

Summarised inspection findings

Balbeggie Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

21 August 2018

Key contextual information

Balbeggie Nursery Class operates in a classroom within Balbeggie Primary School. Children also have access to the school playground and garden.

The group is registered for 20 children attending at any one time. Approximately eight children access full day provision.

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

- Over the last few years, there have been a number of staff changes and different early years support teachers supporting the setting. A few practitioners have only recently taken up post in the setting. In addition, all practitioners with the exception of the play assistant have different work patterns. This presents challenges for the whole staff to come together for planning learning and assessment and evaluating the setting.
- Practitioners in the nursery class are currently in the process of developing a new vision, values and aims for the setting. All practitioners have been involved in this and they now plan to consult and involve parents in the process. We have discussed with practitioners the need to also share this across the whole school community.
- The early years support teacher, who has been working with the setting for four weeks, works with practitioners and children for two half-day sessions per week. She is supporting them to make better use of the challenge questions from How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC?) to enable the identification of progress in addressing improvement priorities. The team plan to develop this further next session to ensure the impact of new developments is regularly reviewed and refined.
- The nursery's improvement plan reflects the school's plan as well as taking account of local authority priorities. It is important that this is regularly reviewed throughout the session. Practitioners are keen to improve the setting. There is a strong ethos of teamwork and they readily share ideas with each other. They lead aspects of the setting's improvement plan, for example, numeracy and development of 'loose parts' play. There is a programme for peer reviews in place, which enables practitioners to benefit from guidance and support from each other. In addition, the early years' support teacher provides the team with weekly summaries of her visits to enable them to receive feedback on their practice and plan next steps for development. There is now a need for the management team to take a more visible and strategic role in leading self-evaluation approaches in the nursery class to support the team identify the main strengths and areas for improvement. More regular use of HGIOELC? and Building the Ambition guidance should be used to support this.

- Children are encouraged to share their likes and dislikes. Floor books are used to capture children's ideas. There is scope to engage children more in the improvement of the setting. More opportunities to develop their leadership skills in both the nursery class and school are required.
- Practitioners welcome opportunities to visit other settings to identify and share good practice. A few practitioners have benefitted from this activity to help improve the outdoor area. To ensure continuous progress it will be important that practitioners have more opportunities to undertake this type of self-evaluation activity. A few practitioners have recently undertaken a senior early year's practitioner course. They are using what they have learned to improve aspects of the learning environment.
- Practitioners show confidence in working with parents and carers and have initiated 'play and stay' opportunities for parents, which is leading to improved engagement. Parents report that they enjoy these informative, informal sessions and find them helpful.

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

- Interactions between children and practitioners are warm and support them to settle and to direct their play. In the outdoor area, children relish the opportunities they have to lead and direct their own learning. It is in the outdoor area where children demonstrate the greatest engagement and excitement in their learning. Children's keen interest in engaging with natural materials is evident. A few invent their own imaginative play episodes and create their own challenges to solve. A good example of this involved children pouring water down a slope and working together to find ways of stopping the flow of water at the bottom. In the playroom children seek out adults to play board games, a few children enjoy creating their own models at the art area.
- Most practitioners engage well with children during their free play. Most are responsive to children's ideas and make good attempts to support them to take these forward. A few practitioners also make positive attempts to provoke deeper learning by adding new resources or through their use of questions.
- The majority of children sustain their interest well on their chosen activities during free play although a few wander from area to area not really engaging in purposeful play. Children choose from a range of resources to support their learning. The indoor learning environment has recently been changed and children are still becoming familiar with the new layout. There is scope to develop further the indoor learning environment to promote higher quality learning and engagement. It is too cluttered with little space for children to develop properly their play. There is also a need to review the playtime arrangements when schoolchildren access the nursery play area.
- Approaches to planning are mostly responsive. The new early years support teacher is working with the team to develop approaches, which allow all practitioners to inform and lead planning. There is a need to ensure that observations of significant learning are used more effectively to inform planning.
- Practitioners make use of local authority developmental milestones to make judgements about children's progress. Learning journey profiles are used to document and record aspects of children's learning. These are variable in quality. At the start of a new plan, practitioners identify aspects of learning to be assessed. This is recorded in a review sheet. This allows practitioners to make judgements about children's progress within each plan and identify next steps for learning. Practitioners now need to make use of the Benchmarks to ensure practitioners have a clear understanding of standards. There is a need to streamline approaches to ensure more consistent support for the tracking of children's progress.

- Children have limited access to digital technologies to support their learning. They make use of a desktop PC and 'pretend mobile phones'. Children also have opportunities to take photographs using the nursery cellular tablet. Cellular tablets would also have the potential to support and extend learning by providing access to the internet.
- Children who have potential barriers to their learning are supported. The setting works with other professionals to support practitioners in their support of children to make the best possible progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- There are positive examples of the local community being used to enhance learning experiences. Visitors are invited into the setting to share information about the world of work, for example, the lollipop lady.
- There is great scope to develop greater continuity in learning across the early level. The headteacher needs to develop closer working between the nursery class and primary one. The nursery class needs to have a more prominent role in the life of the school. Currently, the nursery class is a very separate entity to primary classes. We have discussed with the management team the benefits that could be gained from locating the nursery closer to the primary one class. This would allow opportunities for children to learn together. Good approaches to transition are employed as children start in the setting. More works needs to be done to ensure continuity in learning across the early level.
- The curriculum is based mostly on play. There is an appropriate balance between child initiated and adult-led learning experiences. Recent developments in loose parts play are having a very positive impact on supporting children's learning. More opportunities for this type of play would be beneficial in the playroom.
- There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children were observed to participate enthusiastically in rhyme time and circle games. A few show an interest in art but there is a need to review the resources available for this, for example, the paper available and brushes are too small.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion

good

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

- There are strong relationships between children and practitioners. They take time to warmly welcome each child and their parents at the start of the session. This means that most children settle quickly and are relaxed as they play. Children are observed to approach practitioners when upset or distressed, most support them well in these situations. A few children who are not yet able to join larger group contexts are supported well by most practitioners. Settling-in procedures allow practitioners the opportunity to build positive relationships with children and their families.
- Overall, practitioners have a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They support children well to develop their understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. A helpful wall display has been created to engage children to reflect on the indicators across their nursery experiences. Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies to support children to make good choices. Overall, they are positive role models for children. Most children are caring and helpful towards each other however, a few need support to do this consistently. Older children support younger children well.
- Children who have potential barriers to their learning are supported. The setting works with other professionals, which supports practitioners to support children to make progress. There are support plans in place for a few children who require them including appropriate targets and next steps. Other children in the setting would also benefit from this more formal approach to planning. All children have a care plan in place, although a minority of them have not been updated every six months. Care plans are completed using the wellbeing indicators which all enable practitioners to gain a holistic picture of children.
- Children are encouraged to express their views and inform decisions during their time in the nursery class. They are asked to evaluate new experiences which practitioners take good account of. There is scope to develop this further. This will enable children to play a more active role in the setting. A group of older children were observed to be very confident and capable. They are ready for more responsibility. This could be as part of whole school leadership groups, such as the pupil council.
- Practitioners have created an inclusive environment in which children participate in all aspects of learning. Visual timetables are in place to support children who require them. Due to children's varying patterns of attendance, practitioners work hard to make sure all benefit from similar experiences.

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 equality for all children

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. Practitioners interact well with children to extend their communication and early language skills. Most children are keen to talk to each other and familiar adults in the setting. They readily share information about their learning and experiences with visitors. A few children are able to create their own questions when talking to the lollipop lady about her job. The majority of children demonstrate a developing vocabulary. Most listen well to adults to undertake tasks and plan their learning.
- A few demonstrate a keen interest in mark-making indoors and in the outdoor area. Different tools are used to promote children's skills, for example, paint brushes, sticks and chalks. Children sign in for snack, although not all children choose to do this. A few children choose to make shopping lists for vegetables. A group of children can discuss aspects of their book of the week. There is scope to develop this further to promote, for example, children's understanding of the features of books. Children do not engage well with books independently. There is a need to increase the number of books available across the playroom and outdoors.
- In numeracy and mathematics, the majority of children are making good progress. They are interested in number and readily count as part of routines and independent play. Most older children count to ten with a few also to recognise numerals to ten. A group of children worked together well to order numbers from zero to ten outdoors using numbered logs. There is scope to ensure children are continually challenged in their learning. Children use appropriate language of measure as they build towers and as they compare spaghetti worms. The majority of children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and colours. There is scope for children to be developing and applying a wider range of skills and knowledge in numeracy and mathematics.
- Children are learning about the importance of healthy eating as they help to choose and make snack. They carry out personal hygiene routines well. They can explain the importance of tooth brushing. Outdoors, children benefit from opportunities to develop a wide range of fine and gross motor skills. They enjoy the challenge of negotiating their way across the trim trail. For the most part children play well with each other and most are confident in approaching other children to join their play. A few children have developed firm friendships and regularly seek out their friends. A few children are not yet able to join or play with others. Children are developing a sense of responsibility as they take on roles within the setting. This includes

opportunities to act as snack helpers and undertake risk assessments. There is scope to develop this further.

- Perth and Kinross Council's developmental milestones and numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing overviews are used to track children's progress. This is recorded in their individual learning journey folders. Next steps are identified and stored in a different folder. There is a need to review and improve how children's progress is documented and to ensure they are child friendly and accessible. No child was observed accessing their own folders. This needs to develop further to ensure a clearer overview of individual children's progress.
- Children's achievements are celebrated and displayed on a wall in the nursery and within children's folders. It would be helpful to have the display more accessible to children.
- Practitioners are committed to promoting equity for all children. They ensure they meet the needs of children and their family in terms of offering different patterns of attendance.

Setting choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
 - The promotion of partnerships
 - Impact on children and families
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- Practitioners have fostered strong supportive partnerships with parents. Parents report that they are very satisfied with the work of the setting and appreciate the level of care and support offered to their children. Parents are encouraged to stay in the setting to play with their children. At pick up times, a number of parents choose to stay for longer periods to play alongside their children. They are very comfortable to do this.
 - Parents are informed about their child's progress both formally and informally. They value the weekly email they receive which keeps them up to date about learning in the nursery. They also like the social media app where practitioners share photographs and information about learning. This is reassuring for parents when they are settling new children.
 - The setting has developed a number of partnerships. These include the health visitor, speech, language therapist, and colleagues from the early inclusion team. Practitioners make good use of information and advice to support individuals and groups of learners.

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.