

# Summarised inspection findings

**Balloch Primary School Nursery Class**

The Highland Council

25 February 2020

## Key contextual information

Balloch nursery class is managed overall by the joint headteacher and acting headteacher as part of the whole school community. The depute headteacher (DHT) has delegated leadership responsibility for the setting. The setting is registered to provide early learning and childcare to a maximum of forty six places for children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. The setting operates both a part and full day service during term time. The team continue to explore and adapt their work as they reflect on the changes to patterns of attendance and routines needed to support this flexible service. At the time of the inspection, thirty two children were enrolled in the setting. In August 2020, twenty seven children will start school.

### 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

- The setting's values were reviewed as part of a whole school initiative. The tagline of 'caring, ambitious, active, achieve, to be the best that we can be' is evident in the setting through interactions between children and staff. Practitioners provide quality provision for children to learn in a safe and nurturing environment. Practitioners are currently revisiting existing aims with children and their families. As part of this process, they should ensure the vision, values, and aims continue to reflect the context of the setting within the rest of the primary school and wider community.
- An experienced DHT provides very good leadership for practitioners. They value highly the support and advice she offers which is developing their knowledge and skills in the setting. Practitioners are enthusiastic and work effectively as a team. They value each other's interests and experience and want to do their best to support children's learning and development. As a result, there is a very happy, positive ethos in the setting. The DHT supports practitioners to access professional learning opportunities in early learning and childcare. This has enabled them to take on leadership roles to improve children's experiences. Recently, practitioners have led the development of and enhanced the outdoor area.
- The DHT has established a culture of positive change which she leads well. She meets regularly with practitioners to discuss what is working well, how children are progressing in their learning and what they can do to make improvements. Practitioners are reflective about their work and take part in annual professional review meetings. This good practice enables practitioners to take forward initiatives which build capacity for improvement within the setting. This is done at an appropriate pace to ensure that new developments are sustained. With practitioners, the DHT monitors and evaluates children's progress to ensure maximum impact for their learning.
- Practitioners benefit from an inclusive approach in which they are part of the school community. They attend school events, training and work with colleagues in using national self-evaluation guidance. The DHT should continue to support practitioners to increase their

engagement with local and national practice documents to help them have ownership of shaping future developments.

- The school's annual improvement plan includes priorities for the setting. However, the DHT, with practitioners, needs to develop a more strategic approach to ensure the most relevant priorities, which have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children, are consistently taken forward. Practitioners recognise that the identification of priorities should reflect the setting's own self-evaluation to continue to support well informed change.

## 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

- Practitioners ensure that children start the nursery day in ways which promote positive, warm relationships between practitioners, children and families. Practitioners make time to talk to children and families as they arrive. The setting's emotional check-in at the start of each session is supporting children to feel happy and secure. Children enjoy the range of learning experiences and sustain interest in their chosen activities. Their creativity and curiosity are developing well using the good range of natural and real life resources both indoors and out.
- The setting consists of two separate playrooms and a small shared outdoor area. Children take part in a few joint activities, such as outings in the local community, use of the school hall for physical activity and eating together at lunchtime. Practitioners need to use available space within the setting more efficiently to allow children to mix more freely and to have equal access to resources.
- Practitioners are kind, caring and interact positively with children. They respond well to children's interests. For example, they provide resources and provocations to extend children's interest in changing seasons. They are beginning to use a wider range of communication strategies and techniques from recent training to encourage children to extend their thinking. They need to embed this in practice to ensure all practitioners take advantage of opportunities to deepen children's learning.
- Children use the interactive whiteboard and tablet to research interests and to consolidate their learning through digital games. They use tablets to take photographs and use programmable toys. Practitioners should continue to develop the range of digital learning experiences to enable children to develop the skills they will require for the digital world in which they live.
- Practitioners plan well weekly to ensure a coverage of a broad range experiences and outcomes. Weekly plans are displayed for parents. Appropriate responsive planning around children's interests is recorded in floor books. Practitioners should now review how they plan learning so that they can engage children more in focussed learning conversations during their play.
- Practitioners know the children well as individuals. Their observations on children's learning are recorded appropriately in learning journey folders along with photographs and tracking sheets. Parents and children can easily access these folders at any time to review previous learning. The setting's open door policy for sharing information and two formal parent meetings provides further useful opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress. Practitioners should now review the overview tracking system to ensure it captures the progress children are making as a result of their experiences at Balloch Nursery. They should also review systems to

identify and record children's next steps in learning, to ensure these regularly provide appropriate challenge for all children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan well for learning taking account of national guidance. They use Curriculum for Excellence early level experiences and outcomes appropriately to ensure children receive a broad and balanced curriculum across the year. They plan activities which ensure children's learning experiences are enjoyable and engaging. Practitioners have worked with primary school colleagues to develop a shared curriculum rationale which supports continuity and progression in learning across the early level.
- Overall, there are good opportunities for children to develop literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills across learning. Practitioners should review the location of the story area and consider ways to make independent reading more inviting. The development of meaningful environmental print and reading materials across the nursery provision will further promote early reading skills.
- Children's participation in planning is recorded appropriately in the floor books and this demonstrates that practitioners are responding well to children's interests. For example, a recent walk in the local environment led to children taking an active interest in the changing seasons.
- Practitioners use the local environment well to enhance children's outdoor learning experiences and extend children's awareness of the world around them. Children's real life learning experiences, such as baking and making playdough, also provide meaningful opportunities to extend children's learning in different contexts. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to enhance further children's learning.

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

- Relationships between practitioners and families are positive. As a result, there is good communication to support children to enjoy their time at the setting. Practitioners value the contributions that parents can make in sharing their views to improve the setting. As part of this, parents were involved appropriately in reviewing the values of the school community
- Most parents are happy with the work of the setting in supporting their child's development and learning. Practitioners should now consider further ways to encourage opportunities for families to play and learn together at home.
- Practitioners share information regularly with parents in both formal and informal ways. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their children. They keep them up-to-date through weekly updates and useful newsletters on what learning is planned. Parents also put helpful information on the website and social media page. These help to ensure everyone is well-informed of current events.
- Parents are encouraged to attend 'stay and play' sessions to share in their child's experience in the setting. Practitioners update journals regularly to record children's play experiences. They recognise there is scope to increase parental contributions to the journals in sharing children's successes and achievements from home. Parents have had useful opportunities to visit the setting and share information about their occupations, skills and hobbies with children. This encourages an early understanding for children of the skills required for life, learning and work.

## 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

- Practitioners know children and families well and understand the importance of building strong relationships based on nurture and respect. Children are happy and relaxed in the setting. They are becoming more independent at snack, in their personal care, and developing good friendships. They play very well together and show consideration for each other. Practitioners model respectful interactions, which encourages positive behaviour. They use praise effectively and intervene with restorative approaches where necessary. This creates a calm and enjoyable environment for learning and promotes effectively children's wellbeing.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of their role in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is evident in practice. As a result, children are supported well to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. Attractive wall displays with photographic evidence provides helpful information for parents. As planned, practitioners should continue to help children to understand the indicators of wellbeing to enable them to acquire a language for talking about their own wellbeing with increasing confidence. As this develops, practitioners should build on the work begun with children exploring their rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Children are developing aspects of being responsible through taking lead roles such as preparing snack and risk assessing aspects of their outdoor play area. Practitioners should build on this work by increasing the opportunities available to children to develop their leadership roles and ability in making decisions that affect them.
- The DHT and practitioners are aware of their duties and comply with the statutory requirements in providing early learning and childcare. Importantly, the setting has appropriate procedures in relation to safeguarding children. All children are known as individuals and the information on their wellbeing needs is thorough. This is recorded effectively by practitioners, with key information to ensure relevant details about children's individual circumstances are captured.
- Where barriers to learning are identified, practitioners work closely with school staff and external agencies as appropriate. They create individual plans using a staged intervention approach to best meet the learning needs of children.
- There is a strong sense of community and understanding of the settings context. Practitioners treat children and families fairly and have a good understanding of their responsibility to promote inclusion and equality through their relationships with families. Children now need to expand their awareness of equality and diversity. Children also need to be helped to explore this through the development of play contexts and resources.

### 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

- Most children are making good progress in literacy. They are learning when to talk and when to listen during group discussions and can express their own ideas and thoughts clearly. Children are encouraged to recognise their own name as they self-register and most do this independently. Children read for enjoyment and children listen well at group story time. Children are developing their skills in early mark making. Most children draw recognisable pictures and a few can write their own names independently.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most recognise numerals to five and know the number sequence to 10. A few children have a deeper understanding of number to 10 and are developing an awareness of numbers beyond 10. Most children can recognise and name basic 2D shapes and are using the language of measurement when engaging with resources in the outdoor area. Children are developing their awareness of money and a few are beginning to develop an understanding of the value of different coins. Children are developing an awareness of information handling through creating pictorial representation related to ongoing interests.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are happy and settled at nursery. They are developing friendships across both rooms and are respectful of each other as they play and learn together. Children's independence is developed through nursery routines, for example spreading butter on their toast and pouring their own drinks at snack time. Children are developing their physical skills through daily outdoor play and weekly access to the school gym hall. Children are developing their skills well through taking part in energetic play, managing risks and challenging themselves physically and when using facilities in the school playground and the nearby park.
- Observations and tracking information in children's learning journey folders and the evidence in floor books show children are making progress during their time at nursery. Staff should now review tracking systems and next steps in learning to ensure all children understand their own progress in a meaningful way.
- The DHT gathers and helpfully analyses data on children's progress in December each year. This information identifies clearly areas where children's progress is not as expected. The data, which is reviewed again in May each year, provides evidence of the good progress children have made as a result of the targeted support which practitioners deliver.

## Choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Children and families have helpful opportunities to visit the setting before children start the nursery. This provides a useful mechanism for sharing information between home and nursery. The settling-in process is tailored to meet individual needs which allows additional visits for some children. Practitioners could consider making time to complete the 'All About Me' booklets with the families as part of the initial visit.
- Practitioners are aware of the children who attend more than one setting for their funded early learning and childcare and liaise appropriately with other settings as required. Practitioners report they have positive working relationships in place between settings.
- Children have opportunities to become familiar with the school building during their time at nursery as they use the facilities such as the playground, the gym hall and the dining area.
- During the summer term, practitioners organise an appropriate programme of visits to allow children opportunity to be involved in activities in the P1 classroom and work and play with a P6 buddy. Practitioners meet helpfully with the P1 teacher to share information and data about children's progress to ensure continuity in learning. Practitioners now need to continue to develop these transition arrangements, including opportunities for joint learning across the year.

### 1. Quality of care and support

Children were greeted warmly by staff who knew them well and had built good relationships with them. Parents told us children benefitted from positive relationships with staff. A welcome time was used within the service to bring children together at a time that was right for them. Children were seen to be enthusiastic to interact with their friends and share their ideas. We found children benefitted from this opportunity to settle into their day, enabling them to feel respected and valued.

During the inspection, staff knew children well and were able to discuss their individual needs and how they were supported. We reviewed children's personal plans and found that these held relevant information for individual children. We suggested the use of SHANARRI indicators to provide an ongoing and accurate picture of children's needs. This would ensure they receive consistent care, tailored to their specific needs. These should be reviewed at least every six months, in line with current legislation.

We observed children's snack time and noted how they were supported to become independent and responsible. Children were included in laying out utensils and plates for snack, as well as preparing foods for their friends to enjoy. This was found to be good practice, as children were able to learn about the different foods and develop their social skills.

Staff had a good understanding of children's needs and had been appropriately trained to support those with specific medical needs. We discussed how information held on all children is displayed and specifically the importance of being able to access important information quickly and easily. Records for the administration of medication and the procedures for reviewing medication did not follow best practice. Staff should ensure that all prescribed treatments, including creams are recorded promptly and shared with parents.

Staff were able to safeguard children as a result of recent training. We found that staff who were spoken to on the day of inspection were confident in how to identify and respond to signs and symptoms of abuse, ensuring children were protected from harm.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

### 2. Quality of environment

Children were able to choose from a large variety of toys and games within the service. We found that children were able to access most materials freely, enabling them to direct their own play. During the inspection, children were exploring an array of natural materials they had collected while exploring their local community. We found this to be good practice as children had the opportunity to explore their natural world and follow their own curiosities.

Children were provided with regular outdoor opportunities; we saw staff support children to play outdoors and explore their local community. Children enjoyed water play and planting bulbs while outside. Some staff had recently taken part in outdoor training that impacted positively on children's outcomes and enhanced their outdoor experience.

Children were also kept safe by staff who were proactive in auditing and removing damaged toys to reduce the risk of harm. Furthermore, children were encouraged to identify and manage their own risks while playing. Staff enabled children to use their experiences to problem solve and gain responsibility, allowing them to feel trusted and valued. We discussed where children could have further opportunities to take part in positive risk within their environment, including the use of the large outdoor space available to them within the school grounds.

The environment should be designed and adapted for a high quality of care and support. Through regular observations and audits, staff should identify how the environment could be better used, to utilise space and promote more fluid movement for children both indoors and outdoors. We discussed how this would provide an environment that positively supports children to access play and learning opportunities that will impact on their development, health, wellbeing and happiness.

During the inspection, the lunch time experience was provided from the school dining hall, where some children were seen to be unsettled and unhappy. Staff told us that they had worked together to trial different methods, such as staggered lunch times, to support children to have a better experience. We suggested improvements that could provide a more nurturing and enjoyable experience for children. Staff were keen to implement some suggestions with immediate effect.

**A recommendation has been made, see recommendation 1**

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

**Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class**

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

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1:**

In order to ensure children experience a high quality lunchtime provision, staff must be responsive to children's needs. The provider and staff should work together to improve this experience, ensuring that it is nurturing and promotes independence and responsibility.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35).

## 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.