

# Summarised inspection findings

Lainshaw Early Childhood Centre

East Ayrshire Council

25 February 2020

## Key contextual information

Lainshaw Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is an integral part of Lainshaw Primary School. The ECC is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for 80 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school. A maximum of 15 children will be aged two to three years old. At the time of inspection, there were 64 children registered for the morning sessions and 57 for the afternoon sessions. In the two to three provision, eight children were registered for the morning sessions and five for the afternoon sessions. The accommodation comprises a newly built provision for children aged two to three and two adjoining playrooms for older children. Children aged two to three have direct access to an outdoor area and older children access a nearby outdoor area within the school grounds. The wider school campus, including the gym hall and school garden, provide children with additional environments for learning. The ECC is managed by the headteacher supported by the depute manager and senior early learning and childcare practitioner (SELCP). The depute manager has recently been appointed and took up post in August 2019.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

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

- The headteacher values the ECC and is committed to its' inclusion as part of the whole school community. The depute manager and SELCP have a shared vision and understanding of the quality service they aim to provide for children in Lainshaw ECC. Practitioners are reflective, embrace change in a positive manner and have high aspirations for all children.
- The depute manager provides clear and strategic leadership and creates a positive ethos that supports the team to work well together. In her short time in post, the improvements to children's experiences are evident and clearly documented.
- The school and ECC have recently reviewed and refreshed their vision and values with input from the whole ECC community. Practitioners engaged with all stakeholders in the process, creating a sense of ownership. Daily interactions and everyday practice in the setting reflect the vision and values of respect, honesty and kindness.
- All practitioners have leadership roles and this supports the ethos of distributed leadership and empowerment in the setting. They value each other's strengths and experiences and how these are supporting the work of the ECC team on its' journey for improvement. Children have a meaningful and active role in leading their own learning. A few children undertake daily leadership roles including snack helpers and risk assessors for outdoor learning. As discussed, a positive next step will be to include all children in a wider range of learner participation groups.
- Practitioners are highly motivated and undertake a wide variety of professional learning, dialogue, moderation and training for additional qualifications. As planned, the use of activity

logs to support practitioners with their evaluation of professional learning should more clearly evidence the impact on the delivery of high quality ELC.

- Priorities in the whole school improvement plan are appropriate and relevant to the ECC and reflect national and local guidance. Practitioners are involved in the evaluation of the plan with the support of the depute manager and take forward key priorities. The use of action plans linked to the improvement plan, now needs more time to embed in order to evidence sustained impact. Parents and carers are increasingly involved in this process. As discussed, children now need to be involved further in a developmentally appropriate way.
- The depute manager has established a regular and robust system for self-evaluation. Documented evidence of self-evaluation activities demonstrates the use and a shared understanding of the national self-evaluation framework, How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC?). Practitioners use action plans for each focus quality indicator, which measure success and identify next steps for improvement. As planned, the headteacher should now be more consistently involved in the self-evaluation work of the ECC.

## 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

### Children aged two to three years

- Practitioners establish sensitive and caring relationships with all children and their families. They provide children with the comfort and security they need to enable them to feel confident and ready to learn. They encourage children to explore and investigate through age and stage appropriate resources that support children's play. Practitioners should increase the provision for children to engage in sensory play experiences and provide resources related to children's interests and current schematic play. This should support further children's progress and development.
- Practitioners' interactions are kind and caring. They support children during their play to engage purposefully in activities and with each other. They should develop further the range of strategies that they use to support children's language and communication skills. This should include the increased use of commentary and signing. In addition, there is a need to review the pace of adults' spoken language to support further children's acquisition of language.
- Senior leaders should support practitioners to build their confidence in the use of newly introduced planning formats. This will enable them to plan effectively to support children's development and learning. Practitioners should streamline tracking formats to reduce paperwork and to give a clearer picture of children's progress over time.

### Children aged three to five years

- Practitioners provide a welcoming and nurturing environment and have established positive relationships with children and families. All children are settled in the ECC, they are confident with routines and engage purposefully in their chosen activities. Practitioners organise the environment effectively enabling children to independently lead their play. They provide real life and natural resources that motivate and engage almost all children in their learning. The newly created ECC garden is an exciting and stimulating outdoor environment. Practitioners should review wall displays to ensure children's own work is prominent. This will support further children's ownership of their environment.
- Practitioners engage meaningfully with children to support them during their play. They are interested in what children say and almost all use a variety of strategies to support children's communication skills. Practitioners give specific praise which supports children to know clearly what they have done well. The pace of the session allows children extended time for free flow play. The effective use of open-ended questions is not always consistent across the team. Senior leaders should continue to develop practitioners' skills of sensitive intervention which extends children's learning.
- Practitioners support children to use the internet to build upon and research interests. For example, children used the laptop to look at weather warnings and risk assess play outdoors.

Practitioners have recently ordered more digital resources to develop further the meaningful use of digital technologies which extend and enhance learning.

- All children have a “Special Folder” that contains a range of information including an ‘All About Me’ booklet, photographs, samples of work, observations and tracking sheets. These folders support practitioners to make judgements about children’s progress over time. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to develop further the quality and consistency of observations and capture significant learning. Senior leaders have planned professional learning to support with observations. Practitioners meet regularly with parents to share children’s progress and identify next steps in learning. They should ensure next steps in learning are specific and clearly outlined so they can be easily shared with children, parents and other practitioners. Parents can access the “Special Folders” at any time. Practitioners are aware of the need to promote this further and increase parental engagement.
- Practitioners provide a balance of planned and spontaneous play which supports children’s learning. They use floorbooks to develop children’s interests and build on prior knowledge. Children are involved in planning by using mind maps. Senior leaders monitor floorbooks to evaluate progress across the curriculum to improve children’s learning. They have identified the need to develop the use of local authority progression frameworks to support further planning for progression and depth in learning. Senior leaders support practitioners to gather and analyse a range of data. They use this information to identify gaps in children’s learning and children who require additional challenge. They plan individually for these children and put interventions in place to support their individual progress. Senior leaders are beginning to support practitioners to monitor and evaluate the impact of targeted support. There is a need to embed this in practice.
- Practitioners use skills development records to track and monitor children’s progress in learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders have begun to support practitioners’ moderation of professional judgement and ensure learning experiences effectively meet the needs of individual children. This should be embedded in order to build on the early progress made.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based firmly on play. Almost all practitioners have a good understanding of children's learning and development. They are responsive to children's interests and planning takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. There is a strong focus on early literacy and numeracy skills and ensuring wellbeing. Practitioners track and record coverage of other areas of the curriculum to promote a breadth of experience.
- Trips to the local woods and walks in the local community enhance further children's learning. This is supporting children to develop a variety of skills in different contexts including working collaboratively, managing risk and developing their awareness of the local environment. Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop further children's skills for life and learning and are planning for this.
- Practitioners tailor transitions to suit individual needs. Parents and children visit the ECC prior to starting and parents are welcome to stay with children to support the settling in period. Children in the two to three years room take part in regular joint activities with the three to five years room and transitions between rooms is a natural process. The setting's transition programme supports children well as they move on to school and includes a range of planned activities across the school year. Children are paired with a P5 buddy in January who will be their friend and helper as they transition into P1. At the early stages, a range of information about children's progress in learning is gathered and this should support transitions in learning as children move to P1.
- Practitioners need to work with primary school colleagues to develop a curriculum rationale. This should support a shared understanding of learning approaches across the early level to improve continuity and progression in learning.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnerships with parents and carers are a strong feature of Lainshaw ECC. Children benefit from the setting's supportive approach to all families and their individual circumstances. The key worker approach ensures all children and families build a relationship with a practitioner who knows their child very well. Parents and carers appreciate the informal daily conversations with the team. This helps reassure parents and ensure smooth transitions into the playroom each morning.
- Practitioners inform parents and carers about children's learning in the ECC using an appropriate range of approaches. These include regular informal interactions, newsletters, children's 'Special Folders' and planned opportunities to meet with practitioners. For example, annually planned stay and play events such as the recent 'No screen day' and 'Book Bug' events. Information leaflets are shared with parents and carers from other services and partner agencies. The 'communication champion' shares information to support parents' and carers' involvement in developing language opportunities and skills. The depute manager plans to deliver a programme supporting home learning. This will further support this area of the ECC's work.
- Parents give feedback after initiatives and events. The recently developed online questionnaire is supporting a wider range of parents and carers to contribute their views on ECC improvement priorities. It will be important to continue to review the variety of feedback approaches and maximise parental voice.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning in a variety of ways. This includes contributing to their children's 'Special Folders' at target setting meetings four times per year. Parents receive quarterly summative reports providing an overview of their child's learning in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and other curricular areas. They volunteer on setting outings including the weekly local woodland visits. Parents and carers enjoy being involved in this aspect of the ECC's work.
- The ECC has strong links with the local community. The 'intergenerational champions' lead a weekly visit to a local assisted living community. This initiative aims to improve emotional and physical wellbeing and create lifelong memories and friendships for all participants.

## 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

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

- There is a welcoming, nurturing and supportive environment in the ECC. The ECC team work well together creating strong and effective relationships as a priority in order to improve outcomes for children and families. Children are considered as individuals with their own needs and rights. As a result, children feel included, engaged and involved in the life of the setting.
- Practitioners have a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners use wellbeing indicator documentation with parents and carers to inform planning, agree priorities and support children to develop their understanding of wellbeing. Almost all children know how to keep themselves safe when visiting and exploring the local community. Almost all children are aware of how to be healthy and how their bodies change when they are active, for example, through daily opportunities for outdoor play and weekly visits to a local woodland. Daily planned opportunities for yoga and weekly massage sessions are supporting children's mental and physical wellbeing. Almost all children are engaged, focused and calm during these activities. They demonstrate control of their bodies and a high level of awareness of their personal space. Practitioners plan for baking with children having the opportunity to participate. As a result, all children can prepare food using simple kitchen equipment and have a developing awareness of food hygiene and safety. As discussed, the expansion of opportunities to bake and cook will further develop this area of the health and wellbeing curriculum.
- Practitioners promote wellbeing effectively through the modelling of respectful relationships. Practitioners successfully demonstrate positive behaviour through careful consideration of children's emotional needs and encouraging the building of early friendships. As a result, almost all children play together cooperatively and respectfully. When required, practitioners intervene to support children with their behaviour in a way that builds trust and understanding. A planned focus on developing children's awareness of their rights will support further the ECC's promotion and understanding of wellbeing.
- Practitioners understand statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. They identify, engage in and evaluate professional learning which supports them to meet children's needs. Overall, children are provided with healthy snacks. Practitioners should ensure snack provision adheres to national guidance to promote further children's awareness of healthy eating.
- All children and families are treated with respect, equality and understanding. There is a culture of inclusion with practitioners working proactively to ensure equity and that all children progress in their learning. For example, the availability of free fruit, toothpaste and toothbrushes and free access to children's donated clothing.
- Practitioners apply their knowledge of child development to identify potential barriers to learning for children. Practitioners meet regularly to discuss individual children and the

progress they are making. The depute manager established effective strategies to ensure information from partner agencies is used effectively. This helps promote children's wellbeing and plan for their care. Children's progress is tracked with strategies and approaches identified. The depute manager and SELCP use this information to support and challenge children's learning. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children to learn about equality and diversity in a way that is age and stage appropriate.

### 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

#### Children aged two to three years

- All children are making satisfactory progress across all aspects of their learning. They benefit from strong attachments to the adults who care for them. As they explore their learning environment, most children demonstrate confidence and natural curiosity. Most children are developing their independence in routines. For example pouring their own drinks and brushing their teeth. Children would benefit from additional strategies to support them to develop expressive language.

#### Children aged three to five years

- Almost all children are making good progress in communication and early language. They listen well to others during play and at group times. They follow simple instructions and enjoy listening to stories and rhymes. Most children talk about their experiences and can express their ideas clearly. A few practitioners sign to support communication. This should be developed further to ensure a consistent approach in supporting children's understanding and expressive language. Almost all children choose to engage in mark-making activities. They are developing good pencil control and are beginning to draw recognisable pictures. Almost all children recognise their own name and a few write their name independently and know the letter sounds in their name. Practitioners should model correct letter formation for children, where they show an interest in writing.
- Almost all children are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They know the number sequence to ten and count objects accurately. They apply their understanding of number in their play and in routines. For example, they use number lines to find out which car can travel the furthest, use rulers to measure worms and count items for snack. Most children use mathematical language to compare size. Almost all children recognise basic two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to explore the properties of three-dimensional objects. On a recent 'bug hunt', children used tally marks correctly to record what they found. Almost all children know the sequence of the days of the week. Aspects such as time, money and information handling should be promoted with greater depth and in a wider range of contexts.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing vocabulary to talk about their feelings and an awareness of the feelings of others. Children are learning about good hygiene practices, almost all remember to wash their hands before snack and all children take part in the tooth-brushing programme. Almost all children are developing

their independence skills as they set out paints, wash snack dishes and get dressed for outdoor play. All children take part in outdoor play and physical activities in the gym hall. They are developing good control of their balance and movement as they move their bodies in a variety of ways.

- Almost all children are making good progress in learning across the curriculum. The quality and variety of experiences, particularly in science, results in children developing good investigation and inquiry skills. Discussions with children, observations of play and scrutiny of 'Special Folders' demonstrate that children are making good progress in their learning over time and in all curricular areas, appropriate to their stage of development.
- Children are building confidence and experiencing success in learning through the celebration of their achievements on the 'WOW' wall. Practitioners encourage parents to contribute to children's achievements from beyond the setting. Senior leaders should now track and monitor children's wider achievements in order to plan effectively for gaps in learning and ensure equity for all.
- Senior leaders are very aware of children's socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and the impact this can have on children's learning. They make discrete provision to support families where this is required. Practitioners meet termly with the depute manager to discuss each child's progress. This enables them to identify potential barriers to children's learning. They take prompt action to put strategies in place and seek support from other agencies if required to ensure all children are making 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.