

# Summarised inspection findings

**Dreghorn Primary School Early Years Class**

North Ayrshire Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Dreghorn Early Years Class (EYC) is based within Dreghorn Primary School and has a shared outside space with primary one children. The service provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for 40 children at any one time aged from three until starting primary school. The current roll is 72. A few children attend on a full day basis. Children attend from Dreghorn and the surrounding villages. The Acting Depute Headteacher (ADHT) has had responsibility for the EYC for a few months. At the time of the inspection, the Senior Early Years Practitioner (SEYP) had only been in post for eight days. The post had been vacant since December 2018.

### 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

- School staff, children, parents, carers and EYC practitioners have developed the current vision, values and aims. Practitioners have adopted these and through our observations, it is evident that they underpin the work of the EYC. This has resulted in a respectful, caring, nurturing and inclusive setting where children are achieving well. In future reviews, it will be important to include parents and carers from the EYC and children, in a more developmentally appropriate way.
- There is strong teamwork in the EYC. More experienced practitioners have welcomed positively the recently appointed SEYP into their team and already are beginning to work well together. They engage regularly in professional dialogue and reflect on their practice. They now need to use these opportunities to reach a shared understanding of their approach to delivering high quality ELC. All practitioners demonstrate a strong personal and collective commitment to continually improving the EYC and supporting the children and families attending Dreghorn EYC.
- Practitioners value the support and guidance from senior leaders. They feel fully included in the school community and are involved in a wide range of school events. The ADHT is in the EYC on a daily basis to offer support. She attends weekly planning meetings, which include helpful discussions about children's progress. In addition, she meets with practitioners on a one-to-one basis to discuss in more detail children's individual progress. This includes where additional support or challenge may be required.
- All practitioners have a leadership role within the EYC. This includes literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, outdoor learning and the introduction of sign language. Practitioners with a leadership role provide useful support and guidance to their colleagues to ensure consistency in practice across the team.
- EYC priorities for improvement are embedded within the school improvement plan. Good progress has been made in improving children's experiences in relation to early language and literacy. The principles of 'Getting it right for every child' underpin the nurturing approach within

the EYC. Senior leaders and practitioners are aware that more work is required in order to progress other areas of the plan such as embedding numeracy experiences across learning.

- Practitioners use national guidance to support self-evaluation. In addition, peer evaluation and shared evaluation meetings with the ADHT, has resulted in practitioners being able to identify what is working well and areas where further improvement is required. Building on this, it will be important for practitioners to look critically at their practice in order that future improvements are based on sound judgements. It will also enable them to demonstrate the impact of change in improving outcomes for children.

## 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 are happy, safe, secure and developing confidence within the EYC. Most children are engaged and enjoy learning through free play. They can make choices from the available resources both indoors and outdoors. Children now need more opportunities to lead and develop their own learning.
- Practitioners know their children well and have an appropriate understanding of their development needs. Relationships between practitioners and children are very positive and responsive. There are good examples of practitioners making effective use of questioning and interventions to maintain children's interests during group times. This should be built on when children are following their own interests. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to develop further this aspect of practice. Led by the communications champion, practitioners plan well to support children's developing communication needs through focussed group times and targeted interventions.
- There is an appropriate balance between time children spend choosing activities and time spent in adult-directed tasks. However, practitioners should review the content of group times towards the end of the session to ensure children are actively engaged in appropriately challenging learning activities. Children could be better supported to care for their learning environment as they move between activities.
- Children enjoy accessing the well-resourced outdoor area and benefit from shared play experiences with children from primary one. Daily use is made of the adjoining woodland area to provide children with access to a natural outdoor environment. Children are ready to have increased challenge and to take risks during play. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards and tablet computers to support learning indoors. Practitioners have identified the need to provide opportunities for children to develop skills in using a wider range of technologies.
- Practitioners make ongoing observations about each child's learning and record them in individual profiles. They now need to ensure they capture consistently significant aspects of children's learning. Children enjoy looking at their profiles and a few can share their learning. These include photographic evidence and samples of children's work. There is scope to develop further this approach to ensure it reflects consistently progress and what children might learn next. Parents and carers access and contribute occasionally to children's profiles.

It will be helpful to continue to support parents to share children's learning and achievements from home.

- Practitioners use a variety of planning formats including floorbooks and have recently started to use mindmaps to plan and record children's learning. They should build on these approaches ensuring they focus more clearly on developing children's voice. As correctly identified, they should also continue to review how they plan responsively to develop children's interests as they play.
- Staff monitor and track children's progress and engage in regular, helpful professional dialogue to discuss the progress children are making in their learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan for children's learning using the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to provide a range of learning opportunities for children. The curriculum is appropriately based on play and offers a range of stimulating learning contexts. Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are a focus of planning across the playrooms. There is scope for curriculum planning to build further on children's interests, particularly when planning responsively. Practitioners continue to reflect on their practice using national guidance to help plan their learning environment. This is beginning to support the development of children's skills in curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- Practitioners plan for daily outdoor learning experiences and continue to evaluate how they use this space to support learning across the curriculum. This environment is inviting to children and engages them purposefully in a range of learning experiences. Practitioners have made useful links with a local care home. They have identified correctly the need to make more effective use of the community to learn about their local area and the world of work. The continued use of real life experiences should be maximised to support children to apply further and develop their skills in a progressive way in new contexts.

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

- Practitioners keep parents and carers up-to-date with nursery events through notice boards, newsletters and social media. They are kept informed of their child's progress through termly meetings. Practitioners discuss children's individual learning targets and update any relevant information on personal learning plans. Regularly, they are invited to take children's individual profiles home to share with family members and to talk to their children about their experiences in the EYC. Parents and carers who engaged with the inspection process report that their child's learning is well supported and that they receive helpful feedback on their child's progress.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the EYC in a variety of ways. This includes 'Work with us Wednesdays'. These sessions focus well on specific areas such as numeracy, outdoor learning, communication and language. Helpful opportunities are provided for parents and carers and their children to play and learn together. Practitioners lead these sessions well and share ideas for parents to support their children's learning at home.

## 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

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

- Children are confident within the EYC and enjoy positive relationships with all practitioners. The wellbeing of children and their families is paramount and underpins practitioners' work in improving outcomes for all. Practitioners have a good understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and embed them in practice to support children's health and wellbeing. Children are aware of what it means to be safe and healthy. There is scope to engage children with the indicators at a deeper level and in a developmentally appropriate way through real-life contexts. Practitioners could also make relevant links to the school's work on children's rights.
- Practitioners model positive behaviour and encourage it in the children through a nurturing, and caring approach. Most children demonstrate an understanding of emotions and show consideration and concern for others. Practitioners support this well through a specific programme to enable children to be emotionally aware. Children play well together, develop friendships and share their thoughts on the kindness tree.
- Children are encouraged to share their views and ideas. This includes sharing likes, dislikes and views about the development of the garden and learning contexts. Practitioners respect the views of children, however, they are aware that there is scope to develop this further and make links with children's rights.
- Practitioners provide good support to children who require additional support with their learning through both universal and targeted approaches. Further work is required in relation to individualised planning for children. It will be important for senior leaders and practitioners to develop a robust system for recording children's needs, targets and progress. Plans should include clear, measurable targets for children and be evaluated by practitioners along with parents, carers and support agencies. This will ensure children's needs are being met and that they continue to make progress.
- Practitioners know children and families very well and recognise how this influences their work in reducing barriers to learning and inclusion. There is an inclusive and respectful ethos within the EYC. Practitioners value diversity and challenge discrimination in a meaningful way appropriate to the children's stage of development. Celebrating a range of local and cultural events is enabling children to develop an early awareness of diversity.

### 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 literacy. Most children show a keen interest in mark making and enjoy sharing their 'writing' with adults. They should now continue to build on their skills at writing for a purpose when playing. Most children recognise their name in print and attempt to write it. They enjoy sharing books and develop their knowledge of the language and layout of texts. Most children listen with interest to stories during group times. Children need to continue to develop these skills through meaningful contexts indoors and during outdoor learning.
- Children are progressing well in early numeracy and can count when playing with increasing confidence. They are developing good early mathematical skills through the range of toys and resources available. They are learning about shapes as they build and problem solve with blocks and 'loose parts'. A selection of natural materials encourage children to sort, match and group, embedding early numerical and mathematical skills. Children are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they fill containers with water. They are developing their understanding of the importance of money when 'buying' vegetables at the playroom greengrocer shop. Children need to develop further early numeracy and mathematical skills through real-life contexts and outdoors.
- In health and wellbeing, children are making good progress. They are learning to be caring, kind and respectful to others. The emphasis on relationships and inclusion helps children settle and develop friendships. Children are learning about healthy lifestyles through discussions about healthy snacks and daily active play outdoors. They climb confidently and are agile when balancing on tree swings. Older children are skilled at kicking, throwing and catching balls. Children should now develop skills at managing risks across a wider range of learning contexts. This could include using woodwork tools and assessing risks before playing outdoors and at the woods.
- Children help to make dough and note the change in materials. They plant seedlings and note their growth. They enjoy joining in with singing games and enthusiastically develop imaginary play scenarios although children are not always sufficiently skilled in sustaining these

independently. Children are creative at the craft area when mixing thick paints to use expressively. They work well together to create a spaceship from boxes. Children use simple computer programs independently but there is scope to build further on their skills at using a wider range of technologies. They are at the early stages of developing their skills at using woodwork tools.

- Children are keen to learn and enthusiastically explore the learning environment when engaging in free play. As a result of their nursery experience and from information gathered from individual files, children are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners share children's achievements through a range of approaches and have identified they should continue to explore ways to share children's achievements with parents and carers. As they review their practice and approaches to child centred learning, it will be important for practitioners to continue to develop the indoor and outside spaces to further children's achievements. As a result, children should be able to make improved choices and decisions about their play.

## Choice of QI : Transitions

- Quality of support for children and families
  - Collaborative planning and delivery
  - Continuity and progression
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- The ethos of the setting ensures transitions from home into the EYC are managed sensitively and are flexible to meet the needs of children and families. Registration visits, stay and play sessions and 'All about me' booklets enable practitioners to gather a range of information on children's prior experiences and learning. This is a two-way process between the practitioner and families. Practitioners value the opportunity to meet with parents, carers and children prior to starting the EYC. They view this as the starting point for building positive relationships.
  - Practitioners acknowledge children's previous experiences and provide good support to ensure continuity in care and learning needs. When required, practitioners will work closely with support agencies. Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of the need to improve the systems for documenting children's needs. There needs to be a robust and consistent approach to identifying strategies and evaluating the impact on improving outcomes for children.
  - A range of effective activities including sharing of information on children's learning, visits to primary one classrooms and sharing resources ensure a smooth transition. The ADHT and practitioners are aware of the importance of building on the use of play approaches to learning across the early stages of school. This will be important to develop to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning as they move to primary one. Teachers spend time within the EYC to get to know the children and to hear about their experiences. This time also gives children the opportunity to share their profile. Practitioners share with receiving teachers, children's individual trackers detailing their progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There is scope to extend these opportunities throughout the year rather than fixed to the final term.
  - Children in the EYC and primary one benefit from the shared outdoor space. Opportunities are provided for them to play and learn together, supporting a smoother transition into school. We would encourage practitioners to make regular use of these opportunities. Children in the EYC make use of the gym hall and regularly attend school events such as plays and sports days. This is enabling children to become familiar with school staff and be confident in and around the school.

### 1. Quality of care and support

During this inspection, we considered whether children and their families had access to the right support at the right time. In addition, we looked at individual children's personal plans, as well as evidencing that children and families were listened to, were safe and protected from harm. We found that outcomes in these areas were good (Health and Social Care Standards 1.2, 1.13, 1.15, 1.23, 2.17, 3.1 and 3.20).

Staff had successfully established a caring, nurturing learning environment. We observed staff interacting positively with children providing reassurance, support and comfort. Children were relaxed, confident and active in accessing all opportunities available to them.

We sampled personal plans that were in place, we found these could be developed further to reflect more outcome focused evaluations of children's learning. We highlighted the need to identify progression and next steps and link these to the development of children's experiences. This will support staff to enhance the individual experiences for children. We agreed these should be improved by including children and their parent's aspirations with regards to health, welfare and safety and then link these to the planning, evaluation and observation cycles.

We found the nursery involved parents and partner agencies to ensure all children benefited from the right support at the right time. Parents are offered opportunities to attend 'Work with us Wednesdays' and encouraged to assist in weekly visits to Shalom nursing home. Children and families had access to a nurturing approach, from staff who understood nurturing principles. We found staff could develop this further through encouraging a more open door ethos at drop off and collection times. This would enhance further links between the children and their parents in the life of the nursery to successfully establish an inclusive care and learning environment.

Children had opportunities to direct most of their own play within the indoor and outdoor environment. Through free flow access, children were independent in moving freely from one area to another. The outdoor area was interesting for children and materials were readily available to encourage cooperative and open-ended play. Areas within the environment should be developed to encourage different types of play including, children's curiosity, creativity and inquiry skills. Staff should support children to be leaders in their own learning through expanding child led activities and reduce adult directed actions.

We sampled medication and found procedures were not in line with best practice guidance. In order to ensure all children's medication is recorded and administered safely the management should continue to implement improvements made to the recording and auditing systems. These should be in line with Care Inspectorate's best practice guidance: 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services'.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

## 4. Quality of management and leadership

During this inspection we considered how well children and their families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. We found that the service was good in this area (Health and Social Care Standards 1.2, 2.3, 4.11, 4.19 and 4.23).

We recognise there have been changes within the management team since the last inspection. We found that the long standing practitioners had welcomed and embraced the newly appointed senior early years practitioner and acting deputy headteacher. Relationships are developing within the team and we found the team to be establishing good communication and working links. Although still in the early stages, we are confident that the new staff team will have a positive impact on service delivery and has the potential to deliver quality outcomes for children and families.

Management and staff within the nursery were keen to provide positive outcomes for children. They were committed to the development of the service working well together to ensure a joint approach between the nursery and primary school. Weekly meetings gave management and staff informal opportunities to discuss what was going well and identify areas for improvement. Staff told us that they felt supported by the management team and recognised positive recent changes. We found that staff were involved in some leadership opportunities; they took on different areas of responsibility based on their skills and were keen to take these forward. The service should continue to develop leadership opportunities to promote a strong collegiate learning culture that secures improved outcomes for children.

We found policies and procedures were in place. These should continue to be developed and updated to reflect the good working practices that the nursery operated and local and national best practice guidelines. A General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy should be developed to reflect the practice in the service, and risk assessments undertaken to ensure the children's data is safe and protected. Staff should continue to be included in this process and the policies reviewed regularly.

Parents told us they had confidence in the quality of the service provided for their children. They felt their children were safe, happy and that they benefited from the wide range of play and learning experiences provided. Parents particularly commented positively on the new senior early years practitioner and the impact she had made in the short time in post.

### Care Inspectorate grade: good

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

## 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.