

Summarised inspection findings

Craigclowan Preparatory School Pre-School

Independent

7 March 2023

Key contextual information

Craigclowan Preparatory School Pre-School is situated on the southern edge of Perth within extensive, attractive grounds. Children attend from the city of Perth and surrounding areas. The pre-school is accommodated within one of the school buildings. Children benefit from designated space and use of the school campus, including woodland, sports facilities and specialist classrooms. Since August 2022, the two playrooms have operated separately. Children aged three to four years attend the 'hedgehog' room and children aged four to five years attend the 'owls' room.

The pre-school is registered for 50 children to attend at any time and at the time of the inspection there were 50 children on the roll. Children can attend through funded places in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council, between 8.15 am and 3 pm. during the school term. They may also access wraparound care between 7.30 am until 6 pm, and over school holidays, for 48 weeks per annum.

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 practitioners have a collective commitment to ensure that each child's high-quality Craigclowan 'adventure' starts in the pre-school. Senior leaders and practitioners have a clear vision for the future development of the pre-school. This includes increasing numbers of children attending. The vision, values and aims of the setting are shared with the whole school community with careful adaptations to ensure they are accessible to the youngest learners. Senior leaders recognise that it is timely to review and refresh the vision, values and aims to ensure that they fully reflect recent developments.
- Senior leaders are developing their roles and remits following a recent change to the management structure. The appointment of a lead practitioner has increased leadership capacity. Senior leaders are very positive role-models and are well respected by the whole school community. The staff team has recently grown. Recently recruited practitioners are bringing new ideas and skills, which are already contributing positively to the leadership of change. Senior leaders welcome and benefit from the quality assurance and support provided by Perth and Kinross Council as a result of their partnership to deliver funded places. This supports opportunities for professional learning and external advice to support ongoing improvement.
- Practitioners, led ably by senior leaders, have planned and carried out significant changes to their practice. This has been informed by the changing needs of children post pandemic and consideration of current thinking in early learning and childcare. Changes have focused on developing quality spaces for learning with a particular emphasis on children increasingly leading their own learning. As a result, children now learn in smaller groups. Staff have taken

steps to ensure children have increased access to a wider range of open-ended resources, activities.

- All practitioners have leadership responsibilities that capitalise on their skills and interests. These are leading to improved experiences for children in aspects such as learning to cycle, development of literacy skills and outdoor learning. Professional learning, individually and as a team, is supporting staff's delivery of the shared vision to enable practitioners to take on responsibilities in an informed way. Practitioners are motivated to lead developments. The team shares the responsibilities successfully between them. This is increasing the capacity for leading change.
- Senior leaders and practitioners use self-evaluation effectively to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. Senior leaders have created an improvement plan that contains priorities that are well-judged and build on learning from the pandemic and development of pedagogy.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Almost all children are motivated, enthusiastic, and ready to learn. They readily engage with quality experiences provided by practitioners and other specialist teachers in the school, for example physical education, French and music. Across their learning, children demonstrate a consistently high level of engagement. Recent improvements to the learning environment allow children to be more independent in their learning. The significantly increased access to open-ended resources is promoting well children's curiosity, choice and development of skills in problem solving. Children benefit from spending time outdoors daily, where they experience nature first hand during 'Forest Adventures'.
- Practitioners know children very well and create a welcoming, supportive environment for learning. They understand children's care and learning needs well and their interactions are loving and engaging. Most practitioners consistently use open-ended questions well to extend children's learning. The use of floorbooks helps children recognise the respect and value adults place on their thoughts and ideas. Practitioners should continue to develop planning approaches to ensure they provide the right level of challenge for all children. Children would benefit from opportunities to follow their interests in more depth. This will help children to deepen their knowledge and build on what they already know and can do.
- Children make good use of digital technologies to support their learning. They use the interactive board and tablet computers to research areas of interest. Practitioners could ensure that the use of technology is more frequent to allow children to develop and apply a full range of understanding and skills in their learning.
- Practitioners have a very good working knowledge of children as individuals, their strengths and what they need to learn next. A next step is for staff to improve how they record and document children's progress in learning. They make observations of children as they play. Practitioners should develop their practice to record their observations more thoroughly and include the significant learning of individual children.
- Practitioners use experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to ensure children experience learning across all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners work in partnership with parents to share learning and determine what children need to learn next. They strive to provide an effective blend of child-led and adult-led, more structured experiences that reflect children's needs and parental wishes. They recognise the benefit of planning in response to children's individual stages of development and have begun to make positive changes. Practitioners should continue to keep under review the balance of child-led and adult-led experiences over each day and week, and the frequency of home link activities they provide for families.

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 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 major strength in the pre-school. Practitioners have created a positive and nurturing ethos. As a result, children are very happy and settled. Across both playrooms, children are kind and considerate of their peers. Children enjoy helping others who are new to the setting. Many children have established firm friendships. Practitioners are supporting children very well to develop their understanding of their emotions in a natural and responsive way.
- Practitioners take positive steps to get to know children as they start their pre-school experience. They consult with parents to complete an 'all about me' booklet. This details children's likes and dislikes and includes key information about their stage of development. Practitioners use this information to identify and plan next steps in each child's development. Parents report that they are very satisfied with how well their children have been supported as part of the setting's transition programme.
- Children learn about the wellbeing indicators as part of routines and through play contexts. They can talk about healthy eating as they make choices during snack and lunch. Children can explain how they keep themselves safe as part of their 'forest adventures.' Almost all children show high levels of independence during play and routines. They choose their own snack, pour their own drinks and wash the crockery when they have finished. Children make very good attempts to dress themselves for outdoor play. They benefit from daily outdoor learning opportunities which support their wellbeing and help to develop their resilience.
- Children enjoy a very positive lunchtime experience in the school dining area. Practitioners join children for lunch, and this allows meaningful opportunities for social interactions. Helpfully, the team can consult with the chef and catering staff to ensure children's likes and dislikes are taken account of when new menus are planned.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are knowledgeable about fulfilling their statutory duties. They undertake comprehensive training which enables them to ensure the safety of all children. They are sensitive to the individual circumstances of families and provide one-to-one support for children as appropriate. A few children have additional planning in place which helps practitioners to meet their care and health needs.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality actively, with all children valued as individuals. They support diversity and challenge discrimination, ensuring they treat all children and families fairly. They celebrate differences and introduce children to different family dynamics, cultures and customs. This is helping children to understand and respect others. As planned,

practitioners should now raise children’s awareness of the rights of the child through meaningful contexts.

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

- Almost all children are making very good progress in early language and communication. Children have a wide knowledge of traditional tales and books by favourite authors. Groups of children engage very well when listening to stories read to them. Almost all children engage well in conversation, using a well-developed range of vocabulary. Children confidently mark make in their play, often sustaining their engagement for extended periods. Most are beginning to form letters and write familiar words, such as their names. Most children are adding detail to their already recognisable drawings. Older children make particularly good progress in developing and using French vocabulary. They have fun practicing their French as they play games.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children use the language of measure correctly in context as they compare size confidently when playing with dough. They can describe sequences of events using the appropriate language of time and use positional language correctly during physical education. Almost all children have a developing awareness of number. Most children count confidently within 10 with the majority exploring numbers beyond 10. Almost all children recognise digits that are significant to them, for example their age.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's health and wellbeing and as a result, almost all children are making very good progress. Children benefit from a wide range of physical experiences to develop their gross and fine motor skills. These include tennis, rugby, hockey, swimming and riding a bicycle. The use of diverse terrain outdoors and extensive physical activity provides challenge for children, as they build resilience, perseverance, and stamina. Almost all children can self-regulate their emotions and articulate their feelings confidently.
- Almost all children are making very good progress over time, across the curriculum. Practitioners can articulate confidently the progress children make because of their pre-school experiences. They recognise that more effective recording of their extensive knowledge and observations of children's learning will help them evidence this more effectively.
- Children achieve success across a wide range of contexts, both at home and in pre-school. Practitioners capture and celebrate these successes well. Children benefit from being part of whole school celebrations such as weekly assemblies and headteacher's awards. Practitioners

collate children's achievements in individual learning profiles and contribute to the overall summary of progress in learning.

- Practitioners take very positive steps to promote equity for all. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should continue to develop the effective use of all available data and information. This should help inform decisions about any interventions required to support the best outcomes for all children.

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.