

Summarised inspection findings

Bantaskin Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class

Falkirk Council

11 February 2025

Key contextual information

Bantaskin Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Nursery is based within Bantaskin Primary School. The nursery comprises of a large playroom and a sensory space, with children having free flow access to outdoor play areas. Children also access facilities within the school such as a gym hall, library, and kitchen. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 40 children and is open from 09.00 am until 3.00 pm Monday to Friday. Currently 33 children attend during term time and access full day sessions. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery and is the named manager. The deputy headteacher has ongoing management responsibility for the nursery. The senior early years officer (SEYO) has responsibility for day-to-day management of the nursery. The wider team includes six early years officers, two early learning centre assistants and a support for learning assistant. Over the past year there has been a significant change in staffing.

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

- Senior leaders and practitioners have recently revisited and agreed the shared vision, values and aims of the setting with families. They share these widely with children through displays. Practitioners are supporting children to become more familiar with the language of the values within a meaningful context. Practitioners should continue to share the vision, values and aims with the children in a relevant and developmentally appropriate way. This will ensure they become more fully embedded.
- The deputy headteacher is well known to children and families. She meets with the early years team regularly and engages in professional dialogue providing very good support. As a result, the nursery team feel valued, empowered, and included in the life of the school. Aled by the deputy head, the nursery team work very well together. They are highly motivated and provide a welcoming and inclusive ethos for children and families. As a team, they know their community very well and are committed to do their best for children and families.
- Practitioners undertake a variety of professional learning activities to support children's progress. This includes a recent focus on sign language to aid communication with a few children. The deputy head carries out annual professional reviews with practitioners. Together they identify training needs linking to the improvement plan and their own professional development. Practitioners are reflective and have various leadership roles across the nursery. These include, for example, communication and children's rights champions. Practitioners lead and confidently take forward improvements. They should now consider how they can measure the positive impact of these improvements on children's learning.
- Children are confident as they lead their learning. They have a few leadership responsibilities, including setting up for snack. A few children are now ready to take on more leadership roles, for example, by linking with pupil groups in the primary stages.

- Senior leaders and practitioners know the overall strengths and areas of development for the nursery. They make good use of a wide range of self-evaluation processes and local and national practice guidance. This supports them to identify what they do well and what they have to do to develop further. For example, they have identified improvement priorities in mathematical language development and a communication rich environment. Moving forward, senior leaders and practitioners should continue to ensure that they have a systematic approach to quality assurance. They should measure the impact of changes across the nursery. This will help the practitioners to clearly evidence the differences changes and improvements are making to children's experiences and outcomes. They are well placed to now involve children and families more in the improvement planning process.

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 provide a very nurturing, calm and positive learning environment which supports children to feel valued, safe, and secure. Most children are happy and motivated as they learn through play. A few children would benefit from on-going support to manage their emotions and negotiate relationships.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals. This helps children to feel confident as they explore their learning indoors and outdoors. The majority of children would benefit from greater opportunities to plan their own learning. This should enhance their contribution and participation within the environment.
- Most children are observed in play which sustains interest and extends their thinking well. Practitioners should continue to develop the environment for learning, indoors and outdoors. This will ensure all children experience learning which motivates and challenges them at the right level. This will help them to build on their previous learning in a meaningful way.
- All practitioners interact sensitively with all children in a supportive way. The majority use commentary and questioning skilfully to encourage children to process their thinking and arrive at solutions for themselves. In addition, this unhurried approach supports children to develop skills of independence and encourages perseverance in relation to self-help skills. A few children would benefit from increased interactions with adults as they move between learning spaces. Practitioners should continue to ensure there is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning.
- Practitioners recognise the role of the family in developing their child's learning. Children demonstrate clear ownership and are proud of their learning journals. These continue to provoke engaging conversations within and beyond the setting. For example, they support children to share their learning with families. This is helping staff to understand children as learners and be more confident in identifying next steps in learning.
- Practitioners confidently use information from children's learning journals to complete progress trackers. The deputy headteacher has correctly identified the need to continue to gather and interpret meaningful assessment data as a staff team. This should ensure that all children are consistently experiencing the right level of challenge and support in learning.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning using the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence and local authority guidance. They are responsive to children's interests, using these to plan well for intended learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a wide range of play-based experiences across the curriculum. They focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, as supported by the introduction of a progressive framework provided by the local authority. This enables children to build on their prior learning. Practitioners should make greater use of digital technology to enhance learning and provide more challenge for children.
- Practitioners have worked well to raise awareness of children's rights in an appropriate and relatable way. The majority of children are beginning to associate their right to stay safe, within the nursery environment and experiences.
- Senior Leaders plan nursery transitions in a very individualised way. They create a planned programme of experiences which includes home visits prior to starting in nursery. These experiences are sensitive to the needs of individual children and their families as they begin nursery. As a result, children settle quickly to play and learn. The senior leadership team plan a comprehensive programme to ensure transitions are successful as children move onto primary school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are encouraged and welcomed to access and contribute to their child's 'Magic Moment' books where learning and achievements are evidenced. Staff implement a staggered drop off and pick up which enables staff and parents to meet informally to discuss progress and share information about children. Where appropriate, practitioners meet with parents to discuss aspects of children's learning and development. This is well documented showing clear outcomes for children. This ensures a partnership approach to supporting children.
- All practitioners value and respect parents as partners. Staff's close, trusting relationships with parents are a strength of the setting. Practitioners are exploring further ways to involve parents. They are keen to increase parental participation and engagement through a programme of family learning events. Staff use well existing opportunities such as 'Family Breakfasts' as a method to gather views on the improvement priorities of the setting. Practitioners make full use of the local community to plan rich learning experiences. This includes, for example, weekly trips chosen by children to the park, town and local landmarks, which parents are encouraged to be involved in.

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

- Practitioners have strong and nurturing relationships with children and families. They are positive role models and support children to become confident individuals. Practitioners encourage children to express themselves. They take time to understand and use a range of strategies and resources to support children's emotional regulation. As a result, children know that they are valued and listened to.
- Children are actively encouraged to be involved in decision making around many aspects of the nursery. This includes, for example, the development of the environment and choosing resources. As a result, children have a sense of belonging and ownership. The environment makes visible children's rights and practitioners support children effectively to develop an understanding of their rights. This will become embedded as the focus on rights-based learning with children continues to develop.
- Children participate in a relaxed lunch routine within the playroom. Practitioners sit with children and engage in calm, unhurried conversation. This allows children the opportunity to enjoy their food in a familiar environment. Children develop a wide range of skills through, for example, helping to set up for lunch. They are becoming increasingly independent as they self-select their food and pour their milk and water.
- All practitioners are confident in their knowledge of the statutory requirements in relation to child protection and safeguarding. They understand fully what is expected of them and they have undertaken relevant training. They have a good understanding of children's care needs and work very closely with parents to meet them. Practitioners have a clear awareness of children who may require support with learning. They work alongside parents to create appropriate and detailed personal care plans for all children. Practitioners promptly seek advice from partner agencies where necessary. They provide effective support, plan targets and implement strategies to help children develop and to meet children's individual needs well.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equality throughout the setting. They treat all children and families with respect. The nurturing and inclusive environment celebrates and makes visible the varying cultures within the local community and beyond. As a result, children are gaining a better understanding of the diverse nature of family and life.

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 make good progress in communication and early language. A few learners make very good progress. This is evident in their understanding of texts, and in their early writing skills. These children are now ready to apply these skills as authors and illustrators of their own learning. Most children enjoy regular, supported opportunities to engage with stories in their play. Practitioners use rich language to inspire children's curiosity whilst developing listening skills. Children would benefit from increased opportunities for singing.
- Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few learners make very good progress. These learners recognise three-digit numbers, demonstrate an understanding of counting within 20, and complete simple addition and subtraction, including the ability to self-correct any mistakes. Children benefit from opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge specifically when engaged in woodwork and in the block play area. Most children use appropriate mathematical language within their play, with a few children beginning to plan their construction models using two-dimensional representation. The majority of learners would benefit from further opportunities to develop a broader understanding of early mathematics through real-life contexts, indoors and outside.
- Practitioners have a strong focus on supporting children's health and wellbeing development. All children develop their gross and fine motor skills in a range of experiences, such as, gym hall games, cycling and balancing. Consequently, they make good progress. Children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to explore and learning in their local community. This is enabling them to understand their place in the community and extend learning.
- Children are making good progress in their learning. The majority of learners have the capacity to make even greater progress. To strengthen the impact of the time which children spend in the setting, practitioners need to ensure children's learning targets are specific, measurable, and consistent. This will support children to meaningfully build on their prior learning. Senior leaders and practitioners should engage in further analysis of attainment across the setting. They should identify trends over time, as well as planning effective interventions for individuals who require additional support or challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners have a clear understanding of the needs of children, families and the local community. They provide support to families sensitively through a range of approaches, for example, providing pre-loved clothing.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.