

# Summarised inspection findings

**Inveraray Primary School and Nursery Class**

Argyll and Bute Council

30 October 2018

## Key contextual information

Since August 2018, the nursery class is incorporated into an early level class where children attending early learning and childcare (ELC) and primary one play and learn together. This arrangement is being reinstated after a few years of being unable to facilitate this way of working due to numbers of children attending. The unit is registered for 30 children attending at any one time. At the time of inspection, there were 12 children on the roll. Since January 2018, children are able to attend for 1140 hours within a flexible pattern of AM and extended day sessions. A few children attend on a split placement with another local setting over the extended year. Children attend from the town of Inveraray and surrounding villages and rural areas.

### 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 headteacher has involved all relevant stakeholders, including children, in an extended consultation exercise to refresh the school's vision, values and aims. The creation of the revised vision, values and aims statement for the whole school has been affected by changes in staffing and by staffing shortages in session 2017/18. At the time of inspection the vision, values and aims statements were due to be shared with all stakeholders for comment. It is intended that the vision, value and aims will align with the school's curriculum framework, which is also subject to revision to ensure that the curriculum rationale adequately reflects the rich culture and heritage of the school's environment and community. The vision, 'to provide a challenging and supportive learning environment where everyone can reach their potential and prepare for their future' has yet to be fully embedded or evident in everyday practice in learning and teaching. A positive, early start has been made to sharing the values with children in the early level class by linking them to characters from a favourite story. In taking the vision forward, it will be essential for the headteacher to demonstrate consistent strategic leadership particularly in relation to implementing the revised vision and values and in developing an empowering culture, which is built on mutual respect, and positive and supportive leadership at all levels. It is now time for the school to reflect on what it can achieve together, by building on examples of positive practice to bring about consistency in teaching and learning and realise the potential of the development of the early level class.
- Practitioners, led by the principal teacher demonstrate an enthusiasm and commitment to the development of a play- based pedagogy across the early level within an early level class. They meet regularly as a team to discuss aspects of what is working well and what needs to improve. This now needs to focus on the pedagogical development of the class alongside operational matters to support and ensure the delivery of the shared and agreed vision and to

allow practitioners to come together to build their professional confidence. It will also be important that everyone is increasingly outward looking, for example, use of the National Improvement Hub and national guidance. This should support increased leadership at all levels that nurtures individual skills, expertise and aptitudes and robustly measures the impact of developments within the class.

- Approaches for formally monitoring and evaluating are not yet effective enough. Evaluative activity such as monitoring planning for children's learning, children's progress and observations of the quality of teaching and learning have not been undertaken on a planned basis. There are weaknesses in the quality improvement recording arrangements. The headteacher recognises that she now needs to strengthen her approaches for formally monitoring the quality of educational provision by implementing a programme that is systematic and focused on raising aspirations for children. Input from representatives of the education authority provide helpful points for consideration in the ongoing development of the class. These need to be taken fuller account of in order to support a consistent and increased pace of change.
- There is scope for children to be afforded opportunities to be more involved in relevant and meaningful leadership activities.

## 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

- Although very recently established, the ethos of the class supports positive and nurturing relationships. There is ongoing reflection and development of the underpinning pedagogy, which includes positive and continuing development of the learning environment. Practitioners, with the principal teacher, play a key role in the development of the shared understanding and vision for the class. From observations, children already feel safe and confident within the environment, which is conducive to learning. Overall, they engage well and are motivated during free play and when involved in adult-led activities such as making play dough or playing a table top game.
- Practitioner interactions with children are consistently warm and caring. Children are viewed as individuals with their own unique dispositions. Appropriate use is made of praise and encouragement to encourage and nurture. Independence is actively encouraged, for example, in dressing for outdoors and PE sessions. Practitioners should now build further on provocations for curiosity and inquiry to allow children opportunities to explore in greater depth and with increased challenge to allow increased leadership of learning.
- In most cases, effective use is made of commentary and conversations with children to support their learning. A focus on planning on the use of questions to promote higher order thinking is beginning to support consistent quality in questioning to challenge and extend children's thinking.
- During the inspection, the meaningful use of digital technology by children was not observed. Consideration of how digital technology may be used to support learning in a range of ways should now be made.
- Practitioners carry out regular observations of children at play. These now need to be focused on the significant learning of the individual. This will help inform future planning decisions and ensure that observations have the sharpest focus on identifying what children need to learn next. In turn, this will support a more evidence-based approach, supporting professional judgement, to evaluating and tracking progress using local authority documentation including literacy and numeracy trackers.
- Processes to support planning for children's learning continue to evolve. The use of floor books supports consultation with children alongside planning for continuous provision, forward and responsive planning which take increasing account of the child's voice. Children are at the

early stages of developing an awareness of themselves as learners. Consideration should be made to the relevance of displaying learning intentions for all learners across the early level.

- There have been inputs to support the development of literacy and numeracy provision within the class, which are at the early stages of positively impacting. School staff have worked with practitioners to develop an understanding of SEAL maths. This has supported maths and numeracy activities particularly for outdoor learning and is to be continued this session. Work developing strategies from the Highland Literacy project is supporting the continuing development and quality of literacy learning across the early level class. Together, these provide a sound foundation on which to develop the early level class provision. To support this and moving forward, planning processes need to embed and continue to be evaluated over time. This should promote the learning for all children, across the early level, being delivered with sufficient depth, appropriate challenge and in a progressive way.
- An online format is used to record photographs and observations of children's learning. This is accessible online by parents and carers. As planned, children and parents need to be more involved in contributing to this in order to promote a holistic assessment of children's learning and achievements.
- Ongoing evaluation of the quality of children's experiences of extended day provision and differing attendance patterns should be considered to ensure equitable experiences. This should be coupled with consideration of length of time of learning episodes, for example, PE session of fifty minutes.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The developing curriculum framework encompasses the entire early level and forms part of the whole school curriculum statement. As this develops, positive efforts are being made to ensure that it is appropriately differentiated for all learners and is progressive across the three years. The early level class is being developed based on a sound rationale of provision of an “Environment where children from 3-5 years learn at an appropriate pace that supports and challenges individual learning and development, allowing children to take ownership of their learning”.
- The essential aspects of early learning, including wellbeing, communication and mathematics are evident. Positive efforts have been made to develop and promote curiosity, inquiry and creativity and this should continue. This will support an increasingly coherent, continuous and progressive approach to learning and teaching across the early level.
- The school grounds provide extensive opportunity for curriculum innovations to enrich learning across the early level and should be utilised more fully. This includes opportunities for children to manage and take ‘safe’ risks as they explore and investigate. The wider community and local natural environment provide rich opportunities to develop and apply a range of skills in real life contexts, for example, local shops. Greater use could be made of these as a valuable resource for learning.
- Through a whole school context of the world of work, children are exploring the concept of ‘work’ including why people work, where they may work and why they work. Through consultation with practitioners, children have chosen to explore different occupations, including the role of a vet.

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

- Overall, parents who responded to inspection questionnaires are happy with the early learning and childcare provision. Positive partnerships with parents and carers are evident through the range of ways parents can engage in their child's experiences including weekly Bookbug sessions that are open to the wider community. Practitioners offer on-going support to parents informally and clearly have well established positive relationships with them. Helpful suggestions, linked to local authority developmental milestones, are made to parents to support learning at home. There is scope for engagement with a wider range of partners to support and motivate learning across the early level in a planned way. Parental engagement has been identified as a priority for improvement and planned developments such as stay and play sessions should build on the existing positive relationships.

## 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

satisfactory

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

- Wellbeing is a central focus within the early level class. Relationships between practitioners and children are consistently nurturing, encouraging and positive attachments are evident. This has created an ethos of mutual respect and trust between children, practitioners and families. Practitioners provide positive role models to children. From observations and at this early stage in the session, almost all children appear to feel safe, relaxed and confident as they play. Most are beginning to show respect for each other and their learning environment. This supports the strong sense of family and community evident. The core values of the school community should support this further as they become embedded. Positive behaviour is promoted and practitioners work hard to support children develop the skills they require to work and play with others. We discussed with them the importance of recording strategies used to support individual children in order to identify what is working well.
- The use of floor books and discussion support value being placed on the child's voice with children increasingly being listened and responded to. This is becoming evident through planning for children's learning. 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.
- 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. 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. This should support the development of a language of wellbeing and help further secure children's wellbeing.
- 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 All about me and More all about me formats. We discussed how these need to 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.

- Practitioners correctly identify children who may experience barriers to their learning although written plans are not in place for everyone who may benefit from one. Where interventions are made, it will be important that these are recorded and successes measured robustly over time.
- 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 wider range of cultures and backgrounds than is represented in the immediate community.

### 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 ELC experiences, children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. The majority are confident communicators with most developing and demonstrating spoken language appropriate to their age and stage of development. To support the securing of all children's progress, there is scope for there to be an increased and more explicit emphasis on learning related to literacy and communication, including for children new to English. Overall most children listen well, for example for to instructions in the gym hall. The majority of children show interest in mark making and early writing. This interest should now be nurtured through provision of real-life contexts that challenge the development and application of children's skills. Play experiences such as role-play provide a natural opportunity to promote this and should be maximised.
- 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, number of children in a line and are at the early stages of recognising and representing numbers. Most children are beginning to recognise patterns on a dice and count the representation confidently. Children enjoy exploring volume through filling and pouring containers at the water tray. In role-play, a few children confidently demonstrate an awareness of money and its purpose, beginning to recognise values of different coins. It would be beneficial for skills to be applied across a wider range of contexts to increase opportunities to develop and apply their learning in meaningful, real-life and ways that are more challenging. This could be through increased use of the community and maximising the benefits of positive staff child ratios.
- Children demonstrate a satisfactory awareness of health and wellbeing. Through planned physical education sessions, children develop a range of gross motor skills such as, jumping and landing safely and running. They are developing an awareness of the need to keep themselves safe, for example when moving gym equipment and using tools such as knives. Care should be taken to ensure that the development of skills is progressive and consistently builds on what children can already do. Children develop fine motor control through the use of a range of tools including an interesting range of loose parts, malleable

materials and writing implements. Through snack routines, they learn about healthy foods and enjoy exploring different fruits and how seeds and stones vary.

- Information gathered over time about individual children's progress does not yet provide an accurate and full picture of their skills, aptitudes and abilities. There is scope to better measure how the nursery is adding value to children's experiences and progress. We discussed how this could be achieved, including higher quality observations of learning and the identification of next steps in learning. This would better support the measurement of success in securing children's progress.
- Children's achievements are celebrated through appropriate praise and encouragement. It is recognised that these now need to be captured and recorded more systematically. Working in partnership with families these should be recorded in individual profiles to support building on prior learning and achievement consistently.
- There is potential for children to contribute more fully to the life of the whole school and the wider community to fulfil the roles of which they are capable. This should be considered alongside extending children's awareness of citizenship and their place in the local community, Scotland and the wider world.
- Practitioners strive to ensure that they promote equity across learning for all children within an inclusive ethos. They know children and families very well. Knowledge, data and information about the different cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of children, and the progress they make in their learning, now needs to be explored and monitored in greater depth. Where strategies are utilised, their success and impact should be monitored, with information used to plan future, relevant interventions.

## Setting choice of QI : 2.7 transitions

- Quality of support for children and families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Transitions into the early level class are well planned to ensure children and families are appropriately supported. Home visits have been used successfully to support the early building of positive relationships and attachments. As part of the transition process, parents are encouraged to share information about their child's care and learning needs. This now needs to be more robust to ensure that a coherent and holistic picture is created that allows needs to be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible. Creating a more robust system will also support the effective building on prior learning that better supports continuity and progression. A few children attend the setting as part of a split placement. There is scope to build on arrangements to share information to ensure continuity in learning and care is provided across settings. Children regularly take part in whole school activities and events. As a result, they are comfortable within the school environment.
- The early level class supports transition well with children's learning journey continuing in the same environment and with key members of staff as children move onto primary one. It will be important to continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the early level class on transitions at this important stage. As the school provides the ELC hub for the local area some children move onto other primary schools. Local authority documentation, including literacy and numeracy trackers and developmental milestone trackers, provide a consistent approach to sharing children's progress.

## 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.