

Summarised inspection findings

Kirktonholme Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

10 December 2024

Key contextual information

Kirktonholme Nursery Class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) within Kirktonholme Primary School in East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire. Children attend the nursery from the age of three until they start primary school. Full day, term time sessions are available between 08:45 am and 2.55 pm. The nursery is registered for 40 children. The current roll is 35. The single playroom is accessed from a small cloakroom area with a dedicated entrance for families. Children have their lunch in the school dining hall, and frequently access the school gym. The depute headteacher and team leader lead and manage the work of the nursery team. Seven full or part-time practitioners, and a support worker complete the well-established team. A few members of staff have worked in the nursery for many years. There is a low turnover of staff.

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 nursery team use their clear vision and values well to underpin their work. Staff share the nursery values well with children, parents and the wider school community. All practitioners feel very well supported by, and connected to, the wider life and work of the school. Practitioners ensure every child's individual learning needs are at the 'HEART' of their 'Kirktonholme way'. The highly visible depute headteacher and skilled team leader motivate, lead and support children, families, and practitioners very well. All practitioners demonstrate the nursery values successfully through their work, language, and actions. Together with school staff, parents, and children the nursery team have refined and focused their values to ensure they are meaningful and relevant to young children. The team reinforce the values to children using accessible language and relevant examples. Parents feel included, valued and supported by the nurturing approach of the team and speak positively about the nursery ethos. Senior leaders should continue to share the vision, values and aims with new families to the setting to support them to influence change.
- The depute headteacher and team leader have a strong, shared focus on continuous improvement and have clear roles and responsibilities. The team leader and practitioners contribute actively to identifying and leading change as part of the Kirktonholme Improvement Team. They participate in meaningful weekly reflection sessions and regular meetings with the depute headteacher. The team have a very good understanding of their clear, focused improvement plan which is improving outcomes for children. For example, practitioners have worked well together to develop children's fine motor skills and use of real tools in their woodworking area. Children frequently access the improved small, cosy spaces to rest, relax or process their feelings. Practitioners are confident and skilled in using maths resources as a result of targeted professional learning and work with colleagues across early level. These improvements support children to make very good progress in their learning. All practitioners should continue to develop further their skills and confidence in gathering and analysing

information. This will help all team members identify and celebrate what children have achieved as a result of their leadership of change.

- Senior leaders implement a comprehensive range of planned quality assurance and monitoring processes. This ensures they have an in-depth knowledge of practitioners' and children's strengths and areas for development. The depute headteacher and team leader directly observe learning and teaching regularly. This helps to inform staff professional dialogue and progress meetings with children's keyworkers. Senior leaders' well-judged feedback and high expectations support practitioners to discuss, agree and evaluate what children need to make the very best possible progress. Practitioners provide parents with a good range of ways to be directly involved in or provide feedback about improvements in the nursery. Children's and parent's views inform the improvement plan through consultations and surveys. Children make suggestions about what they would like to learn about or change in their pupil council meetings and discussions with keyworkers.

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 arrive at nursery eager to see their keyworker and ready to learn. They quickly engage with the wide variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Most children demonstrate confidence and independence during almost all of their time at nursery. The team encourage children sensitively to lead their own learning. All children know and understand their nursery routine very well. Children work co-operatively in small groups. For example, when they build a den outside, listen to a story after lunch or explore the good range of sensory activities indoors and outdoors. As a result, most children sustain interest in experiences for extended periods of time. The team should continue to review and refine routines across the nursery day. A few children need support at times of transition such as before they go to the school dining hall.
- Children are polite, friendly and kind as they play and learn with their friends. Almost all practitioners use observations well to identify when children need support from adults to resolve disagreements over space or resources. The team role model, reinforce and comment on children's positive behaviour frequently. Practitioners use the language of the nursery values naturally to encourage children to be kind and be safe. They support children patiently and in nurturing ways to express and name their feelings. The team have made a positive start to exploring the language of rights with children. Practitioners should continue to develop further opportunities to learn and use the language of rights in a way that is meaningful to young children.
- Senior leaders have rightly identified the need for staff to refresh and develop further their skills in using questioning to extend children's thinking. Most practitioners use open ended questioning well. A few practitioners use higher order questioning and commentary well to support children to develop further their own ideas. Practitioners should continue to develop their skills in questioning and commentary as they further implement their 'observe, wait and listen' approach.
- All team members know children very well as individuals. Practitioners observe children at play and record short observations within children's individual learning journals. They have rightly re-introduced learning targets for children. Senior leaders should continue work to improve the quality of staff observations and the range of evidence included in learning journals. This will support keyworkers to draw on a wider range of evidence at their termly progress meetings. Practitioners hold regular discussions with the deputy headteacher about children's progress. The team use information from 'progress week' activities to identify children who need further support or challenge. All children are proud of their individual folders and enjoy accessing these within the playroom. Children collate examples of their drawings and use stickers to comment on what they like about their friends' folders. Practitioners should continue to develop further children's understanding of their own progress and skills.

- Practitioners create focused plans which clearly outline the strategies that assist children to make progress in their development and learning. They plan an effective balance of intentional learning experiences and learning based on children's interests. Senior leaders collaborate effectively with practitioners, parents and visiting professionals. Together, they create relevant additional plans for children who may be experiencing barriers to their learning. Practitioners proactively work in partnership with parents and visiting professionals. They review children's plans regularly to ensure consistent implementation of agreed strategies. This supports children well to make very good progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners work well together to plan a balance of responsive and intentional learning opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing skills. Children vote for topics they would like to learn more about such as dinosaurs or bears. These topics can be short or longer term depending on children's interests. Keyworkers plan for small groups and individual children's learning needs as they lead improvements in curricular areas such as expressive arts or science and technology.
- The team use the local community well to enhance their curriculum. Walks to the local park, shop and community centre motivate children effectively to apply and develop further their communication skills. Practitioners rightly plan to reintroduce opportunities for children to be active citizens through visits to the local care home. Families participate enthusiastically in 'stay and play' sessions in the local woods that introduce new approaches to outdoor learning for children.
- Parents are highly positive about the effective support they receive at key times of transition, such as when children start nursery or as they start school. Practitioners work in close partnership with colleagues in P1 before, during and after children move into school. The team share helpful information on children's progress with P1 teachers through a comprehensive range of assessment information. The team leader engages in relevant work with other local nurseries and schools to offer transition projects across the local cluster. They have worked with colleagues across the early level to increase opportunities for play in P1. Practitioners should now ensure all children experience play experiences that offer challenge and the opportunity to develop further their skills across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The team leader and depute headteacher share important information effectively with parents about key events and children's progress. For example, they share information during their daily welcome to families, on an online platform, displays and in regular newsletters. Parents and children enjoy using relevant home learning materials to develop further children's gross motor skills, love of books or early numeracy skills. Parents are clear about the positive impact of practitioners' support and advice, home learning materials and signposting to specialist agencies on their child's progress.
- Staff work in effective partnership with parents to offer opportunities for small groups of parents to find out about children's learning on 'Family Fridays'. They join their child to 'stay and play' or participate in parenting groups. The 'parent power up' sessions bring families together to share experiences, offer support to one another and develop children's learning at home. Practitioners should continue to identify, celebrate, and evaluate the impact of parental involvement on the progress of individual children.
- Practitioners value the views and engagement of parents in the life of the setting. Recently, a nursery parent has joined the Parent Council to represent the views of nursery parents. Families feel able to make suggestions informally and through short, regular questionnaires.

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

- Practitioners prioritise the wellbeing of all children very well. They support children very effectively to talk about, improve and understand their own and others' wellbeing. Children feel very secure in their nursery and develop a positive sense of self. Practitioners support children well to learn about and celebrate their own and others' strengths and achievements. This helps them to be confident individuals. Practitioners have highly respectful, nurturing relationships with children. As a result, all children have a strong sense of belonging. Children form secure attachments and positive relationships with their keyworker and other children in short, regular group times. They benefit from being able to make choices throughout their day as they choose to join activities where they persevere, work as a team, and develop their imaginations. All children play well together or alongside others and enjoy being able to relax in smaller, cosy spaces throughout the playroom.
- The team use their everyday routines, experiences shared from home and planned activities to increase children's understanding of most of the wellbeing indicators. Most children have a very good understanding of how to risk assess their play, judge when they require help or offer support to other children. Children enjoy the responsibility of important jobs to keep their playroom safe or as they help practitioners prepare for snack and lunch. Children contribute actively to the work of the nursery. Practitioners should continue to increase opportunities for children to develop further their leadership skills.
- Children benefit from a sociable lunch within the school dining hall where they enjoy sitting with their keyworker and friends in a small group. Most children demonstrate confidence and increasing independence as they walk through school, choose, and collect their lunch and begin to use cutlery.
- Practitioners are confident and well informed about their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. The team implement a range of policies that they share regularly with parents to ensure they follow procedures consistently for all children. Each child has an up-to-date individual care plan that is stored securely. All practitioners understand the care and learning needs of all children, including those not in their small keyworker group. The team leaders and depute headteacher regularly monitor child plans. They share them regularly with parents to ensure they accurately reflect children's current circumstances and needs.
- Practitioners have an inclusive, welcoming and open approach. The team treat all children and families with respect. Practitioners focus on children's individual strengths and needs as they work very well together with visiting professionals. The team implement agreed strategies diligently and work well with families to identify and reduce barriers to involvement or learning. Children who require additional help with their learning have specific plans in place with clear, appropriate targets to guide the work of the team. Practitioners should now develop further

their work on inclusion and equity by increasing opportunities for children to learn about inclusion and diversity.

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 make very good progress in communication, early language and literacy. Younger children increase their vocabulary and communicate their ideas using gesture, single words and short sentences. Almost all older children communicate confidently as they talk with adults and one another about hedgehogs, minibeasts or stories they enjoy at home. Most children listen very well to stories in small groups as they relax after lunch. A few children develop further their understanding of books as they accurately describe the roles of authors and illustrators. Children frequently seek out, explore and listen to stories independently and with support from practitioners. Most children understand that print has meaning and confidently mark make or dictate stories for staff to write beside their detailed drawings. Children now need to write for a purpose in real-life activities. A few children are ready to develop further their phonological awareness.
- Almost all children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children accurately identify numbers and count beyond ten as they play simple games on the interactive whiteboard. A few children explore volume and capacity for extended periods in the interesting sand and water areas. Small groups of children extend their mathematical language as they build tall towers and name, sort and identify three-dimensional objects in the block play area. A few children can recall how they gathered and displayed information about children's favourite form of transport. Most children would benefit from increased opportunities to apply their skills in real-life contexts. For example, as they divide or weigh clay or compare the size or weight of pumpkins.
- Almost all children make very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children develop their gross motor skills well as they challenge themselves to balance and climb on their 'castle'. Children are resourceful as they use loose parts to develop their own ideas in outdoor play. They have a good understanding of how to use their goggles and real tools safely as they hammer nails to make hedgehogs in the woodwork area. Almost all children share spaces and resources very well. They are helpful and patient with their friends. Children show empathy and understanding to one another appropriate to their stage of development. Most children are developing their self-care skills well as they dress for outdoor play or wash their hands before lunch.
- Overall children make very good progress across their learning. The team frequently celebrate children's everyday achievements. Online records, displays about children's achievements, home learning experiences, floorbooks, learning journals and assessment activities

demonstrate children's progress over time. Children seek out adults to share their achievements, learning and home lives. The senior leadership team should now continue to work with the new local authority tracking tool to develop an overview of the progress children make across their learning. Practitioners should use this tracker to inform how they plan spaces, experiences and interactions to maximise all children's progress to ensure equity for all.

- Practitioners have a detailed understanding of the holistic needs of children and their families. They understand children, their local community and individual families' lives very well. The deputy headteacher and team leader are respectful, resourceful, and sensitive. They ensure there are no additional costs or barriers to every family participating in the life and work of the nursery. For example, they source nursery uniforms, provide translation services or make connections and referrals to other agencies which supports families when they need it. Practitioners identify children who require extra support quickly and support them effectively through strong relationships and regular contact with relevant professionals. This includes health visitors and social workers. Partners speak very highly of the professional, consistent and effective approach of the nursery team to maximise support for children and their families.

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.