

Summarised inspection findings

Millbank Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

26 September 2023

Key contextual information

Millbank Primary School nursery class is situated within the primary school. The recently appointed acting headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class. At the time of the inspection, 26 children attended sessions throughout the week during the school term. The setting is registered for up to 24 children to attend at any one time. The nursery has experienced staff absence and recruitment challenges this session. A full-time practitioner along with the Excellence and Equality Lead Worker and relief early years staff currently share early learning and childcare responsibilities. A support worker post remains vacant. Children have free access to an enclosed play area in the outdoors. The provision is for children between the age of three and those not yet attending school. Children have an option of progressing into learning through Gaelic or English at the primary stages.

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 have created a warm and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning both indoors and outdoors. Children new to the nursery quickly settle due to the caring and nurturing ethos. Practitioners encourage children to reflect on how they are feeling as they start their day. Almost all children are happy and feel safe and secure as they engage in the wide range of learning contexts provided. They access an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences. Most children concentrate well for extended periods with play that they themselves choose. Children are curious, independent and confident while learning through play. They are imaginative and creative as they design a bug hotel outdoors.
- Practitioners ensure that children are familiar with all the staff on duty within the nursery each day at welcome time. Children and staff model well friendships, working together and enjoying positive relationships with each other. Practitioners are skilful in providing well-timed interventions to extend children's learning and interactions during play. They engage children well in conversations about their interests and encourage children to express their views. As a result, children's confidence is developed.
- Practitioners extend children's interactions with adults through having visitors within the nursery and participating in visits within the local community such as a recent church visit. Children engage well during paired reading and play with their buddies from the P4 class who visit the nursery once a week. They also benefit from hearing Gaelic songs when children from the C1-3 Gaelic Medium class visit. This helps to increase children's awareness of Gaelic language and culture.
- Practitioners involve children in planning their learning experiences using a mark-making planning wall within the playroom and floorbooks. They also use these as stimuli for reflecting with children on their learning. Practitioners have several different systems in place to assess

children's progress. These include practitioners' observations and noting comments made by individual children on wall displays and within floorbooks and profile folders. Children share their learning with parents during stay and play sessions. Parents are encouraged to contribute comments on aspects of their child's learning. Staff should use assessment data gathered to inform more effectively their planning of what individual children need to learn next.

- The acting headteacher and practitioners have developed effective systems for recording, tracking and monitoring children's progress. Practitioners use children's age-appropriate developmental overviews. They use screeners to track the skills children are developing such as pre-writing and fine motor skills. Staff should continue to develop these approaches to include tracking of experiences and outcomes at the early level across all areas of the curriculum.
- Practitioners collaborate well with other nurseries within the cluster. A next step for all staff will be to focus increasingly on moderation. This will help them to develop an improved shared understanding of children's progress and to ensure reliable and valid assessment data.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 are making good progress in communication and early language skills. Children benefit from a literacy rich environment, both indoors and outside, to develop their emerging skills. Children use writing opportunities to mark-make and contribute to floorbooks well. Most children join in daily rhymes and sing songs at together time. A majority of children use language confidently to explain their thinking as they play. Most children need encouragement to engage with texts. They do not access readily the many texts on offer both indoors and out. Most children recognise their names through self-registration routines and during snack. A few children should be challenged to explore letters and sounds within names and familiar words.
- Overall, children are making good progress in early mathematical skills. Most children are developing their number recognition through recording daily lunch choices and using actions for number rhymes. A few children identify, match and form numbers correctly within 10. As children play, a few use appropriate mathematical language while weighing playdough. A few children follow instructions to move a programmable toy accurately along a grid. Overall, children require support to use their mathematical skills in their play across the playroom and outdoors.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Most children play well with one another and are developing friendships. They record how they are feeling on an 'emotions chart' every morning. Most children identify how to keep safe, with helpers carrying out daily safety checks of the equipment outdoors. Almost all children develop physical skills during outdoor play as they use balls and run and jump over tyres outdoors. Children take turns to help prepare snack. Most children are independent as they wash their hands and pour their own milk at snack and mealtimes. Children and practitioners are beginning to talk about the wellbeing indicators within the nursery. These need to be made more meaningful for most children to understand. Children are ready to develop further their awareness of diversity and rights.
- Children's achievements are visible within their profiles and are also celebrated on a WOW wall display in the playroom. Parents are encouraged to share their children's achievements from outwith the nursery. Practitioners are beginning to use this information appropriately to build on children's achievements. Certificates are awarded when, for example, children show kindness or when they achieve new skills. Children are proud that their achievements are celebrated in this way.
- Practitioners know children and families well. They are aware of the need to ensure equity for all children and to take account of any barriers to learning that may exist. The acting

headteacher and practitioners plan effective interventions for individuals who have barriers to learning.

Other relevant evidence

- Children attending Millbank Primary School nursery class have the option to transition into Gaelic Medium Education at the school.
- Children and staff from the Gaelic Medium class visit the nursery on occasion. However, children in the nursery do not benefit from learning Gaelic and set phrases through total immersion play within this setting.

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.