

Summarised inspection findings

Dalry Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

21 August 2018

Key contextual information

Dalry Primary School Nursery Class is situated in a separate, secure area within the school grounds. The setting currently provides 1,140 hours to 42 full time children and an additional 13 children attend morning only sessions. There are two large playrooms connected by a cloakroom and separate nursery entrance. One playroom contains a smaller, sensory room and provides direct access to a large, interesting outdoor learning space that is shared with children who are in primary one. Currently there are 22 different languages spoken by nursery children and their families with around 84% of those attending with English as an additional language.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

satisfactory

This indicator underlines that rigorous self-evaluation is the responsibility of all practitioners and stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and a shared understanding of strengths and areas for development. A key factor is how to demonstrate the impact of self-evaluation and how evidence is used to improve outcomes for children. The themes are:

- collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- evidence-based improvement
- ensuring impact of successes for children and families

- All practitioners are committed to improving outcomes for children. They have worked together to identify, reflect on and improve many practical aspects of their setting. Over the last two years, the setting has participated in a pilot of extended hours and previous initiatives to extend flexibility in attendance. The team has expanded this year as the number of children who attend has increased. Together, as a newly formed group, they are beginning to reflect more deeply on the quality of their work and identify relevant changes to the setting. Important changes include the introduction of a keyworker system and adapting children's routines. Practitioners and children have developed a small, comfortable and relaxing space to support children who attend for a full day. The team have also recently re-organised children's language groups to better suit the learning needs of individuals. Overall, many of these changes are at an early stage of implementation. Now that routines and staffing issues have been addressed, the team should work together to prioritise, analyse and evaluate the impact of changes on learning and children's progress within the setting.
- There is a clear quality assurance calendar in place. A wide range of activities including weekly meetings, monitoring of learning journals, observations and monitoring of children's records take place regularly. This ensures that practitioners increasingly receive feedback about their work and guidance on how they could improve. The actively involved depute headteacher takes overall responsibility for leading improvement within the nursery class. Both the depute and headteacher are actively involved within the setting. As a result, they have a sound understanding of the strengths and development needs of the team. There is a clear overall plan for improvement; however the team need to take forward the key priorities for children in a focused and planned way. Practitioners should increasingly become involved in shaping and delivering on relevant whole school self-evaluation and improvement activities.
- The team are developing in their confidence in using the self-evaluation guidance document *How good is our early learning and childcare?* to evaluate their work. They have made good use of national guidance and toolkits such as *Building the Ambition* to audit and review their work. This is beginning to support the team to explore and agree a shared vision of high

quality early learning across all aspects of their work. Now that the team are meeting regularly to reflect on their work, they should work together to agree and prioritise improvements. They now need to agree how they will work together with children, parents and partners to evaluate the impact of improvements on children's progress across their learning.

- As the team implement and identify improvements, they should agree and plan how they will measure the success of this work effectively. All practitioners should build on and develop further their skills and confidence in the use of data to build a picture of children's progress more accurately. As planned, develop observations of children's progress and significant learning, and work to improve the focus and consistency of their next steps in learning.
- Children and parents are regularly asked for their views and suggestions about how to develop and improve their setting. Children have been involved in creating their sensory room and developing the outdoor learning space. The team have identified that there remains scope for children and parents to lead improvements and shape future priorities in a way that is meaningful to them.
- The team regularly engage in professional learning to develop further their practice. Most recently, this has included input to improve the quality of observations. A few members of the team are undertaking further study. Along with the whole school, the team will participate in a focus on early writing. As the team expands, it will be important to continue to look outwards by visiting other settings to share practice, raise expectations and focus on key areas of improvement.
- The nursery teacher has engaged in moderation activities with other local settings in the cluster. There is scope to involve all practitioners in moderation across the early level within the school. This will support a shared understanding of progression. The team have supported important work with the primary one teachers to develop play spaces within their classrooms. At present, there is not yet a shared pedagogy across the early level. It will be important to ensure that there is a shared understanding of high quality play experiences that support children to apply and develop further their learning.
- There is a clear and in-depth knowledge of the home languages, culture and beliefs, needs and strengths of individual children. The team value and prioritise creating trusting relationships with families to ensure they have a full, up to date picture of the child. Evaluations of home visiting approaches and settling in reviews make an important contribution to this. All practitioners make good use of this knowledge of children as individuals to offer thoughtful, responsive support to families and individual children.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Health and wellbeing is an important aspect across the setting. Practitioners rightly prioritise this in their work with children and families. Children benefit from targeted work to improve their confidence, resilience and self-esteem. As a result, most children are making good progress. They are able to share space and resources, and take turns appropriate to their stage of development. A few children are able to begin to reflect on their own and others feelings as they try to resolve conflicts. Children are increasingly independent as they serve themselves at snack and lunch time. They are confident in accessing, moving and adapting resources especially in the large outdoor space. They are developing an understanding of the importance of personal hygiene routines and take part in daily tooth brushing. They are making good progress in developing their gross motor skills through a range of planned activities including regular use of the school gym area. To ensure children make the very best possible progress, this should form part of a progressive approach to support health and wellbeing across the early level.
- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. A high percentage of children enter the setting with very little or no spoken English. A high number of children speak more than one language at home. Children are making good progress in developing their communication skills. They use gestures, signs and readily engage in conversations with adults and one other. Most children are highly motivated to share their experiences in small groups and one-to-one with adults. They enjoy listening to stories and seek out books independently throughout all areas of their play, and in the attractive book corner. A few children show an interest in sounds and good understanding of rhyming words. Most children are interested in early writing and mark make for a purpose as they attempt to write their names. Practitioners should continue to ensure all children are challenged to extend and develop further their skills through high quality play and motivating real-life contexts.
- Most children show an interest in numbers and are making good progress in numeracy and early mathematics. They recognise numbers, count with confidence to ten and play with numbers in a variety of different contexts in the playroom. Practitioners should continue to ensure that they provide experiences to develop children's understanding of a wider range of early maths and numeracy concepts in a progressive way across the early level.
- Most children are inquisitive and show a keen interest in observing and finding out about mini-beasts. A few children talk in detail about caring for the seeds and flowers they are

growing in the outdoor area. All practitioners should continue to develop their use of higher order questioning to maximise opportunities to ensure depth in learning.

- Children's electronic learning journals document their wide range of experiences within the nursery, in outdoor learning and frequent participation in their local community. Parents enjoy reviewing and commenting on learning activities. Practitioners and parents share valuable information at twice yearly meetings and this is used to support children to make progress on their next steps in learning. Children do not yet have ownership of their electronic journals. Parents are encouraged to share children's achievements from home on the achievement tree. Overall, there is scope to build on early learning conversations to increase children's awareness of themselves as learners.
- Practitioners create a positive, supportive and inclusive ethos where all children and families are welcomed and valued. They identify potential barriers to learning and work together to minimise or remove these. Where required, they promptly access effective support from outside agencies.

Care Inspectorate evidence

1 Quality of care and support

Children were happy and relaxed in the nursery. Children were achieving, nurtured and included, as staff knew them very well and recognised their individual needs and unique personalities.

Initial home visits supported positive transitions into nursery and promoted strong relationships between the nursery team and families. Children benefitted from sensitive and individualised settling in arrangements. The nursery gathered detailed information when children started that supported a continuity of care and promoted their overall wellbeing.

More recently, the nursery had developed a keyworker system that was having a positive impact on children's experiences. Keyworkers regularly shared information with parents about their child's learning and development.

Personal plans were in place for each child. However, the nursery should ensure that parental involvement in reviewing this information is formally recorded. This is to ensure that parents can confirm that these plans continue to accurately reflect their children's needs.

Children were able to make independent choices about how and where they played. We could see they were able to explore and learn through their natural curiosity and enquiry. Children were leading their play using well thought out resources to expand their ideas thus supporting them to develop their creative thinking.

Children actively engaged staff in their play and sought support or reassurance if needed. They were keen to share their learning with staff and it was apparent that children were used to having their ideas valued and respected.

Lunchtime was a sociable experience where children could spend time enjoying their meal and talking with their peers. Children were developing their independence in a variety of ways, for example by self-serving their lunch and pouring their own drinks.

Children were safeguarded, as staff had a good understanding of child protection issues. They were confident with the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. The nursery were aware of how to access additional support services for children. This helped to ensure children were included and respected. The nursery had developed strong partnerships with a variety of support agencies. The nursery completed detailed assessments for children that supported them to access the right support for their individual needs.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

2 Quality of environment

Children were safe as the building was secure and well maintained. The environment was warm and welcoming, which contributed to children feeling included and nurtured.

Children had opportunities to relax throughout the day. The introduction of a sensory room provided children with a calm space where they could engage in activities that promoted their natural curiosity. Staff had worked hard to develop a shared understanding of what this space provided for children and how it could benefit their wellbeing.

The layout of the playroom allowed children to develop and extend their play. Children could transport resources from different areas, allowing them to shape their play and develop their own ideas. Creativity was encouraged and promoted through a range of open-ended natural materials. Staff worked together to reflect on the various areas of the environment and ensured that resources reflected children's needs and interests. The varied experiences on offer were interesting and fun.

Children had daily opportunities to experience energetic, physical play, which contributed to them being healthy and active. The outdoor space provided a rich learning environment that created a sense of wonder for children. Areas were well resourced and inviting meaning children were actively engaged in their play for sustained periods. The nursery had developed Loose Parts play and these resources were supporting children to develop their problem solving skills, work together and manage risk. Loose Parts were also supporting children to develop their creativity and imagination.

Children benefitted from Woodland Explorer sessions at a nearby woodland area. These sessions gave children further opportunities to learn about the natural world and develop new skills. Children's experiences were recorded in a floorbook, which meant they could revisit this learning in nursery.

The nursery made very good use of local resources meaning children were included in their community. Children visited the local swimming pool as a group as well as accessing the library and local shops. These experiences were supporting children to learn more about the world around them as well as helping them to develop valuable life skills.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

3 Quality of staffing

The whole staff team were warm, attentive and nurturing, resulting in a very secure and respectful environment for the children. Staff encouraged children to extend their learning through positive dialogue and sensitive interactions. Some staff would benefit from additional training and support to develop further their use of open-ended questions. This would help them to support children to develop their critical thinking skills and reflect on their learning.

Staff celebrated children's achievements and encouraged parents to do so. This helped children to develop a very positive sense of self.

Staff were committed to supporting children's wellbeing and met regularly as a team to discuss various aspects of the children's care. These meetings also gave staff opportunities to share their ideas and plan for children's learning.

Children were included and achieving as staff used relevant training to implement appropriate strategies of support. For example, staff were using recent Play Box training with children to help them develop their social interactions, shared play and communication skills.

Staff had completed a range of training that helped them to keep children safe and healthy. This included child protection and first aid. Other training needs were identified as part of staff's professional development reviews. Training took account of the nursery priorities and the needs of the children attending. As the team continues to expand and develop, the senior management team should continue to consider ways they can support staff practice to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach to all areas of children's learning.

The nursery team had identified areas of strength within the nursery and had reflected on areas for improvement. Staff should continue to use best practice guidance to support and develop their work, particularly in relation to how they track children's progress across learning.

Staff had developed a resource catalogue so that children could have more say in the resources they used. This was working well and staff should continue to look for other ways that children's choice and voice can be encouraged across the learning environment.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4 Quality of management and leadership

Parents were included and valued within the nursery. Regular questionnaires and 'Two Stars and a Wish' sheets were some of the methods used to engage with parents. The nursery proactively addressed any aspects of parental feedback and shared any action taken with parents.

Parents were welcomed into the nursery to share their skills, for example, to bake with the children as part of a festival celebration. The nursery teacher and wider staff team had a very good understanding of the diverse mix of children and their families. The nursery team gathered information and discussed with families how they could promote and celebrate these individual cultures. It was evident that an ethos of respect was embedded within the nursery setting.

Leadership was promoted across the nursery with staff taking ownership for different aspects of the nursery. For example, some staff led the Woodland Explorers sessions and the development of the outdoor environment. Staff actively shared their knowledge and skills with each other. This helped them to provide interesting and fun experiences for children.

The senior management team had a very good overview of the nursery and staff were well supported. The depute head offered guidance to the team and had a visual presence within the nursery.

The nursery team were committed to improving the nursery. There were systems in place to evaluate the provision and identify areas for improvement. The nursery team used 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and other toolkits to support self-evaluation. The depute head and headteacher undertook some monitoring of staff practice and shared their evaluations with staff. They should continue to build on this ensuring that staff use best practice guidance to effectively develop and evaluate all areas of their work.

During the inspection, we asked the senior management team to familiarise themselves with Care Inspectorate guidance 'Records that all registered care services (except child-minding) must keep and guidance on notification reporting'. This is to ensure the service understands what constitutes a notification and so that they can continue to work in partnership with the Care Inspectorate.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

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.