

Summarised inspection findings

Ralston Nursery Class

Renfrewshire Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Ralston Nursery Class is part of the overall provision of within Ralston Primary School. The nursery accommodation is in a purpose-built building within the grounds of the primary school. It is registered to take 56 children at any one time.

At the time of the inspection there were 56 accessing early learning and childcare provision. Children are aged from 3 years until they are of an age to start primary school.

The headteacher is the named manager of the nursery. She delegates management of the nursery to a depute headteacher and a Senior Early Learning Childcare Officer (SELCO). There are 5 full time Early Learning Childcare Officers (ELCOs) and 3 part-time ELCOs.

The nursery is a term-time provision and is open from 08.50 to 14.50.

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 have established warm and caring relationships with children and provide appropriate comfort for children, as required. This approach supports almost all children to feel valued and secure in the setting and helps them to interact positively with each other.
- Practitioners have recently reviewed the learning environment. They have introduced a wider range of natural materials and open-ended resources. Children have free-flow access to a well-resourced outdoor environment. This provides space for them to engage in energetic play and experiences that support them to develop skills across the curriculum. As a result, almost all children are motivated and engaged in their play. Practitioners have created quieter areas such as the nurture nook where children can relax and rest and take time to manage their emotions.
- All practitioners interact sensitively with children and spend time listening to what children have to say. This supports children to know that their views are respected and valued. The majority of practitioners use strategies and open-ended questions to promote children's curiosity and creativity. The setting can now build on this practice to embed consistently high-quality interactions which support the further development of children's language and thinking skills.
- Practitioners promote the use of digital technologies to enhance children's learning. They support children to use the internet to research information and access games on the touchscreen to reinforce previous learning. Children confidently use bar matrix codes to access their online profiles and familiar stories. As planned, practitioners should continue to extend children's digital skills through the meaningful use of a wider range of digital technologies.

- Practitioners know all children well as learners. They use online profiles to record photographs and observations of children's learning. This allows most children to talk confidently about their previous learning experiences. Parents access and contribute to the online profiles and this ensures they are kept well informed about their child's learning.
- Practitioners plan around children's interests through floor-books and responsive plans within learning zones. The planned experiences capture the journey of learning in the floor-books. Practitioners should now take more account of children's confident talk around their learning to increase their involvement in planning their own learning.
- Practitioners track children's learning in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. They meet regularly with the SELCO to monitor and evaluate children's learning. They should continue to develop the use of the trackers to analyse the range of data they collect. This should support them to identify and plan for gaps in learning to secure improved outcomes for all children.

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

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 progressing well in early language and communication. Most children interact well with adults and other children and communicate their thoughts clearly and with confidence. They listen with interest to stories in small and large groups and are knowledgeable about story characters and events. Almost all children show a keen interest in mark making and share their meaningful writing.
- Children are making good progress in early numeracy and count with confidence when playing. Children are developing good early mathematical skills through a range of resources. They are learning about size and shape as they play with construction. Children use appropriate mathematical language as they compare the capacity of containers when playing with water. A minority of children are not yet able to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills through real-life contexts. Staff should continue to develop opportunities to develop this further.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing across the curriculum. All children move around the setting confidently. They are developing good fine motor control and coordination through the range of experiences available. Children enjoy climbing and balancing outdoors. Children understand how to keep themselves safe when playing outdoors and help risk assess outdoor play spaces. They are developing their awareness of healthy lifestyles through daily keep fit sessions and the range of healthy food offered during mealtimes. Children independently serve themselves and make choices at mealtimes in an unhurried way. A minority of children do not take turns listening and talking to each other as they play. Practitioners should continue to encourage children not to talk over each other and to keep things tidy as they play.
- Almost all children are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum at their own pace. Children with additional support needs are making appropriate progress in relation to their individual developmental stage. Practitioners should now explore how they can continue to improve setting personal targets to reduce potential barriers to learning.
- All practitioners know children well and highlight children's achievements using learning walls and children's personal learning journals. They also celebrate achievements in the setting through appropriate use of praise. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to celebrate and share all children's achievements.
- Practitioners work well together to develop a supportive and inclusive ethos that promotes their values of respect and kindness. They work effectively with families who are encouraged to

support learning and share achievements at home. Practitioners have had a successful focus on working with primary school teachers on shared approaches to developing writing. This was identified as a gap among learners in the years following lockdown closures. Regular parental engagement events provide the opportunity for children to share their learning confidently. Children contribute to the wider community and beyond through their involvement with community groups.

Other relevant evidence

- The management team are clear about the journey of improvement to secure the best possible outcomes for children and manage the pace of change well. There has been significant staff absence over the past year which has impacted on the setting's progress with improvements.
- Practitioners should review snack provision to ensure it complies with 'Setting the Table' nutritional guidance'.
- Practitioners have worked effectively with teachers from the primary school to address gaps in children's attainment in writing. These gaps were identified following the impact of school closures during lockdown. Practitioners have worked with teachers on professional learning on writing and a stronger focus on writing in the nursery to support a progressive transition in writing skills from nursery to P1.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff, involved parents and carers when making shared decisions about their child's care and development. Staff told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's learning and play interests. This enabled the staff team to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Personal plans and online journal observations were regularly reviewed and included care support strategies and next steps for learning. We highlighted the importance of staff continuing to monitor children's personal plans to ensure planned support strategies are more specific and individualised. This can help the staff team to implement approaches that better address children's particular personal care and learning needs.

We discussed with staff how children with medical conditions were supported. Staff told us of the administration and monitoring systems that were in place to ensure that all children's medicines were administered safely. We advised updating medication records to show children had received the first dose of medication at home for non-emergency medication. We discussed with staff situations in which medication has to be given on a 'when required' basis. We highlighted the importance to staff that they know the symptoms of any medication that has been prescribed and that these are recorded in the child's care record. We reviewed how the service stored medication including children's administration and consent forms. We identified a need to ensure that all emergency medication was more easily accessible for staff to administer. These issues were addressed during the course of our inspection visit.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff worked hard to provide a variety of high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. We found that children's voice was highly valued and that staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play. We highlighted the value to staff of continuing to develop their skills in using well-timed open-ended questioning to further extend and challenge children's thinking and learning.

We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. Through discussion, it was evident that the staff team were using professional development opportunities to develop a growing understanding of early years pedagogy. We found this learning was helping staff to scaffold and shape the breadth and depth of

children's learning. Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn.

We discussed with staff strategies for developing children's sense of ownership of leading change related to their self-chosen play projects. Staff agreed that more flexible use of planning tools based on observations of children's most engaging play experiences could strengthen existing opportunities for children to shape their play environments. This can extend opportunities for staff to reflect on when children display deep level engagement in their play and support them to provide greater autonomy and choice as to how this will be taken forward.

Staff told us of how they used shared reflections on children's play within different nursery play zones to shape their planning. For example, staff discussed how children's interests in recreating world famous towers within their block play (e.g. Eiffel tower and the leaning tower of Pisa) had been used to inform three-dimensional model making at the outdoor woodwork table. We highlighted planning approaches that had the potential to strengthen the team's daily communications about linking children's learning across different zones (e.g. imaginative, creative, storytelling, construction, physical play, outdoors).

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior leadership team through consultation with all nursery stakeholders had developed a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families and the wider community. They had created conditions where all staff felt confident to initiate changes and share responsibility for the process. Positive working relationships between the management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children. Each member of the nursery team had undertaken professional development that supported a leadership role in an area of the curriculum that they had identified a particular interest or strength. This included: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths), outdoor learning, numeracy, literacy, community engagement and caring for the environment. We found these leadership roles had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress as well as parental engagement in their children's learning.

The senior leadership team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. This feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the nursery class's priorities and targets for change.

The senior leadership team followed an inclusive and supportive approach to quality assurance and improvement. This included regularly observing and monitoring key aspects of the nursery team's daily practice. This was followed by shared professional reflection and discussions with staff on how their daily roles positively impacted on outcomes for children. We found this helped to channel each staff team member's enthusiasm for taking forward current ideas and developing and implementing best practice guidance. It helped to ensure that care, play and learning experiences were consistently meeting the needs of children.

We highlighted and discussed with staff the importance of ensuring that the that any action plans adopted to meet any previous inspection requirements or areas for improvements are regularly reviewed. This can help to ensure that plans are fully implemented and the related positive impacts on outcomes for children are maintained.

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.