

Summarised inspection findings

Stirches Primary School Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

3 October 2023

Key contextual information

Stirches Primary School Nursery is based within the building of Stirches Primary School. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) placements for children from across the town of Hawick and surrounding area. Children can attend the nursery from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting can provide places for 48 children at any one time. Currently, there are 29 children on the roll. There is one large playroom, a kitchen area and children have direct access to the outdoor area. Children attend during term time from 8.45 am to 3.15 pm. The nursery has experienced significant instability in staffing over the last few years. The headteacher was appointed in March 2022. She has overall responsibility for the nursery. There is an early years officer (EYO) and three full-time equivalent early years practitioners. An acting EYO was in post from October 2021 until October 2022 when the EYO was absent. The EYO returned on a part-time basis in October 2022, then on a full-time basis from May 2023. An excellence and equity lead officer and an early years teacher from Scottish Borders Council support the work of the nursery staff on a regular basis.

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

- There is a warm, nurturing ethos across the nursery. Children have positive relationships with practitioners and other children. As a result, almost all children are confident, motivated and engage well in a range of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led experiences, both indoors and outside. Practitioners provide natural and open-ended materials, indoors and outside, which help children to develop their skills of problem solving and creativity. With practitioner support, a minority of children use digital technology, such as interactive whiteboards and digital tablets, for research, recording learning and literacy and numeracy activities.
- Practitioners interact with children kindly and respectfully. They ask a range of questions when they interact with children which helps children to problem solve or describe what they are doing. They now need to ask more open-ended questions which help children identify the skills they are developing. Practitioners listen to children's thoughts and opinions well and use this information effectively to adapt resources and the environment, to enhance children's learning.
- Practitioners observe children carefully and record their observations well in children's individual online learning journeys. They identify clearly the skills children are developing and link these effectively to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, developmental milestones and the national wellbeing indicators. Practitioners use this information about children's progress effectively to identify next steps in learning for each individual in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use the online learning journey to provide parents with helpful home learning ideas to help their child work towards their next

steps. Children enjoy helping practitioners to photograph their learning experiences and successes to add to their learning journeys.

- Practitioners plan well for children's learning using CfE outcomes and experiences across all curriculum areas. They record which CfE experiences and outcomes children have been covered across the curriculum. They plan a range of adult-led and adult-initiated experiences and are responsive to children's needs and interests to allow for child-initiated learning. Practitioners should now involve children more in recording what they already know and planning what they would like to learn next.
- Practitioners meet three times a year to check and monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy and towards developmental milestones. They use the data gathered to identify individual children who require support or challenge in their literacy and numeracy learning. Together, practitioners plan interventions carefully, and identify appropriate resources to support identified children to make better progress or provide further challenge. They now need to involve all children in setting individual and group targets and help them to reflect on how well they meet these targets.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and language. Most children can follow a set of two or three simple instructions. Most children enjoy listening to stories and reciting well-known nursery rhymes. Almost all children can recognise their own name when they self-register in the morning. Most children can sequence familiar stories into beginning, middle and end. Most older children are beginning to form recognisable figures and letters and make an attempt to write their own name. A few children choose to mark make to enhance their play, such as writing shopping lists or making birthday cards for friends. Practitioners should continue to provide further opportunities for children to engage with non-fiction texts.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children can recall number sequences and one-to-one correspond to ten. A few can do so to 20. Most children enjoy using water and sand to develop their understanding of capacity, such as empty and full. They recognise and match simple two-dimensional shapes in their environment. Most children can sort and match by size and colour. Children would benefit from play to extend their knowledge of coins and time in relevant contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They enjoy developing their gross motor skills as they run, jump, balance and climb in the outdoor area. Most children are developing their fine motor skills through activities such as cutting and using play dough. Almost all children are becoming aware of how to keep their bodies healthy by regular toothbrushing and selecting healthy choices for snack and lunch. Practitioners should help children to develop their fine motor skills further by including them in the preparation of snack. For example, children should be involved in chopping vegetables and fruit for snack. Most children show a sense of wonder about the natural world. They enjoy watching the development of the life cycle of real frogs in the nursery outdoor area and exploring how plants grow.
- Parents share children's achievement from home, such as, learning to ride a two wheeled bicycle. Practitioners use a display to share these achievements. Practitioners should identify those children who do not have opportunities for wider achievements out with the nursery. They need to identify and share wider achievements of all children which occur in the nursery. This should help all children to have their achievements recognised and celebrated and ensure no child is at risk of missing out. Practitioners know and understand well the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of children and families. All children can access clothing for outdoor play in wet or cold weather. This allows all children to be involved fully in all aspects of outdoor play and learning. Practitioners know children very well as individuals and learners.

They use data gathered about children's progress well to identify next steps for those requiring support or challenge in their learning and provide targeted support. Almost all children who receive targeted support are making good progress in their 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.