

Summarised inspection findings

Burntisland Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

5 November 2024

Key contextual information

Burntisland Primary School Nursery is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for a maximum of 119 children at any one time. This includes 15 places for eligible children aged two to three. Children can attend from age of two until starting school. These places are available across 49 weeks per year and children can attend either five morning sessions (08.00-12.20) or five afternoon sessions (13.40-18.00).

Children aged three and above can access ELC through a choice of different models. Term time provision is available 09.00-15.00 each day and 49-week provision is available through five morning sessions (08.00-12.20) or five afternoon sessions (13.40-18.00). Currently there are 17 two-year-olds accessing ELC, 44 children aged three and above accessing term time provision and 22 children aged three and above accessing provision across 49 weeks.

The nursery accommodation is split over two sites. The term time provision is situated in purpose-built accommodation within the main school building. The two to three year-old places and the 49-week provision are accommodated in a separate building across the road from the school. There are two playrooms on each site that have direct access to outdoor play areas. All children also access additional areas within the school building. This includes the gym hall and the music room.

The deputy head teacher has delegated responsibility for the nursery with the headteacher overseeing the strategic leadership. Two senior early years practitioners support with the leadership of the nursery team across both sites. The team consists of twenty practitioners and one pupil support assistant. A peripatetic nursery teacher supports with learning and teaching one week out of two.

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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

Children aged 2-3

- All practitioners have strong nurturing relationships with children and families. They make time to welcome children at the start of every session and to talk with parents at drop off and pick up times. This is supporting almost all children to feel happy and secure in the nursery setting. All practitioners are kind, caring and engage in high quality interactions to support children's language development. They make good use of repetition and commentary to build children's vocabulary. The playroom is well organised with a good range of resources to support children's play and development. As planned, practitioners should review planning and tracking to ensure it appropriately supports the unique stage of development for children aged two to three.

Children aged 3-5

- Practitioners have established very positive relationships with children across the setting. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed, resulting in children who feel safe and secure. Almost all children are confident and independent within the nursery, making choices about where to play and accessing well-resourced learning opportunities indoors and outside. Practitioners provide a wide range of experiences that motivate children to experiment and explore, such as clay and open-ended construction materials. Practitioners encourage children to be independent, for example, in mixing their own paints. Children access a variety of digital devices. Practitioners support children to use these effectively to research their interests, play games, listen to music and capture their own learning. The team have correctly identified that this is an area to continue to develop to enhance children's digital skills.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are respectful and nurturing, supporting emotional wellbeing and extending learning. Practitioners give children time and freedom to develop their ideas, for example supporting children to use 'learning in progress' signs to protect unfinished activities and experiences. Practitioners are skilled at knowing when to intervene to support, and when to give children time and space to work things through. They use comments and open-ended questions very well, encouraging children to extend their thinking and to work positively together. As a result, almost all children are engaged in their learning and share spaces and resources well.
- Practitioners know their children well and respond to children's interests and learning needs as part of daily practice. They observe children as they play, and capture observations focused on learning in children's personal learning journey (PLJ). Children access their PLJs and enjoy sharing them with adults and friends. Practitioners should now review the layout of the folders to improve the opportunity for children to share their own learning experiences. Practitioners identify individual next steps in learning and have processes in place to share these with families. They should continue to develop their approaches to supporting individual next steps through planning processes to maximise progress for all children.
- The team plan for learning across long, medium and short term. Senior leaders have worked with practitioners to review and update planning processes. The team now need time to embed the new approaches into practice.

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

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

Children aged 2-3

- Most children are making good progress in their development. They are able to make their needs and wants known and are increasing vocabulary well through sharing books and singing songs and rhymes. They are developing an awareness of size and shape as they fill and pour with a variety of containers and build with a range of blocks and natural resources. As they settle, children are developing a good sense of themselves through engaging with mirrors and photograph displays. They are learning the names of their friends and to share spaces with other children. They are acquiring fine motor skills effectively as they use utensils and tools in pretend play and mark making experiences. They are becoming increasingly familiar with and independent in nursery routines.

Children aged 3-5

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. Children interact well with adults and other children. Most children confidently ask questions, follow instructions, and listen well. Children benefit from a literacy rich environment. They show emerging writing skills with some starting to scribe their own name and draw recognisable figures. Children engage well in singing and storytelling and access a variety of fiction and non-fiction books independently.
- Children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good. Children use mathematical language as they play, talking about size, shape and measure. They explore comparative size as part of focused experiences related to a favourite story, using tape measures and rulers. Some children have developed their understanding of simple graphs when organising information about house numbers and vehicles. Children should continue to develop early numeracy and mathematical skills through real-life contexts and throughout the nursery.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. All children have free flow access to well-maintained spaces which promote physical play and learning. They climb, balance and manage their own risk with increasing confidence. Children develop fine motor skills through a variety of experiences including mark making, messy play and craft. Children demonstrate their independence during mealtimes and getting ready for outdoor play. Staff should ensure that children have a better understanding of the wellbeing indicators, using them in context throughout the nursery day.

- Children learn skills for life as they access spaces within the community including the forest, beach and local businesses. They learn about planting and growing using the produce they grow for cooking.
- The newly introduced systems for tracking children's learning show that most children are making good progress in their learning across curricular areas. As new tracking systems are embedded, practitioners will have more robust evidence of children's progress over time. This will support them to identify further where children could benefit from specific support and challenge to help them make the best possible progress.
- Staff use praise well and make children's achievements visible throughout the nursery. They encourage parents to share achievements from home within the PLJ. They should now focus on developing further strategies to track children's achievements to include an increased focus on the skills children are developing. This will help to celebrate the good progress they make and identify children who would benefit from additional experiences.
- Staff have a detailed understanding of children, families and the local community. They provide family learning events such as story and rhyme sessions and curricular focused activities to support families learning together at home. They sensitively support families to access free food, household items and Christmas gifts in partnership with local businesses and organisations. This helps to ease the pressure of financial burdens for families.

Other relevant evidence

- The newly appointed depute headteacher provides strong leadership to support the nursery team to have a clear vision for improvement. The large team of practitioners value her leadership and are working very well together to implement changes to improve outcomes for children and families.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and enjoyed their time at nursery. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. Staff recognised children as individuals and responded effectively to their needs and wishes which provided them with responsive care throughout the day. They communicated with children at their level in a quiet and sensitive way. These supportive interactions developed close bonds between staff and children, contributing to them feeling safe and secure.

Children's individual wellbeing was supported through personal planning. Staff knew children well and spoke knowledgeably about children's differing needs. Overall, information recorded in children's personal plans reflected the care and support staff provided which contributed to continuity and consistency in care. Children with additional support needs had strategies in place, however, clear targets had not yet been identified. This meant that some children were not yet being effectively supported to achieve their full potential.

Meal and snack times were relaxed and sociable experiences for children. We saw older children had a wealth of opportunities to develop their self-help skills at snack time. For example, children were able to choose when to go for snack, collect their own crockery and serve the food and drink independently. There were missed opportunities for them to develop these skills during the lunch period. Younger children had some opportunities to be independent during snack. There was scope for this to be enhanced to allow them to build confidence and develop their life skills.

Partnership working with families had been well established. Staff recognised the importance of engaging with children and their families at the earliest possible stage. Ongoing opportunities such as 'book bug', and PEEP" sessions provided meaningful experiences for families to engage in. This contributed to supporting the holistic needs of each child and their family to improve their wellbeing. Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning

Children led their own play and learning across the setting. They had access to resources that were well-organised, and encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. The continuous provision indoors and outdoors had been considered to include age and stage appropriate resources, and interesting, open ended and natural resources. As a result, children were enabled to explore opportunities which promoted and challenged their curiosity and imagination.

Literacy opportunities were very well supported as children had access to various books and texts; fiction and non-fiction books, and resources to support early writing skills were easily accessible for all children. Numeracy opportunities were woven into daily experiences, for example, helping to set up the snack area. This provided good opportunities for children to develop skills in these areas.

Staff effectively intervened, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. They asked 'I wonder how' questions to extend children's thinking, encourage

curiosity and recall previous learning. Staff played with children when they were invited to do so and when they could see that this would support children's experiences. This approach supported children to play without unnecessary interruption and encouraged a deeper learning experience.

Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with daily opportunities for free flow access between the indoor and outdoor nursery areas. This enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. The outdoor space provided a range of play opportunities to extend learning. Outdoors, children had access to areas to climb, run, balance and explore which provided opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills.

A new approach to planning was beginning to have a positive impact on supporting staff to capture children's interests and plan experiences around these. The service was aware they needed more time to embed this approach to be confident children were supported to progress well in their learning.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through established links with the wider community. Regular use of the local woods for the Nature kindergarten and the beach provided opportunities for children to explore and learn about the natural environment. Learning was extended through local community experiences, such as visits to local shops and workplaces. These supported children to develop their understanding and knowledge of their community and extend their learning.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children, families, and staff benefitted from a committed, newly formed leadership team. They promoted high aspirations for children through a shared vision. This created a happy and welcoming ethos in the service promoting a positive atmosphere for children to play and learn. The positive ethos meant staff were proactive in taking shared responsibility for change and improvement. This meant children benefited from a staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs.

Leaders spoke confidently about their aspirations and priorities to develop the service. Staff were encouraged to be part of the service development, contribute ideas, and reflect on their practice together. Staff had been involved in developing the improvement plan which focused on improving outcomes for children. This demonstrated the commitment of the staff team to the ongoing development of the service and ensuring all children achieve their full potential.

Quality assurance processes were beginning to have a positive impact on improving outcomes for children. As a result, the leadership team had identified areas for development within the service. They had a clear and focussed plan in place to make improvements to bring about positive change for children and families.

The service was in the early stages of consulting with families to gather their views. As a result, families had not yet been involved in a meaningful way to influence change within the setting. They should now consider reviewing processes to enable families to contribute to the improvement and development of the service.

The leadership team engaged well in the inspection process, responding positively to improvement discussions. They were confident in the capacity of staff to deliver positive outcomes

for children and families, resulting in staff feeling empowered. Parents are confident that the setting was managed well.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no areas for improvement. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no areas for improvement.

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.