

Summarised inspection findings

Barnhill Nursery Class

Dundee City Council

2 June 2020

Key contextual information

Barnhill Primary School nursery class is integral to the school. It is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for 50 children aged three, to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection, there were 82 children accessing up to 600 hours of funded ELC through a variety of attendance patterns. The purpose built accommodation consists of a large playroom that has direct access to an outdoor area. The deputy headteacher has line management responsibility and is well supported by the part-time nursery teacher and the full-time senior early years practitioner (SEYP). The teacher and SEYP both joined the team in August 2019.

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 has recently reviewed its vision values and aims with children, parents and staff. The values of 'believe, respect, include, learn and achieve and look after each other' (BRILL) are shared with the school. Staff display and illustrate these with photographic examples to make these meaningful to the children.
- The team has undergone a number of changes recently and the newly formed team is working very well together. They have undertaken professional learning and have carried out good practice visits to create a nursery standard for the quality of learning at Barnhill nursery. This supports further a shared understanding of pedagogy and a consistency in high quality approaches to the delivery of ELC across the team. As a result, the quality of the learners' experiences is very good.
- Almost all practitioners have leadership roles that link to the improvement plan and practitioners' interests and skills. These include outdoor learning, developing learning journals, cycling skills and programmes to support children's early literacy skills. Practitioners are proud of their leadership roles and talk passionately about the difference this is making to improve outcomes for children and families. They should develop ways to evidence the impact of leadership roles on improved outcomes for children more consistently. This will enable them to share and celebrate improvements with all stakeholders.
- All practitioners undertake professional learning. They engage in professional reading and research and they value the commitment from senior leaders to enable them to attend relevant training courses and make good practice visits to other settings. They share their learning with their colleagues at weekly team meetings. This is supporting them to build consistent approaches across the team and to take forward their leadership responsibilities effectively.
- Staff have made an early start in providing children with leadership roles. Children help to prepare snack, carry out risk assessments and set tables for lunches. Practitioners should build on this and develop leadership roles more fully across the nursery, building children's confidence and giving them more responsibility.

- The leadership team and staff have correctly identified appropriate priorities to improve the nursery over time. Staff have clearly outlined these priorities within the improvement plan. Staff are clear about how their work contributes to achieving the identified improvement priorities. Almost all practitioners are very reflective and engage regularly in self-evaluation activity. They should make greater use of national guidance documents. This would support staff in identifying accurately successes and areas for improvement. Senior leaders should establish a regular and robust system for monitoring the impact of improvements.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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 have created a rich nursery environment that inspires and motivates children to be curious and engage in deep learning opportunities through play. They plan engaging experiences and question children well to encourage inquiry and scaffold children's learning and development. The provision of open space, soft lighting, a wide range of objects, stimulating materials and loose parts encourage children's discovery and development of critical thinking skills.
- There are warm, nurturing relationships between children, families and practitioners. All children are happy and engage well in learning during their play. They have a very good understanding of rules and routines. As a result, almost all children are secure and settled.
- Practitioners plan well for activities for the key groups to give a balance of experiences across the week. They offer spontaneous and planned, purposeful play contexts which are responsive to children's interests. Practitioners should continue to evaluate group times to ensure these meet the needs of all children.
- Practitioners provide a range of digital electronic toys and educational games to promote literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children also access the interactive whiteboard to research facts in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Practitioners should continue to extend opportunities for children to develop creativity skills through technology. For example, they would benefit from learning from older children by being involved in the school digital leaders team.
- Practitioners plan well to extend children's interests and they document this in planning folders. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should continue to review their current planning formats to make the planning more visible for children.
- Practitioners have developed children's learning journals to make them more relevant and meaningful to children and their families. They make good use of photographs and observations to record specific learning. The feedback from families is very positive and learning journals are highly valued for the quality of the information they contain. Practitioners should ensure that they identify clearly next steps in learning and share these appropriately with children. Practitioners provide parents with regular information about their child's progress. They have ready access to their child's learning journal, they talk daily with practitioners at drop off and pick up times. They have a more formal meeting with their child's key worker twice a year.
- Practitioners monitor the development of children's individual skills in developing literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. These include previously identified Curriculum for Excellence

experiences and outcomes, I-can statements, literacy and numeracy targets and group learning intentions. Senior managers and practitioners should streamline these in order to support practitioners to use assessments more effectively to secure improved outcomes for all children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Senior leaders and practitioners should work with children, families and community partners to create a curriculum rationale that explores the setting's uniqueness and reflects their changing needs. The curriculum rationale should reflect the value placed on relationships within the setting. It should also further develop global citizenship into the school and wider community, for example nursery children supporting 'The Butterfly Café'. Senior leaders should measure the impact that the community can have on improving children's learning.
- Senior leaders and practitioners plan learning using a variety of learning intentions. They should engage further in professional discussion to ensure the patterns of children's individual needs and the principles of curriculum design are at the centre of the planning process.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of the benefits of working in partnership with families. They invite families to become involved in children's learning in the setting through attending activity sessions with their children. This is enabling families to have a better understanding of children's learning within the setting. A few parents report that this enables them to provide a better range of activities to support their child's learning at home. Practitioners are aware of the number of families who cannot attend sessions during the working day and provide evening sessions for them. For example, they provide bedtime story session for children and parents in the evening. They should develop further the use of social media to support engagement with working parents. Practitioners should consider ways to make better use of the skills and interests of families to enrich children's learning in the setting.
- Practitioners have developed 'home learning bags' to support learning at home. The bags contain activities to support learning across the curriculum with suggestions of ways to extend learning further.
- Practitioners use questionnaires and the parent focus group to gather feedback from families to support with self-evaluation. This supports families to contribute effectively to school improvement.

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.

3.1 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 have established strong, positive, nurturing relationships with children and their families. Practitioners value each child as an individual and this supports children to feel included, engaged and involved in the life of the setting.
- The setting uses a key worker approach to build strong relationships and attachments. Practitioners welcome children in their key worker group each morning and make time for children to have an emotional check in. Practitioners use a variety of soft furnishings and lighting to provide cosy, quiet spaces. Children use these spaces well to rest and relax in small groups. There is a range of books that support children to learn about their emotions and the feelings of others. Almost all children are developing friendships and almost all practitioners actively promote positive behaviour.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of children's rights and the wellbeing indicators. They support children to develop their understanding of how to keep safe, for example and when using tools and balance bikes. They provide high quality experiences for children at snack and meal times. They encourage children to develop good social skills and develop a good awareness of the importance of hygiene routines. There is daily free flow access to the outdoor area where children benefit from fresh air and exercise and develop physical skills. Practitioners value children's ideas and opinions and consult them about changes to the environment. They evaluate the learning provision through a focus on the wellbeing indicators. The displays around the learning environment demonstrate the many ways in which the provision supports children's wellbeing. Practitioners should make this information more accessible to children. They should deepen children's understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurturing, achieving, responsible, and respectful and included.
- Together the senior leaders and the practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding statutory requirements. They undertake professional learning to keep their knowledge and practice up to date.
- Practitioners value cultural diversity and they plan for religious and cultural celebrations across the year. Practitioners should introduce resources that reflect a wider range of cultural backgrounds. They should challenge children's thinking about gender stereotypes.
- Practitioners make good use of observations to identify barriers to learning. They should make better use of the local authority's developmental milestone screening tools to ensure children's needs are identified sooner. Practitioners should ensure they implement effective strategies and interventions to support children's learning when they identify barriers to learning. Practitioners should evaluate the impact of interventions to ensure children make maximum progress in their learning.

- All children have a care plan, a learning journal and a pupil progress record in addition to various tracking records. Senior leaders and practitioners should review the systems used to record children's information, to streamline and better organise paperwork. This should support practitioners to have a clearer overview of the progress of individual children. This will help to ensure children who need support can receive timely interventions to address gaps in their learning. Furthermore, it will help identify those children who require further challenge in their learning within the early level.

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 literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

- Most children are confident, resilient, and are independent in their own care routines. They approach adults for help with ease, both within and out with their identified key groups. They independently manage turn taking and confidently share resources. Families report improved outcomes in children's positive behaviours and attachments at home due to effective partnership working and family learning. Almost all children use tools and utensils confidently as they help to prepare snack and throughout spontaneous play. All children participate in outdoor play where they are developing good control of their balance and movement as they move their bodies in a range of ways. Practitioners should continue to involve children in planning and leading their own learning. This will help to empower children to apply, extend and deepen those identified skills through play.
- Children are developing well their skills in oral language, vocabulary, story comprehension, print and phonological awareness. They participate enthusiastically during stories, songs and rhymes, both indoors and out. All children extend their knowledge of Makaton through learning new signs and songs each week. As a result, most children are confident communicators and can articulate their thoughts, ideas and preferences fluently. Most children take pride in sharing their representations and drawings confidently with adults and each other. A stronger focus on early mark making using natural resources and a wider range of tools, particularly outdoors, would help to challenge children to include more detail in drawings and inspire them to become emergent writers.
- Most children are becoming aware of the concepts of shape, size and amounts through engagement with loose parts, transient art and construction. Most children can confidently recognise and name shapes. Practitioners should develop children's vocabulary of three-dimensional objects. Almost all children are developing their understanding of weight and mathematical language as they explore sand, water and the mud area. Most children use programmable toys to develop their sequencing, positional language and problem solving skills. Most children show a good understanding of number. They recognise numbers to ten and beyond. Most children count within ten with accuracy and can sequence numbers easily. Practitioners should ensure there is a range of ways for children to explore bigger numbers in the learning environment to extend their number knowledge. Practitioners should develop further children's awareness of money and coin recognition.

- Overall, children are making good progress in their learning. There is clear evidence that over time children continually improve their skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff now need to improve the accuracy of their professional judgements on children's progress against the National Benchmarks. Senior leaders should take forward work to improve the process of planning, tracking and monitoring of children's progress to ensure challenge for higher-achieving children.
- Practitioners treat all children and families with respect in a fair and just manner. Practitioners are sensitive to the circumstances of individual families and ways in which they can provide support. Families, where needs have been identified, benefit from additional support from the family support worker and the inclusion outreach worker.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Bedtime Story and Singing Sessions

The setting recognises the importance of singing and reading with children to develop early literacy skills. Practitioners promote singing and reading at home by providing family learning sessions. However, these were not well attended as many families were at work during the day.

Practitioners surveyed parents to find out what they could do to make these sessions more attractive. The results of the survey highlighted that the times of the story and singing sessions did not meet the needs of working families. Practitioners then provided evening sessions for families. Initially this increased the attendance but families reported that the timings of these sessions made bedtime routines rushed and challenging.

Practitioners reviewed again, what they were offering families. They now provide evening bedtime story and singing sessions. They use soft lighting to create a calm, welcoming environment and children attend ready for bed wearing their pyjamas. This allows children and families to share a range of stories and songs together in a relaxed way. Practitioners use these sessions to develop further families' understanding of the importance of singing songs and reading stories. They place an emphasis on songs and stories that contain repetition and rhyming words to support children to widen their vocabulary.

The bedtime sessions have greatly increased attendance. Feedback from families is very positive about the enjoyment of singing and reading together. A few families report they sing more songs at home as a result of attending the sessions. All families report that children go home calm and ready for a peaceful night's sleep after the bedtime sessions.

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.