

Summarised inspection findings

East Plean Primary School Nursery Class

Stirling Council

3 March 2020

Key contextual information

East Plean Nursery Class is part of East Plean Primary School and is accommodated within the main school building. It is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for 32 children at any one time from three years until they are of an age to attend primary school. From August 2018 the nursery started to offer 1,140 funded hours of ELC in line with the Scottish Government ELC expansion plans. Children can access 25 funded hours per week over 45.6 weeks and have the options of ten hour or five hour sessions each day.

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 setting is a valued part of the school community and shares the school's vision, values and aims. The school is currently reviewing its values and has fully involved nursery children and parents in this process. Practitioners are planning ways to ensure children understand how these new values relate to their experiences in the setting.
- Practitioners have embraced the introduction of increased funded ELC hours. They welcome the new opportunities this has created including the introduction of new team members who have brought skills and experiences which strengthen the team. There is a strong culture of distributed leadership and all practitioners have leadership roles and responsibilities relevant to their interests and experience. This is supporting them to take forward the priorities identified in the improvement plan. A positive example of this is the more regular visits to the forest to enhance outdoor learning experiences.
- Children's participation in planning is evidenced in wall displays and floor books. To develop further children's early leadership skills and their ability to make decisions that affect them, practitioners should ensure all children have opportunities for leadership roles relevant to their age and stage of development.
- The headteacher and principal early childhood educator provide strong leadership. They support practitioners to reflect continually on practice as part of their commitment to improvement. They provide regular opportunities for the team to engage in professional dialogue, professional learning and self-reflection. These opportunities enable practitioners to share professional learning with the whole team to improve practice. They have created communication systems to take account of the varied working patterns of the team to ensure everyone is well informed.
- The headteacher has a rigorous monitoring calendar. She regularly monitors paperwork and practice and meets with practitioners to discuss children's progress. She provides high quality

feedback for practitioners which celebrates what they do well and gives clear guidance on areas for improvement to improve outcomes for children and families.

- All practitioners have opportunity to moderate their own practice through the early years forum and the early years social media page. Senior practitioners also have additional opportunities through the Improvement Partnership Trio. This supports further the self-evaluation process allowing practitioners to recognise their own strengths and areas for development within a wider context.

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

- The inclusive and nurturing ethos is supporting children to feel safe, secure and keen to engage in learning through play. All children are increasingly confident in their environment moving freely between the playroom and outdoors for almost all of their session. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the role of the environment in supporting children's early learning and have made a number of changes to create a calm and nurturing playroom. They should continue to develop further quality environments for learning to ensure children have more ownership of some areas. For example, removing the adult display from the role play area and providing quality spaces for children to display their own work in the art area. Staff should use national guidance such as 'Building the Ambition' to support them to explore current best practice.
- Practitioners provide a range of developmentally appropriate resources, including natural materials and real objects, to support children to learn and investigate through play. Most children make their own decisions about the resources they will use. All children are enjoying their time in the setting and most actively engage in spontaneous, purposeful play. All practitioners interact sensitively to support children to sustain a level of concentration appropriate to their stage of development.
- Practitioners effectively support children to use the interactive board and tablet computers to research interests. Children use the computer to play games to reinforce prior learning and develop mouse control. Practitioners should continue to develop the use of digital technology to enhance learning experiences and equip children with good early digital skills.
- All practitioners have a very good understanding of how young children learn and develop. They use their knowledge of early learning pedagogy well to support children. They use praise to build children's self-esteem and confidence in learning. Almost all practitioners use effective questioning techniques well to extend children's thinking and deepen their learning.
- Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and provide an appropriate balance of adult and child-initiated learning experiences. They have clear, well-organised termly and weekly planning which outlines contexts and experiences and outcomes to ensure a positive impact on developing core aspects across learning.
- Most children are increasingly involved in leading their learning and recognising themselves as learners. Practitioners are introducing a "learning journey" wall approach with careful attention given to the visual representation of learning, children's interests and ideas, learning intentions and success criteria. The use of 'learning books' is also helping practitioners to document children's learning over time and involve them in the process of reflecting on their own learning. Practitioners should continue to develop these approaches to enable them to engage

children in regular learning conversations which increases their understanding of their own learning.

- Practitioners take good account of children who require challenge or additional support with their learning. Planned, targeted interventions are helping to meet children's needs. The school is developing its approaches to evidencing progress in learning as a result of interventions. Tracking and monitoring of children's progress is becoming more robust. Practitioners record children's individual progress against individual set learning targets for each child to secure children's learning and development. To support practitioners to share learning targets with children and ensure all children make good progress, targets need a sharper focus on learning to provide clear and challenging next steps for children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The setting shares the curriculum rationale with the school, which reflects the school and nursery values and takes account of local needs and circumstances. Practitioners plan responsively to take account of children's interests and needs. They use curriculum pathways to ensure they plan effectively for progression in learning. They have high aspirations for children and there is a strong focus on developing communication skills and ensuring children's wellbeing.
- The curriculum in the nursery is firmly based on play and offers stimulating and engaging opportunities for learning. There is a good balance between allowing children to fully engage in their chosen play activities and focus group activities. Practitioners use the focus group activities to ensure they develop children's skills and support next steps in learning.
- Practitioners plan effectively for transitions to ensure children and families feel welcomed when they start coming to the setting. They use information gathered during home visits and settling in visits to build effectively on children's prior learning. They also carefully plan for transitions as children move on to P1. Children take part in a range of activities to become familiar with the P1 setting and the teacher. Practitioners share relevant information to ensure progression and continuity in learning for all children.
- Practitioners make good use of local woodland to enhance outdoor learning. They should continue to develop the use of the local community to enhance further children's learning experiences and extend children's awareness of the world around them.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Families are welcomed and encouraged to take part in a range of activities across the year. This allows them to participate in and understand the value of their engagement in their children's learning. Practitioners are clear about the expected outcomes for parents and this ensures they provide high quality experiences and activities. An example of positive practice is the Make and Taste cookery session which was developed in partnership with NHS Forth Valley. Practitioners should continue to build on these activities to support further parents' understanding of ways to promote early reading, writing and numeracy at home.
- Practitioners work closely in partnership with other professional agencies to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families. Practitioners have been upskilled in using a range of carefully considered strategies to support children through the sharing of expertise with other agencies.
- Practitioners should look for opportunities to extend partnerships within the community for example, to develop intergenerational working and children's understanding of the world of work.

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

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 understand the impact of strong nurturing relationships to ensure wellbeing and place high importance in establishing these as soon as possible. As a result, the very positive relationships based on trust and respect are a key strength of the setting.
- Key workers and the headteacher make home visits to meet children and parents before they start at the setting. This allows them to get to know and understand children and their individual family circumstances. All children have a detailed care plan which is written in close consultation with families to ensure individual children's needs are met. Practitioners review these regularly with parents. Parents can readily access the online learning journals and have meetings twice a year with the key worker to discuss children's progress. Children who require additional support with their learning are very well supported in the inclusive practice and benefit from input, if required, from other professional agencies.
- Practitioners demonstrate through their practice their understanding of children's rights and the wellbeing indicators. They support children to develop their understanding of how to keep safe and involve them in undertaking risk assessment on visits to the forest. Practitioners provide healthy snacks and sit with children during snack times to ensure these are nurturing, social experiences where children are encouraged to try new foods. Most children take part in the 'emotional check-ins' each day which is supporting them to be aware of their own feelings. They take part in weekly gym sessions and there is daily free flow access to a well-resourced outdoor area to support children to develop their physical skills. The setting should continue to consider ways to develop further the language and understanding of the wellbeing indicators with children in meaningful ways. The nursery team is seeking ways to resolve concerns around the quality and portion size of the lunches provided by Stirling Council.
- Almost all practitioners actively promote positive behaviour. They are skilled in using restorative approaches to support children to deal with disputes and develop positive relationships.
- Together the senior leaders and the practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. Regular opportunities for professional learning support practitioners to keep their knowledge up to date.
- All children and families are treated with respect in a fair and just manner. Practitioners are sensitive to the circumstances of individual families and ways in which they can provide support. They actively challenge children's thinking about gender stereotypes and the traditional view of what makes a family. Practitioners should develop further opportunities to

increase children's awareness of diversity and discrimination through developmentally appropriate experiences.

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 the focus on health and wellbeing within the setting almost all children are making good progress. Practitioners promote and nurture emotional wellbeing effectively to build children's self-confidence and meet children's social needs. Children are learning to express their feelings and show awareness of the feelings of others. Most have a good understanding of healthy choices and can describe foods that are good for their growing bodies. Most children are developing good self-help skills. They dress themselves to go outside, and are learning about the importance of hygiene as they wash their hands. Children are developing good fine motor skills with support from practitioners. For example, using knives and peelers to cut vegetables. Children are developing their physical skills through use of the outdoor environment and a variety of physical resources. As part of this, they are developing a good awareness of risk and taking increased responsibility for their own safety.
- Almost all children are progressing well in language and literacy. Most are developing good listening and talking skills. Most children talk confidently about things they have been learning about. They currently have a high interest in nature and weather. Practitioners use these experiences to extend children's vocabulary. A few children who need additional support to develop communication skills benefit from the input of practitioners who are 'communication champions'. Most children listen well to and carry out simple instructions. They access books independently across the setting and enjoy sharing stories together in the story area. Most older children enjoy mark-making and have a developing understanding that writing has a purpose. They create detailed drawings and maps showing signs, pathways and interesting places to visit in the forest. They would benefit from more real-life and imaginary contexts to apply their early writing skills across the curriculum.
- In numeracy and mathematics most children are making good progress. In planned activities and daily routines, they sort, match and count. Most older children are gaining confidence in ordering numbers to ten and recognising numerals. For example, counting the number of pieces of fruit at snack. Most children are developing awareness of shape and mathematical concepts in play, particularly in the stimulating outdoor area. They explore volume, weight and measure to support their early understanding of these concepts. In the role play shop children use real money and are developing an awareness of different coins. Practitioners should ensure they provide a challenging range of experiences for children to develop and use skills in numeracy and mathematics across learning and in real life situations.

- Regular access to a local woodland area is supporting children to develop strong teamwork, and exploration skills. Children show excitement in 'Forest Adventures'. Practitioners effectively use these experiences to promote children's interests in nature and living things. Practitioners have gathered and collated data on children's progress as a result of 'Forest Adventures' to evidence the significant impact it has on developing children's resilience and physical development.
- Children are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum. All children are able to access the range of quality learning experiences provided. Children are developing skills for life and learning in an inclusive and nurturing environment.
- Practitioners should gather and analyse a range of data to help them evaluate the impact of interventions and ensure children are making the best possible progress.

Choice of QI :2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
- Role of practitioners and leaders
- Identification of learning needs and targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

- The team has shared high aspirations for all children in the setting. A very good understanding of children's individual needs shapes and informs the planning of learning. All practitioners provide high quality support to enable all children to make good progress in their learning. This includes nurturing relationships, home visits and detailed care plans for all children. Practitioners use the wellbeing indicators to provide assessments of children's strengths and support needs. They make good use of this information to build on prior learning and to respond to children's interests. The setting has been accredited with a silver award in recognition of practitioners high quality interactions to support and extend children's communication skills.
- The setting has an established key worker approach which provides good support for children to form secure attachments and enables practitioners to know children and families very well. Practitioners use the care plans and online learning journals to ensure all children can take part in experiences and activities which extend their learning appropriately.
- Practitioners work effectively with parents and, where appropriate, other professionals to ensure factors which might result in barriers to learning are identified and addressed timeously. Child plans are up to date, stored securely and regularly reviewed. They include specific targets and agreed strategies implemented by the whole team. Practitioners implement helpful strategies from other professionals promptly. This ensures children are provided with support or challenge that meets their particular stage of development. Practitioners take part in relevant professional learning to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge of strategies to support children with identified needs. They are very reflective and adapt strategies to ensure children are given support tailored to meet their individual needs.

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.