

Summarised inspection findings

St Andrews Nursery

Fife Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

St Andrews Nursery is a standalone nursery attached to Greyfriars Primary School in St Andrews. It is open 52 weeks a year. St Andrews Nursery was previously a free-standing nursery but is now aligned to Westfield Family Nurture Centre in Cupar, one of seven family nurture centres in Fife. The senior leadership team leads both Westfield Family Nurture Centre and St Andrews Nursery. The team consists of a shared headteacher, a shared deputy head of centre and a shared principal teacher. The headteacher and principal teacher are very recently in post. The rest of the nursery team consists of two senior early years officers, one senior early years family worker, five full time early years officers, six part-time early years officers, one pupil support assistant and one clerical assistant. There are 47 children attending the nursery, which includes seven children who are under three.

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 senior leadership and practitioners are working closely with parents, children and visiting professionals in reviewing the nursery's vision, values and aims. This ensures that the vision, values and aims reflect the uniqueness of the nursery and are meaningful to all. The focus should continue to be on ensuring the vision, values and aims is child friendly so that children can demonstrate the values and make them live in the nursery.
- In the short time the senior leadership team have been in place, they have made significant positive changes in the nursery. For example, improving the environment using the principles of Realising the Ambition (2020) (RtA). The senior leadership team and practitioners should continue to embed further the principles of RtA. In doing so, the team should build on what is working well in terms of interactions and spaces. They should also increase their focus on the experiences they provide, using the guidance as support.
- The senior leadership teams' strategic planning for continuous improvement is robust and builds appropriately on self-evaluation activities. They have outlined relevant key priorities to improve further children's learning such as practitioner's observations, planning processes and parental involvement in the nursery. The senior leadership team support practitioners well and ensure the improvements in the nursery are developed at an appropriate pace which allows the changes to embed. This motivates practitioners to improve the learning experiences for all children in the nursery. As a result, children have positive early learning and childcare experiences in a stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- The senior leadership team are building a culture of reflection and collegiate professional learning within the setting. Practitioners are committed to improving their practice and supporting each other. The senior leadership team support and encourage practitioners to take part in professional learning and pursue further qualifications. They should continue with plans, post COVID, for practitioners to visit other settings to learn and share practice. Practitioners

speak enthusiastically about their leadership roles and the difference they are making to parental engagement and approaches to storytelling. They work hard to build their knowledge to enable them to undertake their leadership roles through research and targeted professional learning. Having a practitioner from each of the three playrooms working together on a shared area is improving both the sustainability of these roles and collegiate responsibility for change. The senior leadership team should develop opportunities for children to undertake leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the setting. This will further improve children's voice in the nursery.

- The senior leadership team currently engage in informal monitoring of practice through focused conversations between themselves and practitioners. This is a useful process and valued by practitioners. However, more formal monitoring and evaluation with recorded identified action points now need to take place. This will enable the senior leadership team to support practitioners to look more critically at their practice. The senior leadership team and practitioners use a range of approaches to gather the views of children and their families such as questionnaires and establishing a parent forum. They should continue with this and reflect on other ways they can improve the voice of children and parents in the improvement journey.

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

Children aged under three years

- Toddlers enjoy caring, nurturing and positive relationships with adults who care for them well. Space in the indoors and outdoors areas is carefully planned to motivate and engage children's interests. Children access resources independently and lead aspects of their own play. Sensitive interactions support children to transition well from home to the playroom. Children and their families are welcomed into the nursery. This helps children to settle and feel relaxed.

Children aged three to starting school

- Children benefit from very nurturing and respectful relationships with practitioners. This caring ethos supports children to learn and develop very well in their play. Recent changes to the environment focused on making more effective use of the indoor and outdoor space. As a result of these recent improvements, children engage in free flow play throughout the playroom across a range of exciting spaces. Resources are accessible and inviting, taking into account children's stage of development. The well-resourced and well-planned areas successfully promote children's independence and interests.
- Practitioners in the setting demonstrate kindness in all their interactions with children. This helps children develop confidence and builds their self-esteem. Their knowledge of child development and early learning pedagogy is beginning to feature more consistently in practice. Practitioners communicate well with children to ensure that children understand why and how to carry out certain activities which promote their knowledge and skills. Carefully considered questioning extends children's learning well.
- Almost all children engage in learning as they choose from the resources available. Children make choices about how the playroom is set up and what they want to learn. Free flow access to outdoor learning is encouraged. The well-developed areas within the outdoor and indoor play space provides opportunities to develop children's curiosity, creativity, resilience and independence as they explore the environment.
- Practitioners plan learning well taking account of the early level outcomes and experiences in Curriculum for Excellence and child initiated plans. They observe children's learning and record their progress through the curriculum within learning journals. Parents are able to access their children's achievements on a digital platform.
- Individual children's learning profiles contain a wide range of relevant assessment data. Practitioners should continue as planned to improve when and how assessment information informs interventions and next steps in learning. Practitioners should also continue to show children's significant achievements and have a clear manageable process that enables both children and parents to reflect on learning.

- Practitioners organise groups of children using a key worker system. This approach ensures that an adult who knows them well carefully monitors children's progress. Now that children use a free flow approach to learning there is a need to ensure that all adults interacting with the children contribute to the assessment information for children across the setting.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The nursery team should continue to review the curriculum learning and development pathways to ensure it matches the stages of development of the children. They promote strong nurturing relationships and support children to explore and develop their skills well. Practitioners use experiences and outcomes in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing from Curriculum for Excellence to plan for children's learning. A variety of digital technologies supports their learning to improve their fine motor skills, literacy and numeracy.
- Children enjoy their learning and experiences when carrying out science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities (STEM). Practitioners should continue to focus on STEM to build on what the children already know. They use the outdoor environment, including the woodlands and beach well to expand children's learning experience. Practitioners should also continue with plans to use the local community to enrich learning experiences for children.
- Practitioners and family support workers manage transitions to nursery for children from home with care and sensitivity. They take time to listen to any wellbeing concerns parents wish to share. Practitioners support children well as they move to primary school. They should continue with their plans to collaborate with teachers at early level in the school to provide effective continuity and progression in learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- One of the key priorities for the nursery is to improve parental engagement. Parents complete questionnaires to gather their views on the running of the nursery including the best way to communicate. After the pandemic, the family support workers are now re-starting sessions in person such as baby massage, Bookbug, cup and chat sessions and art classes. Parents enjoy and develop skills from these sessions. Parents are also enjoying the 'Stay and Play' sessions, which offer them opportunities to spend time in the nursery, allowing them to observe how their children learn in the nursery.
- Parents are extremely positive about the support they receive from the nursery team including the family support workers. Practitioners have established positive trusting relationships and effective communication with parents. Parents learn about their children's experiences and progress in learning in a variety of ways. These include useful informal and formal chats, newsletters, social media and children's individual learning journals. Practitioners should continue to encourage the parents to attend the newly developed parent's forum.

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

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

- The nursery has a welcoming ethos and children are kind and caring towards each other. Older children provide support for younger children naturally. Strong, caring relationships between practitioners and children are evident and the wellbeing of children is paramount. These relationships impact positively on children's wellbeing. All children are valued as individuals with their own personalities and needs. The nursery team treat children and families with respect. The senior leadership team also focuses on the importance of the wellbeing of practitioners. They have developed a framework for practitioners who require support with wellbeing concerns. Together, this nurturing and caring approach within the nursery helps to develop a strong sense of community.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They clearly demonstrate this through the experiences and relationships with families and partners. Practitioners should continue to build on their practice to support children and parents to develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators in meaningful ways. They should also continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by promoting the articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. They ask the children what resources they want to play with and ask their views on the running of the nursery.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. Parents speak very positively of their relationship with the nursery team and family support workers. This allows practitioners to provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and their families at an early stage. All the nursery team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe, and meeting their care needs. The nursery team have regular review meetings, involving parents, to discuss the wellbeing needs of children. Family support workers support well the needs of children and families.
- Practitioners work well with other professionals to support children with additional support needs. Review meetings take place regularly for children and the minutes of these meetings outline their skills well under the wellbeing headings. Next steps are outlined at these meetings. The nursery team should now develop clear individual plans for children with additional support needs from the next steps outlined in the review meetings. These plans should contain clear next steps, which are robustly reviewed and evaluated regularly along with parents and key professionals. This will ensure that children with additional support needs make the best possible progress. The senior leadership team review care plans regularly.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well. Practitioners and the senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do. This helps practitioners to ensure that all children and families are included well in the life of the nursery. They celebrate well the multi-cultural context of the nursery by celebrating a range of festivals and inviting parents to share their language and culture with the

children. Practitioners should continue to promote gender equality effectively with children, to ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- The headteacher and principal teacher recently introduced approaches for tracking children's progress and informing next steps in learning. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress for their age and stage of development. However, a minority of children are capable of making better progress across a broader range of experiences. Practitioners are beginning to improve their recording of children's skills, knowledge and understanding more accurately. This is helping ensure their prior knowledge is taken into consideration.
- Most children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Almost all enjoy playing outdoors making friendships with other children in the garden area. The outdoor garden links the three nursery playrooms which helps all the children play well together. They risk assess and develop balance and coordination through a range of commercial toys and natural objects. They are developing independence skills by accessing and putting on appropriate footwear and clothing for different weather conditions outdoors. Children develop their fine motor skills through a range of natural resources including threading logs with holes in the outside play area. There is a need to develop further children's skills in contributing to wider group discussions.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in early language and literacy. Children access books and enjoy recognising themselves in their learning profiles. Most children engage in conversation with adults. They would benefit from continuing to develop their listening and talking skills through continuing on the increased focus on storytelling. Across the setting, children do not yet talk with confidence about their learning or apply their learning in new and unfamiliar situations.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. They can apply early numeracy skills across areas in the setting and outdoors. Children can order numbers and use mathematical language when measuring and pouring liquids. A minority are able to count beyond 15 using ordering. A few recognise numbers in the local environment. Practitioners should continue to improve children's numeracy skills in real life settings.
- Children celebrate their achievements through a range of visual displays and an electronic journal. Practitioners encourage children to do their best. Practitioners plan universal support well and are beginning to ensure that targeted support is understood and evaluated on an ongoing basis for effectiveness in improving children's learning.

- Practitioners know children and their families very well and have a sound knowledge of the socio-economic context. They use this well to help put in place interventions to ensure all children are making progress in their learning. Practitioners use an authority wide developmental screening tool to monitor children’s speech and language development. The whole staff team works closely with the headteacher to understand children’s behaviours and identify strategies to support development. Each child’s personal circumstances and their learning needs are taken into consideration on an individual basis. Practitioners need to continue to identify potential risks that contribute to gaps in learning and ensure that strategies are well planned to evaluate and support children’s holistic development.

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.