

Summarised Inspection Findings

Houston Primary School and Nursery Class

Renfrewshire Council

SEED No: 8622221

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Section One

Summarised Inspection Findings

Houston Primary School

1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change*
- The school benefits from a strongly held and shared understanding of the values which underpin the life and work of school. The school's values are evident in the quality of relationships across the school community. The school's aims reflect a commitment to meet the needs of all children in a safe, secure and supportive learning environment, and provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop their skills and talents. Currently these values are being reinforced further through the school's assembly programme as children reflect on the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The school now feels that the time is right to revisit the school's aims and vision with all members of the school community. This will enable the school to review and update its curriculum rationale to take account of the four aspects and provide children with enhanced opportunities to develop further their confidence, attributes and skills.
- Staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a detailed knowledge of individual children and the needs and aspirations of the local community. This understanding is supported further with the information supplied via the Education Authority on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This information is being used effectively as the school works to ensure equity for all children.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and is offering clear strategic direction to secure improvements in the quality of children's learning. She displays a strong personal and professional commitment to providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment for children. Staff and the local community have confidence in the leadership across the school. The headteacher has established a clear vision for the school and is developing a very strong collegiate culture. Supported through a planned programme of meetings, teachers meet regularly to reflect on current practice and to plan children's learning. A major strength in taking forward identified aspects for development is the collaborative and collegiate working of staff. Almost all teachers confirm that they are involved in setting school priorities. They describe having regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum.
- All staff are demonstrating their commitment to improve the quality of children's learning. Teachers across the school work well together to evaluate and develop practice. This is evident in the willingness of colleagues to share ideas and resources. Within broad guidelines, teachers have a degree of flexibility and are being encouraged to show initiative. Across the school, teachers are assuming some whole school responsibilities in leading developments as curriculum coordinators. This is helping to manage the pace of change and capitalise on individual expertise.

As already identified by the school, there is a particular emphasis being placed on taking forward teaching strategies to promote higher order thinking and resilience in learners.

- Teachers speak positively about the opportunities which they have to develop their professional expertise and the support which they receive. All staff benefit from a PRD meeting. The school is outward looking. Staff liaise with colleagues in other schools to moderate and develop practices. This extends to close partnership working with the local secondary school. There are, therefore, extensive opportunities for professional development in the sharing of practice within the school, with other schools and in personal professional learning.
- The school improvement plan (SIP) and standards and quality papers accurately identify specific aspects for development. There, however, is scope for the school improvement plan to reflect priorities in more strategic terms and be more focused. At present the SIP is lengthy and needs to focus more closely on identified key priorities. This change will support the school in evaluating its practice and progress against developments.
- A framework for self-evaluation and for monitoring the impact of developments is in place. Peer visits and classroom observations facilitate the sharing of practice. These arrangements, however, require to be more systematic. Evaluations of activities and capturing the views of parents have led to changes in practice. The school has clear plans on how to take this area forward to ensure a more robust analysis to enhance learning, and ensure appropriate challenge for all children. Across the school there is a consensus with respect to the school's improvement agenda and the shared responsibilities of all.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
- *Quality of teaching*
- *Effective use of assessment*
- *Planning, tracking and monitoring*

- Almost all children are motivated and engage positively in their learning. Almost all children are extremely well behaved, are very mannerly and listen carefully to their teachers. The very positive and supportive ethos within all classrooms ensures that children feel cared for and respected within a warm and highly supportive learning environment. The relationship between staff and children is one of mutual respect across the school.
- Almost all children are confident learners. Across the school, children are active in their learning. Where given the opportunity, children work very well collaboratively with partners, in trios and in groups. Children are confident when taking on leadership roles within learning tasks. The school should continue to explore further the opportunities for children to lead learning within the classroom and outwith. In most classes, learning activities and tasks meet the needs of learners. There, however, is further scope for the school to provide increased opportunities for challenge, personalisation and choice across the curriculum.
- The majority of children feel that they have a say in ways to make their learning better. Most teachers give feedback on learning across the curriculum, along with self- and peer-assessment. This could be developed further to engage the children in improving their learning. Where learning is strongest, children are provided with feedback which supports them to identify their next steps but this is not yet consistent across the school. Through the wide variety of interesting learning experiences on offer, the school should continue to make skills more explicit in some classes and develop a more consistent approach to talking to children about their learning in order to agree targets and next steps.
- Through committees, clubs and partnership groups there is a broad range of opportunities for some children to contribute to the life of the school and to the wider community. There is scope to develop further the pupil voice. The school should continue to seek creative ways to engage and empower a greater number of children in this work.
- Children are confidently accessing technologies within their learning. Where this was particularly effective, groups of children with additional support needs were enthusiastically and effectively using specific programmes, games and tools to reinforce and enhance their learning.
- In most lessons, learning intentions and success criteria are used to share the purpose of the lesson. This could be developed further by giving the children

increasing responsibility to co-construct the success criteria to better support learners in knowing what they need to learn. In most lessons, teachers use a wide variety of tasks and activities to create an enjoyable and purposeful learning environment. Children respond well to opportunities for active learning which is evident in most lessons and includes practical tasks, group discussions, challenges and games. This is increasingly developing through the use of outdoor learning. Greater challenge and depth should be offered through increased use of personalisation and choice. Teachers and children are confident in their use of digital technologies which are supporting learning across a range of curricular areas.

- Teachers are using questioning primarily to check understanding. Teachers should now look to place a greater emphasis on questions which encourage analysis and evaluation. As already identified by the school, the planned development of higher order thinking skills will promote learner engagement and give further opportunities for children to lead their learning.
- The school is in the process of refreshing its policy for assessment. Collegiate work amongst staff has produced a working draft and this will benefit from further review. Overall, assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and provides staff with valuable information about children's progress. There is scope for teachers to work more closely with children to enable them to have a deeper understanding of what they do well and what they need to learn next. Staff deploy a variety of school and standardised assessment approaches in the course of teaching and at the conclusion of teaching blocks. Information is then shared with parents. The school has well-developed approaches to moderation in place to ensure professional judgement is sufficiently robust both locally and across Renfrewshire Council.
- Teachers plan collegiately by stage very well. The school has effectively arranged teacher's non-contact time to allow high levels of collaboration between teachers at the same stage. This is impacting positively on the consistency of experiences for children across a stage. Termly plans are translated into weekly planning. Termly planning has been developing well in recent years to take account of national and local guidance. This has been achieved with a high degree of consistency across the primary stages. The school now needs to take forward its plans to develop planning to be more responsive and relevant to children's own interests. Building planning around children's input in a more explicit way will encourage them to take more of a leading role in their own learning.
- Teachers track children's progress in literacy and numeracy against relevant national guidance using a common format across the primary stages. In discussion, teachers show a sound awareness of their children's individual strengths and areas where they can improve. Progress is being made on taking forward a similar approach to tracking individual progress in all other areas of the curriculum. The school is planning to take account of the latest national guidance on tracking, beginning with literacy and numeracy. This guidance should be used as a means to modify rather than overhaul the current arrangements and consideration should be given towards the avoidance of increasing bureaucracy and workload for teachers.
- Promoted staff monitor teacher's planning and tracking through termly reviews of

planning and teacher's evaluations. Interventions are agreed where appropriate, as the evaluation procedures encourage teachers to highlight children who concern them in terms of progress, attitude or more specific issues. These monitoring arrangements are used well, notably for progress in literacy and numeracy, to monitor specific children facing additional challenges to their learning, including those living in financial hardship. Promoted staff responsible for literacy and numeracy are able to discuss well the progress being made by children who may face additional barriers to their learning.

2.2 CURRICULUM: theme 2: Learning Pathways

- Overall, the school has articulated its curriculum rationale, which reflects the aims of the school, through the handbook and stage information booklets. Central to these curricular aims are the four capacities within the context of raising attainment and achievement and the design principles which underpin learning and teaching in all classrooms. The school is making positive progress in supporting children to develop and apply skills for learning, life and work. Rights based education is becoming a stronger feature of the school community and is articulated in all classes. The school should take forward its plans to refresh the curriculum rationale.
- The school has effective strategies in place to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Key programmes are in place for mathematics and numeracy and they have been enhanced through high quality professional learning of staff. Rigorous monitoring and tracking enable staff to make adjustments to the learning pathways for individuals and groups of children. The school is participating in a literacy coaching project with Renfrewshire Council. This has enhanced the professional learning of staff in providing programmes and approaches in reading.
- Learning pathways have been developed over time at each stage and across the school. These would benefit from becoming more flexible to enable children to have a greater say in their learning. Robust planning within all curricular areas provides a clear, progressive framework. High quality collegiate time, provided by the headteacher at each stage, is enabling teachers to come together to develop and review pathways for individual children and groups. The school is taking forward its plans to build on the effectiveness of their curricular pathways to ensure breadth, challenge and application. An on-going focus on music, sustainability, literacy and modern languages is improving how much and how well children gain knowledge and understanding and skills.
- The school makes good use of its context to enhance and broaden the curriculum. Children learn well in and about the outdoors. Vertical learning experiences are enabling children to collaborate to gain skills for learning, life and work. There is scope for the school to strengthen how it articulates and builds on the skills children are gaining through these experiences.

2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: theme 3 Impact on learners – Parental Engagement

- Parents play an active role in the life of the school. Children are benefiting also from the support being offered by volunteers in, for example, out of class learning and paired reading. Parents speak positively about their child's learning and feel well informed about their progress. The school maintains regular communications with parents through a range of channels.
- An active parent council and the wider parent body enhance the life of the school through running events and fund-raising. The school liaises closely with the parent council in planning events. Parents are being supported in their role through information events and interactive workshops, and booklets appropriate to each stage. Some of the topics being addressed are in direct response to requests from the parent body. The parent council currently is planning with the school to survey the views of parents on a range of issues.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's 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 every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
 - *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
 - *Inclusion and equality*
- There are strong procedures and approaches to children's wellbeing across the school with positive relationships and a caring ethos clearly evident. Staff are vigilant and prompt to respond to any issues. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and can speak confidently about the arrangements which are in place, for example the daily check in and the well established procedures to highlight concerns. The staff have a good understanding of GIRFEC and wellbeing. They now need to begin to use the language of the wellbeing indicators more fully with children, and as an integral part of school life. Almost all children describe feeling safe and cared for in school. They speak confidently about having someone to whom they can go should they feel upset or worried. As a result children are relaxed and enjoying their learning. The important messages of equality and the respect for others are being reinforced through the school's anti-bullying policy and the work being done with children in looking at the UN Rights of the Child. Staff and partners have created a positive learning environment where children's wellbeing is at the heart of the work of the school. The planned review of the school's vision will enable the school to incorporate the UN Rights of the Child, the wellbeing indicators and ensure a shared understanding of how these areas connect. Children have a very good understanding of the Golden Rules and their role in contributing to a positive school ethos. Children have been involved in devising the school's anti bullying policy and have drafted their own charter. There, however, is scope to develop a fuller understanding through the use of child friendly language and displays which are accessible to all children across the school.
 - A focus on equality and inclusion permeates all aspects of children's learning. The planning arrangements for individual learners support teachers in meeting the needs of all children. The school should continue to ensure that class grouping arrangements enable the highest expectations of all learners and flexibility in learning pathways. Staff are conscious of the need to ensure equity for all children in relation to events, trips and fundraising. There are opportunities to explore diversity through RME and the school's contributions to charity events and to community fund raising, add to the richness of children's understanding and experiences and their awareness of the needs of others.
 - All staff engage in professional learning in relation to the legislative requirements of supporting wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The school actively engages with all aspects of legislation in relation to children's wellbeing, and children with additional needs are very well supported and experience positive outcomes. The school has stated that the children who are Looked After are currently being considered for a CSP and the school should work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that,

where appropriate, this statutory duty is met.

- In promoting healthy eating, the school meal service should consider allowing discretion for staff in school to use their own judgement in determining portion sizes. The school also should ensure children's views and concerns regarding school meals are taken into account to improve their experience in the dining hall. Children enjoy the 'dine in days'; they are not happy with the amount of plastic and packaging used on other days. Children would welcome some input into the menu combinations. Taking these issues into account would support the school in raising the profile of healthy eating.
- In collaboration with partners, the school provides young people and families with help and advice in keeping themselves safe and healthy in areas such as internet safety. The school is providing outdoor learning which draws on the Forrest School approach in its vertical learning programme. Older children are also benefitting from a residential experience. The school is also meeting its responsibilities in providing two hours of physical education a week across all stages.

3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
 - *Attainment over time*
 - *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
 - *Equity for all learners*
- At the early level, children are making very good progress in literacy. Children listen attentively and respond thoughtfully, demonstrating their prior learning and understanding. They have a strong command of descriptive vocabulary which they use well to articulate their thoughts and ideas. Children show high levels of determination to read. They use the knowledge they have already gained to attempt to decode unfamiliar words. Reading which has been practised is fluent and expression is emerging. Children demonstrate confidence in writing and their early progress is very evident. Within first level, children are sustaining strong progress within listening and talking, reading and writing. They have continued to build on their skills in talking and listening to engage in discussions and ask thoughtful questions. Progress in reading is closely monitored by staff and children are gaining confidence in using their skills across their learning. Motivation for reading is high and children are making progress through the accelerated reading approach. Children write for a range of purposes. They benefit from well-constructed teaching approaches which enable children to plan their writing tasks.
- Children at first and second level are making very good progress in literacy and language. Almost all children are attaining appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in talking and listening, reading and writing. Almost all children engage respectfully with others in class discussions and collaborative activities; they are very articulate, express themselves very well and respect the views of others when talking and listening. Children have opportunities to develop their presentation skills across the four contexts for learning. Children across the school are competent and engaged readers. They have a very good knowledge of different genres and talk confidently about their reading preferences and choice of authors. The school should continue to develop children's awareness and application of reading skills at first and second levels. At second level, almost all children read independently and with some expression. They can answer a range of questions and discuss some aspects of the writer's style successfully.
- Children write effectively for a variety of purposes with confidence. The quality of extended writing is consistently high across the levels. Most children have a very good knowledge of punctuation features and apply this in their writing. Across the school, children are able to discuss confidently a variety of spelling strategies and how they can utilise these to support them in their learning. More able children are challenged to spell more complex words to further extend and enhance their learning.
- Children's attainment in numeracy across the Early, First and Second level is very good. Almost all children have very good levels of mental agility where they are able to confidently explain their thinking and demonstrate a range of strategies from which

to select. The highest attaining learners are very successful at applying their skills and knowledge across a range of aspects of mathematics and numeracy to solve given problems. Children, however, would benefit from more opportunities to create mathematical problems and challenges for others.

- Data provided by the school for children's attainment in literacy and numeracy in the primary stages does not provide a coherent narrative of progress over time. A variety of standardised assessment tools have been provided at different times and aimed at different stages across the school over the last few years by the local authority to support and challenge teacher's professional judgements. Trends over time therefore are difficult to assess and comment upon confidently, based solely on this standardised data. However, inspection activities such as observing learning and teaching, discussions with the leadership team and staff, individually and in groups, confirm that most children are making very good progress over time against national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. This view is backed up by the outcome of meetings with groups of children from stages across the school and observations of children during their learning.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in the early years in literacy and numeracy. The school needs to continue its focus on maintaining this very good start as children progress through the school. Increasing teachers' confidence and use of standardised attainment data to inform their understanding of children's progress has rightly been targeted as a priority to take this forward. The leadership team now need to increase the level of support and challenge within their attainment discussions with teachers, so that their professional judgements and the standardised data available about individual children are more closely aligned. This is not yet consistent enough.
- Across all other curriculum areas, almost all children are making good progress against national expectations and many children are making better than expected progress. Progress is monitored effectively by members of the leadership team, and with curriculum leaders termly monitoring the planning by curriculum area. The on-going development of the school's curriculum to be more responsive and relevant to children's interests, and a continued focus on increasing pace and challenge across the school should contribute to further improvement in progress.
- Almost all children participate regularly in a range of sporting, cultural and musical activities. A few children are performing at a high level and the school is recognising and celebrating this as well as the achievements of all. Achievements in school and out of school are well documented in stimulating displays around the school and notes within the school's newsletters. Achievement assemblies as part of a rolling programme of themed assemblies allow achievements in and out of school to be celebrated. School and class achievement awards allow children to gain recognition for attributes as well as personal successes. The school encourages children to work together supporting local, national and international causes. commendably, the school is working towards its fifth Green flag. The school community is very supportive of efforts to raise awareness or funds and to provide materials and recycle items for a variety of school-driven initiatives. The school should now consider how it can help children to recognise the breadth of skills and the personal attributes they are developing through all of their achievements. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop and apply these skills and talents through contributing to and leading on areas of improvement across the school.

- In discussion with the inspection team, the leadership team was able to identify individual children from vulnerable backgrounds, who may face financial hardship or encounter additional barriers to their learning. The team could describe well the progress made by these children, including any interventions or support provided and the impact of such. These individual children are making good progress in their learning given their additional needs or circumstances. The school now needs to take greater account of the progress made by identifiable cohorts of children to ensure all possible barriers to their progress are removed.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 2.6 TRANSITIONS

This indicator focuses on the need for children and young people to be well supported as they move into school, through school and beyond school. Effective partnership working, tracking of progress and robust record keeping are essential to support continuity in learning at points of transition. That continuity is crucial to maximising children and young people's successes and ensuring the most appropriate post-school destination.

- *Arrangements to support learners and their families*
- *Collaborative planning and delivery*
- *Continuity and progression in learning*
- The school is actively encouraging parents to share in their child's learning. Information workshops on aspects of the curriculum as well as issues relating to the wellbeing and development of children are offered to parents. These have been received well by those attending. Parents are being asked to identify aspects of their child's learning for which they would like a fuller understanding.
- There is a well-established, comprehensive programme for transitions into nursery, through the school and on to Gryffe High School. Pastoral arrangements are very strong. The school works collaboratively with a number of key partners and agencies to ensure the arrangements put in place for individual children and cohorts meet their learning and development needs. Children who have additional support needs and those who need an enhanced transition are identified clearly and benefit from an individualised approach. Documentation to support children at key transitions including those from class-to-class is helpful.
- Continuity and progression in learning at key points of transition has been a focus of continuous improvement for the school. At the early level, staff are reviewing the documentation they use to transfer information to ensure that it provides the most important information about individual children. Close monitoring of children's progress through the early level is enabling staff to determine the very positive gains children have made. As children move on to Gryffe High School they benefit from shared planning for learning, by staff, across a number of curricular areas. Houston Primary School staff and those from Gryffe High School articulate well the very positive impact of their approach to transitions.
- Strong cluster arrangements in the local area support consistency of experience for the youngest children in a number of early learning settings and those moving on to secondary school. Children benefit from the transition planning being led by the establishment they are moving on from as this enables the needs of children and their families to be met more effectively.

Section two

Summarised Inspection Findings

Houston Primary School Nursery Class

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*
-
- The vision, values and aims of the setting are embedded in practice. The school's leadership team recognises the need to refresh these in partnership with the setting's community.
 - Leadership is developing at all levels with practitioners assuming increasing responsibilities for aspects of the setting including leading and being involved in improvement plan priorities. This has made a positive impact on the setting. Examples of this include 'Five to Thrive', developing outdoor education and 'Learning to Talk'. Staff are reflective practitioners. They engage in professional dialogue and share their skills and expertise to help make improvements. This is fostered by the management team who actively encourage them to take on leadership roles. They also encourage practitioners to be outward looking by visiting other establishments both within and outwith the authority. This helps ensure innovation and builds further capacity for improvement.
 - Practitioners report that they are well supported by the leadership team. The leadership team have implemented changes at an appropriate rate to ensure that everyone understands and can implement these changes very effectively. A member of the school's leadership team has responsibility for developing and monitoring the work of the setting which is done very well. The monitoring calendar should continue to have a clear focus on the quality of learning and teaching to ensure that children are challenged.
 - The school improvement plan includes key priorities for the setting. The plan for 2015/16 has had a very positive impact on the quality of experiences for children. Children are now accessing a wider range of learning experiences within the outdoor garden area. Practitioners should continue as planned to focus on developing a more child centered approach to planning and the documentation of the learning process.
 - Self-evaluation of the setting involves practitioners, children and parents. It is robust and systematic using a wide range of evidence including peer observation. All new initiatives in the setting are evaluated by practitioners, parents and children which lead to improvements, for example, the home learning initiative. The self-evaluation process supports the leadership of change with clear, relevant and appropriate targets for improvement being identified and taken forward to drive improvement. In partnership with practitioners, the leadership team now needs to continue to guide the strategic direction of the setting.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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*
- Overall, the quality of interaction is good. Practitioners are sensitive to the varying needs of children attending the setting. There is a respectful ethos and culture where all children are treated and valued as individuals. This is resulting in children feeling safe and secure and allows them to be increasingly successful and confident in their learning. Children are motivated by their play and most children show sustained interest in their chosen activities. In order to enhance this further and provide increasing challenge and depth, practitioners should refine the plan for the support and development of children's creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills both indoors and outside. Most practitioners use skilled questioning techniques appropriately to extend children's thinking. They should now work to share this good practice across the team in order to provide increased benefit to children's learning.
- Children are consulted in planning for their own learning through the use of talking and thinking floorbooks. Children's interests and ideas are used as a starting point for planning which is shared with parents. These approaches are in the initial stages of development and staff should build on existing consultation methods with children to increase further the depth and personalisation of learning.
- Practitioners make observations of children's learning and can talk about their progress over time. Key observations with children's evaluative comments are documented in individual learning logs. Staff should build on the cycle of observation, assessment and planning to give a better holistic picture of the children. This would also support children and parents to engage more effectively and consistently with these learning logs in order to make valuable contributions to the planning, documentation and evaluation of learning.
- The use of digital technologies is appropriate and effective with staff utilising available resources to appropriately support and extend learning. The children have developed their skills by working with the P6 digital team.
- Tracking and monitoring of children's learning is at an early stage of development. Practitioners share an understanding of how this will be developed and are engaging in professional learning to ensure that it is well understood across the setting and secures positive outcomes for children. Better recognition needs to be taken of prior learning. This is particularly relevant for children who are returning for their second year at the setting. The pace and challenge of learning for these children needs to be brisker.
- The manager and staff team are aware of the individual circumstances of the

families attending their setting and make good use of this information in order to secure equity and positive outcomes for all. This includes working closely with external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure all children access the support needed that best meets their needs.

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*
- There are strong caring relationships in the setting and the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners know each child well and are well attuned to their needs. They have a shared understanding of wellbeing and strive to ensure they have a positive relationship with families. This supports family's social and emotional wellbeing. Practitioners now need to support children to develop an awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included.
 - Wellbeing indicators are used to inform regular planning for children. Where children have additional support needs there is robust planning using the 'My World' Triangle and where necessary the Integrated Assessment. Practitioners are proactive in seeking appropriate help at an early stage from other agencies for children with additional support needs. This is handled sensitively. There is strong partnership working with other agencies to support children with additional support needs within the setting. Practitioners have attended appropriate training and have visited other establishments to ensure that children's needs are very well met. Training in nurture and the addition of the nurture room has further embedded nurturing principles in the setting. Practitioners are beginning to use mindfulness as a calming mechanism for children. Management and practitioners actively engage and comply with statutory duties. However, where appropriate, they should ensure that children are considered for a co-ordinated support plan.
 - Positive behaviour is encouraged and promoted. Children have been involved in creating their own Golden Rules. They are encouraged to show consideration and develop positive relationships with others. The setting has a strong sense of community where everyone is valued and included. Parents responding to inspection questionnaires indicated that they feel their child is treated fairly and with respect.
 - Practitioners value the views and opinions of children and have taken steps to ensure that their views are heard. They have set up voting mechanisms so all children are involved in decision making. Practitioners need to continue to encourage children to express their choices and opinions. They should also encourage the children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - Children are taking on leadership roles such as lunch time helpers and eco warriors. Ways to increase further their leadership skills should be sought.

Children's interests are used as a basis for planning experiences and opportunities in their learning. However, children's interests could be built on further.

- Children's achievements are celebrated using praise, reward, 'Star of the Week' and documenting their success in their learning logs. Practitioners should continue to work towards celebrating achievements outside the centre

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*
- Within the setting there is a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of children in order to positively support children's development. This is reinforced with a strong emphasis on nurturing combined with the 'Five to Thrive' initiative in the setting. Practitioners encourage children to express themselves and, as a result, children can discuss their thoughts and feelings. Children have a good understanding of ways to help keep healthy and are familiar with nursery routines to support their health, such as hand washing. They discuss healthy food options during snack times.
- Most children are making good progress in early literacy. Practitioners interact well with children during free play to extend communication and early language skills. Practitioners are using well the skills from their training in the 'Little Big Writing' to embed mark making in the setting. They are also using the skills appropriately from the 'Learning to Talk' training to support children's language development. They make effective use of visual prompts to support children who require additional help to communicate their needs. The majority of children are showing an interest in mark making. It will be important for practitioners to ensure children continue to develop these skills through meaningful contexts both indoors and during outdoor learning.
- Children are progressing well in early numeracy. They are developing good early mathematical skills through the range of resources available and in daily routines. Practitioners are applying the skills from their training in the 'Little Big Maths' well. Most children are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they compare the size, length and height of different objects around the setting and outdoors. A few children develop problem solving skills as they test how quickly water moves through tubes and guttering. Practitioners now need to continue to support children to develop early numeracy and mathematical skills through real-life contexts.
- Children's progress is monitored through personal learning logs. This needs to develop further to ensure a clear overview of individual children's progress. This will help practitioners to plan more effectively for children's individual learning needs and ensure that they are making the best possible progress. At the present time it is difficult to comment on children's progress over time.
- Literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing tracking profiles have been developed to monitor progress in these areas within the Early level. However, practitioners should

consider matching these tracking profiles with the new national standard documentation.

- Children's individual achievements within the setting are captured and celebrated well. Praise is used effectively to support and encourage children and to celebrate their success. Achievements from outwith the setting are shared and recorded within children's learning log. Staff should continue to develop ways of capturing individual achievements from outwith the setting to ensure that these are consistently built upon. Practitioners should now work together with children in order to identify areas where children are capable of taking an increased role to support their collaborative working and decision making skills.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: TRANSITIONS

This indicator focuses on the need for children and young people to be well supported as they move into school, through school and beyond school. Effective partnership working, tracking of progress and robust record keeping are essential to support continuity in learning at points of transition. That continuity is crucial to maximising children and young people's successes and ensuring the most appropriate post-school destination.

- *Arrangements to support learners and their families*
- *Collaborative planning and delivery*
- *Continuity and progression in learning*

Arrangements to support learners and their families

- The school is actively encouraging parents to share in their child's learning. Information workshops on aspects of the curriculum as well as issues relating to the wellbeing and development of children are offered to parents. These have been received well by those attending. Parents are being asked to identify aspects of their child's learning for which they would like a fuller understanding.
- There is a well-established, comprehensive programme for transitions into nursery, through the school and on to Gryffe High School. Pastoral arrangements are very strong. The school works collaboratively with a number of key partners and agencies to ensure the arrangements put in place for individual children and cohorts meet their learning and development needs. Children who have additional support needs and those who need an enhanced transition are identified clearly and benefit from an individualised approach. Documentation to support children at key transitions including those from class-to-class is helpful.
- Continuity and progression in learning at key points of transition has been a focus of continuous improvement for the school. At the early level, staff are reviewing the documentation they use to transfer information to ensure that it provides the most important information about individual children. Close monitoring of children's progress through the early level is enabling staff to determine the very positive gains children have made. As children move on to Gryffe High School they benefit from shared planning for learning, by staff, across a number of curricular areas. Houston Primary School staff and those from Gryffe High School articulate well the very positive impact of their approach to transitions.
- Strong cluster arrangements in the local area support consistency of experience for the youngest children in a number of early learning settings and those moving on to secondary school. Children benefit from the transition planning being led by the establishment they are moving on from as this enables the needs of children and their families to be met more effectively.

CARE INSPECTORATE EVIDENCE

1 Quality of Care and Support

CARE INSPECTORATE GRADE: Good

We found that robust systems were in place in relation to the management of children's medicines. Medication and medical care policies and procedures had been reviewed and updated in response to a previous Care Inspectorate requirement and followed national best practice guidance ('Management of Medication in Day-care and Child-minding Services'). Staff ensured parents provided written consent prior to any medication being received into the service or administered to any child. Health Care plans for children identified as having a pre-existing medical condition, including asthma, allergies, and life threatening conditions had been developed and were regularly reviewed. Specialist medical training (for example, in EpiPen use) ensured that staff were able to recognise the signs and symptoms of when a child may become unwell due to an existing medical condition. It was clear from our discussions with staff that they understood the action and steps they must take when such a situation arose. We discussed with the member of the school's leadership team with responsibility for the nursery the value of continuing professional development opportunities for staff currently in a role where they administer medicine.

The service had reviewed planning systems since the last inspection and had made progress in recording experiences and outcomes covered across the curriculum. We found that planning for play using talking and thinking floorbooks was less adult directed and focused more on children's interests. We discussed with staff observation approaches that could help identify and evaluate play experiences that children found particularly engaging and challenging. We highlighted how this could help staff to efficiently update and maintain children's personal plans as well as foster meaningful discussion between children, parents, and staff about play and development. Staff agreed that this could enhance the systems in place for recognising children's achievements as well as promote children's sense of ownership and leadership of play.

2 Quality of Environment

CARE INSPECTORATE GRADE: Very Good

All parents told us that the service provided them with opportunities to contribute their views on developing the nursery environment. For example, staff told us how parent feedback had led to the reorganisation of the children's cloakroom area to provide more space at busy times. In addition, collection times at the end of each nursery session were changed to ensure staff had more time to welcome families, answer any questions or to discuss individual children's care needs.

Parents and carers were encouraged to share their expertise and skills to enhance the nursery environment. For example, we found that a parent had used joinery skills to work with small groups of children to build bird boxes. Staff also told us that a volunteer had been involved in improving the nursery through a planting project. This had led to children planting a variety of herbs and vegetables that they then used to make soup. Such experiences encouraged children to work co-operatively with peers and understand the relationship between growing activities and healthy food and lifestyle choices.

The staff made very good use of children's ideas and interests to help shape the learning environment and experiences. For example children had opportunities to vote on a range of forest activities including bug hunting, den making, gathering leaves before going on a woodland outing. Staff told us children were consulted on the purchase of new resources including prams, dolls and construction toys from nursery fundraising money. These measures ensured children's ideas were taken seriously and had a key role in decisions that affected them.

We found children's experiences were enriched through planned use of technologies that promoted skills for life and learning. For example, we found the nursery had recently purchased iPads as well as a digital Active Panel that built children's confidence in using digital tools for research, mark making and presentations.

The nursery provided a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. We observed staff support children to be actively involved in assessing relevant risks they may encounter during indoor and outdoor play. This helped empower children to make safe decisions and developed their self-awareness.

3 Quality of Staffing

CARE INSPECTORATE GRADE: Good

All parents we spoke to and who returned our questionnaires told us that they were confident that the staff possessed the skills and experience to care for their children and support their learning and development. They strongly agreed that their children were treated fairly, with respect and appeared happy and confident with staff. All parents were confident that there was always enough staff in the service to provide a good quality of care and would protect their child from harm, abuse, bullying and neglect. We agreed with this feedback as it matched evidence we gathered from our observations of staff during our inspection. Data generated by the service's own quality assurance audits also reflect a high level of parental satisfaction with staff.

Staff told us that as part of the interview process prospective staff are required to spend time in the playroom with the children. Children then had the opportunity to feedback to management their views and opinions on candidates. No new members of staff had been recruited to the staff team recently. We highlighted the value of continuing to involve children in discussing staff qualities and behaviours they liked. We suggested that questionnaires issued by the service could be adapted to support children with help from their parents, to comment on how well the staff looked after them.

We found there was an effective system for identifying and monitoring staff development needs and that staff were deployed in ways that made good use of their expertise. All staff participated in an annual Professional Review and Development meetings with the Deputy Head Teacher. Staff were committed to continuing professional development and had engaged in a wide range of training that was directly related to the nursery improvement priorities. This included Documentation and the Young Child, Forest Kindergarten, Learning to Talk and Five to Thrive (an attachment-based approach to positive parenting). These professional development opportunities helped to ensure children received support and care from staff who understood the significance of high quality interactions with children. Overall, we found professional learning had supported staff interact with children in ways that built confidence, extended learning and encouraged and valued their contributions.

4 Quality of Management and Leadership

CARE INSPECTORATE GRADE: Very Good

We found that the Depute Head Teacher had implemented effective systems for monitoring the quality of work of each member of staff and the service as a whole. This helped ensure that staff were clear about lines of accountability, in particular, in supporting children's health and well-being. We found a collegiate approach to improvement planning within the staff team. This had led to a clear focus on approaches for evaluating the quality of children's care and learning as well as improving systems for tracking their progress and achievements.

The manager was very good at promoting leadership values across the staff team. Staff had taken up leadership roles through a wide range of initiatives including working with parents to develop policies that influenced home learning activities, action planning for quality improvement, documenting children's progress, outdoor learning and positive parenting. This leadership approach ensured planned activities were directed at improving experiences and outcomes for children and strengthened the overall capacity of the team to improve the service.

During our feedback discussions with nursery staff, we highlighted the value to the service's improvement planning processes of strengthening their professional skills in observing and evaluating children's play. We highlighted the value of continuing to provide staff with the opportunity to evaluate training undertaken and jointly reflect on the impact of this learning on both their practice and outcomes for children. This will foster in-depth professional dialogue about observation approaches and build on existing opportunities for peer learning. It has the potential to directly enhance a key aspect of the staff's performance and promote positive outcomes for children in line with the service's wider improvement planning goals.

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- Highly motivated and engaged children who are keen to learn.
- The leadership of the head teacher and her deputies in bringing about change.
- The strong collaborative working of all staff which is taking forward school improvement.
- The high levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The strong positive relationships between the school and its community which are supporting children in their learning, wellbeing and development.

AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- Develop further the approaches to learning and teaching to promote increased personalisation and choice, and enable children to become more independent learners.
- Within the nursery, continue to improve how staff track and monitor children's progress over time.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Renfrewshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.