

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 19 November 2019

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Education Scotland Inspection of Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1);
- (ii) note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings (SIF) for the Primary School and Nursery Class (Appendix 2);
- (iii) note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings (SIF) for the Nursery Class (Appendix 3);
- (iv) note the change in Head Teacher and the significant steps that have been taken by the Education Service and the school to implement planned improvements since the beginning of this academic session; and
- (v) note that Education Scotland has commended the accuracy of the East Lothian school review carried out in February 2019 and as a result has indicated that they would carry out a joint return visit with East Lothian Council within one year of the publication of the letter.

3 BACKGROUND

Inspection model

3.1 The inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS?4) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early

Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class.

- 3.2 Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators (QIs) to report on the outcomes of their three day short model inspection using a six-point scale ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory:

HGIOS?4:

- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

HGIOELC?:

- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Securing Children's Progress

- 3.3 At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement.

National Improvement Framework

- 3.4 As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations of QIs 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government, with the next report due to be published in December 2019.

Inspection Findings

- 3.5 Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected in June 2019. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 5 November 2019. The quality indicators were evaluated as follows:

	Quality Indicator	Whitecraig Primary – Primary 1 to Primary 7	Early Learning and Childcare – Whitecraig Nursery Class
HGIOS?4	2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Weak	
	3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement	Weak	
HGIOELC?	2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment		Satisfactory
	3.2 Securing Children's Progress		Satisfactory

- 3.6 The Care Inspectorate also carried out an inspection of the nursery class as part of the Education Scotland visit to Whitecraig Primary School. The summary of their inspection findings is included in the Education Scotland report.
- 3.7 Inspectors confirmed the accuracy of the East Lothian Council school review, carried out in February 2019. They noted that the Education Service had been supporting the school to improve but that the pace of improvement was too slow.

Improvement Actions

- 3.8 Ms Fiona Macartney, Head Teacher of Stoneyhill Primary School, took up post as interim Head Teacher of Whitecraig Primary School at the start of the new school session in August 2019. She will remain in post for the remainder of school session 2019/20. Since the start of session, there has been significant progress in the areas for improvement identified in the report. Staff have worked together to develop a School Improvement Plan and this provides a strong basis for the ongoing improvement needed at the school.
- 3.9 The Education Service has provided additional resources to the school including enhanced staffing and the support of an experienced depute head teacher to establish an accurate baseline of assessment information for all children to inform the planning of progressive teaching and learning. The interim head teacher has created opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively with colleagues from other schools to support their professional learning. The school has also introduced effective approaches to the planning of learning, teaching and assessment and is developing whole school strategies to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching. Together with teaching staff, the interim head teacher has restructured the timetabling of learning across the school to ensure an improved focus on literacy and numeracy learning for all children.
- 3.10 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Nick Trussler, has provided intensive support to the school and has worked closely with the interim head teacher and staff to provide support and challenge and to monitor the pace of improvement.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – none.
- 6.2 Personnel – During session 2019/20, Ms Macartney will continue as Head Teacher of both Stoneyhill Primary School and Whitecraig Primary School. The Education Service will review this arrangement before the end of the session. During this time additional staffing has been provided to Stoneyhill Primary School to release the Depute Head Teacher from any teaching commitment.
- 6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

Appendix 1: Education Scotland report on Whitecraig School and Nursery Class

Appendix 2: Summarised Inspection Findings – Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class

Appendix 3: Summarised Inspection Findings – Nursery Class

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CONTACT INFO	Tel: 01620 827953 or email ntrussler@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	19 November 2019

5 November 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Happy, welcoming children who feel cared for and enjoy coming to school. Parents value the pastoral support staff provide for the children.
- Staff in the nursery and across the primary school have a commitment and enthusiasm for professional learning and improvement.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from East Lothian Council.

- Develop children's knowledge of themselves as learners and their skills of working independently.
- Improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment leading to raised attainment in literacy and numeracy for children.
- Improve approaches and outcomes for the wellbeing of children and staff.
- Ensure that planning, tracking and monitoring of learning and teaching leads to planned tasks and activities that meet children's needs.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for the nursery class

Care Inspectorate standards	Grade
Quality of care and support	adequate
Quality of environment	adequate

Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class

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

This letter and a more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/east-lothian/5550726>

What happens next?

We will liaise with East Lothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. Within 12 months of this letter we will return to carry out a further inspection of the school. We will discuss with East Lothian Council the details of this inspection. Following our return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Elizabeth C Montgomery
HM Inspector

Sarah Hermiston
Care Inspector



Summarised inspection findings

Whitecraig Primary School and Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

5 November 2019

Key contextual information

Whitecraig Primary School and nursery class serves the village of Whitecraig and surrounding areas in East Lothian. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 105 children in the primary school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
<p>This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Positive and caring relationships between children and staff are evident. Most children enjoy coming to school and the majority interact well during class lessons. Children in a few classes use digital technologies well for researching information linked to their learning. Recent developments to improve the level of challenge for children during planned lessons is beginning to impact on their levels of motivation. However, across the school approaches to learning and teaching are over directed and too often during lessons children's engagement and motivation decreases. Contexts for learning do not provide sufficient opportunities for personalisation and choice or approaches that develop children as independent learners. As a result, learning does not take enough account of what children already know or extend their learning sufficiently well. Children can describe the activities in which they are involved. However, they do not understand the purpose of lessons or know how this helps them to know their strengths and next steps in learning. Planned learning is at the very early stages of developing children as successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- Teachers are proud of their school and use their knowledge of children and families well to ensure a positive ethos. Teachers individually aim to deliver a broad, stimulating and engaging curriculum. They are enthusiastic and proud of the community feel of the school. Staff are clear about the school's strengths and areas of improvement in relation to their teaching. We have asked the school to review further the quality of teaching including the use of time. Too often we observed children not engaged in learning for long periods of time due to timetabling arrangements. For example, we observed practices such as snack time, assemblies and getting ready to go home which do not maximise learning opportunities. In addition, the pace of learning throughout planned lessons is too slow with children undertaking low level tasks and activities. Children with barriers to their learning receive well planned targeted support from additional staff. However, whole class lessons do not use a range of differentiated approaches to meet children's needs well enough. In addition, questioning does not reflect higher order thinking or extend children's learning. Across the school, teaching approaches lack consistency and formative assessment information during lessons is not used well enough to plan next steps. As a result, planned learning does not impact on individual children or help children to understand what they know. Approaches to teaching need to be reviewed urgently in order to ensure clarity of feedback to improve children's progress in learning. Moving forward, there is a need for all staff to work together as a team to revisit and achieve the school's vision, values and aims.

- A variety of assessment information, including the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, informs teachers' professional judgements about children's progress. Staff record the individual progress of children in literacy and numeracy. However, teachers' understanding of national standards is at the very early stages of development. Assessment information does not support ongoing learning and teaching sufficiently well. Staff now need to develop a manageable whole-school approach to assessment which consistently evidences breadth, challenge and application of learning. As part of this process, assessment instruments in place should be reviewed to ensure that they support learning and teaching. More effective use of ongoing assessment of progress would enable teachers to take greater account of where children are in their learning and, in discussion with children, would allow for more meaningful planning of next steps.
- The East Lothian education authority's progression pathways help staff plan children's learning across the session. Forward planning folders show children's coverage of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes at a class level. However, this recording of children's exposure to experiences does not reflect accurately children's progress or attainment. In addition, it does not reflect the slow pace of learning observed during lessons. There is a need to develop processes to evaluate children's progress. In doing so, ensure that children are involved fully in this process and that feedback supports them to know themselves as learners.
- Teachers are at the early stages of engaging meaningfully with the National Benchmarks to help them to make more informed and accurate judgements about children's progress in their learning. Moderation activities do not enable teachers to develop a shared understanding of expectations and national standards. Regular professional dialogue in this area is needed to support and challenge teachers in their judgements. There is scope for more meaningful outward-looking engagement at cluster and local authority levels to help teachers develop their shared understanding of standards.
- Staff participate in termly tracking meetings and children's barriers to learning are discussed. However, there is a need for an effective and strategic approach to monitoring and tracking. This will support staff in addressing potential barriers to children's progress in learning and evaluate the effectiveness of planned interventions to improve outcomes for children.
- A recent study, involving a few children in the school, reviewed the impact of teacher feedback to children. The results from the study were shared across the school and staff welcomed the information about improving approaches to ongoing assessment. However, across the school, professional judgements on children's progress are not reliable and do not reflect national standards. There is no strategic approach to plan application of learning for children to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in new and unfamiliar contexts. Moderation of assessments and planned learning are at the very early stages of development.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- The school shared information about children's progress using Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. This data is at the very early stages of reliability and inspectors formed their view on children's progress from sampling children's work, lesson observations and focus groups of children. Across the school, a minority of children will achieve minimum expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. The organisation of time across the school day reduces opportunities for breadth, challenge and application with children unable to apply their learning. The school is beginning to address the improvement priorities identified by the education authority. There is a need to continue to address these areas for improvement. In doing so, the school needs to ensure that learning is very well planned, delivered at a brisk pace and supported by a range of ongoing and periodic assessments.
- In literacy, children's attainment is weak. Listening and talking skills are not well developed and do not reflect national standards. The introduction of a commercial approach to reading motivates children to read more often for enjoyment. It is improving children's reading fluency and basic comprehension. The structured approach to writing ensures that children experience a basic approach to writing.
- In listening and talking children's attainment is weak. There are a few examples of children with sophisticated listening and talking skills. However, the school does not focus enough attention on developing these progressively. As a result, in group work and in class lessons too often a few children dominate conversations and discussions. They are unable to build on each other's ideas or respect different viewpoints. At early level the majority of children listen to the class teacher during class discussions. At first level the majority can discuss the main idea of the books that they are reading. At second level a few recount personal experiences using appropriate technical vocabulary.
- In reading, children's attainment is weak. Children do not read often enough for pleasure and are limited in describing a range of authors. At early level, the majority of children are developing early literacy skills well. At first level, the majority read fluently and respond accurately to questions that ask them to retell parts of the story. At second level the majority of children do not respond accurately to complex questions requiring inference about the text that they read.
- In writing, children's attainment is weak. Although there is a structure in place to develop children's skills across a range of writing genre, there are too many examples of unfinished work. The focus on spelling is improving children's skills in spelling. However, a minority of children do not understand some of the words that they are spelling and cannot apply them in their writing tasks. At the early level, children are beginning to form words and retell their own stories. At first level, children's writing links well to other areas of their learning and they can

apply their skills in real life contexts. At second level, children write non-chronological reports and letters. They use similes accurately and a minority understand and apply metaphors in their writing.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy is weak. Staff recognise the need to ensure children learn progressively and without gaps in their learning. Teachers are gaining confidence in the teaching of numeracy and mathematics through the local authority's Numeracy Academy. The local authority curriculum framework is supporting the ongoing development of planning in numeracy and mathematics. Approaches to planning should ensure that children experience sufficient breadth, depth and challenge to progress well in their learning. Pace through the Curriculum for Excellence levels needs to increase to ensure more children attain the appropriate levels.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children can check estimates by counting. They link daily routines and personal events to time sequences. At first level, almost all children need to develop mental strategies and written skills to solve addition and subtraction problems with two and three digit whole numbers. The majority of children can explain what a fraction is using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. At second level, the majority of children order numbers less than zero. A few children are able to divide whole numbers by a single digit. Children need to develop further the application of numeracy skills across their learning in unfamiliar contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children working at early level create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At first level, a few children can use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common 2D shapes and 3D objects. At second level, most children know that the radius is half of the diameter. A few children can calculate missing angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children can match and sort items. At first level, children use data gathered from a litter collection to create a simple bar chart. At second level, there is scope to develop children's use of digital technologies to present information in a variety of diagrams, tables and graphs.

Attainment over time

- Data on children's attainment over time was provided by the school. Inspection activities including lesson observations, sampling children's work, focus groups and discussion with staff, indicate that staff should review carefully the range and quality of data used. Analysis of the data provided by the school did not reflect observations and information gathered by the inspection team. Evidence of children's work shows inaccuracies in marking of work and illustrates examples of children making limited progress from the start of the school session. There is a need, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that all children demonstrate continuous progress. Currently, the school does not have in place a manageable robust tracking system that tracks individuals and groups of children ongoing and over time. To improve the robustness of professional judgements, a wider range of appropriate evidence should be used to demonstrate breadth, challenge and application of learning. This should be underpinned by ongoing engagement with the National Benchmarks and in the development of moderation activities.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children at P6 and P7 have the opportunity to lead in a variety of roles including house captains and vice captains, junior school road safety officers, librarians, and as part of the pupil voice group. Recently, a group was set up with representation from all classes looking at rights

education. Pupil achievements are recognised and celebrated at assemblies. However, there is a need to improve the purpose, quality and quantity of achievement opportunities. There is a need to ensure that children learn and progress across all areas of the curriculum. Children are unable to make connections between their involvement in activities and skills for learning, life and work. In addition, the majority of children do not exercise responsibility in their learning, within each class or contribute sufficiently well to the life of their school.

- The school identified the need to improve the involvement of children in their learning. We have asked the school to ensure that children are skilled in talking about their strengths and next steps in learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Equity for all learners

- The school continues to raise awareness to promote equity of success and achievement for all children. The headteacher, along with the support for learning teacher, has termly meetings with class teachers. A variety of interventions are employed to raise children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. However, it is recognised that these have been more focused on literacy and next steps have been identified to provide better outcomes for children in numeracy. Teachers are aware of the need for there to be robust evaluations to measure the effectiveness of any interventions. As well as additional support needs, staff should continue to be aware of all potential barriers to children's learning. As identified by the school, improvement priorities should focus on raising attainment for all and closing gaps in literacy and numeracy.
- The school has in place a plan for the Pupil Equity Fund to identify and support children with barriers to learning arising from economic or social disadvantage. The school discussed the challenges faced by them to implementing the original plan and approaches now in place that are not recorded. We asked the local authority to work with the school as a matter of urgency to clarify, review and amend if necessary, the existing plans in line with national guidance.

Other relevant evidence

- A recent local authority review identified the school's next steps and staff are committed to achieving these and improve children's learning experiences. However, in doing so, we asked the school to plan improvements taking account of the wellbeing of children and staff throughout the process.
- Improve the leadership and management of change involving all staff effectively in the processes ensuring that all children make very good progress in their 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.

Summarised inspection findings

Whitecraig Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

5 November 2019

Key contextual information

Whitecraig Primary School nursery class provides early learning and childcare for children aged from three years. The nursery has one playroom with access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Children use the school grounds for additional physical play and woodland experiences. There has been significant change to the composition of the nursery team since May 2018. The nursery offers morning or afternoon sessions with no full day places. Prior to August 2018 the nursery provided morning sessions only.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Children are happy, settled, and enjoy their time in nursery. They are familiar with routines and make choices from available resources in the playroom and outdoors. The new nursery team are committed to achieving best possible outcomes for children and families. They have made positive progress in improving partnership work, nursery routines, and outdoor learning environments for children.
- Outdoor experiences support children to develop their curiosity and creativity through play with loose parts, and natural materials. As planned, practitioners should build on this to provide increasing opportunities for children to experience depth and challenge in their learning when playing outdoors. They should also continue to improve playroom experiences to provide high quality learning contexts for all children. Senior leaders in the school need to support further improvement to learning and teaching approaches through effective leadership and direction, alongside robust monitoring and planning.
- Children are beginning to make use of digital tools, using an interactive whiteboard to find some information of interest. They have made use of online maps and interactive media to help explore their local area, identifying their homes. Practitioners should continue to develop this, to enable children to explore a wide range of digital resources to extend their learning.
- Practitioners understand the importance of relationships in supporting children's early learning. They are effective in using sensitive interactions to encourage children to begin to share their play and resolve disagreements. This helps children sustain their engagement in play and learning. Group times are not yet consistently effective in supporting children to extend their thinking and develop good listening and talking skills.
- Practitioners are in the process of improving approaches to planning to enable children's ideas and interests to inform and shape experiences and environments. As discussed, the nursery team now need support to improve their use of assessment to inform effective planning. This will enhance personalisation and challenge in learning, and enable practitioners to support children to make best possible progress.

- Floor books are starting to provide contexts for adults and children to engage in purposeful conversations about shared interests. Practitioners should build on this and their use of children's individual learning journals. They should encourage children to explore possibilities and begin to plan and evaluate their experiences. This will help children develop language to talk about learning, and build their sense of themselves as successful leaders of learning.
- Practitioners are working to inform parents about the learning happening in the nursery through 'Sharing the learning' sessions and daily conversations. They have just begun to explore the potential of using simple learning goals with children who attend in the afternoon. They should extend this work and involve families as much as possible in planning and recognising children's achievements and successes in learning.
- The recently appointed early intervention advisor tracks the progress of children identified as needing additional support with their learning. This is at an early stage of development. The nursery team have identified the need to develop effective approaches to track and monitor progress. This will enable them to support children to make best possible progress in learning.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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

satisfactory

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

- Approaches to assessment, tracking and monitoring do not provide a clear picture of children's progress in learning over time. As a result, practitioners are not yet able to build on children's progress effectively enough. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. However, there is significant scope to improve approaches to support skills development and secure children's progress across key aspects of early learning. This will ensure children make the progress they are capable of, and develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills more fully, across learning.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. A positive focus on wellbeing is helping children develop self-regulation skills. We discussed how practitioners could make more use of the school grounds to develop children's physical skills further through challenging, adventurous play. Most children are developing fine motor skills using tools and a range of construction materials. They are learning about the importance of caring for their teeth and hygiene in keeping well. Practitioners need to ensure that learning experiences and snack choices support children to develop their awareness of healthy eating consistently and well.
- Most children are beginning to develop vocabulary and confidence to share ideas and talk about their play. There is scope to develop further children's awareness of sounds and patterns in spoken language through an increased focus on songs and rhymes. Most children enjoy sharing stories with adults. A few children engage with books independently. The majority of older children are beginning to write their own names, they enjoy taking turns writing the snack menu. Children should now be supported to develop their early writing skills further in meaningful contexts. The nursery team now need to develop their use of story, and support children to make and use a wide range of non-fiction texts in play and meaningful contexts.
- Most children are becoming aware of numbers and early counting routines. A few children are more confident in counting. The majority of children are developing some appropriate language to describe position and size, for example when playing with loose parts. Practitioners need to provide more and better opportunities for children to develop numeracy and mathematical skills through play and challenging problem solving experiences.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements in nursery through praise and 'Star of the Week' awards. They should continue to explore creative ways to gather information about children's achievements beyond the nursery. This will enable them to build on what children have already achieved and learned, and help engage families in learning.

- Practitioners know children and families well. They are developing a good understanding of the challenges in the local community. The early intervention advisor is developing useful links with agencies and groups in the community to enhance support for children and families. This is beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes. Senior leaders need to improve tracking and monitoring to evaluate impact and inform future interventions to promote equity. They need to continue to improve planning for children who require additional support with learning.

Other relevant evidence

- Transitions arrangements help ensure parents and children get to know about primary one before children make the move. Practitioners need to work more closely with teachers in primary one to develop a shared understanding of high quality early learning and teaching. Moderation activities will support practitioners and teachers to develop appropriate, increased expectations of children's learning across the early level curriculum.
- The staff team in the nursery work well to improve outcomes and experiences for children in the nursery class. However, as a matter of urgency, there is a need for whole school strategic approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment that includes the nursery class.

1. Quality of care and support

A strength in the setting was the nurturing staff team who fully understood the need for children to feel valued, loved and secure. This created a caring and friendly environment. Children were friendly towards us and confidently told us about and showed us around the environment.

The staff team had been developing their approach to improve partnership working with parents. Parents spoke highly and were appreciative of the opportunity to be involved in their child's nursery experience for example, during stay and play sessions.

Staff had recently completed personal plan forms for children and were in the process of developing a tracking system. We discussed that new personal plan formats needed to be established to ensure meaningful six-monthly reviews were being carried out with parents and children. Furthermore, staff need to ensure that observations and next steps reflect children's progress to inform their assessments of learning. Staff should consider the wellbeing indicators when planning children's care and support. Children would benefit from staff attending training on tracking progress, writing of observations and plans for play. See recommendation one.

Whilst we acknowledged that staff knew children well, strategies for children with additional support needs were not always recorded. The nursery team should work closely with the support for learning teacher and any other agencies to better record, implement and evaluate strategies. This would help support them to measure whether strategies were meeting needs and enabling children to reach their full potential. See recommendation two.

The snack experience was unhurried, relaxed and provided opportunities for children to be involved in menu planning and preparation. Staff need to be mindful of children's need for choice and best practice around nutrition when planning snacks.

Being part of the community was important to the setting and children benefited from the relationships that had been built with other generations within the local community. We felt that children's health and wellbeing could be further enhanced by making better use of the school grounds to experience outdoor play in a natural setting.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

Not assessed

3. Quality of staffing

Staff knew children well as individuals and respected each child's unique personality. Children engaged confidently with staff, inviting them into their play and enjoying conversations together. Staff promoted an ethos of inclusion for both children and parents. Children benefited from staff working well together to create an ethos of respect. Communication was a strength in the nursery team ensuring that children experienced continuity of care.

Whilst we recognised the work staff had already undertaken, staff would benefit from support to further develop their skills in promoting high order thinking. This would further promote children's creative and critical thinking about their learning.

Staff were supportive of children's ideas and interests. This was evidenced through interactions and in floor books where we saw examples of staff taking forward children's ideas. However, staff now need to review the nursery routines. This was of particular need in the afternoon session where the routine impacted on children's experiences as they were involved in a group activity that was not of benefit to their play or learning. Staff need to ensure children can be immersed in and direct their own play and learning.

Staff actively sought opportunities to visit other settings to improve their practice. Self-evaluation was beginning to evolve, and we could see that some areas of improvement identified during the inspection were beginning to be highlighted through this work, for example the nursery environment. However, further work was needed to ensure children were able to freely access a wide range of experiences and resources to stimulate their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

Staff were reflective of their practice and demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment. It was clear they were keen to improve experiences and outcomes for children. To help drive improvements and ensure they are sustained, staff needed to have support from the headteacher through professional development, self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. See recommendation three.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

Not assessed

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 three recommendations.

Recommendations

- To effectively support, develop and track children's learning, the service should improve the way in which observations and next steps are recorded within children's learning stories. This should result in records containing meaningful observations and that are specific to the learning intention. This is to ensure that the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.14) and 'My needs as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected' (HSCS 1.23).
- To effectively meet children's needs, clear plans should be kept on strategies used to support children who require additional support. This will help to ensure children receive the right care to help them reach their full potential. This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).
- To drive improvements and ensure they are sustained, the headteacher should develop and implement a robust system of professional development reviews, self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. This is to ensure that staffing is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes (HSCS 4.19) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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.

