

Summarised inspection findings

St Joseph's Primary School Family Learning Centre

Argyll and Bute Council

31 October 2023

Key contextual information

St Joseph's Primary School Family Learning Centre is part of St Joseph's Primary School in Helensburgh. There are two playrooms, with free flow access to outdoors and access to the wider school building and grounds. The setting is registered for 56 children aged from three to those not yet attending school. Children attend from Helensburgh and the surrounding areas, with a third coming from military families. The current staffing allows for 48 children to attend at any time. At the time of inspection, the setting had 18 children on the roll. This includes 15 children who are now in their second year of learning at St Joseph's. The setting operates term time with children receiving their entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) by attending 8.50 am to 2.50 pm each day. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting and is supported by a lead practitioner, four full-time childcare and education workers and a classroom assistant.

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 nurturing ethos that takes full account of, and promotes, children's rights. As a result, almost all children have settled well and are motivated by the interesting range of learning experiences available. Relationships between practitioners and children are relaxed, loving and respectful. Practitioners use their extensive knowledge of children and individual family contexts to support children's emotional wellbeing. This helps children to be ready to access learning. Almost all children play well together and established friendships are evident. They are independent in their choices about what and where they play, and they often demonstrate perseverance to experience success.
- Working cohesively as a team, practitioners have developed spaces, indoors and outdoors, that are very attractive, stimulating and well-resourced. These spaces promote and nurture children's curiosity and creativity. Practitioners are highly responsive to children's interests. They demonstrate this very well through their interactions, high-quality questioning and commentary that extend children's thinking and curiosity. They use the internet well to assist children to research areas of interest. Practitioners use their sound understanding of how children develop to support individuals, including those with potential barriers to their learning. They carefully monitor children's engagement across the playroom and adjust resources and spaces where necessary to ensure opportunities for learning for all children are maximised.
- Practitioners know children very well as individuals. They observe children as they play, recording what they see and hear. They come together daily to share information about children's progress and plan for what children need to learn next. Practitioners record and share children's progress and achievements with parents and carers using different

approaches, including an online application. Parents and children can review and contribute to this record of learning.

- Practitioners plan for children's learning daily, weekly and termly, linked to the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. This planning also takes full account of children's interests and developmental needs. For example, practitioners plan literacy rich experiences to support all children to develop a breadth of language. They use 'big questions' to record child-led learning. Practitioners should continue to refine this approach with a focus on planning for further challenge and depth in learning, particularly for more able children.
- Practitioners track children's progress using a range of tools, including developmental milestones. This information helps practitioners make evidence-based judgements about children's progress, what they need to learn next or when additional support is required. As identified, practitioners should streamline approaches to recording children's learning. They should ensure a coherent overview is created that avoids duplication and is sustainable to maintain over time.

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

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 communication and early language. Most children use a range of vocabulary with confidence to express their thoughts and feelings. They listen well, for example, to instructions in the gym hall and stories being read to them. Almost all children access books independently and enjoy sharing stories with others. They enjoy creating their own stories and recall events and characters from favourite texts. Children show interest in mark making and early writing at their own developmental stage. A few children are able to copy letters and words confidently and write their name independently. They are beginning to identify the differences between upper and lower case letters.
- Almost all children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They count confidently in their play and for a purpose in routines. Children are developing awareness of shape and a few are developing an awareness of symmetry. They use a range of mathematical language accurately to describe, compare and measure including volume, weight and their heights. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of time through exploring days, months and seasons. A few children are beginning to add and subtract as they count and explore fractions in their play.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing independence across their play and in routines, including increasingly managing their own safety. Practitioners' focus on feelings is supporting children to talk about how they may feel in different situations and they are increasingly able to manage their own emotions. Almost all children are developing a wide range of physical skills, supported very well by a programme of planned physical activities. This includes gymnastics, ball skills and aerobic exercise. Children are developing fine motor control through exploring intricate materials, such as screwdrivers and screws at the 'tinker table'.
- Almost all children, including those with potential barriers to their learning, are making very good progress over time. This is appropriate to their individual stage of development and the stage of their ELC experience. Targeted interventions by practitioners support individual children to make increased progress, for example, in numeracy and mathematics.
- Children's achievements are celebrated by practitioners through praise and display on the 'achievement wall'. As the term progresses, children will be involved with the life of the wider school, as in previous years. Practitioners should progress plans for children to contribute to the wider community as citizens of the local area, Scotland, and the wider world.

- Practitioners understand the importance of ensuring equity for all children. Their in-depth knowledge of children and families, including socio-economic context, help them identify and remove any potential barriers to children's learning. They work in effective partnership with parents and carers to help overcome any barriers, seeking advice and guidance from other professionals when appropriate. This is helping to ensure all children receive the support they need to make the progress they are capable of. Working with senior leaders, practitioners should make even more use of information they gather about children's progress. This will help identify where individuals or groups may benefit from additional support to make accelerated progress.

Other relevant evidence

St Joseph's Primary School Family Learning Centre welcomes a number of children from military families. They work closely with the local authority Service Pupil Advisor to ensure children and families receive the emotional and practical support and guidance they may need before, during and after military deployments. This includes a particular focus on maintaining connections with parents who are deployed and helping children to understand and manage their feelings during periods of uncertainty and transition. Practitioners plan experiences and provide specific resources to support this context, for example military dressing up clothes and relevant stories to explore. Children celebrate Armed Forces Day, Month of the Military Child and Remembrance Day in their context. Working together, practitioners and partners support children and their families very well to help promote continuity in their lives during times of uncertainty.

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.