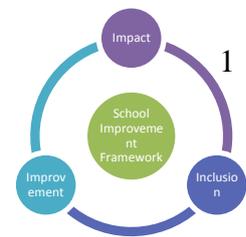




Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Craigclowan Pre School 2 and 4 May 2018

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit, which was conducted by two Officers from Education and Children's Services, was to support the centre in the process of self-evaluation. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' (HGIOELC).

Perth and Kinross Education and Children's Services (ECS) is in partnership with Craigclowan Pre School to provide Early Learning and Childcare for children aged three to five years old. At the time of the visit there were 40 children registered.

The nursery is accommodated in a building adjacent to the school gym hall and consists of a large playroom downstairs and an upstairs room which provides additional play areas and a snack area. In the mornings children have free flow access to the gym hall where they can engage in physical play. The learning environment is well organised to provide attractive and stimulating learning spaces for children. The children have daily access to the extensive outdoor grounds which include a play area, forest area, astro turf pitch and garden area. The nursery provision is a valued and integral part of the whole school provision.

The manager provides strong leadership for the staff team of 3 practitioners. An ECS Early Years Support Teacher (EYST) regularly visits the nursery to support staff in developing learning and teaching.

Information was gathered from playroom visits, scrutiny of data and children's learning journals, discussions with children, parents/carers, staff and displays of children's work around the setting.

Achievement

Almost all children are making very good progress in their learning and development and are being supported to work towards their developmental milestones at nursery. Practitioners and parents have very high expectations of children's achievements and as a result children are acquiring a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills.

Children's learning journals contain a range of information on children's progress in learning. Parents spoken to reported that they can access the children's folders at any time and that the folders support discussion at parent contact meetings. This allows parents to see their child's individual progress in learning and to support with next steps in learning at home. Children were happy to share their learning folders and were able to talk about the learning they have been engaged in. Children were particularly keen to share recent learning around an interest in outer space. They demonstrated a good awareness of planets, meteors, space travel and gravity. Practitioners should now review the information in the learning folders to avoid repetition of tracking and to ensure observations always capture significant learning.

There is a range of books available to foster a love of reading and an interest in reading for information. The cosy story corner provides a quiet space for children to enjoy books independently. Children enjoy sharing books as part of a quiet time after lunch. Almost all pre-school children recognise the letters of the alphabet and know the sounds they make. Some children are beginning to read independently.

The provision across the nursery environment contains a range of activities to encourage the children to make marks and engage in early writing. Almost all preschool children can write their own names independently, are beginning to write other words and recognise the link between the written and spoken word. Children's drawings in learning folders and in talking and thinking books are very detailed.

All practitioners make time for quality interactions with children and use a range of strategies to support children's talking and listening skills. Good use is made of open ended questions to check children's knowledge and understanding. Practitioners should be mindful of giving children appropriate thinking time to answer questions. Children are respectful of others during conversation and discussions and listen well to both adults and peers.

Children are encouraged to count and recognise numbers and understand the language of measurement in their play throughout the session and they also have access to a dedicated numeracy area to develop an awareness of number. During the visit children were setting their own challenges and were mixing up cards with numerals one to ten and then sorting them into the correct order. Children participate in weekly baking activities which provide real life learning opportunities to count, weigh and measure.

Parents provide children's snacks and children have leadership roles of table monitor at snack time. Children who stay for a full day are provided with a healthy school lunch. Lunch times are nurturing experiences where practitioners serve food, eat with children and engage in conversations. All children demonstrate high levels of independence in lunch and snack routines. Children have a good awareness of healthy eating and hygiene rules and this was also recognised by parents.

All children take part in daily outdoor activities, including the daily walk after lunch and play activities in the different outdoor areas where they can develop their physical skills, benefit from fresh air and exercise and take part in planting and growing activities.

Very warm relationships are evident throughout the nursery and the nurturing ethos supports children to feel valued, safe and secure. Child protection policy and procedures are in place and are reviewed on a regular basis. All staff receive yearly child protection training to ensure they have a full understanding of child protection procedures. Additional support with any child protection concerns are available from school child protection officer if required. Risk assessments are in place to ensure children are safe and secure whilst at nursery.

Children's wider achievements are recognised, celebrated and displayed on the 'Wider Achievement' noticeboard. This information is then transferred to children's folders. Children also have the opportunity to gain a 'Headmaster Award' for significant achievements in learning. During the visit children were very proud of the headmaster award that they had received and could talk about how it had been earned

Learning

Practitioners are developing a shared understanding of pedagogy through collegiate activities which has included researching relevant theorists and this is impacting on the opportunities provided for children to learn through play. This was evidenced in the range of natural and open ended resources within the environment both indoors and out to encourage curiosity and creativity. During the visit children were particularly engaged in building and exploring trajectory with wooden block and plastic piping and creating transient art pictures using pebbles, shells and cones.

Children have access to a range of digital technology to enhance learning. During the visit children were using cameras, talking tins and tablets. The smartboard in the upstairs room is well used to enable the children to research interests. During the visit children were finding out about parts of a plant as part of a planting and growing interest.

The children are very motivated and sustain high levels of interest in their chosen learning activities. The structure of the day allows periods of time for children to develop knowledge, explore the world around them and consolidate their skills. Staff should consider timings of group activities and the balance between adult led activities and children's free flow play.

Planning is responsive to children's interests and needs. Talking and Thinking books are used to ensure planning builds on children's prior knowledge. Practitioners know the children very well; understand their needs and how to plan to support next steps in learning. Practitioners should now consider ways to record the children's evaluation of their learning.

Good use is made of opportunity in the local community and parental expertise to enhance children's learning experiences and children experience trips to the nearby supermarket, visits from a vet and doctor and joint activities with the care home in Bridge of Earn. Children also benefit from additional activities such as yoga and tennis. Swimming and cycling sessions are also being planned for.

Transitions are very well planned to support the needs of individual children. Tea Tots sessions provides very good opportunities for younger children to engage in play activities and to become familiar with the setting and the practitioners prior to starting nursery. Children in nursery participate in a variety of activities with the school to support transition including shared lunch times, assemblies and joint activities with Form 1. There is a planned programme of visits to Form 1 in the summer term and the nursery manager also teaches one day a week in Form 1. Children's prior learning is shared with Form 1 to ensure continuity of progression in learning.

Leadership

The manager provides strong leadership to drive improvement through self-evaluation. All practitioners are committed to providing a high quality provision for children and families and work well together as a team. The nursery should now consider ways to ensure children and families are also involved in the self-evaluation process.

Practitioners engage in peer monitoring to evaluate practice and the manager undertakes informal monitoring as she works alongside practitioners in the playrooms.

The manager should now consider ways to ensure monitoring and moderation activities have agreed standards and expectations and are outward looking.

Practitioners have opportunity for daily informal dialogue and planning meetings allow opportunity to engage in professional dialogue, to discuss children's progress and to share and reflect on training courses that have been attended. All practitioners have a yearly appraisal meeting and this allows staff to identify individual strengths and areas for improvement in their work. Practitioners enthusiastically undertake leadership roles relevant to their strengths and experience.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Those spoken to during the visit were very happy with their children's progress and value the ways that learning and care information is shared, for example speaking to staff at daily pick up and drop off times, regular emails and texts and notice board information.

Key Strengths

- The strong leadership provided by the manager to develop a shared vision for change and improvement.
- The confident, articulate, well-mannered children who are motivated and independent learners.
- The positive, welcoming ethos and the strength of the nursery team who work well together, recognise the individual strengths of practitioners and develop and share their own expertise and talents to improve outcomes for children.
- The well planned transitions which ensure prior learning is effectively built on and children experience continuous progression in their development and learning.

Main areas for Improvement

- By August 2018 review children's learning folders to avoid repetition and to ensure observations always capture significant learning.
- Session 2018-19, as identified by the setting, consider ways to involve all stakeholders in the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- Session 2018-19, as identified by the setting, continue to build on approaches to developing children's creativity and curiosity, particularly in art activities.

Conclusion

Staff work well in partnership with ECS and readily take account of advice, support and training and demonstrate a desire to secure improved outcomes for children and their families. The children are very well cared for and are making good progress in their learning across the curriculum.

As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS officers will return within a year to evaluate progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

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