

Summarised inspection findings

St Aloysius' College Kindergarten

Independent

7 May 2024

Key contextual information

St Aloysius College Kindergarten is part of St Aloysius College, an independent Jesuit Catholic school, situated in the city centre of Glasgow. Children attend from Glasgow City and surrounding local authorities. The majority of children attend from neighbouring local authority areas. The kindergarten is accommodated in a separate building as part of the school campus. Children benefit from a large playroom and outdoor play area. They also access the wider school campus, including science lab, dance studio, and library. Children visit an outdoor space in nearby Millerston weekly, for outdoor learning.

The kindergarten is registered for 40 children to attend at any time and at the time of the inspection there were 22 children on the roll. Since August 2023, children access their entitlement to 1140 hours funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in partnership with Glasgow City Council. Children can attend between 8.30 am and 3.00 pm during the school term. Parents have the option to buy additional hours of childcare between 7.45 am and 6 pm.

The college leadership team has recently been restructured with a new head of junior school appointed from within the existing leadership team. The early years depute has overall responsibility for the leadership and operation of the kindergarten. She is supported by three practitioners, with one having recently been appointed as temporary assistant manager. The senior leadership and practitioner teams are long standing members of staff.

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

- The kindergarten's work, including the vision, values and aims are underpinned by the Jesuit Pupil Profile, based on the five principles of Jesuit education. Practitioners carefully introduce the language of the profile to children to ensure it is accessible and meaningful to children. With senior leaders, they demonstrate a strong commitment to the vision of Jesuit education and the values important to it. The kindergarten is an important part of St Aloysius College. Recently the community celebrated the kindergarten's tenth year, demonstrating the respect and value placed on it.
- Senior leaders are highly visible and play an active role in the life and work of the kindergarten. The practitioner team is established and well respected. Together, senior leaders and practitioners work well together as positive role models for children and ambassadors of the college. The leadership of the kindergarten has recently been restructured and there is a strong commitment from senior leaders to continued development.
- Practitioners have leadership responsibilities, including developing resources, tracking the progress children make in their learning and ensuring health and wellbeing. They are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and making the kindergarten the best it can be.

Practitioners are capable of taking on more responsibility. This will increase the capacity for leadership and pace of change.

- The kindergarten recently established a partnership with Glasgow City Council to deliver funded ELC. Senior leaders and practitioners are enthusiastic about this development and look forward to benefitting from opportunities this may bring. They are keen to participate in professional learning, networking with other settings and professional learning opportunities. This will build on recent visits to other settings in the area to share and reflect on practice.
- Parents are invited to be part of a parent focus group. This allows families to contribute to the ongoing work of the kindergarten. This is at the early stages of development and is beginning to have a positive impact, for example, increasing 'come and play' days. Senior leaders could continue to develop the valuable work of the focus group to develop a shared understanding of ELC pedagogy. Children have opportunities for leadership, for example, helping in routines. Practitioners should continue to develop the child's voice in the leadership and development of the kindergarten.
- The kindergarten team informally reflect on their practice. They are at the early stages of using formal self-evaluation tools to reflect on the quality of the kindergarten. As their use of self-evaluation develops, this should inform the team's priorities and reflect a shared agenda for continued improvement. As a team with refreshed roles and responsibilities, the team should establish remits that empower everyone to initiate and influence change. Senior leaders have created an ambitious plan for improvement with relevant, measurable priorities.

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 ensure the college Jesuit values underpin the nurturing, welcoming ethos. Children are encouraged to build positive relationships with each other, and there are established friendships in the group. Children are confident and feel secure. Most children work well together, sharing resources and negotiating play scenarios.
- Children have access to indoor and outdoor spaces and make choices about where they learn for most of the day. They also access off-site outdoor learning experiences weekly. Most children engage well as they play, particularly when exploring open-ended resources. Practitioners should use national guidance to support the development of an enabling, motivating environment. They should focus on promoting children's curiosity, creativity, and inquiry to allow children to explore, extend and revisit their learning spontaneously and independently. Currently, there is too much of focus on adult-led activities, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The team should embed opportunities for children to develop and apply skills as they play. This should be embedded throughout the environment for exploration during child-led play.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are affectionate. They encourage children to talk about their play and learning. Practitioners should develop the consistent use of high-quality commentary and questioning to support and challenge children's learning as they play. Children enjoy exploring tablet computers and the interactive board to apply their understanding, for example, as part of numeracy and stories. They also take photographs. They could be challenged further through the creative use of digital technologies to support and extend learning.
- Practitioners have recently introduced new approaches to plan for children's learning. Children are involved in choosing areas of interest to explore. They are encouraged to share what they already know and their ideas and questions they would like to learn more about. Practitioners use this to inform planned learning and build on what children already know and can do. This is helping children influence what they learn about and is beginning to offer increased depth, breadth, and challenge in learning. Practitioners should continue to develop further their planning processes. They should provide a better balance of child-led and adult-led learning experiences to better meet the needs of all children.
- Children benefit from subject specialists offering experiences in science, music, physical education, modern languages, and outdoor learning. Specialist teachers provide interesting and motivating experiences. These are shared with families online. Examples include finding and exploring deer and fox prints outdoors and learning how to use apparatus in the gym.

- Practitioners observe children as they engage with the available activities. They share these moments with parents using an online application. Practitioners use mostly adult-led activities to support their assessment of children's progress. They should consider using more responsive, individualised observations of children as they play, focusing on the development of skills across learning. Practitioners track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and other curriculum areas. This is helping them identify where children may require additional support or challenge.

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.

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

- Senior leaders and practitioners support the wellbeing of children, families, and each other through the promotion of their values of friendship, love, and kindness. Their supportive relationships are underpinned by trust, respect and shared Jesuit values. These contribute significantly to the sense of community across the kindergarten. Practitioners are at the initial stages of making children aware of their rights. They should consider how this could be delivered in meaningful and relevant ways. Practitioners promote positive behaviour and support children to regulate their emotions. They should continue to help children be aware of their emotions and introduce strategies to resolve conflicts increasingly independently.
- Children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe and the importance of healthy choices. They confidently articulate the benefits of healthy food and exercise and enjoy contributing to assessing potential dangers in the outdoors. A few children are sensitively supported, with most very independent in routines including snack, lunch, and dressing for outdoors. Practitioners provide a relaxed lunch-time experience for children that supports their wellbeing.
- Children enjoy access to outdoor space and this contributes to their wellbeing. They particularly enjoy the challenge of the climbing wall and frame where they develop and apply a range of physical and social skills. Children visit the outdoor learning centre weekly to explore the natural world, enjoy energetic activity, fresh air and learn in a different space. Practitioners should continue to develop these experiences with a focus on challenging children and developing perseverance and resilience.
- Practitioners understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They have undertaken a range of professional learning to ensure they are equipped with up-to-date knowledge to help them in this important role. Practitioners have good knowledge of the needs of individual children. They work sensitively with parents and families, and where appropriate, other professionals, to ensure the care and learning needs of children are met. This helps remove potential barriers to learning and ensures children with additional support needs make progress. Where required, practitioners plan for the needs of individual children. In their new roles, senior leaders should ensure that they understand and fulfil all statutory duties relating to early learning and childcare.
- Practitioners promote equality and inclusion through how they treat children and each other. They value and celebrate diversity, including learning about cultures and celebrations relevant to families in the kindergarten. Practitioners should continue to promote children's awareness as global citizens, particularly their understanding of diversity out with their immediate experience. Practitioners should challenge any stereotypes or gender bias to ensure there are

no potential barriers to participation. They should ensure resources reflect the kindergarten community and interactions support children to view everyone as equal.

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

- Almost all children are making good progress in communication and language. They are confident and keen to talk to each other and to adults. The majority of children are confident in sharing thoughts and feelings at gather times, for example, daily reflection time and during 'show and tell'. Children enjoy creating their own stories through role play. A few initiate and enjoy opportunities to share books and stories with each other and with adults. Children are encouraged to say what they enjoy about texts and share favourite stories from home. Most children are making good progress in identifying environmental print. They make good use of mark-making opportunities indoors and out. Children could be developing and applying an increased range of skills through real life experiences and opportunities to use their skills in play contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are developing their awareness of number through play. Almost all children count confidently to 10, and a few older children enjoy exploring and using larger numbers. Children use a range of mathematical language as they compare, measure and sort. Children could experience a broader range of relevant learning in numeracy and mathematics to support them to develop understanding.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of hygiene as they help to prepare and eat food. Most children are independent in following routines, such as serving themselves and clearing their dishes at lunch time, and dressing for outdoors. Children are developing a range of fine and gross motor skills as they manipulate scissors, construction materials and engage in energetic play in the kindergarten garden.
- Children, including those who have barriers to their learning, are making good progress in their learning and development over time. Practitioners know children well as individuals. They work with families to support all children to achieve. They should now consider how all children could make increased progress because of their kindergarten experiences.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements through a range of approaches, including the 'achievement tree', stickers and celebration certificates. Children contribute to events such as representing the kindergarten as they compete in the Glasgow Music Festival. Practitioners should build on ways for children to contribute to the community

both locally and more widely, in creative and exciting ways. This should have a focus on children becoming responsible citizens and effective contributors.

- Senior leaders and practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children and families. They have created a supportive ethos that encourages equity for all. They should make more effective use of all available data and information to ensure equity across all aspects of the kindergarten. This includes information relating to cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. This will help plan support and interventions to ensure all children make the best progress of which they are capable.

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.