

Summarised inspection findings

Avonbridge Primary School and Nursery Class

Falkirk Council

23 April 2019

Key contextual information

Avonbridge Primary School Nursery Class is registered for a maximum of 23 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. Children can choose to play in the secure outdoor space with direct access from the nursery playroom. They benefit from regular access to the gym hall and additional outdoor spaces in the school grounds. The nursery offers morning only sessions with plans for afternoon and full day sessions to become available from April 2019. There had been significant changes in the nursery team in the 12 months prior to the inspection. Further staff changes are planned with new members joining an expanded team, and a senior early years officer returning from a period of planned leave.

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

- The primary school and nursery class have recently revisited their vision, values and aims. Practitioners consulted with parents and children to find out what they valued, and what kind of experiences the nursery should provide. As a result, there is a positive sense of community and shared purpose in the nursery class. It would be useful to continue to review the vision and aims on a regular and frequent basis. This will help shape priorities for further improvement as the nursery engages in significant expansion of provision over the coming months.
- Practitioners are enthusiastic and committed to continuing improvement to practice. They make effective use of continuing learning and professional dialogue to inform improvement. Practitioners regularly reflect together on how well experiences, environments and interactions enable children to get the best from their nursery experience. This is leading to significant improvement to the nursery environment and to children's engagement in play.
- Action plans are helping to shape the improvement work of the nursery. They provide clarity for practitioners concerning their individual roles in leading and supporting change. Senior leaders should now review these plans, taking account of the changing context of the nursery. It will be important for the head teacher to provide strong leadership and support to the nursery team. This will enable them to manage change successfully and to sustain recent improvement to practice.
- Improvements to the planning process and use of floor books are helping to give children a stronger voice in the nursery. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to involve children further in self-evaluation for improvement.
- Practitioners have made a start to using national self-evaluation guidance. They have begun to document their improvement journey to provide a focus for reflection and to help plan next steps. The senior leadership team should now support practitioners to become more confident in using self-evaluation guidance to evaluate all aspects of their practice. We discussed how

practitioners might use challenge questions to focus the evaluation work of the team more closely on improving the curriculum and securing children’s progress.

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 warm, welcoming and nurturing ethos encourages children to enjoy their time in the nursery.
- Practitioners have worked together to improve the learning environment. They have been effective in creating a range of attractive and interesting play spaces for children. Children now benefit from an improved range of natural and open-ended resources. As a result, children are encouraged to explore possibilities and to play a more active role in initiating and leading their learning. Children know where to find what they need for their play and are becoming more confident when making choices from available resources.
- Most children sustain their interest in play and demonstrate positive levels of engagement throughout the morning. Practitioners have identified a few children who still need to be more engaged in their play. Other children require more challenge to deepen their learning.
- Children benefit from free-flow access to the outdoor space of the nursery every day. Practitioners and senior leaders have identified outdoor learning as an area for further development. Plans are in place to extend outdoor provision, alongside the extension of hours, later in the year.
- Interactions are positive. Sensitive interventions help children to manage their interactions and play with peers. Practitioners are flexible and responsive to children, looking for opportunities to support and extend children's expressions of interest to enrich experiences. As a result, there is a relaxed and purposeful climate in the playroom. Practitioners should now continue to develop consistent approaches to interactions with a focus on providing further challenge.
- Children use digital cameras to take 'selfies' and to record their achievements for inclusion in floor books and displays. With appropriate adult support, they also explore the use of online sources to find useful information. Practitioners should build on this positive start to develop children's use of digital technologies to enrich learning further.
- Online learning journals record episodes of children's engagement in experiences, along with reflections and some possible next steps in learning. Practitioners now need to improve their use of individual journals to capture a fuller picture of each child's significant achievements overtime. This will help them to plan for progression across key aspects of learning and evaluate the impact of support and interventions more accurately.
- Practitioners use floor books to document children's emerging interests and learning during spontaneous play. They reflect together each day on children's engagement in learning. More recently, practitioners have begun to formalise their use of professional dialogue, and

conversations with children, to inform intentional learning planning. This promising approach to planning is at an early stage of development. Practitioners should, as planned, continue to develop approaches to planning.

- Senior leaders should continue to develop tracking and monitoring approaches to include children in the nursery fully. It would be useful to explore opportunities for practitioners and teachers across the early level to reflect together on planning, assessment, and expectations of learners. This will help develop shared pedagogy across the early level in the school and promote progression in learning at transitions.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Children learn through play in the nursery. Practitioners use the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence and take account of Building the Ambition in planning experiences for children.
- Children's health and wellbeing is a priority. Practitioners provide a variety of experiences to support children's development in this area. They should now make more use of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence to support further challenge and progression in learning across the curriculum.
- There is significant scope to extend opportunities for children to develop and apply literacy and mathematical skills through play. Senior leaders should support practitioners to develop further their understanding of effective early language and numeracy pedagogy across the early level.
- With the introduction of extended hours, it will be useful for practitioners and senior leaders to revisit the rationale for the curriculum. In doing so, they should consider how they could make improved use of personal learning planning. This should build on the prior and continuous learning of children within and beyond the nursery.
- Practitioners make use of partners and the local environment to enrich learning. There is scope to develop this further. In doing so, practitioners should create additional opportunities for children to make links between the skills they are learning in the nursery and the wider world of work.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Daily conversations about children's experiences at home and in the nursery help reassure parents and ensure smooth transitions into the playroom each morning. Practitioners inform parents about children's learning in the nursery using an appropriate range of approaches. These include regular informal interactions, floor books, social media, children's individual learning journals and planned opportunities to meet with practitioners. Parents and carers should now be more involved in recognising achievements and planning next steps for children. We discussed how target setting might help with this.
- The nursery team should continue to develop further 'Stay and Play' sessions, and similar opportunities, to enable partners and carers to spend time in the nursery. Looking forward, they should consider how they might extend opportunities for family learning.

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

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 importance of positive relationships in supporting children's learning and development. They share responsibility for ensuring that children feel welcomed and valued in the nursery. Practitioners make effective use of praise to encourage children's positive behaviour and encourage them to participate fully in the play experiences on offer.
- Practitioners demonstrate kindness and consideration in all of their interactions with children and families. As a result, they have been successful in creating a calm and nurturing environment in the nursery.
- Children are happy and settled in the nursery. Most children are developing good friendships and are learning to cooperate with others in their play. The design of learning environments encourages children to share their play, and to help each other in their learning. It was noticeable that children enjoy spending time together as a group and almost all are keen to be involved in joint activities.
- Parents are welcomed in the nursery and have good opportunities to talk with practitioners at the start and end of the session. As a result, practitioners know children well. They make good use of information from home to meet children's individual care needs and to support children to manage well in the setting.
- Practitioners have a sound, shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). They make good use of this to inform all aspects of their work in the nursery. This helps children to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. Practitioners have begun to develop further children's own awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Children have a developing understanding of how the setting is helping them to be aware of what it means to be safe and healthy. We discussed how practitioners might usefully continue to explore the indicators with children and families as a focus for family learning.
- Practitioners are reflective about their practice. They keep informed about important developments in early learning and childcare to fulfil their statutory duties. Practitioners quickly identify when children need additional support with their learning and development. Where appropriate, they work well with partner agencies to provide informed support to children and families. Practitioners are skilled in making well-judged interventions to provide sensitive support when children need it. We have asked senior leaders to review target setting for a few children.
- Practitioners treat all children and families with respect and fairness. They take careful account of the individual needs of children and strive to include all children as fully as possible in the life of the nursery. Practitioners encourage children to develop an early awareness of diversity

through opportunities to learn about a range of different traditions and celebrations. They should continue to explore how they can engage children in further relevant learning about diversity and equality.

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

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress. Practitioners have been effective in creating a nurturing and supportive ethos for children. Improvements to the learning environment mean that most children are increasingly engaged and enthusiastic about learning. Practitioners should build on existing strengths of the nursery. In doing so, they should provide more and better opportunities for children to develop and apply early literacy, numeracy and mathematical skills through play and daily experiences.
- Children are developing their health and wellbeing through a range of experience with adults and peers. Practitioners support children to develop their emotional and social skills well. Opportunities with clay, musical instruments and small parts, encourage children to develop their fine motor skills. Play in the gym and outdoors helps develop their physical skills. There is scope for children to have further opportunities to challenge themselves through energetic play. Children are beginning to learn about healthy choices and the importance of taking care of their teeth.
- In early literacy, the majority of children are developing their listening skills. A few children still need extra help to listen well. Most children enjoy sharing stories and a few show an interest in looking at books on their own. Effective questioning is helping children begin to develop their enjoyment and understanding of stories. Children are starting to explore mark making using a variety of tools and resources. Practitioners support children to begin to understand how they can use signs and written language for a variety of useful purposes. They should build on this positive start. Children enjoy singing and are becoming aware of rhythm through musical experiences.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, most children are becoming aware of 'counting' words. Most are starting to develop strategies to manage counting. A few children are confident and skilled in counting and have a good developing understanding of number. Children are exploring shapes, three dimensional objects and patterns through play with blocks and expressive arts experiences. There is scope to significantly extend opportunities for children to develop mathematical concepts and thinking through their play.
- Practitioners recognise that there are gaps in the assessment records of some children. From inspection activity, floor books, learning journals and wall displays, it is evident children are enthusiastic learners making satisfactory progress across the curriculum.

- Practitioners acknowledge and celebrate children's achievements in the nursery. Children know that practitioners are interested in their achievements and often ask adults to come and see what they have accomplished. Practitioners should build on this to support children to develop vocabulary to talk about their learning. There is scope for children to have more responsibility in the nursery and to play a stronger role in the life of the school. For example, by contributing to whole school Eco projects.
- The nursery team are continuing to develop their understanding of the role of early learning and childcare in promoting equity. They ensure all children are able to participate in the full range of learning experiences provided. Senior leaders should ensure identified interventions are consistently applied.

Choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Practitioners understand the importance of building strong, trusting relationships from the earliest possible time. They make good use of initial information from home to plan care and support for children. Transitions into the nursery are flexible and adapted to the needs of individual children and their families. Parents have information about the setting before children join.
- Practitioners support children's daily transitions into and within the nursery well. Informal conversations and information sharing with parents help ensure practitioners are aware of the changing needs and concerns of children. The warm and welcoming climate of the nursery facilitates this well.
- An appropriate induction programme is in place for children and parents as children move to primary. Parents have opportunities to visit and find out about learning and routines of the school before children join the primary classes. Senior leaders should, as planned, review transition arrangements to enable children across the early level to share their learning as fully as possible.
- Practitioners and teachers share information about children's progress through professional conversations and learning journals. Senior leaders should, as planned, continue to improve assessment, tracking and monitoring of children's progress in nursery to support this information sharing.
- It will be important for teachers and practitioners working across the early level to develop a shared understanding of high quality early learning pedagogy. This will enable them to continue to improve continuity and progression in learning across the early level.

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.