

Summarised inspection findings

Kingsland Primary School Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

12 June 2018

Key contextual information

The nursery class is based in an attractive self-contained wing of the main school building. It is registered for 30 children attending at any one time. At the time of inspection there were 55 children on the register. Children, aged three to five years, attend for AM or PM sessions. A senior nursery nurse leads the team with senior leadership input from a deputy head teacher (DHT).

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

- There is a shared vision, values and aims across the nursery and school, with a mission statement created specifically for the nursery. Practitioners demonstrate their commitment to the collective vision and strive to take account of their aims in providing high quality early learning and childcare (ELC). There is a need, over time, to ensure that the current vision, values and aims remain relevant to the nursery class and are in line with current thinking and best practice.
- Practitioners demonstrate an enthusiastic and professional approach to their role, both collectively and as individuals. Following a period of staffing change, practitioners show commitment and a sense of collective responsibility in taking forward improvements across the setting. Practitioners work well together as a team and are ably led by the senior nursery nurse. The team have benefited from on-going support from the local authority visiting early years teacher, alongside support from the DHT with responsibility for the nursery class.
- The school improvement plan contains appropriate priorities for the nursery and the development of these are clearly evident in practice. The use of national guidance, research and thinking is increasingly supporting the team to take forward their practice. Professional learning has supported practitioners to develop their understanding of how quality learning in literacy and numeracy can be provided. Opportunities for practitioners to develop their own skills and responsibility in taking forward identified priorities from the improvement plan should now be explored.
- Leadership at all levels is developing across the setting with an effective system to monitor improvements and change. This is supporting practitioners to develop a sense of achievement. Opportunities for the team to visit local ELC settings, attend local authority training and participate in local partnership meetings have been welcomed by all. This is broadening and deepening the understanding of the team. The increased opportunity for professional dialogue with colleagues has supported practitioners to make well-informed changes. Moving forward the direction and pace of change needs to be delivered in a way that ensures it remains manageable but supports the setting to provide the highest quality ELC in line with current thinking.

- Practitioners are reflective in their practice and want to do their best to make continuous improvements to the quality of children’s learning. The use of national frameworks to support self-evaluation is at the early stages of robustly supporting improvements. Practitioners now need to build on the positive start made to using How good is our early learning and childcare? The team should continue to develop a more robust and planned approach to self-evaluation in order to ensure they achieve and can measure their success. The senior leadership team need to take a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of changes on outcomes for children and families.

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

- Across the setting very positive relationships is a key feature. There is a strong, welcoming ethos, which supports children to feel safe and secure and develop confidence. Interactions between practitioners and children are consistently kind, caring and with a sense of humour and fun evident. The use of quality questioning promotes higher order thinking in most cases. Children are clearly valued and respected as individuals. Praise and encouragement is used appropriately and in a personalised way. Overall children engage very well in the experiences available and benefit from the arrangements for uninterrupted learning through free flow play indoors and outdoors.
- Over recent years there has been considerable development of the learning environment. As a result an aesthetically pleasing environment has been created with increasing independence being afforded to children. The shift in, and on-going development of pedagogy, has resulted in approaches such as child-initiated learning and the use of loose parts play are having a higher priority within the playroom. During such experiences children are observed to be highly engaged, demonstrate creativity and have a meaningful ownership of, and pride, in their learning. We discussed with practitioners how these successes could be built upon to ensure that the playroom and outdoors provide an even more enabled environment that supports independent learning and exploration.
- Floor books clearly demonstrate the range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences children have over time at Kingsland nursery class. As a result of professional learning, practitioners have developed new approaches to documenting child-initiated learning including the learning tree which focuses on an 'observe, plan, do, review' approach. Going forward, the best of both approaches should be identified and merged to ensure that planning for learning and its documentation is as meaningful as possible to children. This should have a clear focus on the promotion of depth and challenge in learning by establishing what children already know and what they want to learn next.
- As a priority for improvement, practitioners have correctly identified the need to develop and embed a language of learning with children, to support them to recognise and talk about their learning and achievements. We discussed with management how this could be supported including greater involvement of children, and families, in the documentation of learning and achievements, in a proportionate and manageable way. This should build on processes already established, such as learning journals and personal learning plans.
- The use of digital technologies is observed to support and extend learning, for example, the use of the internet to deepen understanding. As a result children have a good understanding of how the internet supports them to find out interesting information. Children enjoy using the interactive whiteboard and desktop computer to create their own drawings. Use of the

computer suite within the school provides children with opportunities to use digital technologies, alongside familiarising themselves with the wider school environment. Children are being well supported to develop and apply particular skills such as mouse control and how to save and print documents.

- Practitioners recognise that there is scope to develop the consistency of the quality of observations of children's learning. These should reflect and record more rigorously the knowledge practitioners have of children as individuals and as learners. This will, in turn, help inform future planning for learning through the identification of clear, focused next steps. This should also contribute to the robust completion of systems that have been introduced to track children's progress over time. The effectiveness of these systems is being monitored to ensure appropriate implementation and this should now involve a more probing and strategic overview

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Practitioners have a well-developed understanding of child development. They recognise that, to best meet the needs of all children, they now need to explore and develop further their understanding of earlier developmental stages. This could include Pre Birth to Three guidance and schematic play. Given the range of developmental stages evident within the setting, it would also be useful to explore the national Benchmarks for curriculum areas, to support the needs of children who are capable of more challenge.
- There is scope for the promotion of literacy and numeracy to be even more explicit, for example, through routines and real-life contexts. We discussed with practitioners how this could be taken forward through a model of distributed leadership.
- Over the last few years, progress has been made in developing an early learning pedagogy that better reflects current thinking. This shared vision continues to develop and be fully and confidently implemented. As this continues to progress, consideration should be made to shifting the focus of a few experiences. Practitioners also recognise the gradual approach required to resourcing the setting to deliver the refreshed pedagogy, for example, a shift in focus from plastic to natural materials.
- Transitions into the setting are well planned and are personalised to meet the needs of individuals. To ensure consistency of experience and progression in learning, consideration could be made to developing stronger links with settings where children attend on a split placement. There is scope to build on arrangements to support transitions into primary one. This should include the development of on-going and progressive connections across the early level, for example, curricular programmes such as physical education. Overall there is considerable potential for the development of a shared pedagogy across the early level at Kingsland Primary School. This needs to have a clear focus on the promotion of continuity and progression in learning.

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

- Partnerships with parents and families are constructive and well supported by the very positive relationships evident. Stay and play sessions provide a valued insight into children's experiences in the setting. Parents lead the preparations for the Peebles Beltane festival. There is scope to capitalise on these positive relationships and the active parental body, to develop family learning and increased involvement in supporting children's learning, for example through the use of learning journals. Over a quarter of parental responses to inspection questionnaires suggested that they would like more information about children's learning and how this can be supported at home.
- There are positive examples of parents, family members and friends of the setting sharing their occupations and interests, for example bee-keeping and bagpipe playing. In order to support and extend children's learning and provide opportunities to learn in real-life and meaningful contexts, there is scope to build on partnerships in the local community such as Peebles Can. This could also have a focus on developing an awareness of the world of work.

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. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 warm and very welcoming ethos supports children to feel safe and secure in their environment. Relationships across the setting are very positive, which result in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Practitioners know individual children very well which ensures continuity in their care and learning. Mutual respect is evident between practitioners, children and families. Practitioners are responsive in their interactions and, children readily approach them when they require help and support. Overall children's behaviour is observed to be positive and appropriate to their age and stage of development. Practitioners should continue to promote positive behaviour through positive relationships.
- The national wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) are referenced by practitioners when planning for individual children. Practitioners and children are at the early stages of using the language of the wellbeing indicators across all aspects of their work. A shared understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included should be developed across the setting. This would promote the language of wellbeing and, further support the development of positive outcomes for children and families in their community. We discussed with the team ways in which this could be done in a developmentally and meaningful way.
- Practitioners listen carefully to what children say and respond thoughtfully through their interactions and daily dialogue. This is increasingly evidenced through refreshed approaches to recording planning for children's learning. The team should now continue to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for meaningful consultation with children to strengthen the child's voice. Examples could include full implementation of the review of learning.
- Children are observed to be happy and confident in their environment and are developing friendships with their peers. Outdoor learning encourages children to be healthy, active and develop a range of skills as they run, jump, balance and climb. The opportunity to share and take turns with their peers is evident as they explore the loose parts area. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop the outdoor space for children.
- Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks and take responsibility for ordering the shopping online. They are developing their personal hygiene skills and are observed to be becoming increasingly independent as they dress themselves for outdoors. Opportunities for children to take a leadership role should be implemented to provide opportunities to develop a wider range of skills.

- Overall, statutory duties are met. It would be useful for management to consolidate their understanding of the full range of statutory duties relevant to early learning and childcare. This includes the legislative requirements surrounding personal plans.
- Practitioners identify where children may benefit from additional support in their learning and respond in a sensitive and caring manner. Partnership working is evident between families, the setting and outside agencies, for example, speech and language therapy. As a result children benefit from effective multi-agency support that is focused on, and successful in, meeting their individual needs. There is scope for record keeping to be streamlined to ensure that information about individual children is current and succinct.
- All children and families are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. The team should continue to explore how they can engage children and parents in relevant and meaningful learning about diversity and equality. As discussed practitioners should continue to explore gender in more depth, ensuring potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

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

- Overall most children are making good progress in communication and early language. In group activities, children listen well and are keen to share their personal experiences. Children chose to spend time exploring books, both independently and with an adult. They enjoy listening to stories being read to them and take pride in sharing favourite books from home. Through the use of a range of stories, rhymes and songs children have explored Scottish words and their meaning. A focus on traditional nursery rhymes is supporting children to identify rhythm and rhyme in language. A few children demonstrate a keen interest in exploring early writing and enjoy the challenge of writing new and less familiar words. Overall children could be developing and applying skills more across their learning, both indoors and out, for example in meaningful contexts such as routines.
- In numeracy and mathematics most children are making good progress. Children are observed to identify readily colours and shapes in their play. They show a well-developed awareness of number with a minority confidently counting and identifying numerals beyond 10. Most children use mathematical language appropriately in a range of contexts including describing weight, length and quantity. There is scope for children to apply their developing skills across a range of meaningful contexts including role-play and real-life situations. Practitioners have identified correctly that children's skills in numeracy and mathematics could be stronger. They have a good understanding of how this can be taken forward.
- Through a range of learning experiences, most children are making good progress in their understanding of health and wellbeing. They recognise healthy food choices and are able to discuss what a balanced diet involves. Children enjoy energetic activity and benefit from input from the physical education specialist teacher. They learn about the importance of warming up and can describe the benefits of exercise. We discussed with practitioners the benefits of exposing children to more risky play to support them to recognise and manage risk in a safe way. Almost all children are observed to have a well-developed awareness of each other with particular friendships becoming evident. This could be developed further through supporting the development of an awareness of emotional intelligence.
- During the inspection children became engrossed in the creation of a wormery that they built, resourced and cared for. Such a positive example of children leading and directing their own learning demonstrates the level of engagement and sustaining of interest that they are capable of and this should be built on.

- From the assessment information available and inspection activity, evidence suggests that children are making good progress over time. Practitioners now need to ensure that collated assessment information robustly demonstrates the progress all children are making as a result of their experiences at Kingsland nursery class.
- Achievements from home are captured via a display which families contribute to. As discussed, there is scope for parents and families to play an even greater role in contributing to learning journals to ensure progress in learning and achievements beyond the setting are consistently captured.
- We discussed with practitioners how children could contribute more fully to the school and wider community and as global citizens. This could also provide increased opportunities for children to develop and apply skills in real-life and meaningful contexts.
- The well-established supportive and inclusive ethos promotes equity. Potential barriers to learning are readily identified and addressed including through referral to other agencies. Knowledge of the context of the setting could now be supported further through the use of a wider range of information and data and on-going evaluation of the success of interventions.

Choice of QI: 1.2 Leadership of learning

- Professional engagement and collegiate working
- Impact of career-long professional learning (CLPL)
- Children leading learning

- Across the setting there is a strong ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working. Practitioners work collaboratively with children, parents and partners to secure improved outcomes for children and families. Practitioners engage with local settings, learning from best practice and professional dialogue with colleagues. The role of the senior nursery nurse is established and she plays a key role in the leadership of learning. She has built, and maintains highly effective relationships and has played a key role in the establishment of a professional, strong team. Moving forward, there is scope for all members of the team to strengthen their role in the leadership of learning.
- Practitioners have engaged in a range of professional learning opportunities, individually and as a team to support their own professional development. Pedagogical leadership training is supporting the senior nursery nurse to develop her skills and knowledge as a leader. This is creating an increasing confidence and supporting continued improvements in practice. Practitioners have recently engaged in a range of professional learning opportunities that link appropriately to identified improvement priorities. The team have begun to reflect upon their professional learning and are helpfully recording this through the development of a floor book.
- Planning for learning takes good account of children's interests and ideas. We discussed with practitioners the potential for children to have increased opportunities to independently lead their own learning. This should build on the developing pedagogy and be based on an increasingly enabled environment.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.