

Summarised inspection findings

St Patrick's Primary School Nursery Class

Falkirk Council

28 November 2023

Key contextual information

St. Patrick's Primary School Nursery is a non-denominational setting located within the school grounds of St. Patrick's Primary School, in the town of Denny. The nursery provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare, during term time, for children from the Denny geographical cluster. The setting is open between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm. Children attend from three years until school starting age. The nursery is registered for 64 children to attend over the week. The current role is 47 children.

The headteacher is responsible for management of the nursery. She is supported in this role by the acting depute headteacher and a principal early years practitioner.

The setting consists of a playroom, with direct access to an outdoor space. Practitioners and children use other areas of the school, for example, the school library, the gym and the lunch hall.

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

- Across the setting, relationships between practitioners, children and parents are consistently nurturing and respectful. Children feel valued, safe and secure. There is a warm, welcoming ethos which is supporting all children to settle quickly and be confident and independent in their play. Children play very well together, demonstrating kindness and empathy towards each other.
- Practitioners engage in ongoing professional learning which helps them to deepen their understanding of a high-quality learning environment. This helps children to make independent choices about their play and engage in a wide range of rich learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. For most of the day, all children are motivated and engaged in their learning as they choose from an extensive range of well-considered resources including natural and open-ended materials. Children have time and space to sustain and revisit their play. This encourages exploration and creativity.
- Practitioners are developing further their understanding of early childhood development and early learning pedagogy. They know children and families well. They use their knowledge to support children's learning through planned experiences and to respond to their interests. Practitioners should develop their use of questioning to further enhance and extend children's learning. Children are confident in sharing their 'Me and My Wellbeing' folders and their achievements. They would benefit from more opportunities to talk about their play and learning.

- Children learn well through digital technologies, for example, using large touch screen games and activities to support skills in literacy and numeracy. They use tablets to carry out research with support and can access their on-line learning profiles independently.
- As children learn, practitioners observe them carefully and record observations through digital learning profiles. Practitioners share these with parents who also record their views in the profile. Practitioners should continue to refine their observations to give further focus to children's learning and the specific skills they are developing. This will support practitioners to identify clearer and meaningful next steps across all aspects of learning for individual children.
- Practitioners planning includes, responsive, intentional and 'in the moment' approaches, which ensure children experience a range of learning opportunities. Practitioners engage in weekly planning meetings, daily huddles and professional dialogue to capture children's ideas and interests and plan together. They begin to plan for children's learning prior to them starting nursery through optional home visits. This supports children to experience a smooth transition from home to nursery. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to develop further their understanding of progression in learning. This will ensure that they plan developmentally appropriate experiences that build on prior learning and provide all children with appropriate levels of support and challenge.
- Practitioners are currently reviewing their approaches to monitoring and tracking children's learning to ensure they are more proportionate and manageable. They are beginning to implement a new local authority tracker to record children's progress towards developmental milestones. Practitioners will also use this to track children's progress in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. This will help practitioners to identify areas where children need further experience or to make better progress across their learning.
- Practitioners regularly engage in discussions about children learning and progress within the nursery and with other colleagues across their cluster areas. This helps them understand national standards at the early level. They have led moderation training for other nursery practitioners at authority level.

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. Areas for development have 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

- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Their wellbeing is enhanced through regular play outdoors, exploring and enjoying the natural environment. They learn to manage risk when playing outdoors and increasingly take responsibility for their own safety. They run, jump, balance and climb with confidence on pallets, tyres and planks. Children develop their fine motor skills through the range of opportunities on offer throughout the setting. With support from practitioners, children demonstrate independence and confidence using a range of tools and equipment such as knives to prepare vegetable and hammers and nails for woodwork. With support, children are learning to regulate their emotions. Practitioners encourage children to make their own snack and serve their own lunch. As a result, children develop good hygiene skills.
- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They are confident talking with familiar and unfamiliar adults. They enjoy singing and are beginning to develop an awareness of rhyme and the initial letter in their name. Most children are confident in choosing and using books. They enjoy adults telling and reading stories. Most children show a good interest in mark-making, and a few can write their name independently. A few children would benefit from further practice to build on early reading and writing skills.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making good progress. They enjoy exploring the different properties three-dimensional objects through block play. Most children count and number match playing games on the interactive white board. During games outdoors, they are beginning to count and match the dots on dominos. A few children are ready to experience more challenge when developing and applying their sense of number in different aspects of their play.
- Practitioners draw upon a wide range of evidence to make judgements about the progress children make. They are currently making changes to how they record and track children's progress to show better the progress all children are making in key areas and over time. These changes are at an early stage. Children are making good progress across key aspects of learning. A few children could be making better progress in their learning.
- Practitioners work well with families and take time to gather information from parents before children start. They review this information once children have settled. Parents also share a range of information on their child's wider achievements. Practitioners recognise these and celebrate children's success. Children are developing as global citizens through developing

an understanding of sustainability. They plant and grow vegetables and use these to prepare food at snack. Practitioners should help children to understand what skills they are developing through their achievements.

- Children are well supported to begin to develop an understanding of diversity and equity. Practitioners regularly invite families to celebrate their culture, language and cuisine in the setting.
- Practitioners know children and families well. Senior leaders gather a range of information to help them identify children who may face barriers to learning. The new approach to monitoring and tracking children's progress will support practitioners to use data more effectively to clearly identify gaps in children's learning. This will enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for all learners.

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.