

Summarised inspection findings

Tayvallich Primary School Early Learning and Childcare

Argyll and Bute Council

30 January 2024

Key contextual information

Tayvallich Primary School Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is situated in purpose-built accommodation within the grounds of Tayvallich Primary School. Children attend from the village of Tayvallich and the wider surrounding area. The headteacher and principal teacher joined the staff last session. Over the previous six years there had been many changes to the leadership of the setting.

The ELC provides 1140 hours early learning and childcare provision during term time, Monday to Friday between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm. It is registered for 11 children aged from three to school age. The ELC has one large playroom with direct access to an outdoor play area and the wider school grounds. At the time of the inspection two children were attending the setting on a full-time basis.

Staffing comprises one full-time childcare and education worker and one part-time classroom assistant. The headteacher of the school manages the ELC and a principal teacher leads learning in the ELC.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- Senior leaders and staff share the well-established school vision, values and aims. Staff model the values of ready, respectful and safe effectively through their practice. They support children very well to develop an awareness and understanding of the values through day-to-day activities and routines in the playroom. Children join the rest of the school to celebrate these values through weekly assemblies.
- Staff have a sound understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are beginning to help children develop an early awareness of their rights through sensitive interactions and daily routines.
- The headteacher and principal teacher spend time productively in the setting. They know children well and ensure that Tayvallich ELC is an integral part of the primary school. Children in the ELC and the school engage regularly in a range of shared experiences across the calendar year. This includes weekly assemblies and paired reading with older children.
- Staff work well together to ensure they get it right for all children. They have created a culture where everyone is valued, and strengths and skills of individual staff are used to benefit children. Staff feel confident to initiate and share the responsibility for change. All staff support each other, and children and families very well. They have ensured that continuous improvement and quality practice have continued throughout a period of change in the senior leadership team.

- The principal teacher meets weekly with staff to review individual children's needs, reflect on practice, and engage in professional dialogue. Staff engage well with other staff across the Lochgilphead cluster. They evaluate their practice and learn together to improve the quality of their work. They should continue to engage in moderation to help them review their practice further.
- The principal teacher monitors effectively the quality of learning guided by a detailed quality assurance plan. All staff contribute well to self-evaluation discussions and development work linked to whole-school improvement areas. Staff now plan to engage partners in the self-evaluation process. The school improvement plan includes specific priorities linked to identified needs in the ELC. For example, family learning and deeper engagement with national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition'. Children and families make a strong contribution to progressing these priorities. Senior leaders ask for their views regularly and give them feedback about improvements made. As a result, children and families feel involved fully. Senior leaders support staff to identify areas for further professional development linked clearly to improvement priorities of the ELC. Staff welcome these opportunities to engage in further professional development.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Relationships between staff and children are warm, kind, nurturing and respectful. Staff play alongside children and respond positively to their needs and interests throughout the course of the day. Children feel valued, safe and secure and make independent choices about where they will play, moving confidently between indoors and outdoors. Children have access to a stimulating learning environment including the local village, woods, beach and nature reserve. This helps children successfully to explore, discover and be creative in the outdoors and in real-life contexts. Children benefit from established routines within an approach that allows them to follow their interests. As a result, children are motivated and engage readily with their learning, often for extended periods of time.
- Staff know children well, both as individuals and as learners. They plan for learning over different timescales responding well to children's learning needs and interests. They take very good account of the local context. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led play opportunities which reflect children's individual interests and build successfully on prior learning. Children are involved fully in this planning process and lead their learning confidently. Staff use floorbooks, learning journeys, and an online platform to document well children's learning experiences. These provide children with worthwhile opportunities to talk about and reflect on their learning.
- Staff use digital technology effectively to support and consolidate children's learning. For example, children use the interactive smart panel to carry out research into bats. Children use programmable toys successfully to develop their learning in mathematics.
- Staff interact respectfully with children to encourage them in their learning and development. Staff use well-timed questioning and commentary appropriately to support and extend children's interests and skills, and to enhance their knowledge and understanding.
- Staff from the school and ELC work together to plan rich opportunities for ELC children to learn and play with younger children from the primary. This provides staff across each setting with valuable opportunities to observe and discuss children's learning and identify their next steps. This supports children very effectively as they move from the ELC into P1. Staff also use these opportunities to extend their own professional development in learning and play across early level and into first level.
- Staff observe children carefully as they learn and note children's responses to learning activities. They use their evaluative comments effectively to plan children's next steps in learning. Staff should continue to develop these observations with a focus on the specific skills children develop and apply. This will help staff to identify clear next steps across the curriculum for individual children.

- Staff use local authority developmental overviews and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) tracking documents effectively to record individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The principal teacher and staff discuss children's progress at weekly meetings. They use this information well to inform planning for individual children. Staff should now consider how they can track children's progress across the wider curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Staff use Argyll and Bute's developmental milestones for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and CfE experiences and outcomes well. They use them successfully when responding to children's interests and needs. Staff provide a curriculum based firmly on play. They include interesting and stimulating experiences ensuring children encounter all curriculum areas. Children gain from quality learning experiences across the curriculum. For example, creating clothes based on their own designs.
- All staff take responsibility for developing early numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Staff track children's coverage of CfE experiences and outcomes, which they link to the learning experiences on offer.
- When children join the ELC, staff work closely with families to ensure they are aware of their individual needs. Staff and teachers across the early level work very well together through the year to support children's successful transitions from the ELC into school. For example, they plan regular joint-learning opportunities for children across early level. Children also have opportunities to join primary classes for whole school events and celebrations. ELC staff share information about children's progress in learning with the P1 teacher at the point of transition to ensure continuity of learning. Children settle quickly into the school environment.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Staff work very closely with families and engage with them regularly. Staff share children's learning with parents successfully using an online platform, through learning journeys and termly reviews. All parents engage fully with these. Parents feel very welcome in the setting and play an active role in their children's learning. Staff provide parents with play-together bags based on each child's interests and needs, to support home-learning. ELC staff invite parents to regular parents' meetings, 'stay and play' sessions, book bug sessions and school events. Grandparent games sessions encourage inter-generational and wider family involvement. This family engagement is impacting positively on children's engagement and progress in learning. Staff now plan to develop family-learning workshops to engage parents further.
- Staff use a range of approaches to keep parents well-informed including daily conversations, regular emails and newsletters, and through the school website. They value their strong and productive partnerships with families and understand how this contributes to children's wellbeing.
- Staff work effectively with partners and support families to access a range of specialised services. Staff are positive about the value of partners' involvement including local community partners. For example, the collaborative work between the setting and the community around the annual flower show.

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

- Positive relationships between children and adults are a strength of the ELC. Staff underpin their work by promoting children's wellbeing. This results in a positive ethos and a culture of trust, where everyone is valued. Staff are respectful and responsive to children's interests and needs. Children are very happy and settled, as a result. Children are kind and considerate of their peers and interact well with each other and with adults. Staff are positive role models for children. They offer sensitive support to individuals to help them negotiate social situations, when required. Staff help children well to develop their understanding of their emotions. Children recognise and manage their own emotions, for example through the daily emotional wellbeing check-in.
- Children are developing an awareness of wellbeing indicators through relevant experiences and daily routines. Staff support children well to understand and manage risk. For example, children learn how to keep safe during walks or when using a fire pit. Staff and children discuss being healthy when preparing and enjoying snack. Staff use wellbeing indicators in children's personal plans to help children and parents develop further their understanding of wellbeing. Staff now plan to introduce characters to help children relate to and identify with the language of wellbeing.
- Children benefit from calm and unhurried experiences at snack and lunch times. They are independent in lunchtime routines. Staff support them well to persevere to experience success. Children are proud of their helper roles and enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. Staff should now work with children to identify the skills they are developing through these roles.
- All staff comply and engage with statutory requirements relating to early learning and childcare. They undertake regular training to ensure they know how to keep children safe. Staff identify quickly where children may benefit from individual input to help their learning. They know where to access additional support if required. This helps ensure children get help they need to make progress in their learning. All children have a personal care plan that records their strengths and areas where they may require additional support. This ensures staff provide consistency and continuity for all children through sharing key information. Regular reviews and updates to care plans ensure information is current and relevant.
- Staff have a sound understanding of children, their families, and the local context. They value diversity and promote inclusion and equality through how they interact with and treat children and each other. As a result, children feel included, engaged, and involved in the playroom. Staff support children to value and celebrate diversity. They use a variety of resources and opportunities to help children understand the village of Tayvallich in the wider world.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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

- In health and wellbeing, children are happy, confident, and making very good progress. They display developing social skills and friendship skills, such as working together and listening to the views and ideas of others during play. They develop independence, and resilience well as learners. Children recognise and express simple emotions well through their daily wellbeing check-ins. They talk confidently about healthy eating and being active. Children engage readily in physical play and demonstrate high levels of coordination, balance, and gross and fine motor skills as they play inside and outside. Children understand the importance of regular handwashing and tooth brushing.
- Children make very good progress in early language and literacy. They listen well to instructions and enjoy contributing their thoughts and ideas in discussions. Children enjoy when adults and older children read them stories. They listen carefully to details, predict and recreate their favourite stories. Children learn about rhyming words through games, songs and ELC rhymes. All children enjoy exploring letters and sounds through play and learning with older children. All children recognise and write their name. They show an interest in drawing pictures, numbers and letters using a range of materials. Staff should continue to develop children's phonological awareness and letter formation to allow children to make even better progress in developing their literacy skills.
- Children make very good progress in their understanding of numerical and mathematical concepts. Staff provide opportunities for counting through daily routines, games and a numeracy rich environment supports children well. They are developing confidence in recognising, ordering and counting numbers to 10 and beyond. Children would now benefit from more opportunities to count backwards. Children use mathematical language correctly as they play to compare the length, weight, size, and shape of different objects. They explore measurement through daily routines, for example, baking and preparing snack. Children name the days of the week and seasons of the year when engaging in discussion, rhymes, and songs. They name basic shapes and match and sort objects using a range of criteria. Children recognise and name halves and quarters successfully. They copy and create patterns and sequences using shape and colour accurately. Children gather simple data and recognise that tally marks represent a quantity.
- Overall, children make very good progress over time appropriate to their stage of development. Senior leaders and staff evidence and record children's progress over time

effectively using developmental and curriculum trackers, learning journeys and floorbooks. The data confirms that children are achieving very well.

- Staff recognise, value, and celebrate children's wider achievement through an online platform, in learning journeys and during school assembly time. Parents share achievements from home. They should now support children to understand what skills they are developing through these wider achievements.
- Working in a climate of respect and trust, staff understand the importance of promoting equity. Across the ELC, staff value children as individuals. They have a very good understanding of children's lives outside the ELC. They are aware of and understand the unique challenges for children and families within the local community. They capture what is important for each individual family well in the 'All About Me' files. Staff make very good use of this information about children's circumstances and family life to identify areas for learning and minimise any barriers faced.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Learning across the early level.

Staff from the ELC and the school work together effectively to plan rich opportunities for ELC children to learn and play with younger children from the primary.

- Staff identified that children across early level would benefit from increased opportunities to play and learn together. This supports children's progress in learning and expands opportunities for the small number of children to mix socially.
- Staff work well collaboratively to plan highly effective joint learning for children in the ELC and the early years of primary.
- Children in the ELC and the school take part regularly in shared learning experiences each week.
- Staff across each setting have valuable opportunities to observe and discuss children's learning and identify their next steps, as a result. This helps to ensure that children make very good progress.
- Staff extend their own professional development in learning and play across early level and into first level as a result of the effective joint working.

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.