

Summarised inspection findings

Fernhill School Nursery Class

Independent

5 March 2024

Key contextual information

Fernhill School Nursery is part of Fernhill School, an independent Roman Catholic school, which is situated in Rutherglen. Children attend from Fernhill and surrounding areas. The nursery is accommodated in a separate building on the school campus. Children benefit from access to extensive woodland and sports facilities in the school campus.

The nursery is registered for 37 children to attend at any time, and at the time of the inspection there were 31 children on the roll. Children can attend through funded places in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, between 8.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. The nursery provides very flexible placements for children during these hours, as well as over 38 or 47 weeks per annum.

There have been two new practitioners and significant changes to the nursery leadership team in the last six months. There is ongoing recruitment for a vacant practitioner post.

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 the new practitioner team are developing their vision for the continued development of the setting. The school values of courage, compassion, confidence, and commitment, and the mission statement, “where little seeds grow”, underpin the work of the nursery. Practitioners could use the values more fully, in accessible and relevant ways, to help children develop a deeper understanding of them. It is timely for staff to revisit the vision, values and aims to ensure they reflect fully the aspirations of current children and families and the new practitioner team. Practitioners have developed supportive relationships with each other in a short time. This creates a cohesive, considerate, and hardworking team. They have a strong collective commitment to delivering the highest quality early learning and childcare. They are well placed to realise this.
- Practitioners are very professional and work collaboratively to get it right for all children. They appreciate and benefit from the support and guidance offered by South Lanarkshire Council officers. This includes professional learning opportunities, networks and support from officers in identifying improvement priorities. Practitioners are very reflective, and this supports the development of their practice. They have recently made changes to improve how children access playrooms and have made adaptations to daily routines. These well-judged developments have resulted in improved outcomes for children. The new team are ready for further collective professional learning and practitioner enquiry to develop further their practice. This will help them to best meet the needs of all children at Fernhill Nursery.
- Senior leaders are developing leadership at all levels and have established shared responsibilities across the new team. All practitioners are responsible for taking forward improvements in areas they have existing skills or are of interest to them. Practitioners are

enthusiastic about working in this way. They feel this is increasing their capacity for improvement and the pace of change. Senior leaders should continue with plans to provide opportunities for practitioners to look outwards to other settings. As a new team, this will help them to identify future developments. Children benefit from and enjoy leadership responsibilities, including as snack and lunch helpers. They are ready to be more involved in leading and contributing to improvements in their nursery.

- The nursery team have the success, achievement, and high-quality care and early learning for children as their shared purpose. Practitioners are developing how they contribute to the process of change. Senior leaders have created an improvement plan with relevant and well-considered priorities for improvement. These priorities are clear, measurable and are making a difference to the quality of children's experiences. Practitioners are using formal self-evaluation tools with increasing confidence to reflect on the quality of provision. This is helping to identify priorities that reflect the shared agenda for continued improvement. A next step is for the nursery team also help them monitor and evaluate with more rigour the impact of changes they make.

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

- Adults' relationships with children are consistently very nurturing and caring. Practitioners respond to children in a calm and sensitive manner. As a result, children feel valued, safe, and secure. Practitioners have created an ethos that places importance on respecting children as individuals, demonstrating their commitment to children's rights.
- Practitioners are developing spaces, and increasingly experiences, that support children's learning. They have significantly improved the outdoor area and children now have free-flow access across both playrooms and outdoors for most of the day. As a result, children make choices about where and what they learn. Building on this, practitioners should continue with their plans to continue to develop spaces and resources that reflect their refreshed approaches to supporting children's learning. They should continue to develop ways to nurture the promotion of curiosity, creativity and inquiry and focus less on planning activities. This will support children, at all stages of development, to extend and become absorbed in their play and increasingly lead their own learning.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are responsive and loving. They listen carefully to children, respecting their views. Practitioners should continue to develop consistent approaches to how they use questioning to support children to follow their interests and deepen their individual learning. Building on existing approaches, practitioners are developing more creative use of digital technologies to enhance and support learning.
- Practitioners know children well as learners and they make observations of children as they play and learn. This helps them identify what children know and can do, and what they need to learn next. Practitioners should continue to develop their observations to have a clear focus on the significant learning of individuals across the breadth of the curriculum. All children have online learning journals that document their learning well. Families have access to these and are encouraged to contribute learning that happens at home.
- Working as a new team, practitioners are refreshing the nursery's approaches to planning, assessing and recording children's progress. Practitioners use floor books and mind maps to involve children in planning for and talking about their learning. They also support children in a very personalised way to meet individual needs. They should further build on this approach to ensure that all opportunities for learning are maximised. Practitioners monitor children's progress at key points across the year. This helps them identify where children may benefit from additional support or challenge in their learning.

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

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

- Ensuring the wellbeing of individual children, families and each other is a priority for practitioners. They demonstrate a high level of care, love, and respect for children. This contributes significantly to the family-like ethos of the setting. Relationships between practitioners and children and their families are based on mutual respect, honesty and trust. Practitioners are positive role models for children. They promote positive behaviour and encourage children to show consideration for others and to self-regulate their emotions. Practitioners should continue to support children to express how they feel and to resolve conflicts increasingly independently, using shared vocabulary and creative strategies.
- The very positive ethos and sense of community supports children to feel included and nurtured. Children talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and ways they can be responsible and achieve. Children would benefit from participating in a wider range of experiences that allow them to develop and apply skills in a range of contexts, for example risk assessing their environments. This will help build and reinforce children's self-esteem and confidence.
- Children enjoy the significantly increased free access to outdoor space. This is helping them to benefit from fresh air and energetic activity, as they develop a range of physical skills. Practitioners should progress their exciting plans to maximise the benefits of the school grounds and beyond. This will help to foster the development of a range of skills, curiosity, and children's sense of wellbeing.
- Children are aware of healthy food choices that are appropriate to their dietary needs and requirements. They are increasingly independent in routines such as snack and lunch where they serve themselves. Practitioners encourage table manners and respect of others by eating with the children. Children are capable of taking on even more responsibilities in routines at lunch times.
- All practitioners have a sound understanding of their statutory duties and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They are sensitive to the needs of individual children and work with families, and where appropriate, other professionals, to ensure the individual care and learning needs of children are met. This promotes a partnership approach to meeting needs and successfully removes children's potential barriers to learning.
- Practitioners value and celebrate diversity and support children to be aware of others that may be different to them. Where children may face challenges in their learning, practitioners put appropriate strategies in place to improve children's progress. These strategies can be short or longer term and are carefully monitored to ensure they are effective and improving the progress children make.

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 making good progress in early language and communication as a result of their nursery experiences. They listen well to adults and most children enjoy stories read to them. Children are familiar with a range of texts, including traditional tales. Most children use a range of vocabulary to share their ideas and would benefit from increased challenge to extend this further. Recently, children have been enjoying taking part in 'show and tell' activities. Through this, they are beginning to develop skills in presenting to an audience and asking questions to further their understanding. They enjoy clapping out rhythms and a few children recognise simple phonics. A few children show particular interest in creating their own stories through their detailed drawings and adult scribing. Children could be developing and applying an increased range of skills in mark making and early writing through real life experiences.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children are developing their awareness of number through play. They count in context and a few children enjoy exploring and using larger numbers. Children use of range of mathematical language in context to compare, measure and sort. They are developing their awareness of time through exploring timers and analogue clocks. Children could be supported to develop and apply their understanding through a broader range of experiences in numeracy and mathematics. This could include number, money and measure and shape, position, and movement.
- Children make good progress in health and wellbeing. They are independent in routines, including snack and lunch and dressing for outdoors. Children are developing a range of fine and gross motor skills as they explore the natural environment and energetic play in the nursery garden. They have a good understanding of the importance of hygiene and safety using tools as they help to prepare and eat food. Children are developing resilience as they learn from 'marvellous mistakes' which provides them with coping strategies and helps encourage perseverance.
- Children, including those who have potential barriers to their learning, are making good progress in their learning and development over time. They are becoming confident individuals who have positive attitudes to learning. Children's individual needs are well supported through interventions and interactions, and as a result, a few make increased progress over time. Most children could be challenged more to build on what they already know and can do. This will support all children to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements from nursery and home through a range of approaches. They contribute to whole-school events, including health week and harvest festival. As they collect for the local food bank with their families, they are learning about how the needs of others may differ from their own. Practitioners should continue to develop ways for children to contribute to the school and wider community as citizens of 21st century Scotland.
- Practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children and their families. They work sensitively to provide an inclusive ethos that promotes equity. Practitioners, working with senior leaders, could make increased use of all available data and information, including that relating to socio-economic backgrounds. This will help staff to plan support and interventions to ensure all children make the very best progress.

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.