

Summarised inspection findings

Cambusbarron Village Nursery

Stirling Council

10 September 2024

Key contextual information

Cambusbarron Village Nursery is in partnership with Stirling Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC). The nursery is situated in the rural community of Cambusbarron, Stirling and provides ELC for children aged 2 years 6 months until starting primary school. The nursery is open during school term time and offers full-day placements. Most children access their 1140 hours of funded ELC. Children attend full days between 8.45 am and 3.15 pm. The nursery is registered for 16 children at any one time. The current roll is 21. Most children attend the setting from the local community.

The nursery previously operated as a playgroup and has been in the village since the 1960s. In 2019 the nursery became a Community Interest Company with a board of six directors which includes the manager. The manager is in the process of moving towards becoming an outdoor nursery, operating fully from within the local woods. Currently, the nursery uses local woodland four days out of five. On the day that children are not at the woods, practitioners use the outdoor area of the nursery and the local park. Facilities indoors are used rarely.

Staffing consists of a manager who has been in post for five years, three early childhood educators and two support workers.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community■ strategic planning for continuous improvement■ implementing improvement and change	

- The manager provides good leadership for the nursery team. With the board of directors and practitioners, she has a clear and shared vision for developing an outdoor nursery with a community focus. The manager demonstrates drive and passion for children to learn within and from nature. She has strong motivation to continue to develop a successful outdoor nursery to improve outcomes for all. The nursery slogan of 'deep roots for a strong community' underpins the ethos of working in strong partnership with community members. Together, they promote and support learning outdoors, sustainability, inclusion and equity. The manager and practitioners bring the nursery values to life through respectful, nurturing relationships and quality woodland learning experiences.
- The team of practitioners work well together and use each other's skills, talents and expertise to provide a good range of outdoor experiences for children. They provide both personal and professional support to each other. Practitioners value the leadership and support from the manager to help them to undertake their role in providing quality ELC.
- The manager places high value on relevant and meaningful professional learning to support nature pedagogy. She has undertaken additional qualifications and a range of professional learning. She supports and encourages this in her team. As a result, the team continue to extend their knowledge and build their confidence in providing quality ELC in an outdoor setting. Their strong knowledge and understanding of nature pedagogy, enables practitioners

to provide children with real-life woodland experiences which develop a wide range of skills for life and learning.

- Most practitioners have a leadership role. These include leading on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These roles are in their early stages, but are giving practitioners a sense of purpose and ownership in supporting improvement. The manager should continue to support practitioners to develop in their roles. She should monitor the impact of these roles on the quality of learning experiences and children's learning.
- The manager looks outwards to research and other settings to learn from the practice of others. She collaborates with senior leaders in local authority ELC settings to share practice and support quality assurance and improvement planning. The manager finds this support invaluable and uses the outcome of self-evaluation visits well to support the continuous improvement of the setting. Practitioners, parents and children engage in self-evaluation activities to identify what is working well and what could develop further. The manager should build on this good practice to develop a more systematic approach to quality assuring the work of the nursery. In doing so, she should ensure self-evaluation is robust and practitioners reflect critically on their practice. The manager should monitor closely the progress of improvements to ensure an appropriate pace of change that leads successfully to improved outcomes for all.

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

- Relationships in the setting are nurturing and positive. As a result, children are happy and secure in their surroundings. Children engage well with the natural environment, making choices as they play and explore. Most children are patient and caring towards each other as they cooperate in play.
- Almost all children engage well in play for extended periods of time in the outdoor environment. Children spend all of their time outdoors. Chosen sites within the local woods provide rich contexts for outdoor learning through natural loose parts and seasonal change. Children choose experiences that interest and motivate them. Routines in the woods are highly flexible. Practitioners sensitively respond to children's level of engagement and individual needs as they navigate the pattern of their day.
- Practitioners engage in conversation with children and make comments as they play. They use natural provocations in the outdoor environment and sensitively introduce ideas to stimulate children's thinking. Most practitioners are skilled as they ask open-ended questions and give children time to think and respond. At times, in the nursery garden, when children are getting ready to walk to the woods, staff are largely task oriented. The manager and practitioners should now review this to ensure children experience quality interactions consistently and at an appropriate pace throughout the day.
- Children are beginning to use digital applications to enrich their learning. They use these to identify bird song and make visual representations of their findings. A few children use digital fitness trackers to track their physical activity. Practitioners should build on this good practice by exploring ways to meaningfully involve children to record and reflect on their learning.
- Practitioners document children's learning using an online profile which they share with families. As planned, they should continue to focus on quality and quantity of observations to ensure significant learning is identified and built upon. Practitioners use observations to set learning possibilities for individual children. These are discussed and reviewed at weekly staff meetings. Practitioners and leaders review children's progress using a local authority toolkit. This data helps them to identify where additional support may be required to ensure continued progress in learning. As planned, practitioners should now consider ways to involve parents in discussing and identifying children's next steps in learning.
- The team should continue to reflect on where children could benefit from increased intentional learning experiences. This would provide a more effective balance of responsive and intentional planning. As planned, practitioners should now develop further their floorbooks with children. They should embed their use in a way that suits their unique outdoor context.

- In partnership with outside agencies, the manager and practitioners plan for children who require additional support with their learning. They identify clear targets and strategies and review these at meetings involving parents and other agencies.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners use local authority learning pathways in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy to guide them when evaluating children's learning. This helps them to build on children's prior learning and identify next steps. The manager should monitor practitioners' planning and assessment information more closely to ensure children learn at an appropriate pace relevant to their stage of development. Moving forward, practitioners should make more effective use of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to help them plan for children's learning across the curriculum.
- Children's experiences are enriched through strong partnerships with community members, volunteers and groups. This includes developing an intergenerational project, 'Mind the Gap' with a local community group. Children engage with community members during experiences such as 'soup share' music events and afternoon teas. This is supporting children to build positive and respectful relationships with community members.
- Children's transition into nursery from home is carefully considered by practitioners who ensure flexibility and sensitivity to meet the individual needs of children. For children moving onto school, a range of visits enable children to become familiar with school staff and key areas of the school. The manager and practitioners meet with senior leaders in the school to share relevant information on children to support their transition.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are provided with regular updates on children's experiences and progress through an online learning journey. This includes observations, photographs and, more recently, individual next steps for children. Practitioners provide parents with a helpful report on their children's learning and achievements at the end of each year. Parents are positive about the work of the nursery and are very positive about children's outdoor learning experiences. This is a significant factor affecting parental choice.
- Practitioners value the views of parents and consult with them regularly on a range of matters. They include parents in woodland experiences such as the family picnic. Parents would like increased opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting. As recognised, the manager and practitioners should continue to seek ways to involve parents further in the setting and in their child's learning.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- The promotion of wellbeing for all underpins the work of practitioners and is central to the ethos of the outdoor nursery. Children are confident, comfortable and develop resilience within the woodland setting. Their emotional and physical wellbeing is supported very well through extended periods of time outdoors. Most children challenge themselves through physical activity within a natural setting where they learn about and manage risk. Children are developing their understanding of wellbeing and can talk confidently about being healthy and safe. Practitioners use the 'Wellbeing buddy' characters effectively to support children to develop an awareness of the range of national wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners are positive role models for children. Their relationships with children are respectful and nurturing, which impacts positively on how children develop friendships with each other. Practitioners could use restorative approaches consistently to support children to manage their emotions and minor differences independently.
- Children plan for their packed lunches across the week. On arrival at the nursery garden, each child prepares their own sandwich and chooses some fruit. Within the woods, practitioners create conditions where children have access to handwashing and shelter to eat their lunch in comfort. Children's lunchtimes are unhurried and are social occasions, where children and practitioners engage in conversation. All children take responsibility for their individual back-packs which contain their lunch, water, a change of clothing and a mini personal first aid kit. Most children have had the opportunity to learn about risks and basic first aid relevant to their stage of development.
- All staff have undertaken child protection training. The manager provides volunteers and students with child protection information as part of their induction. The manager and practitioners should now revisit and refresh their knowledge of the policy to ensure there is a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Each child has a personal plan which practitioners review in partnership with parents. These plans outline children's individual needs and information relating to their health, care and wellbeing. Practitioners update plans regularly to reflect the current needs of children. For children who require additional help with their learning, practitioners liaise with partner agencies to create relevant plans outlining key targets and strategies. They review these plans at regular meetings with parents to ensure individualised planning results in children making progress.
- The nursery has a prominent place within the local community. Parents, partners and community members share the vision and values of the nature pedagogy. They provide valuable support to the nursery to realise the shared vision. Children are developing as active community members as they learn about how to care for their local environment and join in

with intergenerational experiences. Practitioners are highly inclusive and value diversity. Moving forward, they should consider ways to support children further to learn about the diverse world in which they live.

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 in their communication and early language. They listen well to stories and talk about what has been read. Children enjoy talking about and sharing ideas with peers and adults as they navigate the woodland together. A few children identify environmental print, picking out familiar letters in signs as they walk to the woods. Children are beginning to use sign language in familiar situations. A minority of children can represent their ideas in recognisable drawings. In literacy, children would benefit from increased experiences and encouragement to make marks and write in real-life contexts.
- Overall, children's progress in mathematics is good. Children count with one-to-one correspondence as the 'number keeper', who counts the total number of children present for the day. Most children are beginning to understand measurement. They use tools such as tape measures in play and sticks to check depth of mud and puddles. They use positional language correctly as they climb trees and navigate the paths in the woods. As planned, practitioners should explore further how to use natural materials and technology to support children's information handling outdoors.
- Most children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They play cooperatively with friends, share and develop skills in teamwork. Almost all children demonstrate physical skills such as balance and coordination very well. They display resilience and problem-solve during challenging physical tasks. Almost all children skilfully climb trees and navigate uneven terrain. They make very good use of natural materials to support their play. Most children demonstrate how to keep themselves safe as they walk along roads and when using real tools.
- Overall, most children are making good progress over time appropriate to their stage of development. The team should now look at how they use data to inform planned interventions and how they evaluate children's progress over time. This will support practitioners to secure the best possible outcomes for children across all areas of learning.
- Children take part in a variety of community activities such as litter picking in the community. These experiences are developing children's confidence, sense of achievement and responsibility. Learning for sustainability is central to children's experiences. Children are currently working towards their Scottish Junior Forester award. They discuss how to care for their woodland and are supported well to learn the names and attributes of the plants and

animals that share the space. As a result, children are highly observant, appreciate nature and share messages confidently about environmental sustainability.

- The team demonstrate a highly inclusive and respectful approach with their children and families. Outdoor clothing is provided to ensure all children have equal access to the kit required for effective learning in the forest. They should review plans regularly to ensure children continue to make the best possible 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.