

# Summarised inspection findings

**Lenzie Meadow Nursery Class**

East Dunbartonshire Council

28 August 2018

## Key contextual information

Lenzie Meadow Nursery Class was created in August 2016. The head of centre is the headteacher of the primary school. Day-to-day management of the centre is the responsibility of the depute head of centre. The centre is open 50 weeks of the year and is registered for 48 children aged three to five years old and ten children aged two to three years at any one time. Children attend on a full day or sessional basis. At the time of the inspection the total role was 119 children.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

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

- A charter has been created with practitioners, parents and children that is relevant to the setting. This reflects the hopes and aspirations of stakeholders and is leading the work that is carried out in the setting. The wording of the charter has been adapted to ensure children in the setting understand its meaning. This supports children and practitioners to work in an ethos where they are kind, safe and responsible. This is evidenced throughout the setting in the warm and respectful environment for learning. The headteacher and depute head of centre should continue to work together as planned to review the vision, values and aims involving children and partners to ensure it continually reflects the needs of the entire school community.
- The early years setting was created and is managed effectively by the depute head of centre. Together with the senior early years worker and the nursery teacher, she has successfully developed a team of practitioners who work together well and who strongly identify with the setting. She has developed positive relationships and is held in high regard with children, parents and practitioners. She has high expectations for the setting.
- Practitioners access a range of professional learning to support their practice. We discussed how this should be shared with colleagues and as appropriate, impact on learning experiences for children. Practitioners take on leadership roles based on their interests and the needs of the setting. For example, they lead a well-used lending library for children, a children's committee and an Eco committee where children have their views of the setting noted and acted upon as appropriate. As a result, children know their voices are important and can influence what happens.
- Improvement planning for the setting is based on whole school improvement priorities. Early learning specific priorities include literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There is also a focus on outdoor learning. Priorities aim to develop and improve learning experiences and outcomes for children. The depute head of centre systematically monitors the work of the setting. There is scope for her to provide more focused support and guidance to individual practitioners to achieve continuity of approach across the setting. Using national guidance, senior leaders and practitioners engage in self-evaluation activities to review progress and

include parents and increasingly children in this process. As they identify priorities to be taken forward there is scope to continue to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of change.

## 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 two to three years are relaxed within their playroom. They benefit from sensitive, caring relationships with practitioners who give them the comfort they need. The flexible and responsive routines allow practitioners the opportunity to meet the individual needs of each child. The layout of the playroom supports children to participate in meaningful play developing their skills in communication, curiosity and movement. Practitioners plan activities based on sensory materials to help children enjoy discovery play. Children make regular use of their separate outdoor area allowing them to explore the resources available to them. To move this on further, practitioners should ensure planning and assessment meets each child's developmental level.

### Children aged three years and over

- Relationships between children and practitioners continue to be caring and positive. As a result, children feel safe and secure, ask for help when they need it and are developing confidence, independence and resilience. Most children new to the setting, settle quickly into their play. Children benefit from independently accessing a wider range of loose parts and open-ended resources.
- Across the team practitioners listen to what children would like to learn about and respond to their interests. As a result, most children display a positive level of engagement in their play as they initiate imaginative play, explore sensory activities or create structures using blocks in the outdoor and indoor areas. The team have improved how they use learning walls to begin to follow children's questions about learning more consistently. Across the team there are some examples of positive interactions which support children's learning well. This now needs to be more consistent for all children. To improve further, practitioners need to critically evaluate how they could improve their interactions and ensure all experiences support children's learning in interesting and dynamic ways. As part of this practitioners should raise their expectations and aspirations for learners.
- In free play, most experiences are targeted towards all children at a similar level. As there is a variety of developmental stages a more appropriate balance of child-led and adult-initiated learning is needed to ensure all children are challenged at a level that supports them to make the very best progress in their learning.
- Throughout the setting a new approach to assessment and recording has been implemented using online profiles. Episodes of learning with photographic and video evidence are used to capture and record children's progress and achievements. These are shared daily with parents who all feel that this has been a very positive step with almost all parents engaged. Next steps in learning are recorded in the online profile but currently it is difficult to track

children's progress. Practitioners need to establish a shared understanding and system to ensure next steps are consistently addressed. Assessment requires to be further embedded in the life and work of the setting and moderation of children's learning more robust. Currently there is an over reliance on professional judgement to inform progress throughout the early level. More professional learning opportunities in assessment and moderation would increase skill and confidence with the staff team. This will support and inform the identification of clear, measurable next steps in learning and provide more accurate evidence to support the tracking of progress.

- The setting recently held a world of work day using parental volunteers to introduce children to a variety of different professions. Children were introduced to the work of architects, a scientist and an actor.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The curriculum is shaped by the interests of children. Practitioners strive to be highly responsive to children's interests and needs. The recently introduced loose parts offer children the chance to play with natural and creative resources. The team should continue with this work and ensure they record and monitor the impact of these changes on children's progress in learning.
- As highlighted throughout the inspection the balance of adult and child-led opportunities for learning should be improved. This will support more depth and challenge and progression in learning.
- Developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is prioritised in the curriculum. All team members share responsibility for developing and delivering the core areas of the curriculum. The teams working with younger and older children have a developing understanding of national guidance Building the Ambition and the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. Working with children of different age groups the staff team would benefit from developing a shared understanding of progression across rooms and the early level. This could be built upon further to ensure a more rigorous and reflective evaluation of children's learning linked to the experiences and outcomes. Moving forward, it will be important to work with the school to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum and to support continuity of learning across the early level into P1.
- The setting benefits from extensive outdoor grounds that are attractive and offer considerable potential for rich learning experiences. Access to an area of local woodland as planned would further extend opportunities for children. This now needs to be capitalised on more fully to promote real life opportunities for children to develop their curiosity, inquiry, creativity and problem-solving skills.

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

- Almost all parents are very supportive of the setting. They appreciate the welcoming, inclusive ethos created by the practitioner team. Parents support the setting when they stay and play, help with the lending library, join in outings, by membership of the Parent Teacher Association and by engaging with social networking sites. They are kept informed of how they can be involved in their children's learning through fortnightly home links letters, online profiles, social networking sites, take home bear and meetings with practitioners throughout the year. As a result, most parents feel well informed and included in their children's learning. The setting has identified the need to continue to develop the online profiles to provide clear evidence of how children's next steps are being met.
- Parents also support children's learning by sharing their skills and knowledge as children are introduced to the world of work. As a result of this sharing, children have been introduced to various jobs for example, architecture, science and acting. The setting should continue to encourage such participation to enrich children's experiences and to enhance children's awareness of the wide and diverse opportunities that may be available to them in the future.

## 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.



### 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

- The importance of children's wellbeing is embedded within the work of the setting. Practitioners have created a welcoming, nurturing environment where very positive relationships are evident. As a result, almost all children are settled and readily engage in their play. The early years charter is understood by most children and encourages them to be kind, helpful and responsible. A focus on positive alternative thinking strategies, encourages children to recognise and talk about their own and others feeling. A focus on paying compliments helps children to demonstrate kindness and raise self-esteem.
- Practitioners successfully model warm, positive interactions, which promote wellbeing and encourages it in others. A focus on healthy eating and exercise is encouraging children to understand the benefits of keeping healthy. The team has a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of Getting It Right for Every Child and support all children to feel safe, healthy, active, respected, achieving, nurtured, responsible and included. They use these wellbeing indicators effectively when planning for individual support needs. An understanding of children's rights is also developing well. As planned, practitioners should now continue to develop children's understanding of their own rights and wellbeing and the language with which to express their experiences.
- Children's views and opinions are taken seriously. They are learning about democratic voting when they choose the preferred venue for their summer outing. Self-evaluation activities and participating in the setting's children's committee helps them to understand that their views are respected. There is scope to build on this positive start by continuing to develop activities where children can influence aspects of the setting that are important to them. All children are given opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as monitors for various activities throughout the setting. As a result, they are proud and willing helpers.
- Practitioners are reflective about their practice and keen to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. They keep up to date with important developments in early learning and childcare in order that they fulfil their statutory duties. They are particularly mindful of their responsibility towards children's wellbeing. Where children require additional support with their learning, practitioners are proactive in seeking support and making links with external agencies. Through regular 'Support for All' meetings children's progress is carefully monitored. This helps to support children's overall learning and development and to secure positive outcomes for children and families.
- Children and families are supported in a way that encourages participation and promotes inclusion. Practitioners have a very good understanding of the individual circumstances of children and use this knowledge to support them in their learning and help them to make sustained progress. Through the proactive leadership of the depute head of centre, the team

are developing a very good understanding of their responsibility to promote inclusion and equity through their work with children and families. The 'family champion' offers group and individual advice to parents on request. Practitioners celebrate diversity and work closely with families to ensure children's various cultures are respected and celebrated.

## 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 two to three years are becoming more independent in a range of personal skills such as changing shoes, washing hands and are developing physical skills by taking part in regular exercise. Free play is an everyday occurrence, which is balanced with small group activities where they are learning to turn take and share. Practitioners set out the room on a daily basis within the range of equipment available. The recent development of using loose parts in discovery play is at an early stage and has the potential to increase children's curiosity in their learning.
- Early language development is being encouraged through helping children to engage in conversations, listening during small group times and taking part in songs and rhymes. Children are being encouraged to identify their names using pictorial clues which they enjoy with success. Favourite stories are a regular feature of practice in which children eagerly participate. The introduction of the word of the week is extending children's vocabulary.
- Early numeracy and mathematics are being incorporated into play and children have a growing awareness of number through songs and games and when possible links to their favourite stories.

### Children aged three years and over

- Within the setting children are making good progress across most aspects of their learning and development. It is evident that practitioners know children very well as individuals. Children are supported to make choices in their play but few are yet able to talk confidently about their learning. We would recommend that practitioners develop further their own skills and knowledge to ensure children build growing knowledge and skills to be able to discuss their learning.
- There is a strong nurturing focus on children's health and wellbeing. The emphasis on relationships is helping children to settle and develop friendships. The majority can communicate their needs and feelings according to their stage of development and are kind and caring towards each other. Children have a developing awareness of healthy eating and demonstrate independence during snack routines. They enjoy outdoor physical activity and are learning about sustainability and recycling through real-life planting and growing activities.

- Within the playroom early literacy has a strong focus with most children interested in stories, and a few able to create a story in their own words given a particular provocation. This is helpfully scribed by an adult. There is a focus on extending and modelling vocabulary to help extend children's language development. Most children speak confidently about their favourite story and engage in conversations with each other and adults.
- Children are encouraged to participate in specific early writing experiences; however care should be taken that these activities may be overly formal for children, which results in children missing out on essential developmental stages of writing. As discussed, a re-focus on encouraging children firstly to draw their thoughts and real-life experiences would aid their conversations, with their key worker. This then more naturally leads to children wanting to extend their pre-writing skills in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Almost all children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They count with confidence during play and show good number recognition skills. A few children are showing an early understanding of addition and subtraction by knowing numbers before and after single digits. Most children can recognise and name shapes and are able to use mathematical language appropriately during play. Children can compare weight, size and amount and are developing their problem-solving skills while building at the imaginative construction site. Nursery routines are being used to promote numeracy and mathematic skills in a meaningful context, such as paying for snack and count items of food. Children are able to follow a pictorial recipe to make their own play dough using their early number skills. There is scope to build upon this further, by providing regular, relevant opportunities for children to apply these skills in real life and imaginary contexts.
- Children's achievements are celebrated well through praise and encouragement. Achievements are also recorded in children's profiles and older nursery children attend school assemblies where certificates are issued in recognition of their work. Children's individual achievements are recognised on the achievement tree in the playrooms. Some parents contribute their child's achievements outwith the nursery in the online learning profile. Recently children have undertaken roles such as snack helper, garden monitor etc.
- A supportive and inclusive ethos is promoted across all aspects of nursery where equity for all children is recognised. When required the nursery works very well in partnership with other agencies and parents to ensure that progress for individuals who require some additional help is maintained.

## Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Transitions into the setting are well-planned and organised to support young children and their families. Practitioners are sensitive to children's feelings and understand the importance of developing secure relationships to build children's confidence. Induction visits to the setting are planned to help children to become familiar with their new environment and to meet their key worker. Parents understand the expectations of the setting when they meet practitioners and engage with a helpful handbook and welcome booklet. Induction for children attending for full day sessions is tailored to meet their individual needs. A staggered intake gives children time to settle and become ready for learning. Effective arrangements are in place to support families and relevant agencies in carefully planning approaches for children who experience barriers to their learning or require personalised support.
- As children move into the setting and between stages close collaboration between practitioners is key to effective transition. The setting works closely with partner agencies to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for children requiring additional support. Comprehensive records are in place that ensures clear records of children's needs and progress are shared. The setting liaises with other settings that children attend as needs arise. There is scope for these relationships to be developed further to support continuity and progression for children attending more than one setting.
- Children moving from the setting on to primary school benefit from a well-planned transition programme that ensures they are very familiar with the school and its context. A series of play-based visits is arranged for children to meet teachers and become comfortable in the school setting over an extended period of time. The 'Growing up' project includes four focused learning visits for all children from a range of settings to experience P1 in Lenzie Meadow Primary School. Comprehensive reports on children's learning and progress together with developmental milestones ensures P1 teachers have clear knowledge of children's progress within the early level. The school has identified the need to continue to strengthen links between the nursery and P1 particularly with regard to early years pedagogy. This will support continuity and progression in children's learning further. As a result of the current very good transition processes, children are familiar and confident as they enter school and parents report positively on the overall transition experience for their children.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.