

Summarised inspection findings

Littlemill Early Childhood Centre

East Ayrshire Council

1 October 2024

Key contextual information

Littlemill Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is an integral part of Littlemill Primary School. It is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for a maximum of 18 children. At the time of the inspection there were 12 children attending the setting. Children are aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. The ECC is a term time provision and is open daily from 9am to 3pm.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the ECC and is the registered manager. The staffing complement in the ECC comprises of two fulltime early learning and childcare practitioners. This academic session there has been an additional allocation of one Teacher Access Programme (TAP) teacher. In addition, a senior early learning and childcare practitioner from the partner school works one day per week.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

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

- The ECC has a positive and welcoming ethos and there is a strong feeling of community throughout the setting. Practitioners show care and respect for children and their families, and they demonstrate nurturing relationships. As a result, most children are happy, settled and friendly towards each other. Children have free flow access to the outdoor environment where they can engage in energetic play. This supports the majority of children to manage their emotions well. There are a range of open-ended and real-life resources that children can access easily to enrich their play.
- Practitioners interact sensitively and gently with children during their play. They use a range of strategies to support children's language and communication and ask thoughtful questions to extend children's curiosity and deepen their thinking. Practitioners listen attentively to what children have to say and this supports children to feel that their spoken contributions are valued.
- Practitioners use digital technologies to enhance children's learning. They support children to use the internet to research information around subjects of interest. Practitioners use a touchscreen device to reinforce previous learning and to widen children's experiences. For example, using an online piano keyboard to create music and taking part in an online flight simulator. Practitioners should continue to extend children's digital skills through the meaningful use of a wider range of digital technologies.
- Practitioners use online profiles to record photographs and observations about children's learning. Practitioners capture well significant learning in observations but now need to ensure consistent coverage across all areas of learning. Parents access the online profiles to help keep them informed about their child's learning experiences. They also have daily opportunities

to speak with staff at drop off and pick up times. Senior leaders need to monitor profiles to improve the recording and tracking of children's next steps in learning. Practitioners should work with children to identify their next steps and the ways to achieve them in language they can understand. Senior leaders should help to develop the tracking and recording of children's learning to ensure it demonstrates accurately the progress children are making. Practitioners need to engage in moderation activity to support them to make confident and accurate judgements about children's progress.

- There have been changes to the staff team over the past year. This is supporting the setting's progress to embed new approaches to planning and recording of children's learning. The TAP teacher uses the newly introduced planning framework to plan responsively around children's interests and curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes. Practitioners should develop further their use of the planning framework and approaches to planning to ensure they are planning depth and progression in learning. Practitioners should develop ways to share the planned learning with children. This will promote further children's understanding of their own learning and skills development and support them to evaluate learning more effectively.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

3.2 Securing children's progress

weak

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

- The setting does not have systems in place to track the progress of children's learning over time. Children's progress is weak in early language, mathematics and numeracy and satisfactory in health and wellbeing.
- The majority of children talk confidently about their experiences and their ideas and communicate their needs effectively. The majority of children listen well to stories in small groups. A few children draw increasingly detailed pictures and are beginning to write their own name. Most children would benefit from increasing their knowledge of letters and sounds with wider mark making experiences and provocations to write for a purpose.
- The majority of children know the number sequence to 10. They use the language of measurement to describe length and height and understand the concepts of full and empty. They recognise and name basic 2-dimensional shapes and are developing an awareness of the passage of time through daily routine sequences. Most children are not able to recognise and name coins, sequence patterns and gather information for a purpose.
- The majority of children are becoming increasingly confident in daily routines. They demonstrate effective levels of independence when dressing for outdoor play and serving their own food at mealtimes. Children take turns to be snack helpers and this helps develop their responsibility skills. Children need a wider range of experiences to develop further their independence and leadership skills. Most children are developing physical skills in the outdoor area where they run, climb, balance and jump. Children are forming early friendships and offer each other comfort if they are upset. Children need to increase their awareness of their emotions and develop their ability to discuss and regulate them.
- A few parents use the online profiles to share children's wider achievements with the setting. Practitioners acknowledge these achievements and give the children praise. Practitioners should reintroduce ways to ensure all children have the opportunity to experience and celebrate success in achievements. This will ensure children are more aware of the skills they are developing through these achievements both in and outside of the setting.
- Practitioners have positive relationships with families and create an ethos and culture of inclusion. They ensure equity by supporting all children to participate fully in ECC experiences. Children who have identified additional support needs are integrated well in the setting. Senior leaders need to support practitioners to gather effective data that will enable them to identify

gaps in learning. This will help them to put in place appropriate interventions to support children who are not yet meeting their expected developmental milestones. Senior leaders should support practitioners to robustly monitor interventions to ensure they are having a positive impact on children's progress.

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.