

Summarised inspection findings

Auchtertyre Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

09 October 2018

Key contextual information

- The nursery is accommodated near to the primary school campus.
- The setting is registered for 24 children. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 children on the roll.
- The headteacher (HT) has been in post since August 2017. She is HT for a cluster of three schools.
- Since Easter, the nursery has accommodated children who previously attended a private nursery that has now closed. As a result, the staff team has been increased, with hours of operation extended. The setting now operates from 9am to 4pm (Monday, Thursday and Friday) and 9am to 3pm (Tuesday and Wednesday). These hours are to accommodate the increased roll.

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
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- In line with the school, the setting has recently developed a new vision, values and aims. These reflect the views of stakeholders. A next step is to synthesise and frame the vision, values and aims in a more appropriate way. This should create a vision, values and aims that fully reflect current thinking in early learning and childcare, with suitably high aspirations for children and families. Moving forward, the vision, values and aims should underpin the work of the setting and reflect its unique context.
 - The HT recognises that the setting needs to improve. There is an evident willingness to develop and improve the quality of what is provided for children and families. The skills, confidence and professional knowledge of the HT and practitioners needs to be developed to support leadership of learning.
 - The management teacher has been involved with the setting since November 2017. She visits weekly and offers considerable support and direction. This is beginning to contribute positively to the leadership of change. She works collaboratively with the HT and practitioners to develop and monitor aspects of provision. For example, supporting the development of the learning journey folders and floor books.
 - The management teacher and practitioners have made a helpful start to using the self-evaluation framework, “How good is our early learning and childcare?” This is beginning to support practitioners in reflecting on their practice. A culture of self-evaluation is beginning to be developed. The impact of changes should be measured effectively, with future actions planned. Practitioners would benefit from continued use of self-evaluation frameworks to accelerate the pace of change.

- The nursery class needs to be managed in a more strategic and proactive way. This will help realise its potential for improvement. There is considerable scope to build on existing opportunities for distributed leadership. The introduction of clear remits, identifying roles and responsibilities, would be a positive start. HM Inspectors discussed with the HT, and visiting management teacher, how this could be taken forward through practitioners' increased ownership in leading on the delivery of identified priorities. The school improvement plan (SIP) has whole-school and cluster priorities. These are not sufficiently specific to the nursery class. Targets for improvement are required for the nursery. This should include embedding recent changes to staffing and the increased roll of the nursery.
- Practitioners should use the National Improvement Hub to build their understanding of best practice and to be outward-looking. This will support the development of a shared understanding of high-quality early learning and childcare. It will also contribute to the development of a shared pedagogy across the whole team.
- Practitioners have undertaken a range of career-long professional learning (CLPL) this session. All practitioners, as appropriate, have been trained on statutory requirements. The impact of CLPL on learning and teaching is not yet evident. Professional review and development (PRD) has also been a focus and priority. Moving forward, future CLPL should have a better focus on improving learning and teaching. It should also reflect and be explicitly linked to the delivery of identified priorities for improvement.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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 are settled at nursery. They confidently select their chosen activities during free play. Almost all children are motivated to learn. They show an interest in the world around them. This is not yet maximised in the learning opportunities provided in the playroom. Play is not challenging enough for the majority of children. Children now need increased independence in their play and ownership of their learning environment.
- The learning environment needs to be reviewed to support children's independence effectively. A range of rich challenging experiences need to be available to provoke and sustain children's interest. Practitioners should use the national practice guidance, 'Building the Ambition' to support improvements and to develop a shared understanding of what a quality learning environment looks like.
- Practitioners have created a welcoming ethos. They make time to interact with children on arrival at nursery, and during play activities throughout the session. Overall, some conversations are relaxed and natural. Practitioners are interested in what children have to say. However, the quality of interactions is variable across the staff team. There are positive examples of practitioners using open-ended questions to enable children to express their ideas and opinions. It would be useful for practitioners to review the range of questions they ask. This should ensure that there is increased consistency in the quality of questioning to challenge children's thinking and promote greater depth and challenge in learning.
- Practitioners are beginning to develop planning through the use of floor books. This is helping them to be responsive to children's ideas and interests. Account is taken of what children already know, and aspects of what they next want to learn. Practitioners should now review planning formats. This is to streamline paperwork, and to ensure that the focus of learning is readily shared with parents and children. This should support children to recognise themselves as learners.
- The outdoor learning environment has significant potential. This now needs to be developed to involve increased ranges of natural and open-ended materials, including the further development of loose parts play. Regular use is made of local woodland to allow children opportunities to explore the wider community.
- Practitioners know children well. Children's learning journey folders contain observations of their play and learning. The visiting management teacher's support is beginning to develop consistency across the staff team. Learning journey folders capture aspects of children's progress in learning over time. Practitioners should now ensure that the observations of significant learning are celebrated and recorded in collaboration with the children. This will enable children to talk about their learning and achievements with others.

- Next steps are identified and revisited to support children’s progress in learning. Practitioners should review the wording of next steps to make it clear whether these have been identified by the children themselves, or by practitioners. Children will be supported with the language of learning through increased discussion on their next steps.
- Currently, children’s progress in learning is not yet effectively tracked or monitored. Assessment information now needs to be more robust in order to support professional judgement. Helpful guidance from the local authority could be used more effectively to track children’s progress over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Tracking of progress in learning should be reviewed, and monitored regularly, to ensure shared expectations and aspirations across the team.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners make use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan a breadth of learning for children. They are at the early stages of developing responsive planning and using floor books to consult with children. Practitioners would benefit from developing a full understanding of Curriculum for Excellence contexts for learning and the principles of curriculum design. This will enable them to plan for depth and challenge in learning.
- Practitioners make occasional use of the local area and resources to support and extend children's learning. Regular visits are made to local woodland to provide experiences in the natural environment. People in the local community are invited to talk to children about the work they do. Parents are invited to share their skills and talents. Practitioners should continue to develop and explore the learning experiences that exist within the local community. These should provide opportunities for real-life experiences, including the use of the internet to enhance learning. Practitioners should ensure that these opportunities help children to develop an awareness of the world in which they live and grow, including that beyond the local area.
- All children experience learning outside on a daily basis. This allows them access to fresh air and exercise, with an opportunity to develop related skills. The setting benefits from outdoor grounds which offer considerable potential to provide rich learning experiences. This now needs to be developed to promote curiosity, inquiry and creativity across the curriculum.
- As children move into P1, they benefit from a planned programme of regular transition visits. There is now scope to develop 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

- Positive partnerships with parents and carers are evident. Parents are able to contribute to learning journey folders and share children's wider achievements. They are provided with helpful detailed progress reports on their children. At drop off and collection times, practitioners offer much appreciated ongoing, informal support to parents. They clearly enjoy mutually positive relationships.
- Parents have recently been consulted on the newly-introduced flexible hours. This is helping better meet the differing needs of families. There is scope for parents and families to be more involved in their children's learning. For example, consideration should be given to planned stay and play sessions.
- The learning officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and a local artist enrich children's experiences. HM Inspectors discussed how these partnerships could be extended further to include a wider range of real-life experiences and introduce children to the world of work.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

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

- Children are happy. On arrival, they are welcomed into the setting. They quickly choose from the available activities and resources. Children enjoy the company of their friends and adults. A few children require ongoing support to develop and apply the skills they need to work and play together. In most cases, these children are supported appropriately. Opportunities for positive reinforcement should be maximised. Most practitioners promote and encourage respect. Practitioners should raise their expectations of children's behaviour to support the promotion of wellbeing and secure better progress in learning. Expectations should be set around the care and respect children show to each other, the environment and resources. Children are encouraged to recognise and express their feelings appropriately. Individual strategies to meet particular needs are implemented where required.
- Practitioners' knowledge of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the national wellbeing indicators is developing. The wellbeing indicators form the vision for the nursery. However, this is at the early stages of being embedded. Practitioners should continue to develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and use them more extensively and effectively in daily practice. This will help ensure a shared awareness and understanding across the setting's community.
- Children's wellbeing is promoted through a range of learning experiences. They enjoy accessing the extensive outdoor space and the primary school grounds. This supports children's sense of wellbeing. Children's regular visits to local woodlands provide further opportunities to experience the natural world. In so doing, they are building resilience, developing problem-solving skills and learning to manage risk. Structured programmes support a developing, age-appropriate awareness of personal safety and abuse prevention.
- Practitioners need to have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the range of statutory duties required. Individual personal plans are in place for all children. These need to be consistently reviewed within legislative timescales to assist with effective planning for individual children's care and learning. Practitioners should explore best practice guidance in relation to infection control, risk assessment, storage of medication, recording of accidents and safeguarding to ensure everyone is fully aware of how they can contribute to the wellbeing of children.
- There is considerable scope to develop further children's early leadership skills. Children could, for example, prepare and serve snack which would build on their enthusiasm for baking activities. The child's voice needs to be strengthened to enable children to express their views, opinions and make decisions about matters that affect them. This would better realise their potential and allow them to take a more active role in the life of the setting.

- Practitioners correctly identify children who may experience barriers to their learning or participation. Partnership working with other professionals establish appropriate plans to help children reach their potential. Advice is actively sought and implemented. Where interventions are made, it will be important that these are recorded, with successes measured more robustly over time. All available data and information should be used in full to help secure positive outcomes for children.
- Overall, children and their families are observed to be treated equally and inclusively. Children should be introduced to a wider range of cultures to help them value diversity and challenge any potential discrimination. To support this, practitioners should develop their knowledge and understanding of factors that may lead to discrimination. They need to review and develop further the curriculum and daily practices. This should include the challenging of gender stereotypes wherever possible.

3.2 Securing children's progress

weak

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 nursery experiences, children are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. From reviewing learning journey folders, floor books and observations of children's experiences in the playroom, it is clear that children could be making greater progress in their learning. The skills, experiences and knowledge that children bring with them from home, and outwith nursery, now need to be clearly identified and consistently built upon. Learning journey folders evidence participation and, increasingly the value added from nursery experiences. Continued development of folders should ensure that the evidencing of progress over time is explicit, and demonstrates an increased level of challenge and pace in learning.
- Progress is weak in communication and early language, as detailed in the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. Despite this, most children can talk with confidence about their own experiences and articulate their own thoughts and ideas. They are extending their range of vocabulary through ongoing interests. There is significant scope to develop children's listening skills to support them to take turns in conversations, and to listen for instructions and information in group situations. Almost all children recognise their own name and are developing an awareness of significant sounds and letters. Consideration should be given to developing a literacy-rich environment to support children's early reading during play activities. Not enough children show an interest in early mark-making and early writing. Most children write their own name independently and add fine details to their drawings and pictures. Given the abilities of children, there is potential for them to be developing and applying understanding and skills in a broader range of aspects of learning. This could include the sounds and patterns in language, reading books for enjoyment and using texts to find interesting information during their free play.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are not yet making the progress that they are capable of as a result of their experiences at nursery. Most children know the number sequence to ten and recognise numerals that are important to them. The dedicated numeracy area needs to be developed further to promote a real interest and excitement for numbers and mathematical language and concepts. Opportunities to use numeracy and mathematics should be maximised throughout the nursery, with opportunities for real-life learning experiences, such as baking activities being developed further.
- Children are making appropriate progress in health and wellbeing. Their fine motor control is developing through their use of tools such as scissors and snack utensils, for example. In

the outdoor area, children explore the physical environment as they climb, run, jump, balance and pedal. Overall, children have an understanding of what it means to be healthy. They have an awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise and the effect this has on their body. Children are developing an awareness of their own emotions and how to manage these appropriately.

- Children's wider achievements are recorded in their learning journey folders. Where appropriate, wider achievements should be consistently built upon through nursery experiences to add value to children's experiences.
- There is significant scope to increase the challenge in learning to ensure progress is appropriate to children's abilities. Children should contribute more fully to the life of the whole-school and the wider community to fulfil the roles of which they are capable. The whole-school community would be considerably enhanced by the contribution possible by children in the nursery.
- Practitioners work in partnership with colleagues to implement strategies to support children's learning. The impact of strategies should now be monitored to inform decisions about future interventions. The use of wellbeing indicators could be used more effectively to develop a supportive and inclusive ethos, and reduce potential barriers to effective learning of children.

Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
- Role of practitioners and leaders
- Identification of learning needs and targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

- Practitioners are increasingly responsive to children's individual needs, interests and wellbeing. Helpful information is gathered through personal planning. This information now needs to be used fully to secure the best possible outcomes. Overall, relationships between practitioners and children are warm and encouraging. The positive relationships between families and practitioners provide an appropriate starting point for providing both universal and personalised support.
- A key worker approach is now established. It would be beneficial to review this to better reflect the attendance patterns of children and practitioners. The resultant impact on outcomes for children should be monitored. The key worker approach should facilitate the use of learning conversations that support the identification of significant next steps in learning and the right amount of challenge being offered in learning. Strong attachments to a key adult would also support the promotion and understanding of the national wellbeing indicators.
- There is potential for tasks, activities and resources to be more challenging to help children make the progress of which they are capable. This should be better reflected in the identification and delivery of next steps in learning. These should build consistently on what children already know and the skills they have already acquired. Building on increasingly responsive planning, there is scope for children to make more decisions about their own learning. This could include the evaluation of learning experiences.
- Children who have potential barriers to their learning are identified appropriately. Where necessary, plans are established for children who require additional support to help them learn. Relevant professional learning has been undertaken by practitioners to extend and deepen knowledge to help meet the needs of individual children. Referrals are made to other professionals, where appropriate. Good use is made of the positive relationships established with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that factors that may be a barrier to learning are addressed quickly. As identified, it would be helpful to keep chronologies as a record of conversations with parents and other professionals, and related interventions. This would assist in measuring impact over time.

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.