

Summarised inspection findings

St Ignatius Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

St Ignatius Primary School Nursery class is a non-denominational early learning and childcare setting attached to St Ignatius Primary School in Wishaw, North Lanarkshire. The setting provides early learning and childcare for children from aged 3 to school age. It is open 38 weeks of the year, between 8.50am and 2.50pm each day. Children attend in flexible arrangements to meet the needs of families. The setting is registered for 50 children. At the time of the inspection, 48 children attended on a daily basis.

The nursery is managed by the headteacher who is supported by the lead early years practitioner. Over the past three years, there has been significant change in the nursery staff team and long-term staff absence due to unavoidable circumstances.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- There is a welcoming and nurturing ethos across the setting. This is underpinned by the strong nursery values and staff's commitment to children's rights. Children and families benefit from caring, trusting, positive relationships with practitioners. As a result, most children settle well and are secure, confident and happy at nursery. They play cooperatively with their peers, and most enjoy firm friendships.
- Overall, most children are motivated and enjoy their play. Practitioners support and encourage children to be independent when they are getting ready for outdoors and making playdough. A few children play for extended periods of time, for example, in the block play area and outdoors riding bikes. A minority of children move frequently between activities and need more support and interaction from staff to engage more fully in their experiences. This would help children to explore their interests in more depth and apply their skills in more challenging ways.
- Practitioners are working to improve the indoor and outdoor areas. They should continue to review and improve the range and quality of experiences in these areas. A next step is to promote more creativity and curiosity to support children better as they develop their ideas and play alongside other children. Practitioners should work with senior leaders to ensure they are clear about the purpose and value of experiences when children come together as a whole group. They need to maximise children's learning by improving the flow and pace of the day. In doing so, they should ensure an appropriate balance of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led learning that includes children's ideas and interests.
- Children benefit from attentive and caring interactions from practitioners, who listen carefully to their ideas. Practitioners are responsive to children's emotional and wellbeing needs. The team support children's verbal and non-verbal communication well through augmented

communication strategies. As a team, practitioners should continue to develop their skills in using effective questions and commentary to support and extend children's learning.

- Practitioners value children as individuals. They know their personalities and preferences well. The staff team should continue to develop further their understanding of children as learners and their individual skills. Practitioners make observations of children's learning and development and share these with parents using an online platform. The quality of these observations is inconsistent, and they do not always show the key skills children are developing and achieving. Practitioners use Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and school progression pathways to plan learning activities. They now need to focus on identifying individual children's significant learning and next steps and use this information to also inform their planning.
- Staff use a whole-school tracking system to monitor children's progress and development in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Practitioners meet with the headteacher each term to discuss children's progress. As practitioners improve how they identify and record next steps in learning, they need to gather clearer evidence on the progress children are making over time. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to build their confidence and skills in recording and reviewing targets in individual education plans for children who require additional support.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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. An area for development has been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- In communication and early language, most children are making good progress in line with their stage of development. Most children listen well to each other and engage readily in conversations with adults and their friends. Children enjoy reciting rhymes and sharing books as part of group times. The majority of children are developing an interest in early writing skills. The majority recognise their name with support. A few children attempt to write their name. A few are ready to be supported to extend and apply their skills further across all areas of communication and early language.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making good progress in line with their stage of development. They count, identify and order to numbers to 10. A few children can work with numbers to 20. Children apply and use units of measure when mixing paint or baking. They recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and sort and match items by colour, shape and size. They recognise and repeat patterns. A few children are ready to experience more challenge in learning about numeracy and mathematics.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are making good progress. Children are happy and confident. They play well together, and practitioners support children to resolve any conflicts in their play when required. Children are developing an understanding of how each child is unique and special. They engage readily in physical play and demonstrate high levels of coordination and gross and fine motor skills as they play inside and outside. Most children with identified additional support needs are making good progress towards their individual targets.
- Children are developing independence skills well, for example, in choosing where and what to play with across the setting. They enjoy visiting local shops to buy ingredients for baking or resources for the setting. Children understand the importance of regular handwashing and tooth brushing. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example when riding their bikes.
- Practitioners share children's progress regularly with parents, through an online platform and at parent meetings. Practitioners should continue to engage parents and children in creating and reflecting on focused next steps for securing children's continued progress.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements through praise and encouragement. They encourage parents to share children's achievements from home and outside the nursery. Practitioners look for opportunities to celebrate children's wider achievements within the setting to ensure that no child is missing out.

- The nursery has an inclusive ethos where children are valued and respected. The team has a good understanding and knowledge of the needs of children and families within their local community. This includes the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and how this may affect families and create barriers to children’s learning. Practitioners monitor attendance and support parents where necessary to ensure that all children attend regularly. This is supporting all children to engage in learning and play. Practitioners work well with outside agencies to address any identified gaps in children’s learning and development. Where necessary, staff put appropriate interventions in place to support individual children, for example, to improve their speech and communication skills. This helps to improve children’s progress and engagement during their time at nursery.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident and had developed positive relationships with staff. Interactions between staff and children were warm, kind and supportive, helping children feel safe and secure. Staff knew children well and spoke confidently on their individual needs, helping to ensure these were met. Staff had developed positive relationships with families, contributing to trusting connections.

Children experienced a calm and relaxed snack time. They enjoyed sitting with their peers and chatting, helping to support their social development. To further support children's independence, they would benefit from being involved in the preparation of snack. Lunchtime took place in the school dining hall and children were familiar with this routine. Staff were responsive to children's requests and cues, helping children to feel valued. Consideration should be given to the furniture, as not all children could put their feet on the floor, which meant they were not always seated comfortably and safely.

Personal plans were in place for children, and these contained important information on individual needs. However, it was not clear when these were reviewed with parents or children. The service should review personal plans to ensure these are a current reflection of children and their needs. Management recognised there were gaps in personal plans and provided assurances these would be reviewed to ensure these were consistent and reflective of children's needs.

More detailed plans were used to support children with additional support needs and these outlined key information to help staff become familiar with strategies to support children. Staff spoke confidently about these and worked closely with external agencies, promoting a partnership approach and consistency for children.

Personal care for children was carried out in a sensitive manner. Additional strategies were used for children who needed them, contributing to them feeling safe and supported.

We sampled the medication and consent forms held for children requiring medication. Whilst medication was stored safely, there were inconsistencies with paperwork and medication. For example, some children had duplicate medication and not all formal consent forms had been used. Monitoring and auditing of these in line with the current health guidance 'Management of Medication in Day care and Childminding Services' would strengthen procedures and contribute towards children's health and safety.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning

Children enjoyed playing with toys and materials available to them. They had developed positive peer relationships and engaged well with each other. Staff interacted with children and were responsive to their requests and cues.

Opportunities to help support children's literacy development included songs and stories. However, experiences offered to children were not always reflective of current best practice. This meant children were not always engaged and moved quickly between spaces. In addition, regular groups times throughout the day meant there were interruptions to children's play. We discussed the developments needed to ensure experiences offered to children were reflective of child

development. This would help to increase children's engagement, enable them to lead their own play and deepen their thinking.

Staff used Curriculum for Excellence and Pre-Birth to Three documents to support planning of experiences. However, we discussed reviewing planning for all children to help ensure these were reflective of a child led approach. Staff would benefit from being included in the planning process as this would contribute to their confidence, knowledge, skills and improve the pace of the day. (See area for improvement 1).

Children explored the environment with confidence and ease. They were able to choose where to play, both indoors and outdoors, helping to support their choices and wishes. However, children would benefit from further development of some play areas. For example, the role play corner being outside meant that children could not always access this as they wished. Increasing materials in the creative area and construction areas would help strengthen children's imagination, creativity and natural curiosity. (See area for improvement 2).

Observations of children's learning were recorded on learning journals and provided an opportunity of children's experiences to be shared with parents. We advised the service reviewing observations to ensure these contained relevant learning and achievements. Improving observations of children's learning would enable staff to create appropriate next steps to support and challenge children.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Management and staff were welcoming during the inspection and receptive to feedback. They were committed to making improvements to get it right for every child. They were open and honest in relation to the challenges the service had faced. A strong nursery ethos meant that there was a safe and welcoming environment for children and families. The manager explained their next steps were to include children and families in their newly developed vision and values. We agreed this would be a positive step.

A whole school improvement plan was in place and included identified priorities needed within the nursery. This included a focus on further developing approaches to play. Staff would benefit from revisiting best practice guidance and being included in the planning process to enable them to contribute their views and develop their knowledge of play and learning.

Staff had completed some training and they spoke confidently about these opportunities and the impact this had on their thinking and knowledge. Staff appraisals helped identify strengths and areas for development. These could be further developed with planned actions/next steps to support staff in their role.

The manager recognised paperwork that supported meeting children's needs had not been kept up to date. For example, medication, personal plans and monitoring. Moving forward, the manager should develop robust quality assurance systems in line with best practice to support good outcomes for all children. (See area for improvement 3).

Parents were welcomed into the setting, helping to support secure attachments and smooth transitions. Communication with families took place through daily discussions at drop off and collection times. Other methods of communication included newsletters, nursery app and learning journals. This helped families to feel included and informed in their child's nursery journey.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no areas for improvement. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and three areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement

Area for improvement 1:

1) To support children's learning and development, management should review planning systems to ensure children's experiences are reflective of child development, their interests and individual needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity. (HSCS 2.27)

Area for improvement 2:

2) To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, management should ensure the environment is supportive of children's learning, development and choices.

This should include, but not limited to, ensuring children have access to imaginative spaces and enough toys and materials to support their natural curiosity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: I can independently access the parts of the premises I use and the environment has been designed to promote this. (HSCS 5.11)

Area for improvement 3:

1) To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the manager should implement robust quality assurance processes, covering key areas of practice.

This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice, medication systems and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

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.