

# Summarised inspection findings

**Ardrishaig Primary School Nursery  
Class**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**13 February 2018**

## Key contextual information

The nursery class accommodates 20 children at any one time. It is a morning only nursery. At the time of the inspection 14 children were attending. One child has a split placement with another local nursery.

### 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

very good

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

- Following a period of staff changes, the nursery class practitioner staff team has been in place since April 2017. The headteacher, supported by the principal teacher, provides clear and strong leadership to the nursery team. They are very well respected and appreciated by staff and parents. They are highly reflective and together with practitioners they have created an ethos of self-evaluation and self-improvement.
- The nursery class staff team are now more confident in the approach to the self-evaluation process. This is as a result of supportive meetings three times a week with the senior team to discuss practice which is linked to the How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC) framework. This focus on building capacity of staff is resulting in practitioners having increased confidence and knowledge of the self-evaluation process. This is now showing improvements to children's experiences within the nursery class which better reflects children's interests and choices. Children are becoming more confident in sharing their likes and dislikes about particular activities and stories. The use of floorbooks to capture children's choices and interests is a helpful tool to record what children would like to learn. As planned, practitioners should continue to seek ways to fully involve children in the development of the nursery class.
- Practitioners show confidence working with parents and carers and have initiated a Participation Policy for parents. This is now leading to improved engagement with parents. For example, parents are asked informally for their views and through more formal questionnaires. Parents are now more visible within the nursery class and regularly participate in open mornings and shared finishes. Taking account of parental views these events are held on different days of the week to allow better participation from parents. Time has been well spent in sharing developmental milestones with parents to allow a shared understanding of expectations of children's learning. Ideas are shared with parents to help their children learn at home which is linked to their current focus. There is scope

now to develop further ways of involving parents in decisions within the School Improvement Plan and consideration also given to how best to involve partner agencies in this process. This would result in meaningful participation in the life of the nursery class to continue to improve outcomes for children.

- The nursery class's self-evaluation process is based on four identified priorities within the improvement plan. For example, the development of high quality early literacy and numeracy experiences both indoors and outside for children and the on-going development of recording children's progress in these areas. Practitioners use a variety of local and national guidance to support this process. They are becoming more familiar with this process of recording children's achievements in learning logs through observations of children's learning and the use of a robust tracking tool for literacy and numeracy. This is developing well and is well led by the senior team. To move this on further it would be of value to consider how to involve children in reviewing what they have learned in a developmentally appropriate way
- Practitioners use national guidance to review their practice and ensure that they use information gathered to plan future developments as evidenced in the nursery class's Improvement Plan. The use of floorbooks to chart developments has contributions from parents and children. This ensures children and families benefit from a continuously improving service that meets their needs and reflects local and national guidance.
- Opportunities are now available for practitioners to take part in professional learning opportunities to deepen their knowledge. Individual staff are now taking the lead on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in the nursery class. This is supported by the senior management team to ensure experiences and decisions are linked to the particular way young children learn and develop.

## 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.

### 3.2 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

- Across the nursery class there is a strong focus on health and wellbeing. The emphasis on positive relationships is helping children to settle and develop friendships. Most can communicate their needs and feelings according to their stage of development and overall are kind and caring towards each other. Older children are becoming increasingly confident and demonstrate this well through initiating play with others and approaching adults for support in extending their play. Younger children are sensitively supported to understand turn taking and sharing. Over recent months practitioners have gained knowledge about alternative ways to promote positive thinking (PATHS) with children. This is resulting in children learning to manage their feelings and self-regulate their emotions in a more positive way, for example, learning to find coping strategies when they are feeling unhappy.
- Children have a developing awareness of healthy eating. This was supported by their recent topic work on the book "Handa's Surprise" where they were learning about healthy eating and the benefits of eating fruit. Additionally, they demonstrate independence during snack routines. Opportunities for daily outdoor physical activity have been established and children are enthusiastic to play out of doors. There are plans in place to improve the outdoor area which will take account of children's views of what they would like outside.
- With support from the senior management team, there are sound approaches which help support children's progress in early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Most experiences provided are having a positive impact on children's development and learning. There is a blend of adult-directed and child-initiated experiences and at times children were seen to adapt some experiences by themselves which encouraged their own independence and creativity.
- Through observation and self-evaluation procedures practitioners changed the layout of the room to better accommodate children's learning needs. For example, the quiet area has been rearranged and as a result more children are using the area independently to read by themselves or as a quiet place to relax.
- Children are making good progress in early literacy. Developments in early literacy are well developed within the regular planning focus and children's progress assessed using the

Argyll and Bute early literacy and numeracy and developmental milestone trackers. This process results in children making consistent progress and has a positive impact on the improving knowledge and skill of the staff team.

- Most children are developing their early communication skills through caring and supportive interactions with practitioners. It is clear that children are gaining skills in talking and listening in conversations with adults and their friends. They enjoy listening to familiar stories and are encouraged to retell the story in their own way often using props and puppets. They are responding well to the introduction to stories which they are finding exciting and is clearly stimulating an interest in books. Almost all children are recognising their own name in print and use these skills to label their own pictures and paintings.
- Emergent writing experiences are evident in many areas of the playroom which is encouraging the idea that print has meaning. This is helping to develop an interest in mark making opportunities provided across the playroom.
- Additional experiences such as story sacks and the Bookbug programme are helping to raise awareness of early literacy with parents and carers and are linked to developments within the improvement plan. To move this on further it would be helpful to evaluate the use and impact of these initiatives with parents.
- Most children are making good progress in early numeracy experiences. Children are involved in many experiences to explore numbers up to 10. Most understand they represent quantities, and a few children use this knowledge to help them count, create sequences and describe order. A few older children use materials they are playing with to count on and back. Within data analysis, children gather information and display their findings in simple charts and graphs to sort and categorise how many animals and favourite fruits. Most children can match objects and can sort using criteria giving explanations. Children have experienced the use of money and are currently learning about coins in play situations. There is scope to continue to ensure more frequent opportunities through the life of the nursery class and planned activities by practitioners. A few children have successfully worked to re-create patterns and sequences using counting bears as part of work in themed activities. Children are aware of everyday sequences of time and routines in the nursery class.
- Learning logs for individual children are detailed and show progress in learning and development. They are informative and record achievements of children which are regularly shared with parents. The senior team and practitioners have recognised the need to develop this further with parents and carers to take account of achievements within and outwith the nursery, the recent WOW wall in the foyer helps share achievements and includes parents as active partners in this process.
- The strong teamwork of practitioners and their individual 'Champion' roles have made a positive impact on children's progress. The interventions to support individuals and groups of children are successful. Practitioners take pride in knowing the needs of the families and have a sound understanding of any factors which they need to take account of when planning learning experiences, achievement opportunities and family events. With the senior team's leadership they are positive about reducing potential barriers to learning.

## 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.

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