

Summarised inspection findings

Royal Mile Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

19 August 2025

Key contextual information

Royal Mile Primary Nursery Class forms part of the primary school, located in the centre of Edinburgh city. The nursery is accommodated in a separate building in the school playground, with two large playrooms, one of which has access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is registered for 60 children aged two to five years attending at any one time. No more than 20 children can be under three years of age. There are currently 36 children attending the nursery. Children access their 1140 hours entitlement from 9 am until 3.30 pm on Monday to Thursday, and from 9 am until 1 pm on Fridays. The nursery operates during term time only. The headteacher is the registered manager. She has delegated day-to-day leadership of the nursery to the principal teacher. Staffing also includes one early years officer, six early years practitioners, two early years assistants and one domestic assistant. The majority of children have English as an additional language.

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

- Practitioners have recently reviewed the nursery's vision and values to ensure that they are fully aligned with its unique context. All practitioners consistently demonstrate and model the values of respecting ourselves, others and our world. They support children well, through meaningful play contexts, to develop an awareness and understanding of these values. A few children comment on what it means to be kind to others and include them in their play. Practitioners should continue to reinforce the values in age-appropriate ways with all children.
- The principal teacher leads and manages the nursery effectively. She has a clear understanding of the nursery's strengths and what is important for ongoing improvement. She has positive relationships with the team of practitioners and supports them well. As a team they know the children and their community and strive to do their best for them.
- Practitioners undertake appropriate training to enhance their knowledge and skills. Recent professional learning on literacy and communication has strengthened the ways in which they develop children's spoken language. Most practitioners take on a leadership role for one of the nursery's identified key areas for improvement. These include outdoor learning, food and nutrition and approaches to storytelling. Practitioners have led initiatives which has resulted in a few improvements to the quality of children's experiences. However, there is scope for practitioners to improve further experiences in outdoor spaces and monitor the impact of new initiatives. Practitioners demonstrate the capacity to undertake increased leadership responsibilities that impact positively on children, whilst also building their own confidence and expertise.
- Senior leaders know staff well and provide them with effective support and guidance. As part of annual staff development reviews, practitioners reflect on what practice has worked well. They

identify areas for development linked to their own interests, and the needs of the nursery. This process supports practitioners well to continue to develop their professional skills.

- The principal teacher ensures that some key aspects of the nursery are kept under review. For example, she uses a useful quality assurance calendar and worthwhile audits and checklists. The principal teacher has a clear focus on monitoring approaches to keep children safe and well. Practitioners make some use of national guidance to review aspects of learning and teaching. They now need to take their findings forward more effectively, to ensure that self-evaluation leads to identifiable improvements in children's experiences.
- The nursery improvement plan sets out clear, appropriate areas for improvement. These include implementing a stronger focus on aspects of literacy, extending children's participation in decision making, and strengthening parental engagement. Staff have taken forward the literacy priority successfully. They are supporting effectively the development of children's language and communication skills. Staff now need to take forward the priorities of developing further children's voice and parent partnerships at a brisker pace. Practitioners should also increase children's and parents' involvement in identifying, leading and evaluating improvement.

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 under three years of age

- Children benefit from warm, caring relationships with practitioners, who support them well to make choices. Staff's sensitive interactions support children to transition well from home to nursery. Children are settled and increasingly confident in the nursery environment. Practitioners have a good understanding of children's needs and provide a sufficiently wide range of resources and toys to support play. Practitioners should continue to develop their use of natural materials to develop children's curiosity.

Children aged three to five years

- Children receive a warm welcome into the playroom. Practitioners support children well by recognising their emotional and developmental needs. Children are happy, safe, secure and most play confidently. They are motivated, engaged and enthusiastic in their play and learning. Practitioners support children well to develop their independence and make choices about their learning. Children would benefit from having greater responsibility within the playroom and outdoors, including caring for their learning environment. Practitioners provide a range of opportunities for children to learn in the local community. However, they should ensure planning for these visits highlights the intended learning, and that the visits are developmentally appropriate.
- Practitioners interact well with children. They make effective use of questions and comments to sustain children's interests, extend their thinking and work positively together. There is an appropriate balance between the time children spend choosing activities and time spent in adult-initiated tasks. Practitioners provide a wide range of resources for children's play. They should review the layout and organisation of the playroom to improve children's access to nurturing spaces. Children enjoy freely accessing the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to review the experiences offered to children outdoors to ensure appropriate challenge and to develop further early literacy and numeracy skills. Children view information on an interactive screen as part of their digital learning. They would benefit from increased access to a range of digital technologies indoors and outside to support their learning.
- Practitioners regularly discuss individual children's development, helping them to provide a range of learning experiences relevant to most needs. They observe children carefully as they play and record observations of their learning in children's personal learning journals (PLJs). These include photographs and staff's comments. Practitioners are actively working to develop their skills in recording those observations of children's play that represent significant learning. Practitioners have plans to explore ways to support children to share the learning recorded in their PLJ more regularly. Parents appreciate the information about children's progress shared in individual PLJs.

- Practitioners plan for children's learning using a range of approaches such as floorbooks. They should build on this approach, ensuring they focus more clearly on developing children's voice. Staff are working to develop their understanding of how to plan responsively, building on children's interests as they play. Practitioners engage in regular joint professional dialogue to discuss children's progress. Senior leaders meet practitioners regularly to review the progress children are making. Together they monitor and track children's progress effectively using local authority guidance.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Staff are working to develop their understanding of how to plan responsively, building on children's interests as they play. They offer a range of appropriate play-based experiences across different curricular areas. They effectively track coverage of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to ensure children receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. As a team, staff plan to ensure that children experience personalisation and choice in their learning. They now need to focus on ensuring depth and progression in children's learning.
- Practitioners enhance children's experiences through regular visits out into the city to explore buildings, parks, museums and exhibitions. This supports children well to learn about their local area and the history of the city.
- Practitioners support individual children well as they start nursery and transition from one playroom to the other. They engage frequently with parents, ensuring good communication and effective information sharing. This supports parents and children effectively. Practitioners support children who need additional time to settle well. They sensitively respond to children's needs. Families appreciate the flexibility of the staff team in seeking ways to provide them with support. The nursery has an effective transition process in place to support all children moving into P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners regularly share information with parents through daily conversations and an online platform. Parents share examples of children's learning at home to support children's learning and development. Parents appreciate the valuable insight into their child's learning this joint approach offers.
- Practitioners regularly invite parents into the nursery for stay and play sessions. Parents welcome these opportunities to share in children's learning. Practitioners use these sessions to share strategies with parents that support children's learning. They are keen to provide more opportunities to enable parents to become more involved in their children's learning and have a clearer understanding of their progress. This focus on family learning should support improved outcomes for children.
- Practitioners work with partners from the community effectively to enrich children's learning. Children are becoming aware of the importance of respecting their community. The nursery should extend the range of its partners to enhance children's experiences further.

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 created a nurturing, caring environment in the nursery. They treat children with respect and show kindness in their interactions. Children are happy and show enthusiasm and confidence in their play. Practitioners know children well and ensure that their wellbeing has a strong focus.
- Children develop well an understanding of their own wellbeing by taking part in a range of interesting experiences. Children have access to nutritious snacks throughout the day. This helps them to understand the importance of healthy eating. At present, practitioners make only limited use of dialogue to reinforce children's experience of the national wellbeing indicators. For example, they refer to 'Active Amir' when talking about the importance of being fit and active. Practitioners should use displays, wellbeing puppets and stories to make these indicators more meaningful for children. The staff team has begun to develop work around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Practitioners should feature children's rights more prominently in the playrooms.
- Practitioners act as good role models for children and support them well to become aware of their own and others' feelings. Practitioners show skills in engaging in worthwhile restorative conversation with children, but this strong practice is not consistent. As a team, staff should agree approaches to support children to resolve disagreements calmly. They should continue to support children through regular emotional check-ins and use restorative language to help them to manage their feelings.
- Practitioners know clearly their responsibilities for keeping children safe and well. They engage in regular child protection training to ensure that they are able to carry out their roles and remit effectively. They ensure that children's care plans fully comply with national guidance. Staff regularly monitor and review children's individual plans. They identify children who require additional support in their learning at an early stage. Practitioners work effectively in partnership with specialist agencies to ensure that children receive the best possible support. They support children with English as an additional language well through techniques including visuals, signing and words in their first language.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well throughout the nursery. They have developed positive and trusting relationships with families, strengthening their ability to respond to children's needs. Children are developing a strong understanding of diversity through the celebration of a wide range of cultural festivals. Families enjoy sharing their different faiths, customs and beliefs, for example making traditional festival foods to share with the children. Practitioners should develop further children's awareness of diversity through a wider range of resources and appropriate experiences, given the nursery's rich multicultural context. Staff should continue to promote gender equality with children to ensure that potential stereotypes are challenged.

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 under three years of age

- Children make appropriate progress in their learning and development. They demonstrate increasing confidence as they explore the environment and make choices from the activities on offer. Nurturing interactions from practitioners, including the use of songs and stories, support children's early communication skills well. Children enthusiastically access the outdoor space and enjoy developing skills in running, jumping and balancing. Staff should develop children's physical skills further by using a wider range of suitably challenging equipment.

Children aged three to five years

- Children make good progress in early language and communication. Most talk confidently using a developing range of vocabulary and communicating their thoughts clearly. They listen in small groups with interest to stories and recall key events in these tales. Most children show an interest in mark making and enjoy sharing their 'writing' as they create menus for snacks. A few children write early words. Children have a developing understanding that their marks have meaning as they draw and write. To support progress further, children need a wider range of literacy contexts in the playroom and outdoors.
- Children progress well in early numeracy and can count with increasing confidence. They enjoy counting out spoonfuls of porridge when they make flapjacks. They are developing good mathematical awareness through the range of toys and resources. They use appropriate mathematical language as they compare the capacity of jugs when playing with water and are developing their use of comparative language. Children learn about three-dimensional objects as they play with construction toys and develop problem solving skills. Practitioners should continue to support children to develop early numeracy and mathematical skills through a wider range of play opportunities and real-life contexts.
- Children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Most practitioners support children to be kind, caring and respectful towards each other. Older children work well together to solve problems and share ideas. They concentrate on tasks for extended periods of time and are keen to share their learning with adults and each other. They are developing well fine motor control. For example, children use tongs to serve themselves lunch. Children enjoy energetic outdoor activities. However, the range of toys and resources available to them do not always provide sufficient challenge.

- Children make good progress over time as a result of their nursery experience. Practitioners should provide children with identified learning needs plans which include short term targets and identified strategies. This will help to ensure they make the best possible progress.
- Practitioners highlight children's achievements through the appropriate use of praise at group times and on the 'learning journey' wall. They should continue to explore ways to encourage parents to share children's achievements from home. This should help ensure practitioners build on the skills children develop at home progressively.
- Practitioners provide a supportive and inclusive ethos which supports equity. They are keen to identify and address barriers to learning. Senior leaders make effective use of data and information, including those relating to socio-economic backgrounds. This helps them to plan interventions to meet the needs of individual children and families effectively.

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.