

# Summarised inspection findings

**Flora Stevenson Primary School and Nursery Class**

The City of Edinburgh Council

18 December 2018

## Key contextual information

Flora Stevenson's Primary School nursery class is situated within Flora Stevenson's Primary School in Edinburgh. The nursery class is accommodated within a separate building on the school campus with access to a dedicated outdoor play area. The nursery is registered for 60 children age three to not yet attending primary school and provides morning or afternoon sessions.

### 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 setting's vision, values and aims were reviewed and refreshed as part of whole school initiative involving consultation with practitioners and parents. The values are displayed in the nursery welcome area and shared with families. The team are exploring these with children in a developmentally appropriate way. They have developed a 'tree display' which recognises children's understanding of these values. Parents are also encouraged to contribute and share their aspirations for their child's early learning experiences. Exploring the setting's values with children and their link to wider learning about health and wellbeing should be continued.
- There is a positive culture of collegiate working within the team who support each other in their roles well. They are conscientious about developing their practice in order to secure positive outcomes for children and families. Practitioners attend relevant training based on self-evaluation and the needs of the setting. They evaluate the difference these opportunities make to their practice and children's experiences. For example, training in the use of 'signalong' communication has helped practitioners to create a more inclusive learning environment for all children.
- The team has undergone some changes in recent years and is developing a good understanding of particular strengths and professional interests. As a result, practitioners have begun to identify areas of children's learning such as sustainability and skills development that they plan to take forward. This is at early stages and should be supported as the team builds their confidence in leading and evaluating improvement.
- The school leadership team effectively support the nursery team in their work. They manage the pace of change appropriately to secure continuous improvement. The depute head teacher spends regular time in the setting as part of her teaching commitment and has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Monitoring and support of practice through focused observation and professional discussion is at early stages. This would benefit the team as they develop as reflective practitioners.

- Practitioners use a range of national and local practice documents to support their self-evaluation work and improvement planning. They have made a positive start to using this to think more critically about their practice and how they can improve outcomes for children. As planned, this work should be continued with increasing depth with clear strategies for the evaluation of the impact of changes.

## 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

- The ethos and culture of the setting is warm and caring and relationships are positive throughout. Children are developing as confident individuals and are keen to share their experiences and ideas with practitioners. They enjoy and are motivated by the environment which practitioners have worked well to develop over time through the use of natural and open-ended resources. As a result, children play in a calm and purposeful learning environment with a range of interesting experiences both indoors and outside. Most children sustain their interest well and concentrate on their chosen tasks for extended periods of time. They have the time and space to revisit their play and follow their own interests. Children are confident in making choices and are supported well by practitioners within a nurturing environment. There is now potential to develop the range of digital technology used to enhance children's learning.
- Responsive planning approaches are used to plan learning that takes account of children's interests. These include the use of 'floor books' which are used to consult with children and encourage them to share their ideas. Practitioners use their observations of children's play to plan future learning experiences and discuss how they will support the emerging interests. The team recognise that these approaches should be continued with a focus on increasing depth in children's learning. We have asked practitioners to continue to develop children's engagement in planning and reflecting on their own learning. Children are ready to take increased responsibility for leading their own learning.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. They effectively put this into practice through their responsive and sensitive interactions which promote children's independence and confidence well. They listen effectively to children and respond to their interests by adapting the environment and resources available. The majority of practitioners use skilled questioning techniques as they support children in their play which helps them to extend their thinking and consider ways to solve problems. As planned, practitioners should build on this good practice and develop consistency across the team.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals and increasingly as learners. Planned experiences are developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet the range of individual learning needs. Practitioners make observations of children as they play and the majority of these focus effectively on the learning taking place. The team recognise that they now need to continue to develop these skills across the team. Practitioners are at the early stages of involving children in their learning journals. Observations now need to be more frequent and focused in order to build a more comprehensive picture of each child's learning and progress. As tracking arrangements develop, the link between observations, planning, assessment and next steps should continue to be strengthened.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The setting's curriculum is well-matched to the developmental stages of children and firmly based in learning through play. This is supported by skilled and sensitive adult interactions. Practitioners have worked well to make improvements to the learning environment which supports the range of learning needs of children and their interests as they play. Increased use of natural and open ended resources is supporting the development of children's curiosity, imagination and problem-solving skills. Practitioners have a good understanding of how young children learn.
- The essential aspects of quality early learning and childcare are successfully promoted. There is a clear focus on health and wellbeing, numeracy, mathematics and communication. Practitioners make good use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to ensure children experience breadth and balance in their learning. This now needs to be more effectively reflected in children's learning journals in order to build on prior learning consistently. Approaches to planning are flexible and take account of children's emerging interests and are used to help plan contexts for learning. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop this practice to add increasing depth and challenge to children's learning. It would be useful to consider curriculum design principles and expectations for children's progress as part of this work.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Families are made to feel very welcome in the setting. The key worker system ensures that practitioners know children and families well. There are opportunities for informal information sharing with parents and carers on a daily basis at the beginning and end of sessions. Children's progress is shared through electronic learning journals and more formal meetings where parents can discuss their child's learning in more detail. Noticeboards, regular newsletters and social media keep families up to date with children's learning experiences and events.
- Practitioners value the views of families and encourage them to contribute to the children's learning experiences within the setting in a number of ways. For example, parents take part in story sessions, share cultural experiences and skills and relating to the world of work. They also support the setting during trips in the local community and help contribute resources from home to extend areas of learning such as the mud kitchen. Evaluations from parents and carers who take up the opportunity to observe and participate in their children's learning during 'stay and play' sessions are very positive.

## 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

- Children are welcomed to the setting by friendly and interested practitioners who take time to engage with parents and carers as they drop off children. The school and setting values are evident in the ethos of the setting where positive relationships between practitioners, children and families are built on mutual respect and a nurturing approach.
- Children were observed to be happy, confident and secure as they moved between the playrooms and outdoor area where they are able to make decisions and choices. There were good examples of children managing risk in their play in the outdoor area, for example when using large loose parts equipment. Most children are able to share their views and make their wishes known and are supported by a range of communication strategies. Practitioners continue to develop their understanding of the national wellbeing indicators of 'Getting It Right For Every Child'. They should now explore how best to deepen and develop this understanding with children and families in a meaningful way. This will support children to develop the language with which to express their experiences and feelings.
- Children are given opportunities to express their views and make decisions about matters affecting them, such as contributing to the weekly snack menu. They help prepare the snack on a daily basis and are independent in serving themselves, clearing away and washing their own dishes. Children are beginning to evaluate experiences which practitioners take account of. Leadership roles could now be developed further in the setting and link to the pupil groups within the school.
- Practitioners promote positive behaviour through building positive relationships and modelling respectful interactions. When required, they intervene sensitively to support children to develop the skills they need to work and play with others. As a result, most children play co-operatively and can negotiate well during play.
- There are appropriate arrangements in place to comply with statutory requirements duties. Practitioners are particularly mindful of their responsibility to children's wellbeing. They engage in professional training and reading which helps them improve the way they support and care for children and keeps them up to date with important developments in early learning and childcare.
- Practitioners work well with a wide range of professionals to support individual children and families. There are well-judged and timely interventions in place to support children who experience short or long term barriers in their learning. The team should further develop their recording processes to review regularly and evaluate the impact of interventions. This will

enable them to reflect on the impact on learning over time in order to continue to improve outcomes for children.

- There is an inclusive approach ensuring that equality and diversity is promoted and celebrated across the setting. Displays demonstrate the many languages spoken by the children and practitioners plan activities which reflect the range of cultures that are present in the setting and wider community. Children experience a range of stories, songs and rhymes in different languages and have access to dual language story books.

### 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

- Most children are making good progress in early language and communication. They converse as they play and have extended conversations with practitioners as they create imaginative games and share stories. A focus on talking and listening skills is helping to build children's confidence in talking in front of their peers. Most children show a keen interest in mark making as they create cards for each other and label their work. Children also write for a purpose as they create snack menus each day. They independently access books throughout the sessions and enjoy discussing narratives at group times. A few children show an emerging interest in letters and patterns of language as they take part in music activities. A few children require additional challenge across their learning to support them to make the best possible progress.
- Most children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. They count with increasing confidence as they play board games and use open-ended resources to represent their ideas. While using digital technology such as the interactive board, children create patterns and sort according to different criteria. They demonstrate a good understanding of shape as they create junk models, work with blocks and complete puzzles. Children are developing concepts of weight and measure as they bake and take part in cooking activities. We have asked practitioners to build on this good practice by extending opportunities for children to apply their developing skills in real-life contexts.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are building positive relationships and discuss the importance of being kind through planned group work. Children demonstrate good physical skills as they negotiate large loose parts and use a range of bikes according to their ability level. Children would benefit from being allowed to independently assess the risk in their play, for example in the block area. Most children understand how handwashing and tooth brushing contribute to a healthy lifestyle and discuss nutritious foods at snack time. They show confidence with routines such as washing their own dishes and getting ready for outdoor play. Children are learning about their role in sustainability as they carry out activities such as recycling. Opportunities for children to build responsibility and leadership skills should now be developed further.

- Children are motivated learners and show a keen interest in exploring the world around them. They take part in regular planting and growing activities, learning to care for different plants and vegetables. Children are developing their understanding of the link between planting and the food they eat as they harvest potatoes and use herbs in their baking activities.
- Children are becoming successful learners and making good progress over time. Practitioners make sound professional judgements about how children are developing and learning. They use praise effectively to recognise children's achievements. Parents are encouraged to share successes from home through the electronic learning journals. We discussed with practitioners that information could now be used to build a picture of each child's wider achievements and build on prior learning.
- Practitioners know children and families well. They take good account of their individual circumstances and work in partnership with other professionals to provide tailored support and promote an inclusive learning environment. They are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to learning in order to promote equity across their work.

## Setting choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and families
  - Collaborative planning and delivery
  - Continuity and progression in learning
- 
- Practitioners recognise the importance of developing positive relationships with families and respond to individual children in an appropriate way to meet their needs. Contact is made with families prior to the initial visit and they receive information about the setting and team of practitioners. During the initial visit to the setting key workers meet with parents to gather information about children's interests, preferences, care and medical needs. Transition arrangements are then tailored to meet the individual needs of children and families.
  - The setting promote flexible and well-considered approaches to support effective transition arrangements. Enhanced transition arrangements are planned with families and other relevant professionals. This ensures that children who face barriers to their learning or other challenges are well-supported as they move onto the next stage of learning.
  - A range of planned events and activities support children moving on to P1. The children become familiar with the school, visit classrooms and meet their teacher. A planned transition programme includes the use of a teddy bear mascot who sends children postcards throughout the school year and over the holidays. 'Buddies' from the upper stage of the school are introduced to the children in the term prior to them starting P1. This relationship is nurtured and developed through planned experiences and provides support in the school setting.
  - There are planned opportunities for practitioners to share learning information. This should be developed further to ensure continuity, progress and challenge and for individual needs to be met as they progress across the early level.

## 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.