

# Summarised inspection findings

**Ballantrae Primary School**

**South Ayrshire Council**

**SEED No: 8232229**

**10 November 2017**

**Key contextual information**

Ballantrae PS/NC serves the village of Ballantrae and surrounding areas. The roll at the time of the inspection was 62 in the primary classes and 7 in the nursery class. The school building dates back to the late nineteenth century and while it has had some upgrading it requires some attention to ensure it effectively supports learners in modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation. South Ayrshire Council has a plan in place to modernise and extend the school in 2018. Colmonell PS/NC is a partner school also led by the headteacher of Ballantrae PS/NC. In the recent past, staffing in the school and nursery class has seen a number of changes.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 headteacher and her staff have worked very effectively with children, parents and community members to develop a clear vision for the school. Through a range of consultation activities the school has agreed a set of aims and values and created a vision that reflects very well the unique social, economic and cultural context of Ballantrae PS/NC. The vision, values and aims for the school reflect the Rights Respecting School Award principles which are very well embedded within the culture and ethos of the school. The school is working towards the second award level within the scheme. There are a number of important strengths within the staff team. Teaching staff take the lead on a number of curriculum and learning developments. These include learning for sustainability, reviewing outdoor learning approaches and arrangements for children to be involved in the life and work of the school through the creation of community action groups. The impact of these leadership activities is evident in improvements to curriculum programmes and to children's high levels of confidence and knowledge of the community in which they live.
- The headteacher demonstrates very strong strategic leadership and direction. She encourages all staff to develop themselves professionally and as a result they are gaining important leadership skills. Staff are proactive in seeking out career-long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities that are impacting positively on the quality of children's learning experiences. A specific focus has been developing learning for sustainability which in turn is improving children's attainment in listening and talking and writing. The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to employ additional support staff to improve reading skills and approaches to improving mental agility. It is too soon to know if these interventions are closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Teachers plan together to make the best of their collective knowledge and skills and to bring about a progressive and coherent curriculum experience for children. Almost all staff have a good understanding of the school and nursery class strengths and where they need to improve. The school's arrangements for self-evaluation are strong and wide-ranging. In creating the school improvement plan, all staff play their part in reflecting on the quality of provision, they look inwards to seek the views of children and parents and outwards to their peers in the partnership school and beyond to others in the family of schools and other authorities for different ways to improve the curriculum. They make effective use of peer feedback during reciprocal visits to adjust and improve their practice. They take effective account of the needs of the learners who require additional support and those children who are looked after. There is a need for a more consistent pedagogical approach by all staff as they take forward identified areas for improvement.

- The school's approach to leading change is reflexive and inclusive with the wider community also part of any change agenda. A Community Action Plan has been created by children, with support from school staff and involvement of parents and community representatives. Children identified the need to move away from a committee structure to one that provided them with opportunities to support and drive forward improvements in and out of school. The focus for the Community Action Plan groups were decided by the children. These include a group that will work with senior citizens and a gardening group already active within the village. The focus on implementing Curriculum for Excellence through a rights-based agenda has impacted significantly on children's awareness of themselves as learners. Children make valuable contributions to many aspects of the life and work of the school.
- Parents are regular visitors to the school and nursery class. They contribute their views and these are acted upon positively by the school. The headteacher and her staff work closely with other community groups which plan events such as the Ballantrae Food Festival and The Smugglers' Festival. Children contribute fully to these events at the planning stages and as participants at each event.
- The school engages very successfully with a range of partners. The headteacher and principal teacher identify and seek the support of a range of agencies to ensure the curriculum, learning and teaching are enhanced. Close attention is given to providing children with experiences that develop their lifelong learning skills.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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.

### Learning and engagement

- Across the school, there is a very strong, positive and inclusive ethos where children's rights are respected. The development of children's rights and responsibilities are key drivers for the curriculum and the work of the school. As a result of the strong relationships between all members of the school community, there is a very positive and caring climate for learning. There is a strong sense of equity amongst staff, children and parents. Staff know the pastoral needs of children very well and show a commitment to children's wellbeing and development. Children interact very well with staff and each other and they demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Children support each other very well in class and around the school.
- Overall children in Ballantrae School are keen to learn. They have high expectations of themselves and others. Across the school, children are highly motivated to learn and almost all engage very well in their learning activities. They are eager and active participants in their learning. In almost all lessons, learning activities are well matched to the needs of learners. Children who require additional support are very well supported in their learning by class teachers and support staff.
- In almost all lessons, activities are appropriately challenging and enjoyable. On a few occasions, a few children could be better challenged in their learning. By building on the best practice already in the school, there is scope for teaching staff to ensure that there is consistency in the level of challenge within all lessons and across the curriculum, to enable all children to achieve as highly as possible..
- Learning intentions and success criteria are shared well in almost all lessons. This results in effective feedback being given to children in helping them to know how successful they have been in their learning. Children have regular opportunities to self-assess their own work and peer assess the work of others. This is particularly evident in activities such as physical education. Children are clearly used to this way of working and do this very well.
- In all classes, children have a say in shaping how their learning will develop through their involvement in planning learning contexts. For example, children identify what and how they would like to learn in specific projects. Using a 'big question' approach, children have planned their own interdisciplinary work on the sea. As a result of these approaches, levels of engagement and enjoyment are high.
- Most children show confidence in talking about themselves as successful learners and what they need to do improve. Through the use of digital Personal Learning Logs, children are

developing an increasing awareness of their own strengths. The Personal Learning Logs are having a positive impact on children's learning and have the potential to be developed even further. Children use a good range of activities to peer assess how well they have been learning and how well they have understood a task. An example of this is children at the middle stages evaluating how difficult they found the task before the teacher marks their work. Assessment for Learning strategies (AifL) are embedded across the school.

- Children feel that their views are sought and listened to by teachers. They have positive opportunities to be involved in a range of school committees including the Community Action Groups. Children spoke positively in their role in helping and supporting the elderly, a community garden and Brick, a local charity shop. These activities are giving children an increasing awareness of skills related to life and work.

### **Quality of teaching**

- The school has experienced a change in staffing in recent years. However, overall the quality of teaching across the school is good with aspects of very good. Staff know their children very well and are continually seeking ways to ensure all children continue to make the best progress they can. Staff work collegiately with their partner school to identify what makes a high-quality lesson and are using this to further improve aspects of their own teaching.
- Staff provide clear explanations during their teaching and make well-timed interventions effectively to support individuals and groups in their learning as required. They use a variety of strategies to ensure that learning is differentiated for the wide range of learning needs within the multi-stage classes.
- Digital technologies are used to support learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy-based software packages and use of PCs. Interactive whiteboards are used in each class well to make learning more active. The school is aware the use of digital technology is an area for development.

### **Effective use of assessment**

- Across the school, children are supported very well in their learning by teaching and non-teaching staff. A range of assessment techniques, both formal and informal, are used across the school. This results in any potential barriers to children's learning being identified early.
- In classes, AifL strategies are used well, with learning intentions shared and discussed. In almost all lessons observed, assessment approaches support children's needs, for example, feedback is shared in a variety of ways, including peer assessment. Success criteria are shared and discussed in helpful plenaries of learning. Older children are able to identify their own targets for learning which are displayed in a prominent position on desks.
- At a whole school level, the headteacher manages the process of more formal assessment well. Information from this is well-managed to influence planning, tracking and monitoring.

### **Planning tracking and monitoring**

- Led by the headteacher, staff work well together to plan track and monitor children's learning. Teachers work well together to jointly plan and evaluate learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy where appropriate. Moderation activities take place within the school, with the partner school and within the cluster. There is evidence that this is having a positive impact on teachers' professional judgement on achievement of a level.
- Teachers make professional judgements on children's progress and attainment using a range of evidence including the results from standardised assessments. Children's progress is recorded, monitored and tracked very well throughout the year, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Due to the small school roll, the headteacher has correctly identified the need to focus on the progress of individual children rather than relying purely on raw data. The headteacher has a clear understanding of attainment patterns and analysis of data from standardised assessments. As a result, of analysis of data, the headteacher is aware of the need to focus on particular curricular areas, such as taking a more focussed approach to the teaching of reading. As a result, the headteacher and staff know children and their progress on an individual basis. This is working well for the school.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Learning pathways are planned in collaboration with children and reflect the unique context of the school and its community. Careful account is taken of the rural location in planning learning in and beyond the school environment. Children from both the nursery class and primary stages frequently access the local park, the beach and nearby wooded areas to enhance their curricular experiences. Learning is regularly supported by parents, partners and others. Some areas of the curriculum are planned for and taught as discrete subjects and for blocks of time, for example, the sciences. Health and wellbeing permeates all areas of the curriculum. The school places a strong emphasis on learning for sustainability and on the importance of health and wellbeing, in particular building children's resilience. The culture of respect, trust and equity is tangible throughout the school and is valued by staff as the bedrock on which children thrive.
- Learning using digital technologies continues to be developed across the nursery and school. Children are increasingly gaining confidence and skills in using laptops, and tablets. They are becoming proficient in the use of apps and programmes to support their learning. Important skills for learning, life and work are gained through their use of a range of technologies. An example of this would be their presentations and story writing during the Smugglers' Festival.
- After-school and lunchtime clubs are many and varied. They are open to all children at the primary stages. Many of these opportunities are supported by volunteers and by staff. The list of opportunities include, the Glee Club, dance, gymnastics, drama and gardening. The school tracks children's participation in wider achievements and is proactive in ensuring all children can take part. Younger children also have the support of buddies and nursery children regularly work together with children in P1. The focus on play-based learning across the Curriculum for Excellence early level could be developed further. As children make the move from home to nursery and to school, arrangements to smooth the transition are carefully planned and implemented. Parents engage well with events that are held once children make the move to primary school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families - parental engagement

- Strong and productive partnerships have been established with all stakeholders. The parents we met with were highly satisfied with their involvement with the school and nursery class. They felt valued and respected for the contributions they are encouraged to make to the work of the school. These include sharing their skills and experiences. Parents receive timely and relevant information in a range of formats that keeps them suitably informed of their child's progress in learning and their wellbeing. They are fully consulted through surveys and face-to-face meetings on how they might want the school to improve.
- Parents welcome the intended renovations to improve the fabric of the school buildings and the addition of an extension that includes a multi-purpose space. Such an addition will improve the quality of the learning spaces and provide the children with a much needed space for physical education.
- The school is proactive in engaging parents in many ways. These include inviting parents of children who have just started school to meet with the headteacher and the P1 teacher a few weeks into the new session. These meetings offer parents the chance to hear about how their child is settling and to ask any questions about the curriculum and how they can support their child with their learning. The meetings are appreciated greatly by parents who told us they found them helpful in understanding how their child is settling and making progress in P1.

## 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

very 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.

- Wellbeing and health is a strength of the school. A significant emphasis has been placed by the headteacher, principal teacher and all staff on ensuring that children feel safe and that they understand the importance of leading healthy lives. Children are included, respected, nurtured and active learners. This focus on wellbeing is strongly underpinned by the school's vision, values and aims. Building children's resilience is an important aspiration of the school and this is achieved in a number of ways which include, daily checking in using the safe, healthy, achieving, nurturing, active, respecting, responsible and including indicators, giving children leadership opportunities and through the delivery of curricular topics and themes with a health and wellbeing focus.
- Children are highly motivated, happy, confident, trusting and respectful learners. They have a strong sense of self-worth as they go about their school and community. They are extremely well behaved, enthusiastic and take great care of each other, acting as role models for younger children and buddying new entrants to P1. Class charters are displayed in classrooms and used by teachers to support the learning and learners. The school is working towards the achievement of the second level of the Rights Respecting School award. Children demonstrate their effectiveness as responsible citizens in their work as buddies and as members of the Community Action Groups. The children we met with told us they feel respected and safe in school. Their respectful behaviours reflect the school's values. Arrangements to celebrate children's successes are well embedded and meaningful.
- The school works closely with key partners to ensure that all children are very well supported and cared for emotionally and socially. All staff are proactive in supporting children's mental and physical health and wellbeing. Productive links with health partners and other agencies further enhance children's positive attitudes to learning. School quantitative and qualitative data suggests that as a result of the school's approaches for promoting children's health and wellbeing, children's active participation and awareness of themselves as learners is strong.
- All children benefit from accessing the outdoor learning spaces. They regularly go on beach walks, tend the school garden, and access the local play park. They are often involved in activities within the village, going on trips locally and further away that extend their knowledge and give them opportunities to apply their skills and become more globally aware.

- The school staff comply with statutory duties. The principal teacher has responsibility for maintaining the staged intervention processes and ensuring that children's targeted support plans are updated appropriately.
- Inclusion and equality are strengths of the school. All staff are responsive to the individual needs of children, they are proactive in their interactions with children and families and take great pride in the fact that they find ways to ensure all children can take part in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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 has used formal assessment data effectively over a number of years to monitor children's performance. Due to the small numbers of children in each cohort, the school correctly places a focus on the on-going progress of individual children rather than percentages. As numbers in almost all cohorts are fewer than ten children, figures in percentages are not quoted in here as individual children may be identified. According to figures provided by the school, attainment has shown signs of improvement. During last session, most children attained expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. A few children, at various stages, achieved expected levels early. According to the professional judgement of teachers, most children are on track to achieve expected levels of attainment in the current session. Inspection activities would confirm this.

#### Literacy

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy.

#### Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are very attentive. They listen well to each other in class and group situations. A few children at the middle stages still need to work on taking turns in class and in small group situations as they can be inclined to call out and talk when peers and adults are talking. Across the school, most children have a good awareness of audience, enjoying opportunities to share their own personal stories. At almost all stages, children can follow their teacher's instructions and explanations and do what is asked of them.

#### Reading

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in reading. Most children are attaining the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels, including those with additional support needs. A group of children at P3, who are working at the first level read aloud with accuracy and good expression. They can use the illustrations in their reading books to predict what would happen next, to identify the main ideas and talk about why they were important to the story. Almost all can attempt unfamiliar texts and can sound out new vocabulary accurately. They are less confident in explaining the terms, fiction and non-fiction but know the difference between books that contain information and an imaginative story.
- Across the school, children are given regular opportunities to read for pleasure or in a paired reading situation. The school has identified a number of children who are not progressing at a fast enough pace. Strategies to support children include, using small

group reading activities. There is scope to challenge skilled readers more and to extend their access to a wider range of written and electronic text.

## **Writing**

- Almost all children's written work is very well presented. The school places high importance on well-formed handwriting and neatly presented work. Children receive regular helpful written and oral feedback on their writing from teachers and from peers. They also self-assess their writing pieces. A recent focus on improving children's written work is helping children's confidence in themselves as writers. Moderation activities by teachers is improving the consistency of accurately assessing a level. The school now needs to ensure children working beyond the first level are provided with opportunities to write for a wider variety of purposes across the curriculum.

## **Mathematics/Numeracy.**

- Overall, in mathematics and numeracy, most children are making good progress from their prior learning of attainment.

## **Number/Money/Measurement**

- At the early stages, children are making a good start to their early numeracy skills and are developing confidence in their awareness of number bonds. Children in P1 are developing a sound awareness of number recognition and can do so through a range of practical activities. Older children are developing their skills in number very well. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide confidently according to their age and stage of development. By P7, children are able to talk about strategies they use to round numbers to the nearest hundred and thousands. Across the school children's number skills are enhanced by a strong ability to calculate mentally. Older children are less secure when working with fractions. The school has identified this as an area for development.
- Across the school, children's skills in measure are developing well. At the early stages, children estimate the length and height of objects in the classroom using their hands and feet. Older children are developing good skills in estimating length and using a range of measurement tools outdoors.
- At the upper stages, children are able to talk confidently about the connection between analogue and digital time.

## **Shape/Position/Movement**

- At the early and middle stages almost all children are able to identify 2D shapes and 3D objects as appropriate to their stage of development. By the upper stages, children can talk in detail about the properties of shapes. Children have been able to do this through art work and talk about what shapes they have used. At the upper stages, children are developing a good understanding of angles.

## **Information handling**

- At the early stages, children are able to estimate the number of and sort coloured sweets using tally marks. They are able to represent this information in a bar graph. By P7, children can talk about a range of chart and diagrams they have used to display information often using digital technology. They have used a bar graph display to show the results after a survey on their views about school.

- At P7, children are not confident in identifying and using a range of problem solving strategies to solve mathematical problems. In doing so, the school should consider looking for connections for this to work as it is currently doing with higher order thinking skills.

### **Health and wellbeing**

- Across the school, children are making good progress within health and wellbeing. They show a very good awareness of emotional health issues and display a great empathy to support others.

### **Attainment over time:**

- Due to the small number of children within the school, available data cannot accurately define trends over time in attainment. Overall, most children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Formal data and teacher professional judgements show an improving trend for almost all children.
- Children who may require additional support with their learning are supported very well. Staff are aware of relevant personal circumstance of children and well-judged targeted support is planned. Often this is carried out by school assistants who carry out this role very well. This has been the case over a number of years.
- Moderation activities both within and outwith the school are working well. Staff have been engaging with the national benchmarks and this is helping to confirm the professional judgement of staff. The school should continue with plans to develop further tracking and monitoring of children's progress in literacy and numeracy, and across all areas of the curriculum, in order to secure high attainment for all children.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children across the school are very happy, confident and making good progress across a range of social competencies. Children are very proud of their school and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to succeed in community events, in sporting and cultural activities and in having a voice that is listened to, acted upon and impacts positively on making their school better. Children take very seriously their leadership roles. They are good at organising events such as the Glee Club, Holocaust Day and being buddies for younger children. The lunchtime and after-school clubs are enjoyed and ensure children can share and learn new skills in dance and music. Children help to raise funds for a number of charities, as a result, children are gaining skills in citizenship and enterprise. The size of the school allows all children to take responsibility for aspects of the day to day running of the school. Joint events with the other partner school are helping children get to know their peers and relationships are well-established as a result.

### **Equity for all Learners:**

- The school is very aware of children at risk of missing out and supports them very well. It has clear plans for using the PEF based on accurate data. This session the school has accessed an additional school assistant to give targeted support. Over recent years specific targeted support from school assistants has addressed equity issues and been a positive driver for improvements in children's attainment, particularly in early reading.
- The school also addresses issues with equity very well and sensitively in the very inclusive way in which it works with parents.

- All staff know their children very well and they respond sensitively to any economic or emotional and social need. The school does, however, recognise that there is a need to be responsive to the changing demographics of the school and its community and is proactive in taking appropriate action as required.

## Setting choice of QI :1.2 Leadership of learning

- **Theme 1 Professional engagement and collegiate working**
- **Theme 2 Impact of CLPL**
- **Theme 3 Children and young people leading learning**

- The headteacher and her staff have been highly successful in creating a positive learning culture that is built solidly on a collegiate approach. Teaching and support staff are empowered by the headteacher to develop their leadership roles. Collegiality is a strength of the school.
- Staff from both the nursery and the school, identify through their annual review and regular self-reflection, opportunities to enhance their professional knowledge and skills. They have used professional enquiry and training events/courses to extend their understanding of high-quality teaching and learning, adopting nurturing approaches, giving confidence to children to exercise their right to be heard and identifying new and creative ways to involve children in planning their own learning. Having spent time at collegiate sessions researching and reading the literature associated with, 'making thinking visible'. the planned next step as a whole staff is to implement this approach. Staff have critiqued Blooms taxonomy seeking to ensure that the philosophy is the best approach for their children. Support staff engage in professional learning activities, they have attended nurture training, attachment disorder, Rights Respecting School and hygiene training courses. Staff share their learning from training opportunities and reflect on how children have benefited from implementing new approaches to teaching.
- Children benefit from the wide range of leadership experiences they have during their time in school and out in the community. They have a good awareness of the importance of gaining skills that equip them for the world of work. They had full responsibility for developing the activities associated with the 'Holocaust Day' and for the 'Loose Parts' play project. They make effective use of an app that records their progress in learning. A clear picture now exists of their learning journey from nursery to P7. They use digital technology for presentations and animation. They often lead lunch time clubs where they employ their digital literacy skills and take responsibility for clubs such as the 'Glee Club'.

## Particular strengths of the school

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and the effectiveness of her approaches in promoting a sustainable, inclusive learning environment. The strong and productive partnership with parents and the community which impact positively on children's learning experiences.
- The strong teamwork of staff who by working well together are enhancing the quality of children's learning in and beyond the classroom. These effective approaches are resulting in improvements to the curriculum and bringing about the best possible outcomes for all children.
- Responsible, respectful, happy and hardworking learners in both the nursery and primary classes who have high expectations of themselves and others. The school's very strong ethos of achievement and sense of community. Children's high levels of resilience, confidence and enthusiasm.
- The effectiveness of nursery staff in empowering children to be leaders of their own learning through open-ended experiences.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from South Ayrshire Council:

- Continue to further improve aspects of the life and work of the nursery and school such as the use of digital technology and problem solving in mathematics.
- Building on best practice already in the school, continue to develop consistency of approaches to teaching and learning to ensure that attainment continues to rise.

## What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. South Ayrshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

## 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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# Summarised inspection findings

**Ballantrae Primary School and nursery class  
(primary school nursery class)**

**South Ayrshire Council**

**SEED No: 8232229**

**10 November 2017**

### **Key contextual information**

Ballantrae nursery is based within Ballantrae Primary School. The setting provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged 2-5 years from Ballantrae and the surrounding areas. Currently, the setting does not have any 2 year old children. At the time of the inspection the roll was 7. Almost all children are 3 years old. A few children have only been in the setting for 3 weeks. Since August 2017, the local authority has provided parents with access to 1140 hours of ELC. A few parents are accessing this extended provision. This is an independent trial by the local authority.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very 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.

- There is a strong commitment to the shared vision, values and aims of the school and nursery class. These are brought to life through practitioners' practice, their interactions with children and families, and their aspirations for children. Practitioners are professional and work hard to provide high quality ELC. They receive clear guidance and direction from the leadership team, including, the nursery teacher. This has created a confident and motivated team who provide children with very good early learning experiences.
- A clear and detailed improvement plan has been established for the school and nursery class. While the nursery teacher is fully involved in the improvement planning process, there is scope to include and engage all practitioners at a deeper and more pro-active level. As a result, all practitioners within the setting would then be able to clearly demonstrate the impact of improvements within the setting and make the link between the setting and the whole school improvement priorities.
- Within the setting, practitioners make very good use of national guidance, research and their knowledge of early years pedagogy and play to ensure continuous improvement. On-going professional dialogue, reflection and self-evaluation have resulted in a number of positive changes to teaching and learning and the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Practitioners monitor the impact of change on children and families to ensure their improvement priorities remain relevant and are achieved. Regular reflection and monitoring is leading to an appropriate pace of change.
- Leadership at all levels is positively encouraged. This has been particularly successful in supporting areas such as transition, physical activity and outdoor learning. Formal and informal monitoring and individual professional review and development sessions provide practitioners with the opportunity to demonstrate and discuss their strengths. Areas for further development are identified and agreed and the appropriate support provided to enable practitioners to continually improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to ELC. As a result, practitioners are confident and motivated to develop further their practice and ensure a positive impact on children's learning and progress.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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.

- Almost all children engage very happily with the range of interesting experiences within the setting. Children are motivated and come to the setting ready to explore and investigate the stimulating learning environment. Practitioners effectively support and encourage children to make choices and be independent during routines and free-flow play. Children demonstrate confidence in choosing and selecting resources. On-going professional dialogue and personal research has resulted in practitioners reaching a shared understanding of pedagogy and play. Creativity, curiosity and inquiry are promoted very well. Time and space is given within the flexible routine to ensure children lead and deepen their learning. Children's open-ended play is supported very well through a variety of contexts including spontaneous play and real-life experiences. Regular visits to the beach, local park and community are enriching children's learning experiences in a meaningful way.
- Practitioners have a very good understanding of children's stages of development and how to support children's learning through their interactions. They use their skills appropriately to differentiate learning experiences. Children are supported to sustain their interest and experience at an appropriate level of challenge suited to their stage of development. It will be important to continue to offer support to practitioners to ensure consistency across the team.
- Observations of children are used effectively to inform planning and next steps in learning for individual children. Personal plans are created timeously in partnership with parents. Together, practitioners and parents identify targets to support children's learning and wellbeing. Children are supported sensitively to set their own meaningful targets. Electronic profiles demonstrate a clear picture of children's learning and achievements. Most children can confidently contribute to their electronic profile. This includes taking photographs and making video recordings of their experiences to enable them to reflect on their learning and achievements.
- Very good use is made of experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) together with developmental milestones to support the planning and assessment process. Practitioners regularly engage in professional dialogue to moderate and reach a shared understanding of children's progress and learning. As identified, this could be extended to include colleagues from primary one to ensure a shared understanding across the early level of CfE.

- Planning for children's learning is flexible and responsive and built upon children's interests and practitioners' knowledge of individual children. Learning experiences are well considered. Practitioners plan for assessment and meet regularly to discuss and monitor children's progress. Next steps in learning are identified and inform curriculum planning and target setting. We have suggested that practitioners consider ways of streamlining the planning process.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The rationale for the totality of the curriculum is based upon a shared understanding of early years pedagogy and takes account of the local community and opportunities for learning within it. Practitioners use the design principles of CfE well to underpin the planning and evaluation process. They ensure appropriate levels of support and challenge as a result of effective observations and assessment of play and learning.
- Good use is made of National and local guidance to support planning for children's learning. There is an appropriate focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Building the Ambition, a national practice document, is also used to enhance the learning provision with a clear focus on promoting, curiosity, inquiry and creativity. Experiences and outcomes from CfE are tracked to ensure children receive a broad general education.
- Regular opportunities for outdoor learning are enriching children's experiences. Use of the local woodland and beaches are providing children with a wealth of experiences where they learn within and from the natural environment. Natural and real-life objects are fully integrated into the indoor and outdoor environments. The wide range of open-ended resources supports children's imagination and problem solving skills. Children benefit from regular visits to and from members of the local community. There is potential to develop further, children's skills for learning, life and work by maximising these opportunities.
- Transition into the setting is carefully planned, yet flexible to meet the needs of children and families. Transitions throughout the session are well managed. Regular opportunities are provided for nursery children to join school activities and visit primary 1. To support continuity and progression in learning, information on children's progress is shared with the P1 teacher who visits children within the setting. There will be benefit in increasing collaborative work with colleagues working within the early level of CfE. This will support the development of a shared understanding of pedagogy and play and learning and teaching approaches.
- Primary 1 children have the opportunity to engage in play-based sessions with the nursery class children. Careful consideration should be given to how practitioners ensure continuity of the curriculum and support and extend children's learning during these sessions. As a team it will be important to be clear about the rationale for this approach and define clear roles and responsibilities for the adults working with both the setting and primary children.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families - parental engagement

- Practitioners have a respectful relationship with parents. Their contributions are valued. Families are welcome and fully included in the life of the setting. Parents are encouraged to share their views through a variety of methods and feel comfortable to do so.
- The setting provides a range of ways for parents to be involved in their child's learning and be informed of their child's progress. This includes personal planning meetings with practitioners where parents are involved in setting targets and evaluating their child's progress. These meetings provide an opportunity for practitioners to share with parents the valuable contribution they make to their child's learning. A two-way email process linked to children's electronic profiles enables parents to hear about and share their child's learning and achievements. Stay and play sessions where parents work alongside their child are well attended. Parents report that they particularly enjoy spending time with their child, observing their play and learning. Helpful information boards and newsletters provide parents with regular information in relation to the curriculum and nursery class events.

## 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

very 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.

- Very positive relationships exist between practitioners and children. The wellbeing of children and families underpins the work of the setting. Relationships across the setting and with families are respectful. A welcoming and inclusive ethos for children, parents and visitors has been created. Practitioners view children as unique individuals with their own needs, skills and talents. Children's early leadership skills develop through particular tasks such as 'tidy inspectors' and snack helpers. The strong commitment to children's rights and wellbeing is demonstrated through practitioner's interactions and practice. Children's views are valued and recognised. Practitioners involve children in decisions and encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas which are listened to and acted upon.
- Practitioners have a sound understanding of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators. They actively promote these through a range of daily experiences both indoors and outdoors. Most children are developing their awareness of the indicators and understand how to keep safe and healthy through tasks such as risk assessment and personal care. There will be benefit in considering ways to develop further children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators through developmentally appropriate and meaningful learning experiences.
- Children are encouraged and supported to develop friendships and positive relationships with each other. Positive behaviour is promoted. As identified, through self-evaluation, practitioners would benefit from professional learning to develop further their skills in using nurturing approaches.
- Practitioners are fully aware of and comply with the statutory requirements in relation to providing ELC. All children have a personal plan built upon the views of children and their parents. Reviews are held within appropriate timescales to ensure children continue to make progress and have their needs met. Practitioners are clear about their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding children. All children access their entitlement to funded ELC. In addition to this, the setting is currently undertaking a trial in relation to providing 1140 hours of ELC for families who wish to access it. This trial is still at very early stages, therefore it is too early to evidence the impact the trial is having on children and families.
- The setting has an inclusive ethos with a strong sense of community. Practitioners treat children and families fairly and with respect. They value diversity and challenge discrimination in developmentally appropriate ways. There is scope to increase the range of resources and learning experiences to enable children to develop a better awareness of diversity and society. Where barriers to learning are identified, practitioners work together

to provide appropriate support. When required advice and support is sought from partner agencies and appropriate strategies implemented.

### 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 within the setting are making good progress in their learning. A clear focus on health and wellbeing enables children to develop confidence and independence through an open-ended approach to play. Children manage risk during their trips to the beach, forest and local park and are aware of how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of their bodies and how to keep healthy as a result of specific learning contexts. Most children's physical skills are in line with their development. Using scissors and taking part in the 'dough disco' is supporting children's fine motor skills.
- In early language, most children are making good progress. Most are confident to talk to visitors about their learning experiences. An early reading approach is being used effectively to support children's love of books. Most listen well during story time. A few children confidently recall favourite stories. They describe events and ask appropriate questions to deepen their learning. It will be important for practitioners to consistently seek opportunities to build children's vocabulary during free-flow play. A few children are able to recognise their name and other familiar signs within the local environment. All children are developing their mark making skills through a range of sensory and relevant experiences.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in early mathematics and numeracy. Through a wide range of games and natural resources, children are developing an awareness of shape, size, pattern and number. Real-life experiences are supporting children to develop an awareness of money. It would be beneficial to children to continue to support them to develop mathematical language during their play and adult-led activities. Practitioners should consider ways to increase opportunities for information handling.
- The open-ended approach to both indoors and outdoors is providing children with good opportunities to develop and apply their skills across learning. Early skills in science and social studies develop through community visits and specific learning contexts. Learning for sustainability is being supported and encouraged through, for example, charity work, gardening and strong links with the local community. A few children develop their skills in using tablet computers to find information, navigate games and to talk about their experiences through their electronic profile.
- The supportive and nurturing environment is supporting most children to become confident, resilient and independent learners. Children's achievements are recognised and

celebrated in a meaningful way. It will be important for practitioners to continue to build on children's achievements from home. This will better support children to continue to develop their skills and talents and make the best possible progress.

- Practitioners are aware of the socio-economic context of the setting. They recognise the responsibility of practitioners working within the ELC sector in identifying, at an early stage, potential barriers to learning. Practitioners have realistic aspirations for children attending the setting. They demonstrate a positive commitment to ensuring all children have equal access to a wide range of experiences to develop skills for learning and life.

## Setting choice of QI :1.2 Leadership of learning

- **Professional engagement and collegiate working**
- **Impact of career-long professional learning**
- **Children leading learning.**

- Practitioners work very well as a team in an environment where collegiality is encouraged. Practitioners are supportive of each other, sharing their skills, knowledge and expertise to improve their practice. Positive relationships are evident. There is a supportive ethos and a culture exists where practitioners are empowered to undertake research and lead projects. This includes opportunities to work closely with the setting's partner nursery class and take part in reciprocal ELC visits to share good practice. Almost all practitioners within the setting have responsibility for leading on specific areas. This has resulted in improved transition for children moving into primary 1, support for children with balance and coordination and increased use of the local environment to support outdoor learning.
- Continuous professional learning opportunities have had a positive impact on learning and teaching. Practitioners are motivated to increase their knowledge to build on and sustain their practice. This has resulted in a learning environment where children can make choices, be independent in their learning and develop curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- Children are encouraged to make choices, be independent and share their thoughts and ideas. The routine of the day is flexible for children to confidently lead their own learning both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners know children very well, they observe children at play and respond at appropriate times to support and extend children's 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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