

Summarised inspection findings

St Nicholas Primary School Nursery

West Lothian Council

30 April 2024

Key contextual information

St Nicholas Primary School Nursery is part of St Nicholas Roman Catholic Primary School in the village of Broxburn. The nursery consists of a large playroom in the main school building. Children also have access to an attractive, enclosed outdoor space and the wider school building and grounds. Parents can choose for their children to attend morning, afternoon, or full day sessions over 50 weeks. The nursery is registered for 50 children aged from three to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection, the setting had 86 children on the roll.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery with a principal teacher having a delegated leadership role. Two early years officers are responsible for the day to day running of the nursery and are ably supported by seven practitioners and two pupil support workers. An Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Area Support Manager also supports the work of the nursery. The team is well established.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Practitioners have created a welcoming, nurturing, and calm environment that is underpinned by children's rights. They have very positive relationships with children and families and are responsive to their wellbeing needs. The calm and supportive environment enables children to explore freely and engage in a wide range of interesting learning experiences. Practitioners have developed high quality purposeful spaces which promote and nurture children's curiosity, creativity, and learning. Children are confident, happy, and independent in their learning. They benefit from a relaxed, unhurried pace that helps them sustain a consistently high level of engagement across the day.
- Children engage in a variety of real-life learning experiences and talk confidently about their experiences and learning. Practitioners listen attentively to children and engage them in meaningful conversations. They skilfully use questioning to extend and challenge children's thinking. Practitioners make very good use of the local community and visit a local woodland regularly. This offers children opportunities to explore the natural environment in their local area. Practitioners have established a range of effective partnerships within the local community. These include the library, a care home, and a strong working relationship with Broxburn Uphall Growers Society at the community allotments.
- Practitioners use digital technology well to enhance children's learning. Children access the interactive whiteboard to explore games that develop and consolidate their learning. They are well supported to access their learning journals through the interactive whiteboard. Most children are beginning to develop their skills in using matrix bar codes to access resources,

including familiar stories and rhymes. Practitioners should continue to develop children's skills in using digital technologies through interesting and relevant contexts.

- Practitioners provide children with high-quality interactions. They support children well through the use of the positive relationships policy and strategies. They are sensitive in their approaches and engage with children calmly. Practitioners scaffold, extend and challenge children in their play effectively. They take time to carefully listen to children and provide them with very positive role models. As a result, children are kind, respectful and helpful to their peers.
- Practitioners know children very well and use a wide range of approaches to assess children's learning. They capture children's interests through observations and ensure an effective balance between adult and child-initiated experiences. Practitioners capture children's ideas and voices carefully. They document this in individual learning journals, floorbooks and learning walls. Practitioners meet weekly to discuss their observations and how best to support and challenge children's learning, including what children need to learn next. Children with additional learning needs have detailed individual plans and practitioners use robust strategies to support them. Practitioners use rigorous approaches to track children's learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They work with colleagues from other settings to ensure they are accurate as they measure children's progress.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 early language. They listen well to each other and adults, for example as they share personal experiences. Children are developing a love of stories as they explore traditional tales and interesting texts in the nursery and during regular visits to the library. This is also helping them develop an understanding of, and increasingly use, a range of vocabulary. A few children are ready to develop more challenging vocabulary. Children understand their marks have meaning as they write for a purpose in different contexts. Their drawings have increasing detail. Older children are learning to identify words that rhyme, syllables within words and letter names and their associated sounds. Children are at the early stages of learning simple greetings and phrases in French.
- In numeracy and mathematics, almost all children are making very good progress. Children develop and apply their understanding in meaningful and interesting real-life experiences. This includes measuring and weighing as they bake, using money on trips to the shops and exploring pattern as they weave and sew. Children explore volume and capacity outdoors as they create imaginative potions in the mud kitchen and water tray. Children are curious and inquisitive as they use natural resources and open-ended materials to develop and apply early mathematical language and skills. Children could be developing more understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes, three-dimensional objects and simple information handling in relevant contexts.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They have a firm understanding of national wellbeing indicators and confidently articulate how they relate to their experiences. Children understand the importance of keeping themselves safe. Most children focus and persevere when challenged and are developing resilience and self-esteem as they become increasingly independent. Most children are aware of their emotions and confidently articulate how they feel.
- Over time, almost all children are making very good progress across all areas of their learning. Practitioners make very effective use of assessment information to identify any potential gaps in children's learning. Practitioners support children requiring additional support or challenge in their learning very well. This ensures there are no gaps in outcomes for children and everyone makes the progress of which they are capable.

- Children's individual achievements beyond nursery are recognised and celebrated. They are proud of their leadership roles and are confident as they carry out roles in the nursery and the community. Children participate in interesting opportunities that help them develop an understanding of their community and their role in it. They are developing a range of important skills that help them contribute in relevant ways as young citizens. They learn about the needs of others during visits to a local care home. They are learning to be responsible as they contribute to growing vegetables at the community allotments.
- Practitioners actively promote equity through the inclusive and very supportive ethos. They know children as individuals and as part of their family unit. They form positive relationships with families and develop strong partnerships to support children and address any challenges they may face. Practitioners make very effective use of information they have about children's progress to plan and target approaches. They should continue to make use of all information available in creative ways to secure positive outcomes 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.