

Summarised inspection findings

Cuiken Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

29 April 2025

Key contextual information

Cuiken Primary School Nursery Class is situated within Cuiken Primary School in the town of Penicuik. The setting comprises of two large playrooms and an outdoor area. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged from three until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 72 children and the current roll is 55 children. The nursery operates from 8.30 am until 3.45 pm during term-time. All children attend on a full-time basis.

The setting has had significant leadership changes in the last year. The headteacher and both senior early years practitioners (SEYP) are all recently new to the post. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery and has delegated the strategic leadership to the principal teacher. The senior early years practitioners oversee the day to day running of the nursery. There are six early years practitioners, two learning assistants and two catering assistants.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners have built positive and nurturing relationships with children. They offer timely interventions that respond to almost all children's individual needs, preferences and motivations. As a result, most children approach them with ease to confidently share their play, learning and achievements. The setting's positive behaviour charter supports children to 'be kind, be safe, aim high'. Practitioners demonstrate these values naturally through their interactions and conversations. This helps children understand the relevance of the values to their daily experiences.
- Practitioners know children very well. They use a range of approaches to gather information about children as they enrol and settle into nursery. This supports most practitioners to provide a range of interesting spaces and experiences that meet children's needs and interests effectively. As a result, most children are motivated and creative learners. Practitioners make strong use of digital technologies which engages most children well in a wide range of experiences. Practitioners use tablets effectively to support children to explore their interests, to research their ideas and to reflect on their learning.
- Most practitioners regularly plan with children to build upon their ideas and interests. They use observations well to record a range of experiences and interactions identifying children's developing skills and learning. These are shared in online learning journals where parents can contribute their views. Senior practitioners, as planned, could link observations more effectively to tracking information to identify both the progress children make and their next steps. This should allow practitioners to plan better adult-led or adult-initiated experiences to enhance the progress children make from prior learning.

- Practitioners have created an inclusive learning environment through their use of a range of effective communication approaches. This ensures all children are valued and included in the life of the nursery. As discussed, practitioners should now reinstate more targeted strategies to support all children to make clear and timely progress in their learning and development.
- Practitioners record and monitor children's progress using a range of planning documents. They use progression pathways for health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy, identifying termly the range of skills children are developing across the curriculum. As planned, practitioners should develop an overview of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This will support senior leaders and practitioners to identify better any gaps in children's learning. In addition, senior leaders could consider ways to streamline the planning and recording process. This could better support practitioners to plan and record progress linked to children's individual learning targets. This should ensure children's progress in learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is clearly understood by families.

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 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- In early language and communication, children are making good progress. Most children communicate confidently with adults and engage in meaningful interactions. A few children use sign language and visual aids routinely to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Most children choose books independently. They listen well to new and familiar texts and predict what might happen next. Most children understand that print has meaning, and mark make with purpose. They are becoming familiar with more complex vocabulary and use this to communicate with greater detail. Most children would now benefit from opportunities to develop their phonological awareness.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, children are making good progress. Most children count accurately up to 10. A few children add and subtract accurately during routines and play experiences. Most children show an interest when exploring measurement. They use the language of measure confidently when comparing sizes, building structures and weighing ingredients. Most children explore shapes and their properties through floor puzzles and block play. A few children collect and analyse information during real-life play experiences. As a result, they are beginning to make sense of information, make predictions and identify simple patterns.
- In health and wellbeing, children are making good progress. Most interact confidently with their peers and delight in the friendships and strong bonds they make when at the local community care home. They develop gross motor skills well during outdoor play. They balance and co-ordinate their bodies confidently. Most children develop and strengthen their manipulative skills through meaningful experiences. They use tools to engrave their names and add detail to models. They demonstrate confidence when dressing independently for outdoor play and make appropriate choices during snack and lunch. All children could benefit from learning about the wellbeing indicators to deepen their understanding of how to be responsible, healthy, and safe.
- Children make good progress over time. Most are excited about learning and develop a range of important skills and attitudes appropriate to their age and stage of development. Tracking systems enable senior leaders to monitor the breadth of children's learning but do not yet identify how they build effectively on children's prior learning. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners should now use the range of data available to make timely judgements about individual children's progress. By recording and evaluating these planned interventions, this would allow practitioners to gather a robust picture of children's progress over time. Practitioners could then use this valuable information to support all children to make the best possible progress in all areas of their learning and development.

- Practitioners value highly all children and celebrate children's successes in the nursery. Practitioners display children's achievements from home and the community on the nursery's achievement tree. This helps children to aim high and share what they are proud of.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a good understanding of the needs of children and their families. They create an inclusive ethos and work in partnership to reduce potential barriers. Senior leaders, as planned, should now review and simplify the various ways they communicate significant aspects of children's learning and development with parents. This will ensure clearer communication between nursery and home. Practitioners should develop, in partnership with parents, strategies that are personalised to support better the holistic development of all children.

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.