

# Summarised inspection findings

**Bright Horizons Daycare Centre (early  
learning and childcare standalone setting)**

**Fife Council**

**SEED No: 9904034**

**16 January 2018**

## Key contextual information

Bright Horizons Daycare Centre is registered for 120 children aged 12 weeks to those not yet starting school. This purpose built setting caters primarily for the children of military families and is overseen by a Board of Trustees. Around 89% of children are from military families with a further 11% from civilian backgrounds. The setting is in partnership with Fife Council to provide funded early learning and childcare places to 35 children.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 and 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.

- The setting has developed aims and objectives that provide a clear overview of the vision and values of the service they provide for children and their families. In recent years significant changes to the cohort of children and families due to the reassignment of the military base to other services resulted in a significant turnover of children and families. The current welcoming ethos and the settled, nurturing environment provides strong evidence of the very positive leadership of this change by management and practitioners.
- The manager and her two deputies have an accurate and detailed overview of the work of the setting. Robust monitoring takes place to ensure practitioners identify what they are doing well and what needs to improve. Practitioners in each room work together well to reflect on practice and make necessary adjustments on a daily basis. As a result, planning for children's learning and experiences is flexible and appropriate. This good practice supports self-evaluation and ongoing improvements within the rooms.
- The culture of reflection underpins wider evaluation across the setting. Management and practitioners work together well and are keen to engage in the process of continuous improvement. They regularly meet to plan and reflect on the service they provide. Parents are consulted in a variety of ways including through annual questionnaires and informal discussion throughout the year. Practitioners are at an early stage of using national guidance to scrutinise their practice and identify next steps. As planned, a continued focus on increasing practitioners' awareness and understanding of frameworks such as *How good is our early learning and childcare?* should result in an approach to self-evaluation that involves everyone and will support the continuous improvement of the service.
- All practitioners are qualified with a few working towards further qualifications that are recognised by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). A system of professional review and development is in place when practitioners can review their practice and identify development needs. Practitioners take on leadership roles, for example, on learning in the

forest and citizenship. As discussed, practitioners need more opportunities to look outwards in order to gather information which supports self-evaluation further, drives improvement and promotes innovation. Visits to other providers and opportunities for networking will be a supportive route as they continue to develop their practice. Practitioners should also be supported to source opportunities for professional learning that closely link to the plans for improvement to ensure maximum impact is achieved. In order to secure ongoing improvement and professional development practitioners will require appropriate training and development opportunities as part of their working commitment.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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.

- Relationships are nurturing and positive across the setting. Babies and children under three years of age have access to a wide variety of resources both indoors and outdoors. The daily routine is flexible and responsive, taking account of the individual needs of children. Interactions between practitioners and children are caring and nurturing which enable children to feel safe and secure. Planning for the youngest children's learning is developed through the use of mind maps using *Pre Birth to Three* guidance. Further use of national practice guidance *Building the Ambition* would support the development of a shared pedagogy which reflects current thinking.
- Most children aged three to five years demonstrate a high level of engagement in their learning both indoors and outdoors. Children engage in a range of planned and spontaneous experiences which encourage the development of independence and creativity. They are motivated and excited by new experiences, for example, outings to the forest. Practitioners are very responsive to children's interests and this helps shape the direction of learning. In order for children to play an even greater role in leading their learning, a language of learning now needs to be developed. The introduction of learning conversations will enable children to make a connection between what they are doing and what they are learning, alongside the skills they are acquiring and applying. Personal Learning Journals (PLJs) will provide a valuable tool to support individual reflection on learning.
- High quality interactions from caring and supportive practitioners allow children to feel safe and secure in their environment. Practitioners listen attentively to children allowing them time to respond. In most examples, skilled questioning promotes curiosity to support learning. It would be useful to build on these positive examples in order to develop a consistent approach. There are positive examples of practitioners using digital technology to support learning e.g. interactive board, children's camera and tablet computer. In order to enrich learning further, consideration could be made to broadening the use of digital technology as a tool to support and extend learning.
- Tracking and monitoring of learning is well developed and used effectively to secure positive outcomes. Practitioners know children well as individuals. They make observations of children as they play and record them in their PLJs. Information gathered is used to inform planning for children's learning and where they may require support or challenge. Going forward these valuable observations should be fully utilised to inform the identification of individual, personalised next steps for learning. It would be beneficial for practitioners to

work across and beyond the setting to moderate children's progress. This will help develop a shared understanding and expectations of progress as children grow and learn.

- Planning is flexible and responsive taking account of individual children's interests. The use of mind maps and learning walls encourages participation from children and families. We discussed with practitioners that it would be beneficial to review and revise planning processes to ensure minimum bureaucracy.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- National guidance is used effectively to plan for children's learning across the setting. For children aged three to five years Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes are used to plan a variety of relevant learning opportunities. The essential aspects for early learning are evident with a clear focus on children's wellbeing.
- The outdoor learning environment has been developed over time allowing children the opportunity to explore and investigate through a range of stimulating experiences. Examples include exploring the natural environment, looking after the chickens, Stella and Snowy, and developing a fairy garden. The regular outings to the local forest are supporting children to be curious and inquisitive about their natural environment beyond the setting. Consideration should be given to developing a more planned, coherent approach to this opportunity to ensure progression in learning.
- The unique context of the setting, including visits from community partners, allows children the opportunity to engage in their immediate community to support their understanding of the world of work.
- Transition from home to the setting is managed sensitively and on an individual basis. Parents who spoke to us during the inspection reported that when arriving from or departing for overseas, they have been well supported by smooth and well managed transitions. Transition to local schools is planned in partnership and primarily supports children's pastoral needs. Transitions across and out with the setting should continue to be developed to include a clear focus on continuity and progression in learning.

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

- Young children benefit from the setting's supportive approach to all families and their individual circumstances. Parents value the flexible approach to attendance which helps them to balance their personal and working lives. Parents have high regard for the management and practitioners and know their children are safe and secure in their care.
- The setting promotes an open door policy and encourages parental involvement. Parents are welcome to join their children in their learning and are invited to stay and play. They are aware of what their children are learning in the setting by engaging with learning walls, PLJs, and regular opportunities to work with their children at home. Contact meetings throughout the year give parents the opportunity to discuss children's progress. Parents give their time to share skills, for example, making a bonfire during learning experiences in the forest. Practitioners are keen to increase parental involvement to support children's learning as appropriate.
- The close work with the military, whose Board of Trustees oversees the management of the service together with involvement from the Army Welfare Unit, ensures the unique needs of military families are appreciated and supported. This support is vital for children and families particularly at sensitive times when, for example, one parent may be deployed elsewhere for extended periods of time.

## 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, equality and inclusion

very 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 very strong, nurturing and caring relationships are a defining feature of the setting with the wellbeing of children playing a central role. Practitioners know each child extremely well and are very attuned to their individual and changing needs at any given time. This, coupled with the deep, insightful knowledge management and practitioners have of the unique context of the setting provides a strong and successful catalyst for securing positive outcomes for children and families. Parents and partners spoken with during the inspection report very positively on the level of support provided by the setting and the valuable role it plays in the local community. The mutual respect and trust between children, families and the team is evident and has created a real and meaningful sense of community within the setting.
- Across the setting practitioners provide very positive role models to children promoting and modelling positive behaviour. Children are forming relationships with others in a developmentally appropriate way. They behave very well and are becoming increasingly independent at resolving conflicts that may arise in their play. There is a successful focus on developing the ability of children to recognise and talk about their feelings. This should continue to be embedded to reflect the unique context of the setting and the challenges that children and families may experience. The approach of getting it right for every child and family is well embedded in and integral to the work of the setting. Attractive displays illustrate indicators of wellbeing in a meaningful way for families. We discussed with practitioners how the positive work they undertake intuitively could be linked more directly to the language of wellbeing to support children in the development of their understanding.
- Children are listened to in an inclusive way which helps them to feel valued and included. A sense of belonging is evident with children observed to feel safe and secure in their playrooms. Children are consulted about decisions that affect them in an ongoing way. This approach could be further enhanced by supporting children to be more aware of their rights through exploration and promotion of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This will support children to make links and deepen their learning.
- There is active engagement and compliance with relevant statutory duties. There are clear and shared expectations across the team with everyone aware of their responsibilities in fulfilling these duties.
- The noteworthy and exceptionally flexible approach to supporting children and families promotes and creates a culture of inclusion and equality. It also results in the elimination of barriers to participation that may otherwise be faced by children and families. Diversity is

celebrated across the setting community. This celebration enriches the experiences of practitioners, children and families. There is careful consideration made to challenging discrimination and promoting equality, for example, gender.

### 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.

- Babies clearly benefit from the sensitive interactions with the adults who care for them. As they develop confidence they enjoy using their senses to explore the environment around them. Toddlers in the Rainbow room particularly enjoy time spent outdoors where they develop and refine a range of physical skills including climbing, balancing, walking and running. The older toddlers in the Sunburst room are developing the skills they need to play together such as sharing and taking turns. They enjoy listening to stories where they are beginning to predict what might happen next. All children aged under three are developing their early language through a range of experiences including a particular focus on songs and rhymes. To further develop approaches to support the youngest children consideration should be made to continuing to explore national guidance. This should have a particular focus on developing approaches to promote curiosity, inquiry and investigation.
- The clear emphasis and focus on health and wellbeing is resulting in almost all children aged three to five making good progress in developing understanding and a range of skills. They are developing an awareness of risk and how to manage it safely through exciting, real-life experiences such as building a camp fire during their forest experiences. They relate these experiences to forthcoming Bonfire night and how what they have learned will help keep them safe. Almost all children understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating in keeping strong and helping the body grow. Many benefit from exploring different foods with their peers as they enjoy 'kitchen lunches' provided by the setting. Children could now be relating their understanding of wellbeing to the language of the national indicators.
- There is a clear focus on early language and communication which is supporting almost all children to make good progress. They apply developing skills as they listen carefully to stories and enjoy exploring books independently. There is a sustained focus on rhyme and songs in the setting which supports language acquisition well. Children enjoy mark-making in a range of different contexts. Most children can recognise their name in print and a few can write their name, readily identifying the initial letter. Examples of children's writing provide captions for displays. Practitioners should continue to explore how progress in this area can be promoted through real-life and meaningful experiences both indoors and out. There is a meaningful celebration of other languages particularly German which reflects the community and its context.

- In numeracy and mathematics almost all children are making good progress. As they play, they apply their understanding of mathematical language to compare and describe, for example, different sizes. They enjoy counting in play situations and routines. A few are confident in writing numerals with most able to count confidently and with purpose. A few children are beginning to recognise simple fractions, such as a half. They would benefit from applying this knowledge and understanding in different contexts, for example, data handling.
- Over time children are making good progress across all aspects of learning and development. They now need to be supported to talk about their learning as they make choices and decisions about what they will learn. Strategies already utilised such as mind mapping and the learning wall will provide a foundation for this. This could be further enhanced through more conversations with children about individual targets, how they may develop these and celebrate them when they are achieved.
- Parents and families are encouraged to share children's achievements from beyond the setting. These are captured and celebrated promoting a sense of achievement and progress. Practitioners should continue to encourage parental participation in this to promote a learning partnership with home. Greater emphasis could be made to the celebration of wider achievements from within and beyond the setting. In line with the inclusive ethos of the setting this could include the achievements of parents, practitioners and partners. There is scope for opportunities for children to contribute more widely to the setting, the wider community and as global citizens, for example, through re-energising the eco committee.
- As planned, continue to develop the use of self-evaluation activity to ensure effective monitoring of impact of strategies used to ensure equity and inform future interventions.

## Setting choice of QI : Management of resources to promote equity

- **Theme 1 Management of finance for learning**
- **Theme 2 Management of resources and environment for learning**

- Bright Horizons is a self-funding service with charitable status. Primarily funded by grant funding, fees and fundraising the setting operates in a stable financial environment. The management of finance for learning is carefully managed by the Board of Trustees whose treasurer allocates funds on request from management. The welfare of families is at the heart of the service therefore the flexible approach to attendance through an hourly payment system is carefully balanced within the budget. By supporting the family as a whole, children's well-being needs are very well met.
- The qualified managers and practitioners are the setting's primary resource. All are caring, skilled and enthusiastic as they work with children. They are keen to develop their practice further. As resources allow, further support for training and development activities will be crucial in taking the setting forward on its journey of improvement. This should reflect the needs of individuals within the Improvement Plan. For example, as planned, training for those taking leadership roles.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are well resourced to support young children's development and learning. Throughout the setting, playrooms are attractively presented with good attention to detail. Practitioners are careful and creative in developing resources of a more heuristic nature which are open ended and can be used in many different ways. For example, the use of natural materials such as leaves and chestnuts not only provide an understanding of nature but can also be used to develop children's early numeracy skills such as counting, sorting and matching. As planned, the development of such open ended resources will enhance creativity and if used well, will promote rich learning experiences.
- The outdoor learning space is being developed and provides quality learning experiences for children on a daily basis. Management plan to allocate sufficient funds over the next two years to continue to improve the outdoor space to create more learning opportunities across the curriculum.

## 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.

**Education Scotland**

Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston EH54 6GA

**T** +44 (0)131 244 4330  
**E** enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

[www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

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