

Summarised inspection findings

Strathmiglo Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

18 February 2020

Key contextual information

Strathmiglo Primary School nursery class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for a maximum of 30 children aged three until they are of an age to attend primary school. At the time of inspection, 17 children were enrolled. The nursery is housed in a separate building in the school grounds and consists of a playroom with a cloakroom and toilet area. Children have free flow access to the nursery garden. In August 2019, the nursery offered parents the option of accessing increased funded hours for their children in line with the Scottish Government ELC expansion plans. The majority of children are accessing the additional hours.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 is a valued part of the school community and shares the same vision values and aims as the school. The values of 'be ready, be responsible, be respectful' have been reviewed as part of a whole school initiative to make them more meaningful for children. As a result, they are relevant to children in the nursery and they understand well what they mean. Practitioners refer frequently to the values when giving children praise and feedback during their play to reinforce their importance.
- Practitioners have responded positively to the introduction of increased ELC provision. They have developed strong relationships with the new team members and value the skills and experience they bring. All practitioners have delegated leadership roles relevant to their interests and experience. These include outdoor learning, digital learning, nurture and conceptual numeracy. The headteacher should continue to ensure leadership roles are aligned with improvement priorities and monitor the impact to determine if they are improving outcomes for children and their families.
- The headteacher is present frequently in the nursery and has established positive nurturing relationships with practitioners and children. The newly appointed peripatetic nursery teacher is working well with the team and is beginning to implement changes to improve practice. It is too early to evidence the impact of the teacher input. Additional support from the central team of Early Years Development Officers and the Early Years Principal Teacher is supporting practitioners. There needs to be a more cohesive approach to the range of support and advice provided to the nursery. Practitioners want to do their best to support children's learning. The headteacher should continue to develop her strategic lead to co-ordinate roles and remits of all involved in the nursery. She should continue to support practitioners to implement appropriate recommendations and advice to meet the needs of children and families.
- Practitioners in the nursery, together with the headteacher, should continue to improve self-evaluation approaches. They should continue to use national documentation and online

training materials. Practitioners should further develop partnership working with other nursery settings to support them in identifying strengths and improvements.

- Practitioners participate well in professional dialogue and learning. The leadership team should ensure protected time for regular professional learning to support the newly formed team to have a shared understanding of pedagogy.

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

- Children are happy and settled in the nursery. They benefit from the welcoming ethos and the strong relationships with practitioners. The majority of children engage in sustained play. A few children require better support from staff to help them sustain their attention. Practitioners have consulted children in the selection of new resources and support children's curiosity and creativity well by providing real life, natural and open-ended activities. However, there are too many resources in a small space, many of which are not accessible. Practitioners need to review the range of resources on offer to improve play across all areas and to provide quality spaces for play. Practitioners should ensure activities link with the planned learning. Children have free-flow access to outdoors throughout the day. They are demonstrating creative and imaginative play in the outdoors as a result of recent improvements to the environment.
- Practitioners are nurturing and kind in their interactions with children. They are responsive to children's ideas and suggestions and create opportunities for them to contribute to the improvement of the nursery. Practitioners use questioning to lead children in their play. They need to develop further their interactions to ensure they do not miss opportunities to scaffold and challenge learning.
- Children use digital technologies confidently, including the interactive whiteboard to engage in educational games or digital cameras to photograph the environment. Children's learning is beginning to be extended and enhanced by these resources.
- Practitioners use personal learning journals (PLJs) to record observations of children's engagement in learning. They link observations to the tracking of children's progress but do not yet link observations clearly to next steps in learning. Practitioners have identified the need to support children to reflect on their learning and as planned, should develop the use of PLJs to support this. Practitioners use too many approaches for recording observations. They need to evaluate the wide range of methods they use for recording and develop a proportionate and sustainable approach. Practitioners should ensure that the agreed approach accurately reflects the progress children make in their learning.
- Practitioners observe children well in their play and plan learning based on children's interests. They are beginning to explore the impact of assessment on their long-term planning through fortnightly meetings. Practitioners gather children's ideas to inform and shape experiences and the environment. These ideas are recorded appropriately and displayed on the learning wall and in floor books. Practitioners need to improve their use of assessment to inform effective planning and ensure children are appropriately challenged.

- Practitioners meet with parents throughout the year to share PLJs and to discuss progress and next steps. They should gather information that takes account of children's prior experiences and learning outwith the nursery.
- Practitioners are developing approaches to assess, track and monitor children's progress in learning over time. They need to ensure that information is used appropriately to provide support and challenge for children and enable them to make the best possible progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based firmly on play and takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Practitioners use a range of planning formats which have a strong focus on developing children's interests. Children's participation in the planning process is clearly evidenced on the learning wall. Practitioners need to ensure planning is flexible to take account of children's changing interests.
- The nursery does not yet have a curriculum rationale. As planned, the headteacher should support the team to create a curriculum rationale to take account of the unique setting of Strathmiglo Primary School Nursery Class. The agreed curriculum rationale needs ensure an appropriate focus on challenge, depth and progression of children's skills across the curriculum.
- Practitioners use the local environment well to enhance children's learning experiences and extend their awareness of their environments and of the world of work. Children's real life learning experiences such as buying snack from the shop, baking and making playdough provide meaningful opportunities to extend learning in different contexts.
- Practitioners plan well for children's transition into nursery taking account of their individual needs. They plan effectively with the P1 teacher to support children to be confident and secure in the transition to school. Pastoral transition arrangements are strong. Practitioners share information well with the school staff about children's learning and progression.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

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

- Almost all practitioners have strong and positive relationships with families which are based on nurture and respect. This supports children to feel confident and develop their own self-esteem. Children have friendships with others and are learning to be respectful and responsible in their play. Practitioners model respectful interactions and use praise effectively to encourage positive behaviour. This creates a calm and enjoyable learning environment for children.
- Practitioners promote actively children's wellbeing. The majority of children can talk about most of the wellbeing indicators. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to be healthy, safe, active, achieving and responsible. A few children need to be supported better to help them understand the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners are beginning to link the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child with the wellbeing indicators in a meaningful way. This is making the rights more meaningful for children.
- Most children have a good understanding of their own wellbeing through a range of well-considered activities. A few children need to be supported better to help them understand their own wellbeing. Practitioners provide children with healthy snacks and introduce children to a range of different foods. As a result, children are developing a good awareness of healthy eating. Almost all children demonstrate high levels of independence in their care routines such as dressing to go outdoors, brushing their own teeth, and clearing away their dishes after lunch. Practitioners ensure the daily free flow access to the outdoor area provides children with opportunities to engage in energetic play and to develop their physical skills. As a result, most children have a good awareness of the need to be active to keep their body healthy. A few children need to be supported better to help them understand how to keep healthy.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. They access regular opportunities for professional learning to support them in keeping their knowledge of statutory requirements up to date. Staff need to ensure input from other professional agencies is identified and requested timeously. They need to apply their knowledge of statutory requirements to their own practice and ensure they are identifying the needs of all children.
- Practitioners support children well to learn about attitudes to diversity. Children participate enthusiastically in activities that allow them to challenge gender stereotypes and understand the differences of individuals in age appropriate ways. Children are being supported to be inclusive and respectful of others.
- The visiting nursery teacher and headteacher are in the process of creating systems to gather data on children's progress in learning. As planned, the nursery team should continue to gather

and analyse appropriate and relevant data. Practitioners should ensure information provides a clear and accurate overall picture of children's progress and areas where support is required.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning.

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. A few children could make better progress. The majority of children engage appropriately in conversations with adults and use a range of vocabulary as they play alongside their peers. Most children listen well during group story times and to verbal instructions. Children are not yet choosing to read books independently to develop their early reading skills. They are beginning to develop their early writing skills well as they make marks during a variety of learning experiences. Most children identify their name confidently as they self-select at snack or select labels for their artwork. A few children successfully write their name on labels and when they register coming into the nursery each day. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of the purpose of writing through, for example writing shopping lists and making signs. Across the playroom, children's skills in mark making are not well enough developed. Children are not yet able to apply their early writing skills across different aspects of their learning in various curricular areas.
- In numeracy and mathematics, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress. Children are playing with and identifying numerals in interesting play contexts, for example on padlocks, flowerpots and stones. The majority of children count with increasing confidence as they play games or sort items. A few children could be making better progress in number. Most children are able to use mathematical language well to talk about size and quantities of objects. A few children are not yet able to apply numeracy in their play. Outdoors, children compare accurately the length of branches and the size of footprints. A few children engage confidently in practical problem solving such as using a programmable robot or estimating depth of sand using non-standard units. More children need to develop problem solving skills. Practitioners should continue to ensure that children are making suitable progress in numeracy. Children need to develop and use their skills in numeracy and mathematics across their learning and in real life situations.
- Most children are developing a good awareness of health and wellbeing. The majority talk confidently about the wellbeing indicators and can relate these to their experiences in nursery. Children's gross motor skills and enjoyment of physical activity are developing well through regular access to outdoor play and the school grounds. Most children are considerate and respectful towards each other and can negotiate taking turns independently. A few children are

developing their fine-motor skills well through drawing and cutting activities. More children should be supported to develop their fine motor skills.

- Children are building confidence and experiencing success in learning through the celebration of their achievements in the Star Moment display. Practitioners should extend this to recognise children's achievements from beyond the setting and at home. This should support them to increase partnerships with parents in fostering children's learning and development.
- All children are treated fairly in the inclusive practice. Almost all practitioners are aware of children's socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. They are developing an understanding of the impact this can have on children's learning. Most practitioners have undertaken training to enable them to build trusting relationships with children and families.

Choice of QI : 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnerships
- Impact on children and families

- Relationships between practitioners and parents are very positive. Regular and informative communication with parents takes place through daily dialogue, nursery noticeboards, parents meetings, and newsletters. Parents are kept fully informed of the ongoing nursery interests, learning activities and how to extend learning at home.
- Practitioners are very aware of the importance of helping parents to understand the value of their engagement in their child's learning. Parents have regular opportunities to be involved in their child's learning and nursery experiences, for example story and singing sessions, stay and play sessions and family learning sessions. Practitioners should work to identify aims for these parental activities. They should be clear about the purpose of the activities offered and evaluate them to ensure they are meeting the planned outcomes. Parents can engage in learning with their children at home through the lending library and home link bags. As planned, practitioners should provide parent workshops in response to feedback from a recent parental questionnaire. Practitioners should ensure that workshops support parents' understanding of ways to promote early reading, writing and numeracy.
- The close working and sharing of experiences with the primary pupils is enhancing children's learning. For example, children in the school shared the recently reviewed values with the nursery children. Children have shared their learning about Diwali, Scots poems, making pancakes and playing musical instruments. These partnerships are supporting children in the nursery understand their connection with the rest of the school.
- The impact of partnerships is positive and extends beyond the immediate school community. This includes well-considered intergenerational learning where children and members of the senior citizen lunch club take part in joint activities. Children are benefitting by learning about the world of work through visits to the local businesses such as the local grocery shop and hairdresser. Members of the community support planting and growing activities to enable children to gain a good understanding about their food.

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.