

# Summarised inspection findings

**Aberdour Early Learning and Childcare Centre**

Fife Council

2 June 2020

## Key contextual information

Aberdour Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) is situated within Aberdour Primary School and serves the area of Aberdour and surrounding villages. The setting is registered for 28 children at any one time. The current roll is 40. Children attending the setting are aged three and over. The school principal teacher has the strategic responsibility for the ELCC supported by a peripatetic teacher. The setting also receives support from other visiting local authority officers.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

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

- Senior leaders view the ELCC as an integral aspect of the school community. Practitioners value this and find senior leaders supportive. They benefit from the guidance and support of the peripatetic teacher who supports them very well in their role. She has responsibility for leading on many aspects of the setting. The principal teacher within the school has overall responsibility for the ELCC. Senior leaders and the peripatetic teacher need to work more collaboratively to guide and manage the direction of change and improvement within the ELCC.
- The team of practitioners within the ELCC work well together. They are professional, enthusiastic and motivated to do their best for children and to improve continuously the quality of provision. The ELCC shares the school's vision and the values of 'respect, honesty, fairness and kindness'. Practitioners embed the values through their positive, nurturing and respectful interactions with children. As a result, children demonstrate positive and respectful behaviour.
- Practitioners are respectful of each other and value the range of skills and expertise within the team. Senior leaders support and encourage practitioners to undertake regular professional learning to develop further practitioners' knowledge and skills. Each practitioner has a specific leadership role to ensure continuous improvement of the ELCC. As a result, children have developed further their skills in numeracy and emotional literacy, and have increased their awareness of social issues.
- All practitioners are involved fully in self-evaluation activities to evaluate the quality of the setting. They engage in regular professional dialogue to reflect on practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement. With the support of senior leaders and the peripatetic teacher, practitioners should continue to develop their use of national self-evaluation guidance. They need to reflect critically on practice to inform future improvements based on a cycle of robust self-evaluation. Children and parents are included in a range of ways to share their views and ideas. Practitioners share with parents and children how they have influenced change through a 'You Said, We Did' board and an 'all voices matter' book.

- The current ELCC improvement plan links closely with school priorities. Practitioners have specific responsibilities and meet regularly to discuss the progress of the plan. They keep parents informed of progress through an attractive display.
- The peripatetic teacher carries out monitoring of children's personal learning journals (PLJs). She provides supportive feedback to enable practitioners to continue to develop their skills in demonstrating children's significant learning and progress. Senior leaders should also undertake monitoring of learning, teaching and children's assessment information. They need to ensure consistency in assessment and tracking of children's learning. Senior leaders need to have a clear overview of the work of the ELCC and children's progress.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- Children receive a warm welcome from practitioners. They are socially confident in interacting with one another and playing together. Children choose where they want to play and have freedom to follow their interests. The wide range of resources in the playroom and the outdoor area helps to encourage investigation and creativity. Children sustain interest as they bake gingerbread biscuits and play with open-ended materials outdoors. They are enthusiastic when playing table top games with friends, and show responsibility and patience in taking turns. During regular trips to the beach, they laugh, climb, explore their local environment and learn to manage risks and keep themselves safe. There is appropriate use of digital technology such as video cameras, interactive boards and toys to support children's learning.
- Practitioners value children's views and ideas and use them to influence learning experiences. Children contribute very well to the local community through recycling, litter picking, intergenerational work and social enterprise projects. This is giving children a sense of achievement and awareness of the important role they play as members of their local community.
- Very positive relationships are evident between practitioners, parents and children. Interactions are kindly, and children respond well to praise. During games and activities, most practitioners' interactions support children's learning well. At times, children would benefit from increased adult intervention and support to develop and extend skills and build confidence as learners.
- Practitioners gather a range of information and observations for children's PLJs. They respond daily to observations to support children's play. Practitioners identify next steps for children and share these with parents. In the majority of cases, PLJs help practitioners to track children's progress. Practitioners need to increase opportunities for children to talk about their learning and involve them in identifying their possible next steps. Senior leaders, along with the peripatetic teacher should continue to support practitioners in compiling PLJs. Practitioners need ongoing support to ensure consistency in how they record children's progress and next steps in learning.
- Practitioners use a variety of approaches to plan children's learning. They use learning walls well to involve children in planning and take account of their interests. Responsive observations support daily and fortnightly plans. Senior leaders should support all practitioners to review and refine systems for planning and assessment to reduce bureaucracy. Practitioners should engage in moderation activities and use the National Benchmarks more effectively to support their professional judgements and expectations of children's learning.
- Practitioners use information from local authority language assessments effectively to support children who would benefit from specific strategies and interventions. They monitor the impact of these interventions to show the progress children are making in this area of learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is appropriately play based, responsive and built on a clear nurturing approach. Practitioners link planning to experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. There is a need for senior leaders to work with practitioners to develop a clearer understanding of curriculum design and embed the principles of Curriculum for Excellence more fully. Planning needs to develop further to ensure progression of skills across the curriculum. Practitioners need to have a clearer focus on skills development to support continuity and progression in children's learning. Overall, the curriculum needs to be refreshed to become more coherent and provide children with depth, challenge and progression in learning.
- Practitioners use the local community very well. They engage with local businesses and key landmarks to enrich children's learning experiences. Children are becoming aware of the world of work through these opportunities. They are beginning to talk about the skills required in certain careers.
- Transitions from home to the setting are flexible to meet children's needs. Practitioners offer home visits to families to enable parents to share children's prior experiences and health and wellbeing needs. This also gives children the time in their home environment to become familiar with their keyworker. Practitioners and the P1 teacher provide a wide range of opportunities for children and families to become familiar with the school and P1 classroom. Parents report that transition from the ELCC to P1 is seamless and supports their children very well.
- Practitioners working across the early level provide opportunities for children in the ELCC and P1 to learn together. Visits to the beach and woods provide continuity in learning. With support from senior leaders, all practitioners should develop further a clear approach to progression and curricular transitions. Practitioners should seek opportunities to work collaboratively with the P1 teacher to develop further planning and share methodologies to enhance children's learning.

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

- Practitioners work very hard to engage parents in the life of the ELCC. Parents are encouraged to be involved in a range of events. This includes, 'stay and play' sessions, parent groups and 'blether together' and 'parent chat' sessions. These opportunities enable parents to hear about how the ELCC promotes learning and the progress their child is making. In addition, practitioners display 'big books' and use social media to keep parents informed of the setting's events and children's experiences. Practitioners share helpful written reports and children's PLJs with parents detailing children's learning across the curriculum. They should continue to seek ways to maximise parental engagement.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners 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

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

- The promotion of wellbeing is important to practitioners as they strive to improve outcomes for all children. They have created a calm and nurturing environment for children to develop and learn. Very positive relationships are evident which support children to feel happy, safe and confident within the setting.
- Practitioners place an important emphasis on developing children's emotional wellbeing and support this well through a range of helpful resources. This includes the use of puppets, storybooks and emotion stones and spoons. These resources, along with practitioners' supportive and nurturing interactions, enable children to become aware of, and talk about, different emotions. Children demonstrate their understanding as they share how different real-life situations make them feel.
- Practitioners embed the national wellbeing indicators through the positive ethos and their caring interactions with children. Children are familiar with a few of the wellbeing indicators and are confident to talk about how to be safe, healthy and responsible. They identify and manage risk during visits to the beach and forest. Practitioners should continue to develop children's awareness of the full range of indicators through real-life situations to deepen children's understanding. They should make meaningful links with the school values and children's rights.
- Practitioners are positive role models for children and promote respectful behaviour. Children play well together and show care and consideration to each other. They demonstrate through the 'good choices' book their understanding of respect, kindness and responsibility.
- Practitioners comply and actively engage with statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. Practitioners gather a range of information from parents during home visits and as they join the setting. This includes information on children's care and health needs and prior experiences. Practitioners use 'parent chat' sessions to update this information to enable them to continue to meet children's needs.
- Children who require additional help with their learning receive targeted support to ensure they continue to make progress. Practitioners identify specific targets and strategies to support children during play. They need to evaluate these targets with parents and, where appropriate, partner agencies to ensure strategies are effective and lead to children making progress.
- Practitioners treat children and families with fairness and respect. They support children to be aware of different cultures and traditions by celebrating a range of cultural festivals and events. Through the current focus of the world of work, children are becoming aware of gender equality. Practitioners should continue to support children to learn about equality and diversity as an integral part of the curriculum to develop awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> century society.



### 3.2 Securing children's progress

good

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 are making good progress in early language. Children use rich vocabulary when engaging with adults and their peers. They are confident in social interactions with one another and enjoy talking together and sharing ideas during play activities. Children enjoy listening to stories and a few are making good attempts to read stories to other children. Most children are developing a good understanding of rhyme and letter sounds and recognise their name in print. Children enjoy mark making and a few are beginning to write simple words. Practitioners need to raise their expectations of children and support them to develop progressive skills in early literacy.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are confident in counting and using one to one correspondence. They use tally marks to gather information and make graphs. During baking, with practitioners' support, they experiment with weighing to follow recipes. They demonstrate a good understanding of money during play activities and in real life contexts. Children need support to extend their use of mathematical language and to develop mathematical skills progressively during play and real-life contexts.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They demonstrate an understanding of keeping themselves safe including at the beach and in the local area. They have good fine motor skills and use tools such as hammers, scissors and screwdrivers during craft activities. Children are developing a good sense of belonging through the welcoming environment and regular outings within the local community. Children are ready to have greater challenge in physical play and adult-led activities to develop their skills progressively.
- Children are developing very good creative skills in art, craft and woodwork. They are becoming responsible citizens within their community and developing skills in enterprise through a range of projects. Children have worked with P6 pupils to confidently and successfully bid for grant money to develop a 'pop up' charity shop in the local community. They demonstrate an awareness of worldwide issues in relation to recycling and discuss the effect of plastic on wildlife.
- Most children are making good progress from the positive start they have when they come to the ELCC. Children would benefit from increased challenge to develop skills progressively and learn in depth. Arrangements are in place to track and monitor children's progress. The peripatetic teacher has tracking meetings with practitioners to discuss children's progress and next steps. Practitioners' recording of children's learning needs to be more consistent to ensure practitioners demonstrate clearly the progress children make over time.

- Practitioners have created attractive displays within the playroom and ELCC entrance to celebrate children's achievements. Parents are encouraged to share children's 'star moments' from home. As a result, children are proud of their success and confidently share their achievements. Practitioners need to track children's wider achievements to support the development of skills in a progressive way within the setting.
- Practitioners provide a supportive and inclusive ethos for children and families. They are aware of potential barriers to learning. They provide targeted support to ensure all children access the full range of experiences within the ELCC. Most children are progressing well in early language as a result of a focused approach to assessing and developing children's skills.

## 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.