

Summarised inspection findings

Spean Bridge Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

Spean Bridge nursery class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) within Spean Bridge Primary School. The setting provides ELC between 8.45 am and 3 pm to children from the age of three until they begin primary school. The current roll is 25 children. Children attend on a wide variety of full and part-time patterns during term time. A third of children currently have a shared placement where they attend a different setting for part of their week. The setting has experienced disruption to staffing due to staff absence over the last two years. This included a period where the nursery was closed. Two practitioners and an assistant form the small team. Over the past year the principal teacher and the headteacher have had leadership responsibility for the setting. The team receive support from a visiting local authority officer during improvement visits. There is one playroom with direct access through a fire door to a small, secure outdoor area.

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

- There is a caring ethos in the nursery class. Practitioners have positive relationships with families. As a result, children feel safe and secure. Most children listen well to adults and to other children. A few children would benefit from continued support to learn how to share resources and space. Children benefit from recent, necessary changes to the learning environment and resources. Practitioners have increased the availability of open-ended resources, including natural materials. The team have started to make important changes to how they plan learning experiences. This includes reducing the amount of adult directed group activities. As a result, there is an improved balance of child and adult-led experiences. Practitioners should continue to use national guidance to develop further responsive approaches to planning children's learning. Staff need to be clear about why they have made changes and what they hope to observe about children's learning as a result. This will help them to begin to evaluate the impact of improvements on children's learning.
- Overall, most children can participate well in their learning. The majority of children are able to follow their own interests both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners have significantly reduced the number of group activities and routines that interrupt children's play. The majority of children would benefit from more challenging activities that support them to apply their skills. Practitioners support children to access the outdoor area in groups throughout the day. Positively, the team have begun to re-introduce visits to a business in the local community to look after flowers they have planted. Staff are aware of the significant number of shared placements many children access across their week. Practitioners should use the information they have about children's skills to inform increased use of the school grounds and local community. This will support children to apply their skills in new contexts. Practitioners involve children increasingly in planning what they are interested in learning more about. They should continue to build on and develop further children's prior learning and skills.

- Practitioners have introduced new approaches to how they plan for children's learning. This is beginning to support a more responsive approach. Staff continue to offer a few activities that are very structured and adult directed. Most children would benefit from continued, increased use of open-ended materials to support their curiosity and creativity.
- Practitioners record short observations about things they notice about children's learning and development. Staff also note children's experiences, interests and questions in floor books, displays and new planning sheets. The team include photographs and children's comments to illustrate what children are interested in. Children are proud of their profiles. A few children access these independently during the session and use them to recall and discuss previous experiences. Practitioners need to develop further their skills in capturing high quality observations. Staff need to record more clearly focused, measurable targets that reflect significant learning for each individual child.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Securing children's progress

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

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. The majority of children show a keen interest in books, they explore fiction and non-fiction texts independently. The majority of children participate purposefully in mark making indoors and outdoors. There are a few examples of strong emergent writing as children write shopping lists. Children now require greater challenge to apply and extend their early language and communication skills.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children are developing an understanding of number. They count and sort objects by colour as they play. The majority of children can recognise and match numerals beyond 10 in outdoor games. A few children identify two dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects as they create models with blocks. Most children would benefit increased opportunities to develop a wider range of early numeracy and mathematics skills such as time and measure.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. A few children develop their fine motor skills well as they use real tools to make a bug hotel. Most children are sociable and independent for example, as they clear their plates after lunch. Most children can describe what being healthy means as they talk about fruit and vegetables. The majority of children are engaged and motivated in their learning. They recall prior learning well, for example, as they discuss how to care for a new baby.
- Children have made satisfactory progress over time. Senior leaders should work with practitioners to review and streamline current processes for recording and tracking children's progress. This should ensure the process is manageable and meaningful for staff, parents, and children.
- Children are proud of their achievements captured in displays and profiles. Parents are beginning to share children's achievements and interests from home. For example, a few children shared an experience from home, which sparked an interest in growing and planting in the setting. Practitioners should increase the use of information about children's interests and achievements to inform learning experiences and how they support children to develop further their achievements.
- Practitioners know their children and families well. They are aware of, and respond to, individual children's circumstances. They offer opportunities for children and parents to learn together in stay and play sessions. This helps build relationships between staff and family

members. Practitioners initiate conversations with parents about the benefits of working with other professionals and signpost them to relevant partner agencies. Staff should continue to develop their skills and confidence in recording individual targets and strategies for children who need additional support.

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.