

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cunningsburgh Primary School Nursery Class**

Shetlands Islands Council

04 September 2018

## Key contextual information

The nursery class is registered for 20 children at any time. At the time of inspection there were 19 children on the roll. Accommodation is in a designated room within Cunningsburgh Primary School and is staffed by an early years worker and an early years assistant under the management of the headteacher. The headteacher has a one-day teaching commitment to the nursery class alongside other teaching commitments and headteacher responsibilities. The service operates a morning session only. There have been a number of changes in leadership across the school community over a sustained time.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**weak**

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 nursery class shares a vision, values and aims with the wider school community that has been in place for some time. These now need to be reviewed and refreshed involving all stakeholders. Careful consideration needs to be made of current thinking in early learning and childcare and suitably high aspirations for children and families. This will help ensure the new vision, values and aims accurately underpin and reflect the work and the unique context of the setting.
- Building on a willingness to develop skills and knowledge, the headteacher and practitioners need to work collaboratively to develop their professional knowledge, understanding and confidence with a sharper focus on the leadership of learning. Practitioners already assume considerable leadership responsibility for the running of the class. This now needs to be managed more strategically to promote continuous improvement alongside day-to-day management of the setting. To support this further it would be useful for management and practitioners to be increasingly outward looking. This will support the development of a shared understanding of current thinking in early learning and childcare and help benchmark practice.
- Practitioners work very well together and demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering a quality service for children and families. They are extremely hard working and show a high level of determination to securing positive outcomes for children through their informal vision of what they want for children. Together with the headteacher, they identify and implement their own improvements, for example the ongoing development of the outdoor learning environment. The commitment to improvement now needs to be fully supported by a deeper working knowledge and understanding of national guidance Building the Ambition and the self-evaluation framework How good is our early learning and childcare? This will help support the identification of what is working well and what needs to improve as well as guide thinking, enabling practice to be looked at more critically in an informed way.
- Opportunities for everyone to take forward strategically planned improvement should now be provided. There is a clear commitment to the leadership of change by the staff team. This now needs to be managed in order to secure and realise the potential for improvement. Increased and targeted support and resources will be required to continue the successful

development of approaches across the early level. Improvement planning processes need to identify the key priorities of the setting within the whole school community. The improvement plan needs to clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of everyone in taking forward identified improvements at an increased pace. This will ensure that the setting better reflects current thinking in high quality early learning and childcare.

- Career-long professional learning opportunities are provided through the local authority. Alongside the necessary statutory training, future learning should have a clear focus on improving learning and teaching and reflect and support the delivery of identified priorities for improvement.
- There is no formal monitoring of the setting to support practitioners in recognising what is working well, areas for improvement and the impact of changes. To ensure this is effective, monitoring and evaluation needs to now be carried out in a systematic and more formalised way. This will help ensure that the impact of changes on outcomes for children and families can be measured effectively and future actions planned.

## 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

- There is a strong and positive ethos created by positive and nurturing relationships. Children are observed to feel secure and confident within a relaxed and caring atmosphere. They engage well and most are motivated during free play and when involved in adult-led activities. Most children are able to sustain interest in their chosen activity. On a few occasions, older children became less engaged in the available activities. We discussed with the headteacher and practitioners ways in which children could be more involved in talking about, planning and leading their own learning. This would include development of the learning environment to enable children to be more independent in their own learning. Consideration could also be made to facilitating free flow access to outdoors to maximise the benefits of the developing outdoor learning space.
- Practitioner interactions with children are consistently warm and caring with each individual being valued. Individual needs and feelings are responded to through appropriate praise and encouragement. Children readily share their views and thoughts. Practitioners engage appropriately in conversation with children during play and are developing questioning techniques to support and extend children's thinking. The use of questioning now needs to build consistently on what children already know in order to add sufficient depth and challenge to children's learning. This will help ensure that all children make the progress that they are capable of as a result of their experiences at nursery.
- Digital technology is used appropriately, for example to research an interest in dinosaurs and developing children's skills in the use of the interactive whiteboard. There is scope for the use of technology to be made more fully and frequently to support learning and provide real-life experiences.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals, but do not yet record their knowledge of children as learners well enough. Observations are carried out on a regular basis. These now need to have a focus on the significant learning of individuals. This will inform future planning decisions and ensure that observations have the sharpest focus on establishing what children need to learn next. This should be on a more individual basis and will help support accurate judgements about the progress children are making.
- Attractive personal learning profiles are in place for all children. These contain examples of children's work and observations related to planned learning experiences. This, alongside use of a social media platform, help share learning with parents and carers. As discussed, there is scope to develop the format of personal learning profiles. This would support children to have significantly increased ownership of them, provide a more personalised, coherent and holistic profile of children's learning over time and potentially reduce bureaucracy. There is scope for a

language of learning to be developed across the nursery session. Daily together times could provide a useful starting point to support this.

- Arrangements for planning children's learning have recently been developed. Moving forward, this now needs to have a clearer focus on what children need to learn rather than activities and resources. During the inspection we discussed the potential of big books and developments in the school classes, which could support the involvement of children in planning for their own learning. The tracking and monitoring of children's progress needs to be monitored more strategically. Moderation, both within and beyond the setting, would ensure a shared understanding of children's progress and achievements and ensure that professional judgement is suitably robust.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Appropriate use is made of the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence in planning a range of experiences for children. Practitioners now need to continue to develop their skills and confidence in planning, assessing and evaluating learning across the curriculum. This should be more personalised to better reflect children's individual learning and ensure skills are progressively built upon. Full account should be taken of curriculum design principles with particular reference to depth, personalisation and challenge.
- To support the development of a full understanding of learning and developmental pathways, there is scope for practitioners to deepen their knowledge of children's learning across the early level. This could include, for example, younger children's schematic play and the National Benchmarks towards the end of the level.
- It would be helpful for a clear rationale for the curriculum to be defined to ensure that appropriately high aspirations and expectations for all children's learning are reflected. Awareness of local culture and heritage is promoted and supported very well and this should be continued, for example celebration of festivals such as the South Mainland Up Helly Aa. Overall, the basic aspects for early learning are in place. Consideration should now be made to securing maximum opportunities for curiosity, inquiry and creativity. This should include for example no adult-directed art work and an increase in open-ended resources such as story stones and loose parts already in use.
- Arrangements to support children at points of transition continue to develop. The local toddler group meets weekly in the school, which provides a meaningful opportunity for links to be built over time. This would support children to be familiar with the nursery setting before starting. A helpful and valued open afternoon is held to introduce children to the setting prior to their placement. A few children attend other settings as part of a split placement. There is potential for links to be established with these to promote continuity of experience and progression in learning. As children move onto primary one they benefit from a planned programme of regular visits. There is now scope to develop arrangements to include the development of a shared pedagogy across the early level. This should promote progression and continuity in learning.

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

- Strong partnerships with parents and carers are evident through a range of ways parents can engage in their child's learning. These include through a social media platform and sharing personal achievements. Children's personal learning profiles (PLPs) are shared at regular intervals and are very much valued by families. Practitioners offer ongoing support to parents informally and clearly have very positive relationships with them. The development of family learning will build naturally on existing positive relationships and be key in developing already strong partnerships further.
- Parents have been consulted recently on what information they would like about how children's learning is planned for. To build on this further, practitioners could work with parents and carers to develop a shared understanding of what high quality early learning and childcare looks like.

## 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 strong focus on the promotion of children's wellbeing. Relationships between practitioners and children are consistently warm, encouraging and very positive attachments are evident. From observations almost all children appear to feel safe, relaxed and confident as they play. They show respect for each other and their learning environment. This supports the strong sense of family and community evident. This now needs to extend to ensure the nursery class is an integral part of the wider school community.
- Positive behaviour is promoted with practitioners modelling respectful and kind interactions. Children consistently demonstrate traits such as respect, manners and kindness with little to no prompting. Almost all children are developing the skills required to play together including sharing and taking turns. Positive behaviour is well supported by the calm learning environment.
- There is value placed upon children's views and opinions with children being listened and responded to. Where facilitated, children are able to express their views and influence some decisions that affect them such as contributing to the snack menu. National guidance should be revisited to ensure that snack provision consistently reflects best practice. There is scope to develop children's leadership skills further. This could include responsibilities such as leading the ordering of, and preparing, snack and risk assessing aspects of their play. There is scope for children to be consulted and more significantly involved in day-to-day decisions in the setting alongside increased leadership roles that reflect their abilities.
- Practitioners continue to develop their understanding of the national wellbeing indicators. This understanding now needs to be deepened and shared in a meaningful and focused way with children and families. This should support the development of a language of wellbeing and help further secure children's wellbeing. The majority of children can describe what it means to be safe and healthy. There is scope to increase developmentally appropriate experiences to enable children to develop an awareness of how the wellbeing indicators relate to them as individuals.
- Overall statutory duties are met. Practitioners recognise the key role they play in keeping children safe. A range of information is collated to support practitioners meet the care and learning needs of children in the form of care plans. We discussed how these could be developed further to provide more holistic information and more consistently reviewed in order to meet legislative requirements. Better use needs to be made of this information to help secure positive outcomes for children. Management need to develop and consolidate their understanding of the full range of statutory duties relevant to early learning and childcare. Roles and responsibilities across the whole team should also be clearly established.

- All practitioners are respectful of children and their families with all children observed to be treated equally and included. In order to value diversity and challenge any potential discrimination children should be introduced to a wider range of cultures and backgrounds than is represented in the immediate community. To support this, practitioners should develop their knowledge and understanding of factors that may lead to discrimination and use this to review and further develop their curriculum and daily practices. This should include the challenging of gender stereotypes wherever possible.
- Children who may experience barriers to their learning are correctly identified by practitioners. To ensure that these are addressed as fully as possible there is scope to develop closer working relationships with other agencies such as health professionals. Where interventions are made it will be important that these are recorded and successes measured more robustly over time.

## 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

- As a result of their nursery experiences, children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. They enjoy sharing their personal experiences through the use of their talking boxes and at together time. They are supported to develop a range of vocabulary within learning contexts. Overall children listen well. Story stones provide a useful catalyst for the creation of imaginative stories which children enjoy. These open-ended resources and approaches should be developed to allow children increased opportunities to be creative and develop a wide range of skills. Most children show interest in mark-making and early writing. This interest should be nurtured through provision of real-life contexts that challenge the development and application of children's skills. Given the abilities of children there is potential for children to be developing and applying understanding and skills in a broader range of aspects. This could include the sounds and patterns in language.
- In numeracy and mathematics children are making satisfactory progress as they develop an awareness of early numeracy and mathematics. They count in context such as registration and snack routines and are beginning to recognise and represent numbers. Children use a range of mathematical language to compare and describe, for example weight. It would be beneficial for skills to be applied across a wider range of contexts to allow children increased opportunities to develop and apply their learning in meaningful and more challenging contexts. There is scope for opportunities to promote mathematics to be maximised.
- Children demonstrate an awareness of health and wellbeing and have a sound understanding of how they can support their own, for example making healthy choices at snack and brushing their teeth. They are developing fine motor control through the use of a range of tools including scissors and cutlery. As they play outdoors and in particular at the play park, they are developing skills in balancing, climbing, running and managing their bodies when feeling dizzy. Consideration should be made to how physical activity in nursery is progressive and adds value to existing, developed skills. More risky play would support children to manage risk and their personal safety in an age appropriate way.
- As discussed, information gathered over time about children's progress does not yet provide a true picture of their skills, aptitudes and abilities. In particular, it does not measure the value added by experiences in nursery. We discussed how this could be developed, including the identification and measurement of success in meeting next steps in learning. This should include next steps in the areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and be regularly revisited.

- Children's achievements are celebrated well through praise and encouragement and captured through 'Achievement Awards' presented at achievement assemblies. These are recorded in personal learning profiles. Where appropriate, wider achievements should be consistently built upon through nursery experiences.
- There is scope for children to contribute more fully to the life of the whole school and the wider community to fulfil the roles they are capable of. The whole school community would be considerably enhanced by the contribution possible by the nursery children. This should be considered alongside extending children's awareness of global citizenship and their place in 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.
- Practitioners strive to ensure that they promote equity across learning for all children. They know children and families very well and take into account barriers to learning for individual children. When required, they work in partnership with parents and carers to support children.

## Choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

- The headteacher and staff are committed to engaging families in learning and in providing support to families. Staff pride themselves on the positive relationships they have with families and the mutual trust and respect that exists. They have a sound knowledge of the local context in which children live and possible challenges and barriers they may encounter. Universal support is offered to all families through ongoing communication with staff via a social media platform, an open door policy and a welcoming school ethos. Parents are invited to attend regular whole school learning events, which celebrate children's learning and the culture of the local community. Almost all parents across the primary school and nursery class who responded to the Education Scotland questionnaire stated that the school gives advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- Practitioners in the nursery work hard and have been successful in developing positive and trusting relationships with families. Most parents in the primary and almost all in the nursery class who responded to the Education Scotland questionnaire stated that the school organises activities where parents and children can learn together. A range of home link learning resources are utilised across the year including a library, story sacks and a take home toy. There is scope to involve parents and carers further in the learning within the nursery class, for example stay and play sessions as well as sharing events. This will support the development of a shared understanding of early learning pedagogy.
- In order to progress the development of family learning it will now be useful to develop a shared understanding, rationale, vision and aims of family learning at Cunningsburgh Primary School. This should be developed with all stakeholders involved and to determine what families would find useful, thus securing successful implementation.
- The school is keen to offer high quality targeted support to families, with help from partners that enable them to access learning activities that meet their interests. This provides an opportunity for parents and families to be involved in the design and delivery of programmes, for example to make them accessible to all. The development of family learning programmes is at the earliest stages of development. There is considerable scope for families to be more engaged in this area and participate in designing and delivering high quality learning programmes within the school and local community. For example, literacy and numeracy sessions delivered by staff could enable parents to gain a deeper understanding of what is taught at the school and the methodologies deployed. This could support the next step of moving from parental involvement towards family learning and foster even stronger home-school links.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.