

Summarised inspection findings

Netherthird Primary School Early Childhood Centre

East Ayrshire Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

Netherthird Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is registered to provide a day care service to a maximum of nine children aged zero - under two years; ten children aged two - under three years and 40 children aged three years and over. The service is provided by East Ayrshire Council and managed by the headteacher of Netherthird Primary School. The primary school had been relocated and is operating from a separate location. The early childhood service was provided from the existing detached building which has been sectioned away from the ongoing construction work for the new school campus.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- A strong feature of the setting is the very positive relationship between children and practitioners and, parents and carers. Children, parents and carers are warmly welcomed by practitioners who know them well. As a result, children are happy, settled and secure in their environment and benefit fully from this nurturing approach. Almost all children respond well to each other and are learning to share and take turns as they play. Practitioners support children to understand their own and others' feelings and as a result, there is an ethos of mutual respect.
- Children under the age of three years are settled, engaged and being encouraged to develop their independence skills. Practitioners provide children with nurturing, responsive care and learning experiences that support very effectively their development. They know children well as individuals and tailor their care and interactions accordingly. Children demonstrate throughout their play both indoors and outdoors that they feel safe, secure and valued.
- Almost all children aged three to five years are motivated and highly engaged in their play and very much enjoy their time in the setting. Children concentrate on tasks for extended periods of time and participate in cooperative play. Practitioners have high expectations of children. They work together to review and create stimulating learning environments using national guidance. The ECC team are committed to continue and extend learning opportunities to enable children to practice and develop their skills.
- Children engage in spontaneous play, which is freely available both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor area is reviewed regularly. There is a focus on the promotion of experiences where children can investigate, solve problems, experience physical activity and manage their own risk. A fully embedded outdoor learning experience at Dumfries House is supporting children to develop resilience and a sense of their place in the wider community. They provide learning experiences which focus on the children's ability to manage risk and their understanding of the natural world by encouraging children to be curious and have a sense of wonder. The commitment of the senior leadership team and practitioners to ensure children access and

benefit from the wide variety of experiences at Dumfries House is commendable and very much appreciated by parents and carers.

- The headteacher, acting depute manager and practitioners know children well as a result of regular dialogue with families. Overall, practitioners have a very good understanding of early learning pedagogy and skilfully put this into practice. As a result, they have created a positive climate for achievement through responsive interactions and effective use of praise. Practitioners promote language and interactions in line with children's developmental needs. This allows children to contribute views and ideas and follow their needs and interests. Practitioners also use questioning well to promote children's thinking and a sense of curiosity.
- Staff use digital technology effectively to support children's learning. They plan to develop this further with a focus on promoting depth and challenge.
- Practitioners engage in regular dialogue both formally and informally to discuss the progress children are making in their learning. They make very effective use of their observations of children's learning and use this information to plan future experiences and identify targets for individual children. Each child has a 'Special Book' containing observations of learning, targets and children's views. Children are aware of their targets and talk about them with their key worker. The special books are shared with parents and carers regularly who also provide information on achievements and learning beyond the setting. This information is displayed in the ECC. As discussed, this could be added to children's special books along with parental comments. This would provide a more holistic picture of children's learning and development.
- Practitioners plan well for learning ensuring appropriate coverage of the curriculum and at the same time, responding to children's interests and ideas. Floorbooks clearly demonstrate the range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences children have over time at Netherthird ECC. Possible lines of development are used effectively to plan next steps in learning. Practitioners are continuing to develop ways of involving children further in planning. As discussed, children's views now need to be included more when making further improvements to the learning environment. This will enable children to lead their own learning through meaningful opportunities for example, when the creating and using resources in role-play spaces.
- Local authority progression frameworks are supporting practitioners in their ongoing development of their curricular knowledge. This is being supported by the well-established moderation process in the primary and local education group. Planned developments to the tracking of children's progress will enable practitioners across the early level to ensure prior learning continues to be taken into account and built upon.
- Practitioners are very knowledgeable about the individual circumstances of children and families attending the ECC. They make very good use of this information in order to secure equity and positive outcomes for all. This includes working closely with external agencies where appropriate, to ensure all children access the support needed that best meets their needs.

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

very 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

- The ECC provides a warm and nurturing environment for both parents and children. Children are confident, settled, and are well supported by attentive and caring adults. This means that they are ready to learn and explore and are becoming confident and resilient learners. As a result, they are making very good progress.
- Practitioners working with children under three years are focused on supporting children's developmental milestones. In the 'Little Explorers' room, adults develop language by describing children's actions and engaging in interactive play. Practitioners in the 'Busy Bees' room support communication by using key word signing alongside speech. As a result, children are making good progress in their communication and early language.
- Children under three have access to a range of sensory experiences, including a sensory room. Outside experiences extend children's motor skills including climbing and balancing. A newly developed outside space has provided increased opportunities for babies to develop their physical skills and sensory awareness. Two year olds are developing independence skills by making choices in play and tidying up after snack.
- Children aged three to five years are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children make choices about their play and are very engaged. They are kind and considerate towards each other, and are able to share their space and resources. Children are developing their independence skills by getting themselves ready for outside and helping with snack. They now need to develop these skills further through for example preparing fruit and vegetables and creating menus.
- Children are making very good progress in language and literacy development. They can talk confidently about their experiences and sensitive practitioner interactions encourage extended conversations. Children who require additional support with language and communication benefit from being involved in a practitioner led communication group. Children enjoy stories in groups and individually. They are able to retell favourite books and use the pictures to point out aspects of the story. Creative role-play spaces enable children to act out familiar fairy tales, for example, The Three Pigs, and children readily take on roles within the play. Regular opportunities to share rhymes and songs have enabled children to build up a rhyme repertoire and the majority of older children are able to identify some rhyming words in stories and games.

- Almost all children recognise their name symbol and can find their name card to register for outside play and snack. A few children recognise letters in familiar words, such as the days of the week. Creative ways of exploring text has resulted in children having a good sense of environmental print. Children enjoy mark making in a variety of ways, including using sensory materials such as ice and mud. They make good use of the well-resourced mark making area to draw pictures and make marks that have meaning, including letter like shapes. There is evidence of children's emergent writing in floorbooks; however, there is scope to develop their skills more through writing in real and meaningful contexts. This will help to develop children's understanding of the purpose of writing.
- Overall, children are making good progress in their mathematical development. Children are increasingly confident in identifying quantity. Children enjoy exploring numbers and counting with one to one correspondence and a few children are interested in much larger numbers. Most children recognise shapes in play and in context. Through loose parts play and art experiences they are becoming aware of symmetry.
- Families share wider achievements and these are celebrated by the setting. As discussed, a positive next step would be to create an overview to support the setting in identifying any barriers to participation and resulting next steps.
- Equity is promoted across all aspects of the setting's work. Practitioners know their community very well and work hard to create an inclusive environment and meet the needs of all children and families. Feedback from parents confirms this positive and supportive ethos. Community practitioners support parents in their own home and 'Wonderful Wednesday' sessions help parents to engage with their child's learning. Work with partners ensures that children who have barriers to learning are well planned for and supported.

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.