

Summarised inspection findings

Wallacestone Primary School Nursery Class

Falkirk Council

17 December 2024

Key contextual information

Wallacestone Nursery Class is based within the school grounds of Wallacestone Primary School. The nursery has two large playrooms, and a small playroom used for quieter activities. There are two outdoor areas for children to access. Children access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) between 8.45am and 2.45pm, during term time. There are currently 66 children on the nursery roll. The nursery is registered to take up to 80 children from age three until starting primary school.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class. He is supported by a principal early years officer, a senior early years officer and 12 early years officers. There is a support for learning assistant, two early learning and childcare assistants and a modern apprentice. Staff work across all areas of the nursery.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Senior leaders and practitioners have been developing their vision of work, play and succeed together well. As planned, senior leaders should refresh their current values and aims which have been in place for several years.
- Practitioners participate in a wide range of professional learning. This gives them a clear understanding of approaches to meet the needs of all children. Practitioners have leadership roles connected to their strengths and interests. They are becoming more confident leaders to support better outcomes for children. Most practitioners are developing in confidence through leading experiences such as Woods Wednesday, the secret garden and early communication and language. This is increasing the range of experiences which children encounter.
- Senior leaders work well together across the nursery and school to promote a shared responsibility for improvement. The principal early years officer (PEYO) leads the nursery well. She is dedicated to making positive changes to support improved outcomes for children. She has developed good relationships with practitioners and provides clear expectations for quality provision.
- Senior leaders and practitioners use a range of self-evaluation activities well to help them to identify their priorities for improvement. They consult with practitioners, children and parents using surveys to help gather, then act on their views.
- Senior leaders understand clearly the importance of ensuring the pace of change is appropriate to their nursery. Practitioners meet with senior leaders to discuss their practice. They should continue to support practitioners to embed their progression and assessment framework, and their observation skills using the new local authority tracking system. This will ensure observations effectively identify children's progress. Most practitioners show motivation

to make these improvements to enhance their practice. Senior leaders should now support improvement by ensuring all practitioners have a clear understanding of how to make significant observations and track children's progress.

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

- There is a welcoming, nurturing and supportive ethos within the setting. Practitioners have very positive relationships with children and families. This is contributing to children feeling safe, secure and confident within the environment.
- Practitioners make good use of conversation to find out about children's interests, ideas and prior knowledge. They should continue to build their skills in extending children's thinking through consistent use of open-ended questions and comment. There is an appropriate balance between children leading their own learning and time spent in adult-directed tasks. Practitioners should now review the organisation of group times towards the end of sessions to ensure children remain engaged in play until their parents collect them. Children would benefit from support from practitioners to help them to take better care of their environment as they move between activities.
- Children enjoy accessing freely the enclosed outdoor areas and learning to engage in a wide range of play opportunities. Children visit their secret garden to grow, harvest and cook their own vegetables. Groups of children visit the local woodland to explore and learn about nature. Children engage well with a small range of digital technologies including an interactive television.
- Practitioners discuss regularly children's individual needs. This enables them to provide learning experiences relevant to the interests of most children. They gather examples of children's experiences in learning journals. These include photographs and detailed narrative. Practitioners should review and adjust how they record children's learning to ensure there is a clearer focus on identifying significant learning. This should help practitioners make increasingly accurate judgements about the progress children are making and to identify appropriate next steps in learning. Parents share children's learning and achievements from home. This enables parents to engage in their children's learning more frequently.
- Practitioners meet regularly to plan children's learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. While doing so, practitioners focus well on developing further opportunities for children to plan and evaluate their own learning. Practitioners are focusing on how they plan responsively to take forward children's interests, building on their prior knowledge as they play.
- Practitioners have supportive plans in place to meet the needs of children who require additional support. This helps ensure accessible experiences for all children. Practitioners know children well and monitor the progress they make in their learning through observations. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to develop practitioners' observation skills, linking the recording of group activities closely with assessment information for individual children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum based firmly on play. They take steps to allow children to lead and direct their own learning throughout the session and build on their prior knowledge and skills. Planning for children's learning takes account of national guidance. Practitioners provide a learning environment to support children's literacy and numeracy skills. There is scope to develop this further, paying particular attention to opportunities for children to develop skills in counting and numeral recognition.
- Practitioners work well with a range of partners in their community to deliver a rich curriculum. Practitioners make good use of the local community to enhance children's experiences. Families join children on trips to the local woodland, waterway and open spaces.
- Practitioners sensitively support children when they start nursery. They have effective arrangements in place to support those children starting school. This helps children settle more easily into their new environments and gives them the confidence they need to enjoy their learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners recognise the importance of involving parents. They promote and encourage parents to come into the setting. Parents are offered opportunities to stay and play with their children at times suitable to them. Practitioners organise volunteering days to involve whole families in the setting. For example, parents and children volunteer at weekends to develop the nursery garden. Practitioners value the positive impact this has on children's learning experiences.
- Practitioners share children's learning with parents regularly, for example through individual learning journals twice per year. Parents make comments in these journals. Practitioners have created 'chatterbox' information where parents share information from home about achievements. Practitioners share children's learning on a secure social media platform. Practitioners should continue to increase the level of engagement from parents. This should support parents to have greater involvement in their child's progress. For example, practitioners sharing children's progress when it happens so learning can be discussed when it is relevant and meaningful to the child.

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.

3.1 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

- Children enjoy coming to the setting and are developing friendships successfully. Overall, children play together well. Practitioners know each child well as individuals. They value the views and interests of children and use these effectively to plan learning experiences.
- Practitioners have a strong focus on supporting children's wellbeing in the nursery. This ensures children experience a caring environment. Children are developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators. For example, practitioners support children well to reflect on how to keep safe and healthy when on a visit to the local woods. The 'Being Me' display illustrates the indicators for children. Children use this well to support them to celebrate their achievements. Practitioners ensure their relationships with children and their families are open and supportive. Children have daily opportunities to explore and express their emotions. With support, most children are learning how to manage their emotions in an age-appropriate way and recognise how others feel.
- Children use the outdoor learning space effectively to improve their wellbeing. They enjoy the freedom they have to choose when they want to go outside and when they want to play indoors. Children enjoy learning about healthy foods when planning snack menus and are aware of the basic rules of hygiene.
- Children have good opportunities to contribute to decisions in the playroom and this should continue to be developed further. For example, they would benefit from building on their leadership roles during snack and lunch times. This would support them to develop their organisation skills and take more responsibility for maintaining a safe and tidy environment. They should be supported to risk assess outdoor play spaces and when visiting the woods to help them develop their understanding of safe play. Senior leaders have identified the importance of opportunities for children to contribute to school committees to help them understand their rights further in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Practitioners are clear about their statutory duties and understand what they need to do to keep children safe. They take part in regular professional learning to develop their knowledge and receive regular updates to ensure they have current knowledge. Practitioners understand their roles and are clear about following procedures.
- Prior to children starting nursery, practitioners collect and record important information about each child. They use this information effectively to support them to meet the individual wellbeing needs of children. Senior leaders and practitioners work closely with other agencies to put in place effective strategies to support children who require additional support for learning. This is helping identified children to overcome communication difficulties and to regulate better their emotions.

- Practitioners provide an inclusive setting and treat children equally and with respect. It is important for practitioners to continue to increase opportunities for children to learn about diversity. They could do this by reviewing the range of relevant resources and toys available.

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

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. They listen well to instructions and share their thoughts and ideas during discussions. Children engage in mark making and early writing across the setting. Most children are making progress in early writing as a result. They develop skills in retelling and creating stories through story of the month. Children talk about favourite stories and read for enjoyment in a variety of contexts.
- Children are making good progress in mathematics. Children, through daily interactions, count, measure, compare size and explore volume. With support, they explore mathematical concepts in real life contexts such as baking and making soup. Most children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop early numeracy and mathematical skills further, both indoors and outside.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Most children are developing an awareness of their emotions and how to manage their feelings using a range of strategies. Children demonstrate well-developed physical skills, through a range of activities and outdoor spaces. For example, most children confidently ride bikes, run, climb and balance on large, fixed equipment. They enjoy using loose parts to create obstacle courses, which they navigate skilfully.
- Most children are making good progress in their learning as a result of planned experiences and opportunities within the nursery. Practitioners have a useful system in place to track children's progress. They use this well to record general next steps. Practitioners should continue to develop their current processes for documenting and tracking children's progress over time. In doing so, this should help them demonstrate children's progress more effectively.
- Practitioners share children's progress with families through 'where I am now' reports and through sharing children's learning journeys. They should now ensure more regular and consistent updates for families about children's achievements within nursery. Children and practitioners celebrate children's achievements in the nursery using 'Chatterbox' sheets completed by parents. Children celebrate their achievements enthusiastically with their peers at together time and practitioners include these in children's learning journeys.
- Practitioners build trusting and respectful relationships with families. They understand the importance of gathering helpful information that allows them to build a picture of the whole child

to ensure equity. Practitioners work in partnership with families and partners well to plan interventions that enable children to make progress in their development and learning.

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.