

Summarised inspection findings

Carron Primary School Nursery Class

Falkirk Council

22 August 2023

Key contextual information

Carron Primary School Nursery Class is located within a purpose-built space located in the grounds of the school. The nursery class moved to this current space in 2021. The team of three staff increased to 16 including practitioners and support assistants. The setting provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC). Children attend from the age of three until they start primary school. The current roll is 63 children.

The deputy headteacher has delegated responsibility for the leadership and quality assurance of the nursery. The Senior Early Years Officer (SEYO) provides day-to-day management and leadership of the team. The nursery has one main playroom, a cloakroom area and direct access to a spacious outdoor area. Children also access additional spaces within the grounds of the school such as the school garden and a forest area.

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

- The skilled and experienced deputy headteacher and SEYO work as a collaborative and effective leadership team. Together, they lead, support, and encourage practitioners well to improve their work. Senior leaders and practitioners have a deep understanding of children, families, and their wider community. All practitioners prioritise relationships with children and families. This rightly informs all aspects of their work.
- The vision for the whole school sets out aspirations for 'achieving with positive relationships and a caring heart.' Senior leaders have engaged children, staff, and parents to personalise this vision and ensure it is relevant and meaningful for the nursery. Children understand and have ownership of their nursery rules. Staff and children frequently emphasise kindness and responsibility as they play together. Senior leaders worked with parents and children to adapt the language of values. This ensures that the values are meaningful to children, parents, and all staff. Senior leaders have rightly identified the need to involve new families in the process of refreshing their vision as new children join the setting. This should ensure that everyone continues to share a common purpose.
- Senior leaders initiate, influence, and evaluate improvements very well. Practitioners and support staff are hardworking, thoughtful, and reflective. Staff provide very good support to one another to improve the quality of their work. This means practice quickly responds to what staff have identified as important for children. Practitioners meet daily to review and plan together. Staff communicate effectively to share important information about children's needs, interests and progress at regular planning, progress and team meetings. Prompt action ensures spaces and experiences are improved. These positive changes have increased opportunities for children to solve problems, develop their gross and fine motor skills, and develop further their creativity skills.

- Staff are curious, solution focused and open to innovative ideas as they undertake relevant professional learning and additional qualifications. They thoughtfully apply relevant ideas from courses, learning from visits to other settings and advice from visiting specialists. This enhances and improves the high quality of their work. Staff use professional learning well to improve the quality of observations of children’s learning. They make significant improvements to the outdoor space and introduce new expressive arts and sensory experiences. Practitioners should continue to develop their skills and confidence in measuring the impact of improvements on children’s learning.
- Senior leaders coordinate a clear, well organised process for self-evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance. Practitioners use national and local authority guidance well to inform self-evaluation, develop further planning approaches and create stimulating learning environments. As a result, children have access to a wider range of experiences that invite and support them to apply their skills. Senior leaders should continue to build on this positive work with their planned focus on the quality of staff interactions. This will support consistency across the team.

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, children, and families have nurturing, respectful and positive relationships. Children are valued as individuals and communicate their needs and preferences to staff. Practitioners respond promptly to children's interests and use these to inform interactions. Secure attachments are evident between children and practitioners. Most children settle quickly and are eager to start their play.
- Children are enthusiastic and inspired to learn, particularly in the interesting outdoor areas. Most practitioners are observant and responsive across the playroom and outdoors. Staff increasingly support children to lead their own learning. Most children frequently challenge themselves to solve problems, explore their senses and try out ideas using open ended materials. A few children would benefit from further opportunities to explore specific interests in more depth. A few children are absorbed for extended periods as they apply their skills and represent their ideas in the clay and woodwork areas. All practitioners should continue to build on children's prior learning. They should challenge children to apply their skills in new contexts in the playroom and during outings in the local area.
- All staff interact well with children in a supportive, interested way. Practitioners ask open-ended questions and listen attentively to children. Across the nursery, children are very confident in routines. Most children concentrate well on learning throughout most of their day. A few children would benefit from more challenge in their learning. Practitioners frequently use songs, rhyme, and gestures effectively to sustain most children's participation. The team should reflect on the quality of experience for children in group activities at the end of the session.
- Practitioners regularly record information about children's experiences and note progress in learning journals, floorbooks and planning records. Practitioners should continue to focus on the specific skills being assessed and how this informs support for children to achieve next steps. Children and parents enjoy and value online learning journals. Practitioners should continue to increase the use of online journals by children throughout the session. This will ensure children are actively involved in documenting, celebrating, and reflecting on their progress.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have detailed information about children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. The team promptly identify children who require additional support in their learning. Senior leaders and practitioners act upon their in-depth knowledge of children, families, and their needs effectively. Records of partnership working with families, agencies, and professionals such as speech and language therapists are up to date and detailed. Practitioners implement specific strategies to work with children to support their specific needs. The team should continue to develop their confidence about the purpose of all records for children who have additional agreed targets and support strategies.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners offer a curriculum that is play based and responsive to children's interests and needs. The team offer a wide variety of experiences across different areas of learning. Children influence and direct spaces and experiences. Their needs and interests drive learning. Planning of spaces, experiences and interactions include careful attention to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The curriculum includes frequent opportunities for children to explore a range of expressive arts including music and dance.
- Practitioners use national practice guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020) and their new curriculum rationale well to direct their practice. The team have rightly identified that they are ready to increase the profile of a few areas of the curriculum, for example in digital learning. Practitioners should continue to plan for, and respond to, opportunities for children to apply and develop further their skills in a progressive way.
- Practitioners plan initial, personalised transitions into the nursery in partnership with families very well. The team are sensitive to the needs and preferences of individual children. Practitioners and parents form close, trusting relationships supported by initial home visits. Keyworkers and senior leaders gather a good range of information on children's wellbeing, health, and previous experiences through these important visits. This supports continued open and honest dialogue about children. Practitioners implement a well-planned programme of activities to support children as they transition into primary school. They provide additional sessions and activities to support a few children who need additional support during periods of transition.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are welcomed warmly at the beginning and end of the session. There is a strong sense of community within the nursery built upon positive relationships. Practitioners should continue to gather and act on feedback from parents and children to inform their routines.
- Practitioners support and encourage families to join nursery activities. These include 'stay and play' and sessions to support children's early literacy. A few volunteers share their skills in the new woodwork area and plant flowers with children. The team should continue to work with parents to provide a wider range of groups and opportunities to volunteer. Practitioners and parents should continue to work together to understand and celebrate the positive impact of this work.
- Practitioners use a range of approaches to share information and consult with parents. Practitioners share children's experiences through children's online journals and daily conversations. Staff also keep parents informed using noticeboards, online platforms, and social media. Parents are enthusiastic about children's online learning and share learning from home.
- Parents receive information regularly on children's learning and development. A few parents would be interested in more detailed information about children's learning at the end of the day.

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

- Senior leaders and practitioners prioritise the wellbeing of children and families in all aspects of their work. Practitioners demonstrate the nursery promise of 'children are at the heart of our nursery'. Staff role model nursery values in respectful interactions with children. This supports children to feel safe and secure. The nursery has a happy, relaxed, and welcoming atmosphere.
- Practitioners use a variety of resources well to support children to explore and recognise a range of feelings and emotions. Most children can talk about how they feel as they explore props and books. Most children play well on their own, or with their friends. Practitioners respond sensitively to occasions when children need more support to resolve a difficulty. Senior leaders and practitioners should link this positive approach to planned work to explore children's rights in more depth.
- Children understand how to keep themselves safe as they use tools to hammer nails. Most children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They develop their gross motor skills well in the gym and forest area. A few practitioners use the language of the wellbeing indicators during relevant experiences and routines. Practitioners should continue to support children to gain an awareness of the full range of wellbeing indicators through routines and real-life contexts. The team use the national wellbeing indicators effectively to support discussions at meetings with parents. This helps staff to understand children's wellbeing needs.
- Children benefit from a calm and sociable lunchtime at the indoor and outdoor areas. They are independent, and resourceful as they collect their own lunch and clear away their plates. Staff support children well to use cutlery and develop their language and social skills during mealtimes. Practitioners support children to follow simple recipes to bake and cook. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to grow, harvest, and prepare their own food. This will provide a wider range of opportunities for children to talk and learn about a wider range of healthy foods and ways to keep their bodies healthy.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are clear about their statutory duties. They understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and keeping them safe. Each child has an up-to-date personal plan, which outlines specific care and welfare needs. Practitioners work in partnership with parents and other partners to review and update these plans regularly. Practitioners have recently updated risk assessments for the outdoor area. Practitioners support children who require additional help with their learning well. Practitioners rightly recognise that a few children require increased support to follow routines. Staff are aware that a few children would benefit from an increased focus on the use of visual cues. This will support all children to communicate their choices and follow instructions.

- Practitioners value and include all children as individuals. Practitioners provide a few experiences and resources to develop children’s awareness of cultural diversity. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should continue to build on this practice to provide a wider range of experiences and resources to reflect the diversity of children’s lives.

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

- Most children are making very good progress in early language and communication, early mathematics and health and wellbeing.
- Almost all children communicate very effectively with practitioners and their friends. Children frequently join in with familiar songs. A few children enjoy playing with language as they change the words of familiar rhymes. Children show a keen interest in mark making with most writing their own name and familiar letters. Most children demonstrate a high level of skill as they represent their ideas through imaginative use of creative materials such as clay. Most children seek out fiction and non-fiction books in their play. Most children listen attentively to stories and enjoy discussing characters and authors. A few children would benefit from increased opportunities to create and document their own stories and increased opportunities to write for a purpose.
- Children make very good use of resources to explore measure and length in the woodwork and sewing areas. Children enjoy exploring volume in water play. Almost all children develop a very good awareness of shape, symmetry, and length as they select and sort blocks to build complex models in the large well-resourced construction areas. Children use mathematical language with understanding as they follow instructions to make playdough independently. Children frequently sort, count beyond ten and identify numerals in their play with open ended resources. A few children would benefit from more challenging opportunities to develop further their skills in numeracy and mathematics.
- Almost all children develop further their understanding of the importance of healthy eating as they discuss suggestions for the snack menu or make shortbread. Most children have well developed fine motor skills as they confidently pour water and milk during their sociable lunch experience. Children develop gross motor skills well as they balance and jump when playing outdoors. Snack and lunch helpers are successful learners who are proud of their important role. Practitioners should continue to increase leadership roles for all children.
- Staff value and respect all children and their families equally. The nursery has an inclusive ethos. Practitioners celebrate children's achievements by displaying them in the cloakroom area and in online journals. Staff recognise they now need to use children's achievements to inform planning for next steps in children's learning.

- Senior leaders meet with practitioners termly to monitor and document children's progress. Practitioners identify appropriate next steps for children with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners record when children begin to explore or master a skill using a local authority tracker. The team should continue to use this tracking information to inform all aspects of their practice.

- Practitioners promote fairness and mutual respect across all aspects of their work. The team use their knowledge of children's individual needs to reduce potential barriers to learning. Practitioners and senior leaders work in very effective partnerships with professionals to ensure equity for all children and families. Senior leaders use data about children's attendance well to anticipate and respond to children's needs. Children participate in thoughtfully planned small group activities, carefully targeted to those who need additional support. Support assistants offer engaging activities to improve children's communication and social skills. Staff should continue to measure and assess the impact of targeted interventions on children's progress. Senior leaders should continue to build the skills of the whole team in using data to evaluate and tailor future interventions.

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.