

Summarised inspection findings

Grantown Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

There are 31 children registered for early learning and childcare. 26 children are currently accessing early learning and childcare. There have been a number of changes to the senior leadership team and the staff team during recent years.

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

- Most children appear settled and happy in the nursery environment and are greeted warmly by practitioners as they arrive. Key worker groups provide children with a familiar adult who knows them well. The majority of children make choices and use a wide range of learning contexts across the playroom and outdoors. However, a few children spend lengthy periods of time at a particular experience or context, which prevents them from accessing a wider range of learning opportunities. Practitioners should be alert to this and support children to develop their interests and learning in a wider range of areas.
- Practitioners have made improvements to the learning environments both inside and out. Removing artificial barriers and room dividers has opened up the space for children. They now have more opportunities to explore and be creative in their play, for example, at the art area, as they mix their own colours and investigate clay. Outdoors, children have space to run and be active. The outdoor learning environment affords positive opportunities to learn about the different fruit trees and the natural world. Children make use of the fruit for making snacks and baking. There is little evidence of children engaging well with digital learning opportunities. This needs to be addressed through the school's refresh of digital technologies.
- Practitioners offer a predominately child-led experience. As such, children make choices about where and what they want to engage with. For a number of children this is not allowing their learning to be extended or developed well enough. A few children wander from activity to activity, not spending necessary time to deepen their learning. A few children also choose to spend most of their session at the same activity, not experiencing learning across the curriculum. To ensure children's learning is developing and extended appropriately, practitioners should ensure there are greater opportunities for children to engage and be supported by them in a skilful way. In doing so, it is important that an appropriate balance is maintained between adult-led and child initiated experiences to ensure full account is taken of children's stages of development.
- Most practitioners engage with children in a positive way. A few use questions effectively to develop children's thinking. However, there is too much variability in the quality of interaction practitioners have with children. They now need to work together to develop a shared understanding of highly effective questioning and use of skilful commentary to support children. It is important that practitioners model appropriate language of learning when conversing with

children. For example, using the 'hello time' at the start of the session for children to plan and talk about their learning would be beneficial.

- Children were observed to be very enthusiastic during a French lesson, recalling their knowledge of colours in French.
- Practitioners have developed and implemented different approaches to planning over the last few years. Floor books and mind maps have been used in the past to support planning of children's learning. The team now plan fortnightly. This approach, including the introduction of a learning wall, is at an early stage of development. It is not clear how the current planning for children's learning takes sufficient account of children's prior learning. Therefore, for children who are accessing a second, or indeed a third year at nursery, there is no way of ensuring that they will benefit from a progressive learning experience. This needs to be reviewed and supported by senior leaders.
- Assessment to inform next steps in learning is at the very early stages of development. Practitioners maintain children's learning journeys and include observations and photographs to document children's experiences. They capture episodes of learning across the curriculum. Observations are not always significant or informative. Children are not yet aware of themselves as learners. They are not yet able to talk about their learning in a meaningful way. Better use of the learning journeys and the introduction of personal targets as planned, will support this development.
- Developmental milestones for aspects of the curriculum are completed for children in their time at nursery. There is not yet any overall tracking and monitoring of children's progress. This is an important area for development.

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

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

- Children do not yet make sufficient progress in their learning. Overall, children's progress as a result of their nursery experiences is weak. The majority of children engage in conversations with each other and familiar adults. They are keen to share information about their experiences at home and in the nursery. They would benefit from a more focused approach to develop their listening skills, particularly in small group activities. A few children demonstrate a keen interest in mark making at different areas in the playroom. To develop their skills further, staff now need to provide more opportunities to mark make as part of daily routines. The majority of children recognise their name. A few children read simple and familiar texts around the playroom. Children enjoy listening to stories shared by adults. While practitioners have increased the range of resources to promote early literacy, few children are choosing to make use of them. It will be important that practitioners model and support children to make more meaningful use of new resources to develop their skills. Children need more opportunities to develop their understanding and enjoyment in playing with the sounds of language through rhyme, songs and interactions with adults and peers.
- Children count as part of their play and some daily routines, such as counting the number of children staying for lunch. A few make and explain simple patterns and a few are developing an understanding of simple two dimensional shapes. Mathematical language is used appropriately by a few children when comparing lengths of ribbon. Children do not yet have a sound understanding about the purpose of money and displaying and interpreting data, appropriate to their stage of development. Staff have improved the range of resources and contexts children can access. Practitioners now need to support children more during play to make use of the resources and contexts and develop their skills in numeracy. Practitioners would benefit from professional learning to improve their understanding of how children develop early language skills and mathematical thinking.
- Children demonstrate positive self-help skills. Most are adept at preparing themselves for outdoor play. A focus on improving children's fine motor skills is beginning to have a positive impact. Children are kind to each other and a few demonstrate firm friendships. A few children need more adult direction to engage with their peers in play contexts. Children benefit from exercise and enjoy the freedom and fresh air of their garden. They benefit also from their trips to the local woodland area. Parents are keen that this becomes a more regular feature of nursery practice.

- Children are developing an early understanding of their role in sustainability as they take part in planting and growing activities.
- There is not a clear picture of the progress children are making across their time in the nursery class. While 'learning journeys' capture aspects of their learning, they do not clearly illustrate progressive learning. As practitioners become more skilled in identifying individual learning steps for children, these could be used to support children to build on learning more effectively. Practitioners talk about their key children's learning. However, there is a lack of clarity about the progress and learning needs of children who are not in their group. Due to the differing shift patterns, it is important all practitioners are aware of children's learning and progress. There is a need for senior management to support the team to track children's progress more robustly to ensure that children benefit from challenge and support as appropriate.
- Children's achievements are displayed on walls and in 'learning journeys'. Helpfully, children's achievements are also displayed on the 'Wow Wall' in the school. Parents are encouraged to share children's successes from home. The use of an app promotes this well and parents are keen for this to be reintroduced. Children are capable of taking more responsibility within the nursery. A few relish the opportunities as snack helpers and practitioners should consider how this could be extended to other aspects of daily routines. Children are included in the school's promotion of citizenship at a variety of events. This allows them opportunities to learn about sustainability and the needs of others.
- Practitioners take positive steps to ensure equity for all children. They know children and their families well and share key information with senior leaders to support children and individual circumstances of families. Flexible patterns of attendance are encouraged to enable children to access as many sessions as possible. Practitioners work with other professionals to support children as required.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1. Quality of care and support

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as adequate. We looked at how the service was meeting the needs of all children and how it supported safety, independence and choice.

We spoke with a sample of Early Years' Practitioners (EYP) staff about the service's child protection policy. We were satisfied that they had a good working knowledge of their responsibilities and the procedures in place to highlight any concerns they may have in future regarding children in their care. Staff could name the child protection officer and shared with us the steps and measures they would take to ensure children were safe.

During much of the time within the service we saw that children were busy and purposeful. Children interacted well together and made use of the space and resources available to them. The resources supported children's independence, providing them with some opportunities to investigate and be creative.

Staff interactions were in the main warm and nurturing. Staff treated children as individuals and used what they knew about each child to communicate with them. We observed occasions where staff provided children with support and a level of challenge in a number of learning contexts.

Staff had shared some of the children's experiences through the use of photographs and descriptive accounts of what had occurred. These accounts were contained in learning journeys and wall displays. Parents spoken with confirmed that this information was welcomed and helped provide information linked to activities within the nursery. Staff indicated that when IT issues are resolved, further information sharing can be supported through the use of a digital platform

Staff were aware of many of the children's needs and how they should be supported. However, there were some areas where, either individually or as a team, information was not fully accessed and shared (see recommendation 1). Consequently, children's needs were not always fully understood. Children's learning journals had been the subject of ongoing review and evaluation by the staff team and the manager, and priorities linked to ongoing improvement identified. Staff should further develop these to ensure they contain significant observations and include targets linked to supporting progression and learning.

Recommendation 1

We would ask the service ensure that care plan documentation used to record children's personal and individual care needs reflecting the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, is shared and understood by all staff caring for the child. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'my care plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices'. (HSCS 1.15)

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

During the inspection we evaluated the service to be good. We looked at the physical environment, resources and opportunities for children.

Staff had organised the environment well and made good use of all available space. The nursery was clean and well maintained. Staff had decorated the children's toilet area, which was not able to be kept clean, with improved paint surfaces. Staff were aware of the benefits of further changes to colour schemes in the nursery for children with additional support needs. It is hoped these changes will take place as funds become available.

Resources available in the garden had improved in recent times, and we saw that a range of resources including loose parts were available to the children. These promoted and supported creativity, problem solving, collaboration and decision making. The children had access to a finger gym to support fine motor skills, and the natural displays linked to autumnal fruits and colours were available for children to explore and add to with their findings from the 'Scavenger Hunt' in the local woods.

The outdoor area and local woods provided children with good opportunities to explore the natural environment as well as providing them with experiences using more traditional resources such as kite flying.

The staff were aware of the importance of encouraging children to assess and explore risks which helped them to find out more about their capabilities. This gave children responsibility and freedom, with guidance, to experiment and learn naturally through play and to learn from their mistakes.

We were disappointed to observe that the use of IT had been hampered by breakages and intermittent breaks in service from the provider. We would encourage a review of these resources to see what improvements are required to support the delivery of a range of equipment and resources to support children's enquiry and exploration.

We observed snack and lunchtime service and saw positive discussions around the table with staff. Staff may wish to consider having lunch with the children and modelling good table manners.

While changes to the room layout had been undertaken we highlighted further changes. This included the benefits of having an adult sized settee in a nurture corner where children and adults can sit and have quiet time reading or talking in comfort.

Accidents and incidents were being recorded by nursery staff. Staff had a summary sheet of recent accidents. It was not clear if this had been the subject of an audit to identify common features, and how the service intended to minimise any identified risks to children. (See recommendation 2)

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the manager or appropriate person regularly audits accident and incident reports to identify common features and how the service intends to minimise any identified risks to children. This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care

Standards 4.14 which states that 'my care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event'.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as adequate.

There had been a number of changes in the staff team in recent months, and the manager and staff had been working to develop a team approach. We noted that staff's individual strengths were recognised, and that they had a desire to maintain a fun, safe environment where children can play and learn. Working as a team and sharing individual strengths should be developed across the setting, to ensure an ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working.

Staff individually had accessed training to support the care of children. This included: child protection, First Aid, EpiPen guidance and Words Up 2 to support the development of children's literacy.

We observed many positive nurturing relationships throughout the nursery sessions. Children approached staff for help and reassurance throughout the session which demonstrated that they had developed trusting relationships. The children shared achievements with staff throughout our visit and these were celebrated appropriately.

We observed a very enjoyable French session undertaken weekly by a visiting parent/teacher, which on this occasion supported the children's understanding of colours both in English and French.

We found the staff to understand the importance of their role. They individually spoke positively about their roles within the setting. Staff had a desire to create a nurturing environment and generally positive ethos, which was reflected in the children's attitude towards each other. We saw evidence of this in the way which children spoke and looked after each other, and how disagreements between children were resolved with the support of staff who were sensitive and patient in their approach.

Many staff indicated time was an issue in ensuring they completed their roles effectively. We highlighted the need, for staff to discuss with managers, the issues that were preventing staff acting on recent training linked to recording and planning to support progression and support needs.

Not all staff made use of online resources such as the Care Inspectorate Hub to access best practice guidance, such as 'Our Creative Journey' linked to the support of expressive arts in various childcare settings. We would encourage staff to access best practice guidance and continue to embed their understanding of the recent Health and Social Care Standards (see recommendation 3).

Recommendation 3

Staff should ensure they are familiar with current best practice guidance. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice'. (HSCS 4.16)

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as adequate.

The nursery staff members spoken with felt supported by the acting headteacher and commented on weekly visits to the nursery and previous management meetings. Together they had identified a number of actions and improvements required to improve the service although many of these plans had yet to be acted upon. The acting headteacher had undertaken annual appraisal meetings with staff, and agreed with staff the action points and targets to support them in their respective roles.

The service had developed an improvement plan for the whole school, including the nursery. This was to support the development of the service and the experiences for children. We spoke to staff about the quality assurance processes which were in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the service. We were not able to access recent information linked to a formal quality assurance planning and assessment and we would seek to have this completed at their earliest opportunity. Staff engagement with a quality assurance calendar would help to support regular review of the service provision.

Safeguarding records were maintained in a way that relevant information and records were not held in a central location. Staff were not clear how information recorded had been used to support the review of children's care. We require the provider of the service to ensure chronological records linked to the care of children are fully maintained and stored securely. (See requirement 1)

Requirement 1

The provider of the service is required to ensure chronological records linked to the care of safeguarded care of children are maintained and stored securely. This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210).

Timescale – This requirement is to be completed by 12 October 2018.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

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.

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