

Summarised inspection findings

Ceres Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

25 March 2025

Key contextual information

Ceres Primary School Nursery is in a separate building in the grounds of Ceres Primary School. It is situated within the small community of Ceres in the north-east of Fife. The setting has a small entrance hall, one large playroom and direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor play space. Currently 23 children attend the nursery, aged three to children not yet at primary school. The nursery operates from 9am- 3pm each day during term time. The headteacher is the named manager for the nursery. The principal teacher is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the nursery and is supported by a peripatetic nursery teacher four days every second week. Staffing consists of two full time and two part time early years officers.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community■ strategic planning for continuous improvement■ implementing improvement and change	

- Practitioners and children demonstrate the nursery values of kindness, courage, responsibility and respect very well in their interactions with each other. Practitioners implement successfully the school and nursery vision of being caring in a meaningful way. All practitioners have high standards and aspirations for themselves, all children and their families. They use these appropriately to inform their work and when engaging with each other. Children and parents fully respect and trust practitioners. Practitioners should continue to expand the range of areas for improvement that parents can help to shape.
- The headteacher, principal teacher and peripatetic nursery teacher provide effective leadership. They all play an active role in leadership of learning within the nursery. They guide and support practitioners who work very well as a team to provide high-quality learning and care. All practitioners enthusiastically take on leadership roles that support the nursery improvement priorities and they have strong commitment for continuous improvement. These include literacy development through music, outdoor learning, sustainability and links with the community. Practitioners should develop further children's leadership opportunities by offering an increased range of roles and responsibilities.
- Senior leaders value the commitment and creativity of practitioners. This encourages children's creativity and exploration. Senior leaders work very well with staff to promote continuous improvement through regular supportive input. All practitioners have visited other nurseries to share good practice and develop new learning. Practitioners use a range of approaches, including a cycle of focused meetings to support ongoing reflection and to improve the quality of children's experiences. They use local and national guidance as well as research to improve and change provision for children.
- Senior leaders implement a well-balanced quality assurance calendar which practitioners engage with very well. As a team, they are reflective and offer helpful suggestions on how to improve nursery practice. Senior leaders, working with practitioners, have a range of processes in place and promote a shared responsibility. This ensures their strategic planning is delivering

well-paced change, for example in improving planning and assessing children's progress. Senior leaders should now provide further opportunities for staff to moderate their assessment approaches across early level and with cluster nurseries.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- All practitioners provide varied and interesting experiences for children. They successfully create a welcoming family atmosphere and have built extremely positive relationships with children and parents. Almost all children are engaged in their play and practitioners support them well. Children are extremely curious and make decisions confidently about where they want to play. They access resources freely as they discover and investigate for extended periods of time.
- Practitioners offer support to children as they learn to express and understand their feelings. Almost all children co-operate well, share resources and are kind and caring towards one another. All practitioners follow agreed approaches to support children with the development of positive relationships. This is leading to children relating better with each other.
- Almost all practitioners make highly effective use of open-ended questions and explanations to extend and challenge children's thinking. They listen carefully to children's thoughts, ideas, and interests, and encourage them to extend their thinking. They encourage children to lead their learning well and to choose resources to enhance their play from the wide range on offer. Practitioners capture children's learning in their personal learning journals. Children access these frequently, talking about their learning and how much fun they had. Staff consider meaningfully and evaluate play spaces and add and remove learning experiences and resources where appropriate.
- Almost all practitioners make skilful observations of children at play and record these within children's individual journals. They have a clear focus on the skills children are developing which helps practitioners to identify relevant next steps in learning. Practitioners should continue to develop children's role in talking about their skills and learning. They should extend opportunities for children to share their learning journals with parents.
- Practitioners have developed well-considered approaches to plan for, assess and record children's progress. Children's thoughts, interests and developmental needs, underpin planning for learning. Practitioners plan sensitively, and on an individual basis, for children who require additional support with their learning and development. This is removing barriers to learning successfully and helping all children make positive, and in some cases, accelerated, progress.
- Practitioners set clear short-term targets for children based on their strengths and their specific needs. They work well with parents and other agencies to help children achieve these targets. As a result, practitioners meet children's needs very well both indoors and outdoors.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have developed a new planning format recently. They plan well over different timescales and are extremely responsive to children's interests. Practitioners

provide a skilful balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated experiences. They meet regularly with a distinct focus to discuss their observations and agree how to support and challenge children effectively.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide very strong nurturing attachment for all children. Children learn through play across a curriculum in a way that is child-centred and responsive. All children have a strong sense of ownership of the spaces. These spaces enable children to play and learn in a variety of ways that promote independence and skills for life. Further improving and refreshing the nursery environment, including the snack preparation area, will improve children's independence and experiences. Practitioners use local authority progression frameworks to plan children's learning for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners have embedded a focus on music and singing which is supporting children's literacy skills.
- Staff use national guidance to deliver curricular pathways which include exciting play experiences specifically outdoors and in the woods for children. Staff take particularly good account of children's interests when developing these to help ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Staff consider carefully how they develop children's skills in communication and language, mathematics and numeracy, curiosity and inquiry. They also reflect on, and are being successful in, using space very well within the nursery environment to promote children's skills in all curricular areas.
- Children become familiar with their local community through various and quality visits. These include walks and woodland visits where children learn about their local environment. Practitioners should continue to develop meaningful links to the community. This will help to develop children's knowledge and skills in relation to real-life contexts. Staff manage children's move into nursery well and have suitable arrangements in place to support children's transitions into P1. Senior leaders recognise that they need to undertake further work across early level to develop further a shared understanding of play for staff working at these stages.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have positive, open relationships with all families. Staff know families very well. Parents feel valued and are welcomed warmly into nursery. They are encouraged to join in 'stay and play' sessions. Parents appreciate these opportunities which support well their understanding of how to help their child at home and build on their learning in nursery. They appreciate the individual help provided to any child when needed. Practitioners keep parents well informed through daily conversations at drop off and pick up times.
- Practitioners share information well with parents. They focus strongly on children's learning and development during conversations at pick up times. This supports parents to become involved with different community partners which benefit children and families. Parents appreciate the information and guidance they receive which helps them to support their children.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Practitioners are very positive role models for children and place a strong emphasis on developing and supporting children's wellbeing. They support and value children as unique individuals. As a result, children have a strong sense of belonging. Children have high levels of support and encouragement. As a result, they are respectful of others. Most children negotiate successfully with one another and avoid unnecessary conflict. A few of the younger children continue to develop this skill.
- Children settle well into the playroom. They feel safe and secure in a relaxed, caring and homely environment. Children are at the centre of transitions when joining the nursery. In longer term transitions, practitioners work closely with families to best meet the needs of children. Parents appreciate the range of communication approaches including phone calls and online photos. They value the variety of family engagement opportunities planned and delivered throughout the year.
- All staff know their statutory requirements in relation to child protection and safeguarding. They have undertaken appropriate training and know what is expected of them. They are confident and highly skilled in identifying needs and using a wide range of strategies to meet well all children's additional needs.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality very well throughout the setting. They treat all children and families with respect and promote diverse cultures within the nursery, local community and beyond. Practitioners provide a wide range of valuable resources and displays for children which are relevant to their real-life experiences. This supports all children to understand better their individual family circumstances.
- Almost all children feel confident to engage with adults and share their views on their daily experiences. They suggest improvements to areas within the nursery by writing and drawing on comment walls. Children are beginning to develop the language of wellbeing. They use various resources to help them to describe their feelings and emotions. Practitioners ensure consistently and effectively that children's rights are valued and practiced however, children have yet to develop an understanding of their rights. Practitioners should continue to reinforce regularly aspects of wellbeing and rights in an age-appropriate way.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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 very good progress in early language and communication. Most children use a wide and interesting range of vocabulary to express themselves and engage in discussions. All children are learning, and benefitting from, signing to support communication. Children mark make in a range of contexts including using digital technology and numerous displays around the playroom. Children are able to recognise and write their own name. Almost all children are keen to hear stories and are confident in retelling stories and rhymes. They actively seek out adults to hear a story in the popular library area. A few children enjoy creating their own stories, which they share confidently. They are now ready for more in-depth exploration of texts.
- Most children make very good progress in developing their skills in early mathematics and numeracy. Practitioners focus on developing numeracy skilfully through play. As a result, most children are making very good progress in this area. Most children recognise numerals and count confidently to 10. They can recognise and copy simple patterns using digital learning resources. They use mathematical vocabulary confidently and in a range of contexts, such as when using measuring tapes and discussing size such as "not big enough." A few children are estimating, and most can describe and compare lengths while learning in the woods. Children explain choice, process and problem solving meaningfully while den building. They understand volume through their play using water and sand. Children are confident in using tally marks to record birds that visit their garden.
- Most children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Children benefit from daily emotional check-ins which helps them to name and understand emotions. They learn about making healthy choices at snack and lunch. Children benefit from a range of challenging opportunities to run, jump, climb and balance outdoors which develops their gross motor skills very well. They should now be encouraged to develop respect and responsibility for the care of toys and resources within their environment.
- Overall, children make very good progress in their learning. They make choices ably and develop a deep curiosity as they play. Children's achievements during learning and at home are celebrated with their peers. Practitioners use praise to encourage children in their learning and recognise their efforts. This is contributing to children becoming increasingly confident and independent as they talk about their play and learning.

- Children experience success, are developing confidence and are becoming responsible individuals because of their nursery experiences. Children make effective contributions to the local community and are acquiring and applying a range of skills.

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.