

Summarised inspection findings

Strathdevon Primary School Nursery Class

Clackmannanshire Council

25 February 2020

Key contextual information

Strathdevon Primary School Nursery Class is situated within Strathdevon Primary School and serves the village of Dollar and surrounding areas. Children attend the nursery from the age of three until starting primary school. Flexible placements support the needs of children and families. This includes morning and afternoon sessions and full day placements. The nursery is registered for 35 children at any one time. The current roll is 42. A number of children have shared placements with other early learning and childcare settings.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- School leaders value the nursery as part of the school community and encourage all practitioners to contribute to the continuous improvement of the whole school. Teachers, practitioners and stakeholders have refreshed the vision, values and aims to reflect the ethos and life of the school meaningfully. Practitioners in the nursery bring these to life through the positive ethos and interactions with children. There is a strong culture of respect, teamwork and ambition.
- Senior leaders, including the senior early years practitioner (SEYP), provide strong leadership and direction to nursery practitioners. On a day-to-day basis, the SEYP leads the nursery very well. Since taking up post, she has led on significant changes within the nursery. She provides very good support and guidance to practitioners in their role to build confidence, knowledge and skills. As a result, children have high quality early learning and childcare (ELC) experiences in a stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- Practitioners are empowered to lead change. They are encouraged to look outwards to other ELC settings to identify good practice. Each practitioner has a specific leadership role linked to the school improvement plan. Their confidence, knowledge and understanding of high quality ELC has increased through access to a range of professional learning opportunities. This has a positive impact on children's learning. There are increased opportunities for children to develop numeracy across learning indoors and outdoors. Family learning sessions led by practitioners provide opportunities and support for children and parents to play and learn together. Practitioners' knowledge and skills support leadership of change in the school. This includes supporting the use of sign language.
- Practitioners work very well as a team. They value and share skills and expertise to ensure continuous improvement of the nursery. They are reflective, engage regularly in professional dialogue to discuss what is working well and where further improvement is required. Practitioners now need to use national guidance at a deeper level to support robust evaluation based upon clear evidence that demonstrates the impact of change. The deputy headteacher and SEYP monitor the work of the nursery well and meet regularly to discuss nursery developments. Helpful feedback supports practitioners to continue to improve their skills.

- Senior leaders work collaboratively with practitioners to identify key priorities for improvement. The depute headteacher and SEYP monitor closely the progress of the improvement plan to ensure an appropriate pace of change and positive impact on children and families.

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

- Practitioners make very good use of neutral colours and materials in the playroom to create a welcoming and calming learning environment. Almost all children are settled and confident within the nursery. They engage purposefully in their chosen activities and sustain high levels of concentration in their play. Practitioners plan and organise the environment very well to enable children to lead their play and independently access the resources they require. Practitioners provide interesting natural and real life resources to promote the development of children's creativity and curiosity. This is most evident in the construction area where children spend extensive periods of time using the wooden blocks creatively to extend their imaginative play.
- The flow of the nursery session provides a good balance of extended, uninterrupted time for learning through spontaneous free play, carefully planned group activities and real-life experiences.
- The skilled practitioners have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop. They use their knowledge of early learning very well to support children during play. All practitioners are caring and sensitive in their interactions with children. They use a good range of strategies to develop children's vocabulary and to develop their thinking and problem solving skills. They use praise well to build children's self-esteem and confidence in learning.
- Children play digital games to reinforce learning and use the tablet with confidence to research interests. Practitioners should develop the use and range of digital technologies to enable children to develop skills further .
- The newly developed approach to planning is enabling practitioners to be very responsive to children's needs and interests. Practitioners now need to embed this approach in practice. They should support children to be involved meaningfully in the planning process through more effective use of the learning wall. This will support children's skills in talking about and evaluating their own learning.
- Children have individual on-line learning journals that contain photographs and observations describing their significant learning. Practitioners track children's progress within each curricular area. They use observations and tracking information well to identify next steps to support children's learning. Practitioners should develop this further to ensure next steps are clear and shared with children in a developmentally appropriate way. This will enable children to reflect on their progress and achievements more meaningfully. Practitioners are beginning to use local authority progression pathways to track children's learning. Senior leaders and practitioners now need to use all the information more effectively to identify children's progress. Practitioners need to ensure a streamlined approach to avoid duplication.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners are knowledgeable and have a shared understanding of their role in promoting children's learning and development. They take good account of Curriculum for Excellence to ensure children's experiences are based firmly on play and active learning. Practitioners take account of experiences and outcomes to support planning. Their planning is responsive to children's interests and learning needs. Practitioners have high aspirations for children and there is a strong focus on developing language and numeracy skills and ensuring children's wellbeing. They provide high quality experiences that support children to practise skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Practitioners make good use of a range of partners and visitors to enrich children's experiences. As a result, children are becoming aware of the world of work. They regularly have outings in the community and visit local woodland to enable children to develop, apply and extend skills in different contexts.
- Practitioners provide a range of relevant transition activities to support children and families as they join the nursery. These sessions provide helpful information for parents and an opportunity to be involved along with their child in learning experiences. The school and nursery organise a range of transition events for children and families to become familiar with the school and the P1 classroom. These activities include shared play sessions with P1 pupils. All practitioners and teachers working across the early level now need to meet together to share skills and expertise to ensure continuity of the curriculum and pedagogical approaches.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners make effective use of partners, the local community and parents to enhance children's learning. This includes joining community events and parents sharing their skills and talents, for example, playing musical instruments and leading physical activity sessions.
- Parents receive helpful information on their child's experiences and progress through online learning journals, social media, newsletters and noticeboards. They also have the opportunity to engage with practitioners on an informal basis to hear about their child's nursery experience. In addition, practitioners arrange informal events. 'The Big Breakfast' event encourages children to share their experiences and learning with parents. Practitioners provide twice-yearly meetings for parents to engage in a two-way discussion on their child's progress.
- Practitioners organise helpful 'Learning Together' sessions and home-link resources to enable parents to engage with and support their child's learning in the nursery and at home. These activities support the development of children's social, literacy and numeracy skills.

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

very 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 are happy and settled at nursery as a result of the positive and nurturing relationships with practitioners. Practitioners have high expectations of children. They support them effectively to develop confidence, take risks and to embrace challenge during woodland visits and physical play within the gym hall. Practitioners value children highly as unique individuals with their own strengths, personalities and interests. They support and encourage children to share ideas and views when making decisions about purchasing new resources.
- Practitioners are very positive role models for children. They use restorative approaches effectively and in a developmentally appropriate way to support children to resolve minor conflict. Children are developing very good social skills to help them play cooperatively with their peers. They are kind, respectful and show consideration to others.
- Practitioners have a deep understanding of health and wellbeing, which underpins and influences their work with children and improve outcomes. They use the concepts of the wellbeing indicators meaningfully and in a natural way during learning experiences and interactions with children. Children are developing a very good awareness of indicators such as safe, healthy and nurtured. They demonstrate understanding of how certain indicators impact on their daily lives. Practitioners should continue to develop this work to support children to become aware of how the full range of indicators relate to them as individuals.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a good working knowledge of statutory duties in relation to improving outcomes for children. Each child has a comprehensive personal plan. Practitioners use this information very well to plan for and meet children's individual care and learning needs. They review and update plans in-line with legislation and in partnership with parents. Individual planning for children who require additional support is highly effective. Practitioners work closely with relevant agencies to set clear, measurable targets and timescales. These are reviewed with all stakeholders to ensure children continue to make progress in learning.
- Practitioners treat children and families with fairness and respect. They have created a fully inclusive nursery where individuality is celebrated. Practitioners support children to be aware of different cultures and traditions by celebrating a range of cultural festivals and events. They engage children in developmentally appropriate discussions to deepen awareness of and celebrate diversity.
- Practitioners use their knowledge of children very well and implement strategies to reduce possible barriers to learning appropriately. They provide highly effective support and monitor children's progress closely to ensure they make continuous progress.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. Most talk confidently and express ideas and thoughts articulately. They listen intently to stories and follow simple instructions well. Most engage purposefully in mark making activities. They are beginning to draw recognisable pictures and a few are beginning to write their name. Almost all children recognise their own name. Children link puppets to well-known nursery rhymes and most recite these confidently. Practitioners should continue to develop resources and activities to support further children's awareness of the rhythm and patterns of words to broaden early reading skills.
- Most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most know the number sequence to ten with a few who count confidently to 30 and beyond. They recognise numerals to ten with a few recognising bigger numbers. Most children count objects accurately and are beginning to develop a knowledge of the number before and after in a sequence. Most children recognise and name common two dimensional shapes. They are learning about the properties of three dimensional objects as they construct models in the block play area. Most children use a range of vocabulary to describe measurement and size. They are developing an awareness of money through real life experiences. Practitioners should ensure children develop information handling skills and an awareness of pattern in real-life contexts.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Practitioners provide healthy snacks and children are developing an awareness of healthy eating. Children understand the importance of handwashing and take part in the tooth-brushing programme. They are aware of safety rules when using knives to chop fruit and when building fires outdoors. Almost all children, demonstrate high levels of independence in their own care routines. They put on their coats and shoes for the outdoors. They spread their toast and pour their drinks for snack. All children take part in daily outdoor play and challenging physical activities in the gym hall. They are developing good control over their balance and body movements. The trips to the local woodland allow children to experience a variety of terrain and to manage their own risky play. Practitioners are following a planned cycling programme with children. A few children confidently pedal two-wheeled bikes. Practitioners should develop further the daily emotional check-in to extend children's awareness of emotions and develop the vocabulary to talk about them.

- Overall, most children are making good progress in learning across the curriculum. They are learning about planting and growing in the garden. They investigate the properties of magnets. Children experiment and explore a variety of media in the art area.
- Practitioners regularly support children to celebrate their achievements. They are beginning to use information about children's achievements to plan for further learning in nursery.
- Practitioners know they need to be fully aware of children's socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They are developing an understanding of the impact this has on children's learning.
- Practitioners continue to develop skills in tracking and monitoring to demonstrate children's progress in learning over time. They should begin to gather and analyse data that enables them to measure the impact of strategies and interventions. This will support them to evaluate effectively the best ways to support children's progress and 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.