

Summarised inspection findings

Stenhousemuir Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Centre

Falkirk Council

17 March 2020

Key contextual information

Stenhousemuir Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) is a new purpose-built setting, situated in the grounds of Stenhousemuir Primary School. Early learning and childcare (ELC) is provided for children aged from three years. The setting is registered for 56 children at any one time. The current roll is 52. All children can access 1140 hours of ELC. Practitioners and children returned to the new building in April 2019 after being decanted for a period of six months. Since then, the number of children and practitioners has increased significantly. Most practitioners have been employed within the last nine months.

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

- In the last year, the setting has experienced significant change. The senior early years officer (SEYO), together with the support of the principal teacher, has led and managed this extremely well. As a result of this strong leadership, the new team work together very well. They have embraced positively the many new developments that have taken place in the last year.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a strong awareness of the social, economic and cultural context of the setting. They have high aspirations for children and families and reflect this in the meaningful vision, values and aims. Practitioners embed these very well through the highly supportive and inclusive ethos of the ELCC. They use them meaningfully to guide improvement and practice to improve outcomes for children.
- Practitioners respect the knowledge, skills and expertise that each member of the team brings to the setting. This has been used to influence and lead improvements. Continuous lifelong professional learning is important to all practitioners. They keep abreast of current thinking in ELC and look outwards using research and visits to other settings to inform practice. As a result, children benefit from high quality learning experiences.
- Senior leaders encourage and support leadership at all levels. They empower practitioners to undertake leadership responsibilities linked to the setting's priorities for improvement, which are family engagement and outdoor learning. These areas have been an important focus because of the new environment and an increase to 1140 hours of ELC. Practitioners meet regularly with senior leaders to review the progress of the improvement plan and demonstrate positive improvements. They should consider how future priorities for the setting will focus on children's progress and address potential attainment gaps. The headteacher should continue to develop a strategic overview of the ELCC to help guide and manage the direction and pace of improvement.
- Practitioners are extremely reflective and use daily 'huddles' to discuss observations and evaluate learning experiences. These sessions ensure practitioners remain highly responsive to children's ideas and interests. Practitioners value the opinions of all stakeholders and

regularly gather their views. They use this information very well to improve the quality of ELC for children and families. Practitioners have made a positive start to using national guidance to support self-evaluation. They are clear about strengths and areas for improvement in relation to particular quality indicators. Practitioners need to embed this to shape future improvements.

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

- Practitioners provide a welcoming, attractive learning environment. They offer a wide range of experiences to stimulate children's interest in learning through play. Practitioners create high quality, very well resourced areas that children access independently. They make very effective use of natural, open-ended materials that encourage children's imagination and creativity. This is particularly evident during block play when children work together to build complex structures which they design with great attention to detail.
- Most children are motivated by the rich, quality learning experiences both indoors and outside. The majority of children engage well in their learning for extended periods of time. Most play in pairs or small groups where they interact positively with each other, sharing ideas and solving problems. Practitioners should review the layout of this busy environment to offer children increased options to seek more enclosed spaces to relax and be restful. Practitioners gather children briefly to talk about what they can look forward to for lunch and what might be happening during the session. They should develop this practice further to enable a focused approach to supporting children's learning in smaller groups.
- Practitioners have a shared understanding of their approach to early learning pedagogy. They are nurturing and very sensitive to individual children's needs. Practitioners skilfully join in discussions to stimulate, support and extend learning. They use digital technology such as the interactive whiteboard to encourage mark-making and support children to use cameras to record their achievements. Practitioners should continue to review and widen opportunities to use digital technology to support learning and teaching.
- Practitioners are developing a new approach to planning which aims to be fully responsive to children's interests. This encourages children to lead their own learning. Practitioners meet daily to reflect on children's interests and to plan learning experiences in response to observations. They should continue to review and develop this approach to ensure children are supported to develop core skills progressively.
- A new approach to documenting children's learning is at an early stage. Practitioners record observations in scrapbooks, which children use to reflect on their learning. Practitioners need to continue to develop their skills in writing high quality observations of children's learning. They should ensure observations capture significant learning and identify next steps for children. Practitioners need to work with children to identify their next steps in learning and ways to achieve them. In addition, they should encourage children to reflect meaningfully on their progress.
- Practitioners track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at particular points in the year. They should continue to review and refresh this process to ensure it reflects fully the progress children are making in their learning. In doing so, they should work

towards including all areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders monitor children's learning and progress with practitioners to identify where further support and challenge is required. In addition, they monitor children's scrapbooks and provide helpful feedback to practitioners. Senior leaders need to support practitioners to ensure scrapbooks demonstrate fully the progress children make across their learning over time.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners know children very well and offer them support and encouragement to lead their own learning. They link observations to Curriculum for Excellence and track coverage across the curriculum. Practitioners promote and develop successfully essential aspects of early learning. This includes a strong focus on children's developing skills in wellbeing, curiosity, inquiry and creativity. They ensure early literacy and numeracy experiences indoors and outdoors enable children to develop and apply skills in different contexts.
- Children are beginning to engage with the local community when they visit the shop to buy snack. They engage with local businesses who donate towards fundraising. As planned, practitioners should develop further the links within the community to encourage children's knowledge and understanding of the local area. Additionally, as planned, they should explore opportunities further afield to enrich learning through real life experiences. Parents and extended family contribute well to the curriculum. They share their talents and develop children's skills in baking, arts and crafts and planting and growing.
- Transition arrangements are flexible and practitioners are sensitive to the differing needs of families to ensure a smooth transition into the ELCC. Practitioners offer home visits to families prior to children starting the setting. This enables parents to share children's prior experiences and health and wellbeing needs. Practitioners should review and update the information requested from parents to enable practitioners to build on children's prior learning.
- Teachers, along with practitioners, provide a range of pastoral experiences to support children and parents to become familiar with the school setting. They need to develop collaborative working to share approaches and information on children's learning to ensure continuity and progression across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners' focus on family engagement has resulted in an increase in parents and extended family being involved in the setting. This includes sessions where families join their child to share in their play and learning. Practitioners record the views of children and parents, which demonstrates they find this a positive family experience. They should now seek ways to develop family engagement further to provide opportunities for children and parents to learn together at home.
- Parents receive information on their child's progress and achievements in a range of ways. Practitioners provide informal feedback to parents on a daily basis, sharing children's experiences and achievements. They meet formally with individual parents to discuss children's progress and achievements in greater detail at least twice per year. Practitioners also encourage parents to use the 'Parent Hub' to view their child's scrapbook and to keep up to date with information and events.
- Practitioners provide specific events for parents to hear about the work of the setting. They should develop this further to share the setting's 'Visible Pedagogy'. Practitioners should share this in a meaningful way to give parents an understanding of the approaches used within the setting. In addition, they should support parents to understand the contribution they make to their child's learning.

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

- Children's and families' wellbeing is paramount. This has been critical this year to ensure a smooth transition into the new building and the full implementation of 1140 hours of ELC. Strong, positive and respectful relationships result in children feeling safe and content within the setting. The principles of 'Getting it right for every child' underpin practitioners' approach to supporting children's health, wellbeing and learning. Children are becoming familiar with the wellbeing indicators and relate these to their everyday lives. They share what it means to be safe, feel included and be responsible. Practitioners should develop children's awareness of their rights through meaningful and developmentally appropriate links with the wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners provide a cosy, quiet space where children take time to rest, relax and explore their emotions and feelings. They have access to appropriate resources and this helps them to communicate how they feel. Practitioners are respectful of children's time in this area. They gauge when it is respectfully appropriate to interact to support and comfort children to manage their emotions and build resilience.
- Practitioners model positive and respectful behaviour and share their expectations with children. Practitioners are professional and positive role models for children. They support children in a sensitive and nurturing manner to promote positive behaviour. Highly effective strategies such as 'red choices and green choices' support children to understand expectations. Most children play very well together and develop an understanding of the importance of teamwork during play. Children's behaviour towards each other is mostly kind and respectful.
- Practitioners, including early learning and childcare assistants (ELAs), ensure 'Marvellous Mealtimes' enable children to enjoy healthy snacks and lunches in a calm and relaxed way. Children demonstrate good social skills as they chat with adults and their peers. They are encouraged and supported very well to develop good table manners and to use cutlery correctly.
- Children's health and wellbeing is supported through high quality and challenging outdoor experiences. They benefit from daily fresh air and the opportunity to be energetic as they develop a range of physical skills. Most children spend extended periods of time outdoors.
- Practitioners are fully aware of their legislative responsibilities to keep children safe and meet their learning needs. Each child has a personal plan, which outlines care and welfare needs. Senior leaders monitor and update these plans. They do this in consultation with parents to ensure children receive the appropriate support to continue to develop and learn. Practitioners identify timeously when children require additional support with their learning. They work very effectively with support agencies and parents to meet their needs. Relevant planning processes including identified strategies ensure practitioners are clear about the support

children require. Practitioners evaluate these strategies to ensure they continue to be effective in reducing barriers to learning. As a result, children who require additional support continue to develop and learn.

- Practitioners create a highly inclusive and respectful ethos where everyone is welcome. Children arrive at the ELCC excited and ready to learn. Families are relaxed when they come into the setting, engage well with practitioners and enjoy being involved in a range of experiences. Practitioners value and respect diversity. They need to ensure that they promote this and provide a wider range of resources to support children's understanding.

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 with their health and wellbeing. They are aware of the importance of healthy eating. They confidently peel, chop and mix as they make fresh soup and bread. Children are making important friendships. They share ideas, help each other and are learning to negotiate. A few children require help to develop skills in sharing and managing their emotions. Most children engage in adventurous play when they climb, slide and balance. They are gaining courage to balance on challenging structures, which they create themselves. Practitioners should support children to create and carry out developmentally appropriate risk assessment within the playroom and outdoors.
- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They talk confidently and express themselves well as they share their ideas. Most choose to read books by themselves or have stories read by adults. They enjoy nursery rhymes and singing simple songs. Practitioners should monitor children's engagement with books to support all children to develop their interest, skills and pleasure in reading. Children require a wider range of non-fiction books across the setting to support and extend their interests. A few children recognise signs in the environment and understand they have meaning. Most children recognise their name. Children develop emergent writing through play as they mark-make, draw with detail and attempt to write their name. A few children are writing stories with adult help.
- Most children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. They count in sequence to ten with a few counting to 20 and beyond. Children explore numbers through play and understand they represent quantities. A few children are developing their understanding of simple addition and enjoy 'writing sums' in their scrapbooks. Most children are developing mathematical language through their play. They talk about the weight of blocks, compare sizes and are developing an understanding of space around them. Children understand they need money to buy snack at the shop. They need to develop further their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts such as three-dimensional objects, pattern and time and their importance in the world around us.
- Most children are highly creative. They use their imaginations well to design and build houses, make structures from clay and create drawings and models with increasing attention to detail. They use musical instruments to accompany singing and to develop a sense of rhythm. Children's ability to solve problems is particularly strong and is evident throughout their play.

- Most children understand they are being responsible when they are helpers in the setting. They enjoy the feeling of success as they persevere in activities they have chosen themselves. Parents and practitioners are beginning to share with each other children's achievements in the setting and at home using an online tool. Practitioners should begin to track children's achievements to ensure equity for all and build on their individual skills as part of the setting's experiences.
- Over time, practitioners understand families' personal circumstances and how these affect children. They build up a picture of children's strengths, needs and interests through focused observations. Practitioners need to use all data available to demonstrate children's progress over time. They should use this information to provide tailored support to meet individual needs.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- High quality experiences using open-ended materials to promote creativity, curiosity and inquiry.

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.