

Summarised inspection findings

St Andrew's Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

14 January 2020

Key contextual information

St Andrew's Nursery Class is located within St Andrew's Primary School in Airdrie. It has two large playrooms situated within its own annex, with access to an outdoor space and nearby forest area. The setting provides morning and afternoon places for children aged 3 to 5 years. The setting is registered for 48 children at any one session. The current roll is 20 children attending the morning session and 12 in the afternoon session. The nursery class staff team comprises nine practitioners, including one teacher, one lead practitioner and a principal teacher. Staff work a variety of hours across the week. Children attending in the morning have lunch in school, as part of the local authority's approaches for the provision of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare.

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

- Relationships between children and adults in the nursery class are positive and nurturing. Children are eager to have fun at nursery and are very clear on the rules and daily routines. Most children appear happy, confident and settled. They are able to choose independently resources and materials to support their play when given the opportunity to do so. The majority of children engage appropriately for most of the time, during both adult-led and child-initiated experiences. They sustain interest for more extended periods when they are able to exercise personal choice about where to play. They respond particularly well to their woodland experiences. Practitioners recognise that in moving forward, it will be important to achieve a better consistency of high quality experiences within the playroom. This includes understanding the impact of children having their concentration disturbed, due to the timetabling of parts of the session.
- All practitioners work hard to create a pleasant and increasingly stimulating learning environment for children within the nursery. This includes the recent development of areas within the playroom to encourage children to access books in a comfortable space; and to engage with more open-ended resources through the recent inclusion of loose parts. As a result, the majority of children are developing their imagination and problem solving skills well. Children now need regular access to these materials within the playroom, through a more enabling environment. A next step for practitioners is to support children's play more effectively and to provide increased opportunities for children to lead and direct their own learning. Practitioners now need to become more confident at evaluating the impact of changes and take action when such changes do not stimulate children's interest and curiosity.

- Overall, practitioners are not yet consistently using a wide range of questions and interesting conversations with children to extend their learning. Practitioners' focus on adhering to routines can interrupt these opportunities. Children use the interactive whiteboards and tablet computers to practice and reinforce their learning, mostly around literacy and numeracy. Practitioners should broaden children's engagement with a range of technologies to deepen, extend and enhance their learning.
- Practitioners know children and their families very well and are responsive to their care and learning needs. On an individual basis, practitioners recognise children's likes and dislikes. Practitioners should continue to review planning procedures to maximise opportunities to integrate children's interests, build on previous learning and facilitate knowledge and skills development. Parents appreciate the daily informal conversations with practitioners. They are happy with the care provided for their children and support events. Parents appreciate the information shared by the nursery through social media and the new online journals.
- The quality of practitioners' observations of children's learning is variable. Practitioners need to develop an agreed approach to recording significant episodes of learning for individual children. This will help to better inform practitioners' planning and establish relevant learning priorities for children. Working in this way should assist practitioners to better understand and evaluate what they are providing for children.
- Planning for children's learning takes place over different time frames. It is predominantly focused on resources and activities rather than focused on planning what children need to learn next and the skills to be acquired. Practitioners recognise that current approaches to planning need to be reviewed in order to be fully responsive to children's interests and include their voice. Links to prior learning are not clear enough. The development of a shared understanding of high-quality pedagogy would promote the securing of positive outcomes for children's learning. Practitioners are committed to promoting children's rights and are eager to take this forward in a meaningful way with children.
- Practitioners use a well-organised range of assessments to facilitate discussions with senior management about children's progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Children who need further support are highlighted through this tracking system. A next step is to ensure this information is used to set more individualised targets for children. The headteacher carries out monitoring visits to the nursery class and provides feedback that practitioners find useful. Practitioners should be empowered to take more responsibility for evaluating children's progress and the overall effectiveness of interventions and changes within the nursery.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting 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

- As a result of their nursery experiences, most children are making good progress across key aspects of their learning. The particular focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is having a positive impact on children's development and learning. Assessment information provided by the setting is reliable. Practitioners, to reflect better the value of nursery experiences on children's progress, could capture the holistic development of children alongside more formal assessment information more fully.
- In communication and early language. Most children enjoy interactions with their peers and familiar adults. A few children who require it are offered appropriate support to develop their expressive language at their individual developmental stage. The extensive use of story, rhyme and song supports children's language acquisition well. In group learning experiences, most children listen well. A range of fictional characters from a structured programme support children well to develop the skills required for effective listening in a fun way. Children experience a good range of texts and clearly enjoy and benefit from sharing books with practitioners. More children could be exploring books independently. A range of materials and experiences are used to help children develop the skills they require to mark make. The majority of children show interest in mark making across a range of contexts, including outdoors. Practitioners should ensure that there is an effective blend of adult supported and child-initiated experiences to support children's early writing skills. Most children draw recognisable figures and a few are beginning to explore writing letters. Daily routines, such as registration and snack, encourage children to recognise their written name.
- Most children demonstrate an awareness of number, including counting to ten. They are beginning to recognise and write numbers. This developing understanding is applied in routines such as snack and their play. Children could be applying this learning across even more of their play and experiences, in meaningful and purposeful contexts. They confidently sort and match objects, including to their own criteria. The majority of children are confident in identifying two-dimensional shapes, with the exploration of three-dimensional objects identified as a learning target for a few. Measurement is beginning to be explored in the context of the forest, where children use a range of mathematical language to compare and estimate size. Through the role-play shop, children are developing an understanding of the purpose of money. The setting has limited evidence of children's progress over time in aspects such as information handling, measurement, money and time.

- The setting's focus on health and wellbeing supports almost all children to feel safe, secure and ready to learn in the nursery environment. Children are encouraged to develop independence through routines such as snack, where they explore a range of tastes and textures. Lunches are provided for children who attend morning sessions, as part of their entitlement to extended hours. Practitioners should continue to monitor implementation of lunches, as part of the North Lanarkshire Council pilot programme, to maximise opportunities to develop children's independence and learning. Visits to nearby woodland provide opportunities for children to explore new environments. This helps to challenge children physically. Characters such as 'Sid' help children develop an understanding of the national wellbeing indicators in a fun and interactive way. Helpfully, take-home resources are available for families to share with their children, to learn about the indicators through a 'story line' approach.
- Assessment information gathered by practitioners and children's learning journals provide a basic level of evidence of children's progress over time. Next steps for learning are identified for key curricular areas. To promote the best possible progress, the learning journals could be more individualised to better reflect the particular learning needs of each individual child.
- Children's individual achievements, such as contributions to the life of the nursery, are captured through a helpful approach to tracking children's involvement. To build on this approach, consideration could be made to the skills children are developing and applying across their experiences. Children could now contribute more to their wider community and increasingly as global citizens of 21st century Scotland. The school's informal links with a local care home for the elderly and links with St Andrew's church could provide useful starting points to build upon. Parents and families are kept well informed of their child's progress and should be empowered further to share their child's success beyond the setting.
- The supportive and inclusive ethos is underpinned by a climate of trust and mutual respect. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the differing backgrounds of children and families and use this to sensitively reduce or eliminate any potential barriers to learning. Practitioners collated and use a range of information, for example, they monitor children's attendance and the impact of inputs aiming to raise attainment. To promote equity further, practitioners should ensure all interventions are evaluated, in order to ensure the impact can be measured, and where necessary, inform any future intervention.

1. Quality of care and support

Children consistently received high quality care from staff who were kind and caring. Cuddles, cosy story times and praise were plentiful, contributing to children feeling loved and secure. Staff knew children well and had built trusting relationships with the whole family. Parents told us that they found staff to be nurturing and interested in their child's needs. They felt comfortable to share information with staff, working together in partnership to meet children's needs.

We discussed with the service how children's significant needs could be more clearly recorded within personal plans. Current systems should be reviewed to reflect children as individuals and should contribute to their progression. See recommendation 1.

The service had increased parental involvement over the last year. Parents had attended a variety of events which included, cookery classes, stay and play sessions and visits to the woods. Parents told us that they valued the opportunity to get involved. One parent said "I've attended a few things. I feel like I know the staff even better now, and what my child enjoys. I've tried out a few things at home that I didn't realise my child liked and it has helped their learning".

Children experienced a relaxed and sociable snack time. They chose from a variety of healthy options which included fruit, crackers and cheese. Children were sensitively supported whilst being positively encouraged to develop independence in eating and preparing food. Children had also been involved in growing their own food. This had contributed to them developing a healthy attitude to eating. The service had recently introduced a hot meal at lunch time for children. This was served in the school canteen. This provision was in the early stages of implementation and staff recognised the need to continue reviewing this experience, ensuring it meets children's needs.

We asked the service to build on opportunities for children to participate in freely chosen extended play which provides greater opportunities for creativity, imagination, positive risk taking and problem solving. We found that children's experiences were frequently directed by staff.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. Quality of environment

Children were warmly welcomed into the service and experienced a positive atmosphere because staff had good working relationships. This contributed to children feeling happy and settled. Children experienced care in a clean and well-maintained environment. Handwashing was embedded in practice, limiting the spread of infection and contributing to children's good health.

Staff were well deployed to ensure children's safety. They knew where children were and moved accordingly to ensure good supervision.

We asked the service to review some procedures for storing and administering children's medication safely. We were satisfied that the service had taken quick action to address this during the inspection.

The service had identified that the children's toilets required to be refurbished. We agreed and suggested that a separate cloakroom featured as part of the renovation. This would further minimise the spread of infection.

Children were developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they participated in assessing the garden before accessing it for play.

A positive start had been made on extending the use of natural and open-ended materials. Loose parts materials encourage children to be curious, imaginative and inventive. We encouraged the service to continue maximising use of these within the environment to support the development of high quality play.

Children had access to a large garden. Experiences outdoors were fun and motivating. For example, children developed their imagination, communication, problem solving and thinking as they pretended to cook 'potato soup' in the mud kitchen. We discussed with the service how the outdoor environment could be further developed to support positive risk taking. This would further build children's resilience.

Children accessed areas within the community which enriched their experiences and sense of belonging. For example, the local park, nursing home and woods. Trips to the woods were particularly good and children engaged in lots of exciting activities. For example, bug hunting, swinging in a hammock and fire building.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there is one recommendation.

Recommendations

The service should review children's personal planning systems, to ensure that they demonstrate clearly how children's individual needs are met.

To achieve this consideration should be given to:

- Using children's prior experiences before starting nursery to contribute to plans
- Development of 'all about me' records to include more information on wellbeing needs
- The continued development of individualised strategies to support meeting children's needs
- Reviewing how children's progress is recorded

This is to ensure that children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, "my personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15), "my care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19), and "my needs, as agreed within my personal plan are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

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.