*Please Note our Lasswade nursery is the only nursery that has had HMIe inspection the last 10 years. All our nurseries have regular Care Inspectorate inspections.*

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**HMIe Lasswade nursery**

In November 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Pinocchio’s

Children’s Nursery. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and worked closely with the manager and practitioners.

**The inspection team found the following strengths in the setting’s work.**

* **The caring, supportive and nurturing ethos. Practitioners ensure a flexible, individualised approach to transitions across the setting. This results in children being settled, happy and secure in the setting.**
* **Confident children who are curious, independent and motivated to learn.**
* **The leadership of the manager in establishing a shared approach to self-reflection and self-evaluation. This has created a culture of team work supporting the setting on its’ improvement journey.**
* **Strong, collaborative partnership working to support children’s additional support needs. The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the manager and a representative from Midlothian Council.**
* **Continue to build on established good practice in the setting to ensure planning, tracking and monitoring procedures are streamlined, to better meet children’s learning needs and evidence progress over time.**
* **Continue to develop the curriculum rationale with a particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.**

**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.*
* **The manager, quality assurance officer and practitioners engaged positively in professional dialogue during the inspection and demonstrated their commitment to making improvements and providing a quality service.**
* The setting’s philosophy is embedded and understood by stakeholders. The manager has correctly identified the need to review and update the aims. This will reflect the unique context and aspirations of the setting, as well as current thinking and developments in early learning and childcare. This should be revisited and reviewed regularly and be used to underpin and inform daily practice.
* **The manager is keen to improve the setting and has established a team of practitioners who are committed to meeting children’s needs. The manager values practitioners and has encouraged them to become ‘champions’, building upon practitioners’ interests and strengths. This is creating a positive ethos within the setting, where practitioners feel valued and are confident to make suggestions and share opinions. There is now scope to develop practitioner leadership roles further to deliver on areas of curriculum development. This will support and extend the distributed leadership in the setting and link to improvement priorities.**
* A few children enjoy being snack or lunch helpers and risk benefit assessors. Practitioners should build on children’s enthusiasm by increasing the opportunities available to develop children’s early leadership skills in the setting.
* **The manager has established a clear direction and appropriate pace of change across the setting, taking account of practitioner knowledge and experience. A culture of self-reflection and self-evaluation is evident. Practitioners are proactive in updating their own professional development and this is reviewed annually through an established professional review and development process. They engage well with a range of in-house and local authority training and are keen to develop their knowledge and skills in early learning and childcare. Practitioners have been using national guidance and researching current thinking on outdoor learning and loose parts play. This is leading to improvements in their practice and the learning environment. For example, the recently developed outdoor learning area for the babies in partnership with parents and a local garden centre.**
* The setting’s improvement plan includes relevant key priorities. Practitioners regularly meet to identify what they feel is working well and also what could be improved. Implementation of the plan is monitored to ensure progress continues to be made across all identified areas. The plan was created through consultation as a practitioner team and with the support of the local authority. The improvement plan now needs to be shared with stakeholders in order to support future improvement areas, for example, the continued development of the curriculum rationale. Practitioners will benefit from further developing their understanding and use of national guidance on self-evaluation. This will support them to make well-timed changes for continuous improvement.
* **The management team are visible in the setting and monitor aspects of the provision. The feedback from this is leading to improvements, for example, in changes to the environment. Room supervisors work together and have recently re-introduced opportunities for peer observation. The management team should continue to build on this model and monitor other areas of the provision to ensure changes are leading to improvements in the service. As discussed, the development and monitoring of parents’ and carers’ inputs to support the delivery of skills for learning, life and work would be a positive next step.**

**2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment**

*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*
* **Babies are very settled and happy within the setting. They benefit from caring and sensitive interactions with practitioners. They enjoy exploring the range of toys and resources, sensory materials, sharing books and singing songs. Practitioners know each child within the ‘baby room’ very well and provide developmentally appropriate experiences. They have developed an effective, streamlined approach to planning, assessing and tracking children’s learning and development. Their efficient use of online learning journals provides an up-to-date overview of each child’s achievements and next steps. Practitioners use national practice guidance increasingly well to reflect on and improve their practice.**
* **In the ‘junior room’, toddlers engage well with the range of play experiences on offer, both indoors and outside. They are secure and happy in the positive environment and benefit from nurturing relationships with practitioners. Toddlers make regular use of their outdoor area where they are building their confidence through use of active play equipment and exploring different terrains. They use natural resources and loose parts to build their own obstacle courses. They have appropriate plans in place to develop further the use of floor books as a focus for planning, as well as documenting children’s learning.**
* **In the ‘early learning room’, children aged three to five years benefit from the warm and caring ethos created by practitioners. They are encouraged to be kind and respectful of others and to care for their environment. Most children are developing confidence in expressing their needs. Almost all are developing their independence well, as they confidently access toys and resources and happily follow daily routines. Children are keen to learn and show an interest in the world around them. Children benefit from a range of toys and resources, including loose parts and natural materials. Overall, they are supported well to make choices in their play.**
* **Practitioners interact with children in a way that is caring and supportive. They intervene swiftly to support children when they are upset or need some help.** As planned, they need to continue to develop confidence to intervene with questions and dialogue, to help all children to extend their thinking and deepen their learning during their play. Practitioners should continue to reflect on the learning environment across the week. We have asked them to keep under review the layout and resources, in order to provide the best levels of support and challenge. At times, more able children require more adult direction in order for them to revisit, and build upon their interests and previous learning.
* **Practitioners know children well as individuals and support them to follow their own interests. Planning methods take account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes in relation to planned themes and topics.**
* Practitioners are developing their approaches to making and recording observations of children at play. The progress children make in their learning should be carefully monitored to ensure that the very best progress in learning is made by all. The successful and succinct approaches to monitoring the progress of babies and younger children could now be shared and developed across all playrooms.
* **Children are ready for increased responsibility for their own learning. Practitioners use a range of techniques to consult with children and involve them in their learning. Recent training in the use of floor books has allowed practitioners to feel more confident in using this method to record children’s learning. This should now be developed further, with a focus on increasing children’s engagement in planning, leading, documenting and reflecting on their own learning. There is scope for children to have increased ownership of their online learning journals to support conversations about learning, and in turn develop a better awareness of themselves as learners. Inclusion of children’s wider achievements will outline their knowledge of the local community and support identification of next steps in order to build upon prior learning.**

**2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways**

* **Across the playrooms, there are opportunities for children to develop early health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy skills.** The management team and practitioners have identified the need to continue to deepen their understanding of their role in developing children’s early literacy and numeracy skills. The use of local guidance and progression pathways and an increase in the use of real-life experiences will support this. Practitioners have expressed a willingness to take on roles as ‘champions’, with a few leading on aspects of curriculum development. From this positive start, there is scope to build on this approach, with more practitioners taking responsibility for developing curricular areas such as numeracy and science. This should deepen their understanding of their role in building progressively on children’s skills across their learning.
* **In all playrooms, children benefit from daily outdoor learning experiences. With the support of the local authority, managers and practitioners have recently carried out an audit to review and further improve the outdoor environment. Outdoors, children have opportunities to develop their awareness of risk and use different materials within their play. They enjoy exploring and creating with loose parts. Planting and growing activities also help children to learn about the environment and natural world. Regular use is made of the local environment to enrich children’s learning, such as visits to the woods and the park. Visitors to the setting, such as health and community partners, also enhance children’s learning.**
* The curriculum across the playrooms is firmly based on play and active approaches to learning and development.

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

* Information is shared with parents about children’s experiences in both formal and informal ways. There is a monthly newsletter and information is also put on the social media page. Both the newsletter and social media page could be used to inform parents more about what their children are learning in terms of curriculum areas. The online learning journals are a popular resource.
* **Transitions from home to nursery and between playrooms are flexible, positive and supportive. The team recognise the importance of developing positive, warm relationships over time with children and their families. Children who are ready to move on to school have a summary report created and shared with the receiving primary school. By continuing and extending this work within the locality network, there is an opportunity to moderate practice. This will support an increased focus on continuity and progression in learning across the early level.**
* There is scope to explore the range of skills and experiences parents and carers could contribute to the setting. This could enhance the children’s learning in terms of developing their awareness of the world of work and cultural awareness in the wider community.
  1. **Safeguarding**
* The setting 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.

**3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – 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*
* **Relationships across the setting are built upon mutual respect and trust, leading to a warm, welcoming ethos for all families. The manager and practitioners know their children and families very well, resulting in continuity of care within the setting.** **Transitions from room to room are managed sensitively and flexibly to meet the needs of children. This is a key strength of the setting and results in children who are settled, happy and secure. Practitioners are welcoming and supportive of parents and take time to listen to their concerns about children’s wellbeing. Parents report that they are supported by the setting and are confident that their children’s wellbeing needs are being met effectively.**
* Practitioners have a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of ‘Getting it right for every child’ (GIRFEC) and ensure children are supported to feel safe, healthy and included. Children know about healthy eating through discussions at snack time and can make healthy choices. Practitioners’ use of the wellbeing indicators is becoming evident in practice, for example, through the identification of risk in the outdoor environments.
* **Within the setting, practitioners promote positive behaviour in line with the setting’s policy, through role modelling and considering children’s emotional needs. Overall, children’s behaviour was observed to be positive in line with their age and stage of development. As planned, the development of children’s social and emotional resilience and self-regulation has been outlined in the setting’s current improvement plan. This will support children to become successful learners whilst promoting independence and problem-solving skills.**
* The practitioners listen carefully to what children say and act upon children’s views, choices and opinions in their daily interactions. For example when carrying out risk benefit assessments in the outdoor learning areas. The management team and practitioners have a clear understanding of what is expected in order to fulfil required statutory duties, in order to secure positive outcomes for children. Regular training helps to increase practitioners’ knowledge of first aid, medical needs and keeping children safe. The manager ensures practitioners are aware of current developments and legislation and each child has a personal plan that is reviewed and updated with parents at regular intervals. Children who face barriers to their learning are identified and, in consultation with parents, appropriate individual strategies are put in place. When necessary, external agencies are contacted and involved in the planning process. The setting has strong links with a variety of health agencies including occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. This practice means that children’s individual care and health needs are being met within the setting.
* **The practitioner team have a good understanding of their responsibility to promote inclusion and equality through their work with families and partner agencies.** **Children, parents and partners are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. Children are learning about a range of celebrations and cultures from around the world in a way that is meaningful to their stage of development. Through collecting for charities and participating in fundraising activities, they are learning about people who are less fortunate and need help.** **As planned, practitioners should continue with this work to further expand children’s awareness of equality and diversity.**

**3.2 Securing children’s progress**

*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*
* **All children enjoy exploring and making choices in their playrooms.** **Managers and practitioners are aware of the need to identify and act on children’s next steps in learning**.
* Toddlers are developing their early language and communication skills well. Most show a keen interest in songs, rhymes and books. They are curious about the world around them and enjoy developing their physical skills through use of the outdoor area and local park. Toddlers show a growing independence in their use of the environment and are becoming familiar with nursery routines. Exploration of sensory play materials, malleable resources and mark-making activities enable all children to develop their early mark-making skills in a motivating way.
* **Babies benefit from the caring relationships they have with practitioners, who look after them very well. Practitioners’ use of voice, song and gesture enables babies to feel very secure. All babies are developing their early communication skills very well, appropriate to their stage of development. They show great interest in books and many can hold a book correctly and turn the pages. The learning environment encourages babies to explore and develop curiosity. The environment, alongside the skilled input of practitioners, supports all babies to develop gross motor skills, such as crawling and walking, as well as fine motor skills, such as painting and learning to feed themselves using cutlery.**
* Most children age three to five years are able to share their thoughts in conversation with practitioners and visitors. They have recently enjoyed beginning to learn Spanish. Most older children demonstrate a well-developed vocabulary and an interest in learning new words. Whilst most children are very articulate, Most children listen well when sharing books. Practitioners are positive about the benefits of storytelling and most children respond well by retelling stories using puppets. A few children demonstrate an interest in early writing and mark-making. A few children are making particularly strong progress and can spell simple words unaided. Practitioners now need to continue to ensure that all children are consistently encouraged to access resources for mark-making across the playroom. We have asked the staff team to continue to develop a literacy-rich environment, indoors and outdoors, which offers adult-supported opportunities for children to explore phonological awareness through stories, songs and rhymes.
* **Most children count with growing confidence during play when exploring resources and when playing outdoor games. A few children can confidently identify and write numbers, and can count on and backwards beyond ten. Most also recognise simple 2D shapes in their play. The majority are beginning to use mathematical language to compare size and amount when playing at the water and sand trays. They measure and follow instructions as they make bread and play dough. A few children are beginning to explore measure more deeply by trialling how far they can fly their paper planes.**
* Most children can confidently talk about aspects of a healthy lifestyle, for example, making good choices at snack and the importance of washing hands and dental hygiene. Children help to take care of their playroom by tidying their toys and by clearing their own plates etc. after snack and meal times.
* **Overall, there is an inclusive and nurturing ethos in playrooms. Many children bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the setting. Practitioners celebrate with children when they have achieved success at home or in clubs outwith the setting.**

**Choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement**

* *Evidence based improvement*
* *Ensuring impact of success for children and families*
* *Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation*
* Self-evaluation within the setting is carried out through informal dialogue on an ongoing basis, as well as at planned meetings to discuss improvement work. These opportunities allow practitioners time to discuss their practice and identify priorities for improvement. As self-evaluation processes develop, it will be important to clearly evidence the link between self-evaluation and improved approaches to how children learn. This should support and develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations amongst all practitioners. Achievements, progress and success should be celebrated with children and families.
* **Staff value the contribution of children, families and partners using a range of methods to consult with them and gain their views. Parents are asked for feedback about various aspects of the setting. It will be important to communicate the impact of parental views. This will ensure continued engagement and development of these collaborative approaches to self-evaluation leading to improvement.**
* Self-evaluation and improvement planning approaches focus appropriately on improving outcomes for children. This includes regular review of any improvement work in order to evaluate the progress achieved. The manager and practitioners use national practice guidance ‘Building the Ambition’ and ‘How good is our early learning and childcare?’. They are aware that they need to revisit this to support more effective and systematic self-evaluation in relation to planning, tracking, monitoring and curriculum development.