

# Summarised inspection findings

St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

14 February 2023

## Key contextual information

St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School Nursery Class is situated within the main building of St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School. The nursery class opened in August 2020 and consists of a large playroom and garden area. The school reports that, in adverse weather conditions, due to the artificial surface in the playground, the outdoor area is not accessible.

Currently the roll is eight children aged three to not yet starting school and in September 2022, three children aged two started attending the nursery. The setting was established within the timeframe of the expansion of early learning and childcare. Children can access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare during term time between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class. The setting consists mainly of part time staff: One full time Early Childhood Practitioner (ECP) and two part time ECPs, one part time play assistant and an early years family learning practitioner. The Early Years Support Teacher (EYST) visits the setting one day per week.

Over the past year, there has been changes in leaders in the school supporting the nursery and the EYST post is vacant.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

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

- The nursery ethos and learning environment is attractive, welcoming and nurturing. Children are settled and follow nursery routines very well. Relationships are very positive between children. They care and support each other during their play. Children follow their interests and are engaged in their learning. They make choices about where they want to play. Practitioners use planned group time well supporting children to develop a sense of family and belonging. Planned group time supports children to develop a sense of family and belonging. Children concentrate well singing songs and listening to stories. There is a need to ensure that children's engagement in learning sustains their interest and develops their creativity, resilience and independence. Children would benefit from real life experiences that challenges their thinking and extends their learning.
- Practitioners demonstrate warm, supportive relationships and create a positive environment for children to learn and achieve. Professional learning is supporting practitioners well to develop children's language development. Children's views are listened to during play and children are confident in expressing their feelings. Recently, children's voices feature more often in floorbooks and in planning. However, practitioners are at the early stages of embedding their knowledge of child development consistently across all interactions with all children. Therefore, there are missed opportunities to question children and promote curiosity. There is a need for practitioners to develop approaches that engage all children in conversations that enrich their

learning. In addition, children would benefit from increased use of digital technologies to support their learning.

- Practitioners know children's emotional needs well and support them to engage with the nursery routines. They observe children playing and encourage them to make choices. Staff use an online platform to share with parents, photographs of children participating in activities. However, effective use of observations is at an early stage of development. Staff need to ensure that all interventions are well-timed and help children make better progress. Staff record children's progress using developmental milestones and Curriculum for Excellence benchmarks. These assessments at key points in children's learning are not yet supported by rigorous evidence and do not demonstrate significant improvements in children's learning and development. Barriers to children's learning are not clearly defined or consistently removed to support progress. A next step for practitioners is to moderate children's progress across all areas of their learning with colleagues at the primary stages. There is a need to ensure consistency in expectations of standards across the early level with teachers at P1.
- Children's learning is captured in floorbooks and online journals that are shared with parents. Trackers show children's progress across the year and an analysis of the data is beginning to show gaps in children's learning. Children are beginning to reflect on their learning and they enjoy the use of achievement stars to recognise their progress. Staff should work together to create an effective and manageable approach to monitoring and tracking children's progress across the nursery and in a range of play and learning contexts. There is a need to ensure that all children, including those facing additional challenges, can make very good progress through Curriculum for Excellence early level.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

weak

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 appropriate progress in a few aspects of their learning. However, due to the limited planning for Curriculum for Excellence, there are important weaknesses in their experiences and progress at early level. Overall, children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and the curriculum as a whole, is too slow.
- Children enjoy sitting together in a small group and listening to stories in cosy reading spaces. Through storytelling approaches used by practitioners, children are at the early stages of using puppets to help them to talk confidently and share their ideas, thoughts and feelings. They can recognise their names as they register their attendance in the morning and talk about the day of the week. Children enjoy books, mark make on paper and make patterns in the sand. During group time and individual play activities there are missed opportunities for each child to participate in songs or stories at their individual age and stage of development. There is a need to ensure that each child enjoys the literacy experiences and makes progress developing their listening, talking, reading and writing skills at their individual level.
- Children are beginning to recognise their numbers and have one to one correspondence. They need more opportunities to recognise number patterns and to describe length and height. Children require support to develop their skills and understanding in relation to time and information handling.
- Children make satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing when starting at the nursery. They know about hygiene routines before snack and when going to the toilet. Children are developing independence and serve their own snack. They develop fine motor skills through picking out bricks in the sand tray. There is a need to ensure that children have daily access to outdoor floor spaces and develop further their gross motor skills. Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's achievements informally. As a team, they are beginning to introduce more consistency through the use of star awards. However, this information does not yet inform children's progress sufficiently well and ensure that all learning takes full account of what children already know.
- Children do not make appropriate progress through early level in literacy and numeracy. Children make satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing and benefit from the nurturing and inclusive approach. Staff should ensure that children's strengths and next steps in learning take greater account of children's individual needs. In addition, staff need to demonstrate that significant learning is supported by reliable evidence through observations. Presently, children's progress is not overseen and monitored closely by senior leaders. Approaches to track

children's progress over time do not yet show that planned interventions for individuals are considered by all practitioners working in the playroom. There is a need for senior leaders to create and attend dedicated planning time to support practitioners to make sound professional judgements for planning and supporting children.

- Practitioners know families well and this allows them to take account of the socio-economic backgrounds of children. They promote equity and are sensitive to the needs of children and their families. The nursery team create a supportive and inclusive ethos. However, they must take the needs of children and their families into account better when planning learning. Children do not receive their basic entitlement to an early level Curriculum for Excellence.
- Senior leaders in the school need to ensure that all practitioners in the nursery consistently apply planned interventions to support children across all areas of learning. There is an important need for all practitioners and senior leaders to ensure that they are proactive in reducing potential barriers to learning. Children's socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds are recognised but there is a need to ensure that all children make sufficient progress.

## Other relevant evidence

- The nursery team work very well together and provide a nurturing and caring environment with very positive relationships. Together they created a new ELC provision for the school community that has very positive relationships. The learning environment is well thought out and children enjoy being at the nursery. There is a focus on wellbeing and practitioners supported children and families very well through the pandemic.
- There is an urgent need to ensure that senior leaders in the school revisit their roles, responsibilities and remits and ensure that the nursery team benefits from strong leadership and direction. Senior leaders need to include the nursery class in whole school strategic planning for continuous improvement and the implementation of improvement and change. There is a need for the effective use of available time to support quality assurance processes within the nursery class.
- The curriculum in the nursery reflects well the principles of the national practice guidance *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*. The environment and spaces are planned well, interactions are positive and the planned experiences support children to learn. There is a need to review the planning, implementation and assessment of Curriculum for Excellence in the nursery. Approaches do not reflect the design principles and ensure coherence across the early level into primary one.

## 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.