. They are aware of the importance of developing positive relationships and building strong attachments to ensure children feel secure and nurtured in the setting. Transitions from room to room are well organised and tailored to suit the needs of individual children and their families.
- The setting are aware of the importance of liaising with other providers where children attend split placements and regularly share appropriate information to support children's development. They should continue with this good practice.
- Where children have additional support needs, practitioners work closely with other agencies who are involved and provide an extended transition to help support individual needs. This is helping to ensure children settle well and promotes continuity in their care and learning.
- Practitioners complete a detailed, local authority transfer of information document when children are moving into primary school. They should continue to develop relationships with local schools to support continuity and progression in learning as children transfer into P1.

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.