

Summarised inspection findings

Castle Douglas Primary School and Nursery Class

Dumfries and Galloway Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Castle Douglas Nursery operates from one large playroom with direct access to a fenced outdoor area. Recent extension to the fence surrounding this outdoor balcony enables free flow access to this space. The setting is now registered for a maximum of 60 children aged from three years to school age who could attend at any one time. At the time of inspection, there were 70 children on the roll. The majority attend on a part time basis with a few children attending for full days. At the time of inspection, there had been an increase in the number of younger children attending the setting. Changes to the service in preparation for expansion mean a new nursery manager is due to be appointed.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- A positive and calm ethos is evident within the setting. Most children explore their own interests and are inquisitive, engaged and motivated to learn. They sustain their interest for extended periods. This includes creating structures and exploring how water moves through tubes and the water wall. When required, practitioners support sensitively children to access experiences appropriate to their individual need. We observed children making choices and decisions about their play and accessing a good range of interesting experiences. Increasingly, the setting is introducing natural materials and a variety of objects to support children's play with plans to continue to develop this further. There are a few examples where children challenge themselves to identify, explore and solve problems. Practitioners recognise there is scope to increase this further to ensure children are consistent and appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Positive relationships are evident between adults and children. Interactions are caring and responsive to children's needs and interests. In the best examples, practitioners use good open questions to extend learning and deepen children's thinking. This now needs to be more consistent across the team.
- Practitioners support children well to use digital technologies such as tablet computers and an interactive whiteboard to support their learning. This includes supporting children to research points of interests and to use the interactive board for drawing, early writing and to learn about shape. Children could tell us about taking photographs of their 'work'. Practitioners and children celebrate and share achievements and experiences with others through a screen in the hallway and a digital photograph album within the playroom.
- All adults working with the children know them very well and are clear about their individual needs. They make observations of children during play and record these in children's individual learning stories along with photographs and a few examples of children's mark making. The quality of observations is variable. There needs to be a sharper focus on capturing significant

learning, in order to identify clearly next steps in learning for individual children. While there is a system for tracking curriculum coverage, practitioners are aware that a tracking system is required to capture children's progress over time.

- A few children use their 'learning stories' to talk about their experiences and achievements. There is scope to develop this further to give children opportunities to talk about their learning and consider what they might learn next. Children need to take a greater role in leading their learning.
- Practitioners share children's achievements and their progress effectively with parents in many ways. This includes social media, sharing learning stories and daily informal exchanges. Formal meetings twice per year, provide a helpful opportunity for practitioners to discuss children's progress. Parents engage well with a good range of home link activities well matched to children's learning needs. This supports children's learning at home and as a result, parents feel actively involved in supporting children's progress in partnership with the team. The team should now work with parents to evidence how these activities impact on children's progress.
- Increasingly, staff's planning for children's learning is becoming more responsive. Practitioners encourage children to share their ideas and interests and use this information appropriately to plan relevant experiences. We discussed with practitioners, ways to engage children in planning their learning at a deeper level and involve them more fully in their learning.
- An effective planning process is in place to support children who require additional support with their learning. All adults working with the children know them very well. They work closely with parents and other agencies to identify suitable strategies which support children to develop and learn. Practitioners review these strategies regularly to ensure there are improving outcomes for children.

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. 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

- Almost all children are making good progress in communication and early language. Children new to the setting are increasing their vocabulary as they share experiences from home. Most older children are articulate, confident communicators. They listen well to instructions as they discuss in detail how to care for sunflowers. Most children access books independently throughout their day. They enjoy sharing, retelling and having fun with familiar stories, songs and rhymes. To build on children's interest in stories the team should continue to expand the range of fiction and non-fiction books available. Most children show an interest in mark making in the outdoor area. A few children are particularly interested in writing for a purpose and can confidently write their own name. Others could be making brisker progress. Children need to apply their literacy skills in real life contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in mathematics. A few children work well in small groups with practitioners to develop their understanding of simple addition. Children demonstrate an understanding of size and shape as they plan, build and compare towers. Children are developing their early understanding of the concept of volume as they fill and empty containers to transport water to 'wash' the nursery windows. Children need increased opportunities to apply their learning in a wider range of contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children behave and work well together. They show care and respect for one another and their resources. Children are developing their self-care skills through daily routines such as tooth brushing and independently dressing for outdoor play. Most children are developing their gross motor skills well as they play active games in gym sessions within the school. Children need opportunities to develop further their leadership skills.
- Children are making good progress across all areas of their learning. Children enjoy regular music, dance and outdoor learning activities where they are creative and develop their interest in the natural world. A few children use magnifying glasses to carefully observe mini beasts.
- Children enjoy celebrating their success with practitioners and parents. A few examples of children's achievements from out with the setting are captured in large books and wall displays. The team should track and monitor achievements, for example by using children's learning stories.
- There is a very inclusive ethos in the nursery class where all children are valued as individuals. Children who require additional support to access learning make good progress and achieve

relevant and appropriate targets. Next steps are identified and implemented through effective partnership working with parents. A personalised programme of activities, including specialist resources and effective one to one support ensures children blossom and build on their skills. The team should continue to carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of specific strategies on the progress of children who face additional challenges.

1. Quality of care and support

Nursery staff worked very well as a team to promote the inclusive ethos of the school. Parents spoke highly of staff in their questionnaire responses, confirming that staff made their family feel welcome and respected in the nursery. The key worker system helped children build an attachment with their keyworker who would provide reassurance when needed, contributing to children feeling safe and loved. We observed that staff used gentle and patient voices when communicating with children, listening to their ideas and valuing their contributions. Offering children praise for their achievements helps build their confidence and self-esteem.

Staff spoke sensitively and knowledgeably about children's individual care, learning and development needs. Staff took account of parents' knowledge of their child's needs, interests and personality when gathering information required for their personal plan. We particularly liked the signposting between each element of children's personal plans so that meeting children's needs was planned for and reviewed holistically. Staff should be vigilant about dating all documents to ensure that they are current and relevant to the child. Children who presented with additional needs were very well supported. There were strong links between families, the nursery and staff from the wider school as well as external agencies to share strategies that would support children to achieve. Training in core topics such as child protection, infection control and paediatric first aid ensured that staff were supporting the health, welfare and safety of all children.

Systems were in place for the management of children's medication. Parents provided written consent prior to the nursery accepting medication to children. Staff were aware of the actions they should take if a child became unwell. We saw some very good examples of children's health care plans where children might need emergency medication. For example, the nursery used the school asthma cards, which had individualised protocols for staff to follow if children had an asthma attack. We discussed the importance of parents giving specific details of children's symptoms for any medication that was prescribed to be administered 'as required'. This will support the health and safety of children. We also encouraged management to provide clearer templates for logging when medication had been administered (please see recommendation 1).

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

2. Quality of environment

The nursery accommodation was an integral part of the wider school campus and children were able to access a range of facilities to extend the quality of their experiences. For example, we observed children in the games hall, the hydrotherapy pool and the sensory room where they were involved in activities that supported their physical development and emotional wellbeing.

We found that the nursery itself was a happy, busy environment where children were directing and leading their own play. Staff had worked hard to provide fun, stimulating and enabling spaces for children. This was particularly evident in the organisation of free flow access to the outdoor play area where open-ended materials and loose parts had been introduced. We observed children following their play intentions to explore, discover and experiment with the available resources. Staff were skilled in supporting and intervening to promote positive outcomes for children. For example they recognised the importance of managing risk positively to promote children's independence and support them to take responsibility for their own safety. This approach helped build children's resilience and enjoyment of risky play.

In their questionnaire responses, parents were impressed with the breadth of experiences offered to their children and greatly appreciated the outdoor learning.

Staff were vigilant about promoting children's health and safety. As recommended at our last inspection, the fencing around the balcony had been raised to keep children safe. We recognised that infection prevention and control measures had been enhanced to minimise the spread of infection, which meant a related recommendation had been overtaken. However, we asked that management review the shared use of the disabled toilet as a staff toilet and standby change area for children. This is to provide a comfortable and pleasant environment for children being changed as well as to avoid cross infection between people using the service. We referred management to the design guidance for early learning and childcare settings, 'Space to Grow', which highlights best practice in the organisation of children's toilets.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and two recommendations. From these, both recommendations have been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and one recommendation.

Recommendations

The service manager should monitor the procedures for the management of children's medication to incorporate best practice. Management and staff should refer to the Care Inspectorate good practice guidance - Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services (2014).

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that as a child: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice." (HSCS 4.11)

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.