

Summarised inspection findings

Pencaitland Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

17 February 2020

Key contextual information

Pencaitland Primary School Nursery Class is situated in a separate building located in the school grounds. Children access a secure, enclosed outdoor area regularly and use the wider school grounds and a local woodland area. Since February 2019, the nursery class offers parents and carers the opportunity for 1140 hours early learning and childcare per year from Monday to Thursday. There are 29 children on the roll with some attending full-time and some part-time, in either the morning or afternoon.

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

- Practitioners share the current vision and values with parents, carers and children who are able to talk about them with increasing confidence. The recently appointed headteacher plans to refresh the vision, values and aims for the whole school community. This should support the creation of a shared curriculum rationale that reflects the unique context of Pencaitland Primary School more accurately.
- All practitioners have leadership roles that support the implementation of improvement plan priorities. They have identified correctly the need to ensure there is a whole team approach to deciding and planning responsibilities. All practitioners have the opportunity to be the lead person in the nursery class. This ensures practitioners are more aware of the skills and responsibilities required to lead the nursery class. Children are enthusiastic lunch and snack leaders. However, there is scope for children to increase further their leadership opportunities.
- The nursery team work well together and support one another with the recent increased pace of change. They meet regularly and share individual professional learning with the rest of the team. This is supporting the development of the learning provision. The nursery team, with the support of the local authority Early Years Support Teacher (EYST), evaluate the improvement plan priorities. Practitioners have tasks and activities outlined in action plans. The action plans are reviewed in-line with agreed timescales. The whole team reviews evidence showing how improvements have been implemented and identify next steps for improvement. Professional learning is identified for practitioners and links made to how this will support the area of development identified. Senior leaders now need to evaluate the impact of professional learning on improvement priorities.
- The team has established systematic and regular self-evaluation approaches using the national guidance framework. Practitioners are supported in their use of challenge questions to analyse and identify priorities and actions. The team should continue to evaluate practice and the effectiveness of the recently developed learning environment. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to continue to support the nursery team in her strategic role.

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

- The ethos in the nursery is caring, supportive and nurturing. The practitioners as key workers, have a strong focus on attachment and establish positive relationships with children and their families. Most children are motivated and keen to engage and access the learning environment and resources available. They choose with confidence, where they would like to play during their time at nursery and are developing their levels of engagement. Practitioners should develop further, children's opportunities and application of skills in meaningful contexts. This will develop their ability to lead their own learning alongside deepening, and extending their levels of engagement and concentration.
- Practitioners consistently support children with positive interactions. These support children to be confident in their environment. They listen to children and help them to take their ideas forward. Practitioners provide choices in the learning environment as well as time and space for children to explore the resources. Practitioners need to develop further their skills in effective questioning. They should support and challenge children's learning more consistently and promote curiosity, inquiry and problem solving skills.
- Children have an individual 'Learning Story' jotter where experiences, achievements and assessment information is recorded. Parents, carers and children access these during stay and play sessions with identified key workers. These do not yet provide a coherent picture of children's learning and progress across the curriculum to ensure children make the best progress possible. Practitioners need to improve approaches to observing children's learning. This should include identifying significant learning and clear and relevant next steps in learning for individual children.
- Children access a desktop computer to consolidate some aspects of their learning. They would benefit from more meaningful use of digital technology to support their learning.
- Practitioners plan appropriately over a variety of timescales. This includes weekly, fortnightly and responsive planning, mind maps and an outline of provision using areas of interest. Floorbooks record children's voice and clearly show what children already know in the areas of interest. However, planning documentation does not yet include planned learning for individual children. This area for development should ensure planning fully supports children's learning and development and takes full account of children's next steps in learning. Clear links should be evident between planning and the tracking and monitoring of children's progress. The headteacher should continue to reflect on, develop and evaluate approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring.
- Practitioners would benefit from participating in moderation activities with early level colleagues in the primary school. This should allow teachers and practitioners to develop appropriate,

increased expectations of children's progress in key aspects of learning and improve transition experiences further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum based firmly on play, which takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. All practitioners take responsibility for developing early literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The nursery team use local authority progression frameworks across all curricular areas. The children engage with a range of experiences indoors and outdoors, and enjoy free access to the outdoor area for large parts of the day.
- Senior leaders recognise the benefits of creating a curriculum rationale for the whole Pencaitland school community. This will provide the nursery team with an opportunity to be clear about their shared pedagogy and focus on challenge, depth and progression of children across the early level. The process of reviewing and creating a curriculum rationale will help consolidate links across the early level to develop further a play-based approach to learning. This will also support an identification and shared understanding of the main drivers of the curriculum in the context of Pencaitland school community.
- Practitioners are aware of the need to support children at points of transition and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to visit the setting before they start. There is a programme of activities to support transition into Primary 1 including visits to the school and support from a buddy. There is scope for practitioners and teachers to develop further their understanding of learning progression at the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnerships with parents and carers to promote parental engagement have been a key priority for the nursery class. Practitioners work hard to foster warm and respectful relationships with families. Parents and carers engage readily in daily conversations with the team and report that they appreciate and feel reassured through these interactions.
- Practitioners inform parents and carers about children's learning in the nursery using an appropriate range of approaches. These include regular informal interactions, floor books, access to their child's individual 'Learning Story' jotters, newsletters and planned opportunities to meet with practitioners. The outdoor learning together with parents and carers sessions and stay and play sessions are well attended. Practitioners plan to continue with this approach to build upon how parents and carers can support their children's learning.
- Children are learning about the skills needed for work and life. Practitioners encourage parents, carers and members of the local community to volunteer and share their skills with children in the nursery. As identified by the headteacher, practitioners and teachers across the school should build on this work to include a variety of jobs and careers available in the life and work of the local community.
- Children have attended sessions supporting intergenerational sharing of skills and talents through creativity. Local community participants and the children shared their enjoyment of the process and the benefits to their wellbeing. Practitioners should continue with their plans to build upon these experiences.

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

satisfactory

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 provide a safe and welcoming environment for children and their families. Trusting relationships are evident. Most children enjoy playing alongside and with one another and are developing friendships. They interact well together and share resources and space in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Practitioners are developing their use of the wellbeing indicators to support children's understanding. They support parental engagement by sharing the wellbeing indicators with parents and carers outlining how they can be applied to real life situations. Most children have a well-developed awareness of safety. The nursery team support this with regular visits to the local community and highlight road safety awareness. Children are aware of how to keep themselves healthy and active through physical activity and eating healthy foods. All children benefit from eating socially during lunch times in the school dining area. Most are willing to try a range of unfamiliar foods. A wide variety of outdoor learning experiences support children to be healthy and active and provide opportunities for them to manage their own risk. The nursery team should continue to develop and plan developmentally appropriate activities to extend children's awareness of their own wellbeing.
- The nurturing environment created by the nursery team results in an ethos where children feel respected and included in all learning experiences. Practitioners work well together to develop an independent, accessible approach to learning in the nursery. They involve children in making decisions about the nursery such as choices for snack and discussing planned learning experiences. There is potential for children to play an even greater role in leading aspects of the nursery.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a sound understanding of the statutory duties required to improve outcomes for children. Practitioners understand the importance of keeping children safe and their role in ensuring that this happens. Senior leaders are aware of the need to have a more robust and coherent system that collates and tracks information supporting children's wellbeing.
- All children and families are treated with respect in a fair and just manner. Practitioners encourage children to develop an early awareness of diversity through opportunities to learn about a range of different traditions and celebrations. They should increase opportunities to develop children's awareness of diversity and discrimination through developmentally appropriate experiences.
- Practitioners know their children and families well. They follow advice and guidance from partner agencies, such as speech and language therapy and other health service professionals, to bring about improvements for individuals. They should now develop recording processes, sharing of information at point of need and the evaluation of the impact of any interventions used to support individuals.

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

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. They talk readily in different situations with the majority listening and responding to others appropriately. They engage well with stories, songs and rhymes. A range of fiction and non-fiction books is available across the nursery environment. Practitioners resource the writing areas with a variety of writing materials to encourage children to engage in early writing and mark making activities. Most children recognise their own name. The majority of children are at the early stages of mark making with a few drawing recognisable pictures and attempting to write familiar letters. Practitioners should consider developing meaningful provocations to support children's engagement in reading and writing activities. This will develop further children's early reading and literacy skills.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children recognise numerals to ten and can recall number sequences forwards and backwards to 20. Recent developments in the outdoor area and the use of block play are ensuring that children are developing an understanding of shape, mathematical and positional language. Children are developing their awareness of capacity through filling and pouring resources at the sand and water. The nursery team should now plan individual children's experiences to focus on the development of skills for learning and life. This should improve children's awareness of their skills in numeracy and mathematics resulting in children making better progress in their learning.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. All children are happy and settled at nursery. They are forming friendships, are supported to share, and take turns in their play. Children are developing their physical skills well through daily outdoor play, regular activities in the school gym hall and the use of additional green spaces in the locality such as the local woodland. Children are developing their curiosity and awareness of the natural world and their understanding of their place in the community through experiencing outdoor learning. Children are confident in nursery routines and demonstrate appropriate levels of independence for example, putting on coats and shoes and helping to prepare snack. Most children are increasingly aware of how everyday routines keep them healthy and take part in daily tooth brushing. Children now need to develop further their awareness and understanding of their social and emotional wellbeing. Children should increase their independence skills and have developmentally appropriate experiences that enable them to understand the wellbeing indicators in real and meaningful contexts.

- Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning over time. The embedding of planning approaches, linked to observations and identification of next steps, should provide a clearer overview of children's progress over time. This is not yet evident. Practitioners should ensure they build on what children already know and use new tracking documents to regularly measure children's progress over time and the value added by nursery experiences.
- Practitioners support children to share their achievements during group times with practitioners offering praise and encouragement. They are beginning to record these achievements in children's 'Learning Story' jotters. This is at the early stages and should be developed to ensure practitioners have a more holistic understanding of a child. Senior leaders should now track and monitor children's achievements in order to plan effectively for gaps in learning.
- The nursery team have an inclusive approach and work well with parents and other agencies to reduce potential barriers to learning. Practitioners provide appropriate additional support to secure positive outcomes for children. As tracking and monitoring approaches improve, a fuller picture of the impact of interventions and strategies should improve outcomes further for children and families. This will enable senior management and practitioners to measure the impact of interventions to ensure equity and make decisions about children's future development.

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.