

# Summarised inspection findings

**Small Isles Primary School Nursery Class**

Argyll and Bute Council

25 June 2019

## Key contextual information

Small Isles Nursery Class is situated within the Primary School and share accommodation with children attending the school. They have controlled access to the outdoor area. The nursery is registered to provide early learning and childcare for ten children aged from three to starting school. The nursery has started to provide extended hours and children can access up to six hours each day during term time. There are currently four children attending.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Children in the nursery class are included within the primary school classroom and share an appropriate vision, values and aims. There is a strong sense of community and practitioners talk to children about the values of respect, friendship and excellence. They work hard to incorporate the values into their daily practice. As discussed, the nursery should continue to embed these values with children and families.
- The headteacher, who also has responsibility for another primary school and nursery class, leads the nursery. Practitioners are committed to the nursery and are enthusiastic about continuing to improve the early learning and childcare they provide for children and families. They are reflective and have been working recently to improve the environment in the area used by the nursery children. There is still work to be done to ensure these changes have a positive impact on children. Practitioners should continue to use national best practice guidance to make well-planned improvements to the environment with a focus on meeting the individual needs of each child. They will benefit from support from the headteacher or early years officers from the local authority to ensure they continue to make well-planned changes to the existing provision.
- The headteacher is visible within the nursery and is well known to the children. She provides a positive role model for practitioners when interacting with the children. During her visits, she observes practice and provides feedback and support to practitioners. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to put in place more robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery.
- Practitioners are at an early stage of taking on leadership roles. Recent work on improving the outdoor provision involved practitioners in carrying out audits, making changes and increasing the available resources. They should build on this positive start and with the support of the headteacher use national self-evaluation guidance to continue to make improvements to the nursery. Practitioners recognise the importance of professional learning and have taken part in training and visited other establishments. They will benefit from accessing additional training to raise their awareness of current research in early learning and develop further their understanding of early years pedagogy.

## 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

- The small number of children attending the nursery enables practitioners to get to know each child very well as an individual. Relationships are positive and children are happy and settled. Children are confident within the environment and take on responsibilities such as helping with snack and feeding the fish. They enjoy making choices and for the most part, engage well in play as they follow their interests and use the available resources. At times during the session, routines and adult directed experiences inhibit the learning opportunities for children. Practitioners need to review the balance of the day and ensure that children are given time and space to explore the available experiences. This will help them to make decisions about how they want to develop their learning.
- Practitioners are kind and caring and interact positively with children. They provide support and encouragement and use praise well to support children. However, during the session there were missed opportunities to build on children's learning. Practitioners will benefit from developing their knowledge of how young children learn to help them interact effectively to support and extend children's learning. It will also help them to provide experiences to suit the stage of development of individual children.
- Children access a range of digital technologies and enjoy investigating using 'talking tins' as they record sounds during their beach visit. Practitioners need to continue to develop their use of digital technologies and support children to use digital technologies to extend their learning.
- Practitioners observe children during play and record information and evidence in children's individual folders about their achievements. Practitioners would benefit from support to improve the quality of observations to help them to recognise and build on children's significant learning. In a few examples, the information from parents helps to build a rich picture of the child as a learner, including when outside the nursery. There is scope to build on this positive start and involve all parents more fully in children's learning.
- Practitioners use floor books to capture children's interests and find out what they want to learn. In the best examples, there is clear evidence of what children have learned. However, the quality of the information is varied. Practitioners need to build on the positive practice and ensure there is greater consistency throughout the planning process. A clearer focus on linking planning to children's interests and documenting their learning will help to ensure children's voice is heard and share their plans with parents.
- Practitioners use local authority formats to track children's progress across health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. This is helping practitioners to start to make judgements about children's learning. It is important that they ensure the information they are recording is accurate and is used to inform next steps in learning. A more robust and consistent approach will help children to make better progress in their learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use national guidance to plan the curriculum which is based on play and linked to children's interests. There is a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing and we discussed with practitioners the importance of embedding experiences to promote the development of literacy and numeracy. Children demonstrate a keen interest in books and there is scope for practitioners to build on this.
- Outdoor learning provides children with helpful opportunities to develop their physical skills while using the climbing frame. As the outdoor provision develops, children will have greater opportunities to develop creativity, inquiry and problem solving. Practitioners should ensure they are making use of the design principles to enable them to provide breadth, depth, relevance and challenge for all children.
- Practitioners are starting to use the beach as a focus for learning. There is scope to develop this more fully and provide rich, meaningful opportunities for children to learn about their local environment.

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

- Parents are welcomed into the nursery and practitioners provide verbal feedback on children's experiences at the end of the session. Practitioners share information on learning experiences that are being planned for children and provide useful tips on how parents can help at home. There is a lending library in the nursery and children enjoy taking home books to read with parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning through sharing information from children's experiences at home. There is scope for practitioners to build on this practice and make closer links with the learning taking place at home.
- The nursery arrange regular stay and play sessions and encourage parents take part in play experiences with children. Practitioners should explore how they can develop this and have a clearer focus on children's learning and development. The nursery also provide informative reports on children's progress and invite parents to discuss any concerns.
- Practitioners encourage parents to volunteer to share their skills with children in the nursery, as a result children have the opportunity to take part in interesting and informative experiences. We discussed how practitioners can build on this work and start to talk about the skills children will need for the future 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.

### 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

- The nursery recognise that caring relationships are at the heart of children's learning and development. Practitioners are responsive to children's individual needs and as a result children are settled and happy in the nursery. Younger children are given time and support to help them settle and start to understand the daily routines. Practitioners model kind, caring behaviour and encourage children to be respectful. They have involved children in creating a set of appropriate rules to encourage positive behaviour. As a result, children co-operate well, share resources and are helpful towards each other. As planned, the nursery should continue to develop their programme to support children to manage their emotions appropriately.
- Practitioners work well with children to develop their wellbeing. Children make choices about which healthy foods they would like for snack and enjoy regular access to the outdoor area. Practitioners have recently been working with children to help them develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators through meaningful experiences. This has involved children talking about wearing helmets to keep safe on bikes and finding out about road safety. Practitioners should continue to build on this positive practice and develop children's awareness of other wellbeing indicators. This will help to ensure children develop an understanding of what the wellbeing indicators mean to them as individuals.
- Practitioners involve children in making decisions about the nursery such as choices for snack and discussing planned experiences. Moving forward, practitioners should explore how they can engage children more fully in participating in the life of the nursery and in making decisions about aspects that affect them.
- The nursery are clear about their statutory duties and understand the importance of keeping children safe. They have attended appropriate training to ensure they understand procedures and school policies. The nursery is currently delivering an increased amount of early learning and childcare to children and are responsive and flexible to meet the needs of families. There is scope to continue to develop procedures for lunches to ensure this is an enjoyable learning experience for children.
- Practitioners treat all children and families fairly and with respect. They value the contribution they make to the nursery.

### 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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress across their learning and development. Children are able to make choices about their play and how they spend their time in the nursery. They are developing friendships and work well together to share resources and take turns. Children understand the importance of personal hygiene and participate in tooth brushing and hand-washing. They are developing their physical skills well in the outdoor area and a few children demonstrate a high level of skill using two wheeled bikes. Children are developing confidence and are now ready to be more involved in making decisions.
- In communication and early language, children are making satisfactory progress. They are articulate and take part in conversations with each other with a few demonstrating an extensive vocabulary. Children listen well when they are interested, however at times a few need reminding and support to help them follow instructions. Children demonstrate an interest in and love of books. Almost all children recognise their names and a few are attempting to write their names and other familiar words A few children are capable of making further progress.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. Most children are able to count to five, with older children showing confidence in dealing with larger numbers. Children are starting to use mathematical language appropriately during play experiences in the sand and water. They recognise and name simple shapes during games and are learning to sort and match objects using different criteria. Children are not yet developing their understanding of other mathematical concepts such as time, money and information handling.
- Children are developing confidence and are enthusiastic about learning and finding new information. They enjoy spending time with older children in the primary school and have opportunities to learn together. Children are developing creativity and demonstrate independence as they select resources and create artwork. Children need to develop their skills more in investigating and problem solving.
- Children start nursery with a variety of skills and experience a wide range of activities at home. Practitioners should ensure that they build on these experiences and ensure that children continue to make progress.
- The nursery are aware that they would benefit from increasing their knowledge and understanding of equity.



## Choice of QI : Management of resources to promote equity

■ See primary school SIF

■ See information from school QI

### 1. Quality of care and support

Staff were observed to be nurturing, kind and caring in their interactions with children with positive respectful relationships established. Close friendships had formed between the children.

Through observations and discussions we found staff knew the children and their families very well. Each child had a folder 'My Special File', this contained a range of observations, next steps, all about me information and art work. In each folder we could see parents regularly shared interesting and informative information about what their child had enjoyed doing at home and on holiday. This meant there was a rounded overview of children's personal preferences, interests and achievements. We found that more purposeful observations should be recorded that link to each child's individual learning. Next steps should be individualised and tracked in order to celebrate achievements and progression.

Staff were clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. Regular training and discussions supported this knowledge. This meant they were well placed to take appropriate action to support children's health and wellbeing in the event of any incidents or concerns.

Children's ideas and thoughts about different activities were recorded in a floor book, with information on what the children would like to learn. Thought should be given to further developing this book to include children's reflections and evaluations of what they have learned. This would demonstrate children's learning and understanding of the identified interests.

Children were encouraged to be independent when choosing and preparing their snack. A helpful wipe board was in place where children wrote their name or marked against what they wanted. During lunch staff supported and encouraged children, reminding children of the importance of using tongs to stop the spread of infection.

Due to the shared space with the school staff confirmed transitions into school were very successful. In the last term there was a programme for children to take part in the routine of the day and lunch with the primary children. Children were very familiar with the staff in the school. This meant children felt supported, secure and safe when moving into primary one.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

### 2. Quality of environment

Staff had started to develop the outdoor area, looking to create more natural spaces and resources for children to investigate and explore. This meant children had access to open ended resources to stimulate their curiosity. Staff should use knowledge gained on training and best practice documents to support this development.

We observed children were skilled at using bikes. Children were aware of the importance of wearing helmets to keep themselves safe, this included being aware of where their friends were to reduce the risk of accidents.

Thought should be given to the pace and balance of the day, for example the routine of the day impacted negatively on some of the children's learning experiences. This meant children did not

always have the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning with the ability to explore, investigate, problem solve and spend time being engrossed in their play. (See recommendation 1)

Children moved confidently around the classroom environment, this was a shared space with the school. A base had been established for the early learning and childcare children. We found the layout of this area did not fully support positive outcomes for children, for example there was not a lot of space for children to relax, with limited floor space for children to extend their play and learning. (See recommendation 1)

Due to the shared space a number of resources were in different areas that were not always easily accessible. Thought should be given as to how children can make informed choices about what they want to do, including accessing the outdoors.

Children had fun at the nearby beach to listen and explore what they could see and hear. A parent, with a particular interest in accessing outdoors, offered support and advice to both children and staff.

We found risk assessments were in place for trips. Children were encouraged to set boundaries when accessing the beach, and look at risks in the outdoor area. The headteacher and staff should further develop the risk assessments to cover all area accessed by the children. This would result in staff and visitors being aware of any potential risks and any measures that had been taken to reduce these. Staff should continue to involve children in risk assessing as this would encourage children to be risk aware, building a lifelong skill.

### Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and one recommendation.

### Recommendations

- 1. The pace and the balance of the day should be reviewed in order to meet children's individual needs and promote positive learning outcomes. The headteacher and staff should continue to review the environment, both inside and outside, to ensure they provide a dynamic, fun, stimulating and enabling environment. Children should be given the time and space to develop their ideas, flourish and be creative.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

-‘As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling’ (HSCS 1.30);

-‘As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.’ (HSCS 1.31); and

-‘As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.’ (HSCS 1.30).

## 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.