

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Leonard's Primary School Nursery Class**

Fife Council

11 June 2019

## Key contextual information

St Leonard's nursery class is situated within the grounds of St Leonard's Primary School, Fife. The nursery offers morning and afternoon sessions to children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. The nursery can accommodate 35 children at any one time, at the time of inspection there were 41 children on the roll.

### 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

- There is a shared vision, values and aims across the nursery and school. These were reviewed and refreshed in consultation with all stakeholders. Practitioners adapt the language of the vision and values within the nursery, ensuring it is meaningful and understood by all. As planned, there is a need to ensure that the current vision, values and aims remain relevant to the nursery and in line with current thinking and best practice.
- There have been changes in the staffing structure since the start of the academic year, this includes the introduction of peripatetic teachers. The practitioner team have worked well together to embrace the changes in a positive manner. Staff meetings take place regularly with a focus on planning, evaluation of learning and reflection on nursery practice. The nursery benefit from continued support from the local authority early years team and the depute headteacher in the school, who has responsibility for overseeing the nursery.
- Practitioners are reflective in their practice and engage in daily dialogue within the team. They demonstrate a commitment to professional learning and have access to in house and local authority training. All practitioners attended Solihull training and this has had a positive impact on practice, in particular, engagement with parents. For example, parents are supported to engage confidently in learning experiences with their children at home and in the nursery. Practitioners are at an early stage of developing leadership roles and responsibilities. Building on the skills and talents of the team, they should now develop further leadership roles across the nursery.
- There is an improvement plan in place across the school and nursery. Priorities identified are appropriate and relevant to the nursery context, for example, developing a consistent approach to implementing nurture principles. As a result of the strong focus on nurture across the nursery, all children are sensitively supported to make good progress in their learning. A focus on literacy across the school and nursery is supported by a practitioner who works across both establishments, as a result, promoting continuity in learning. There is scope to increase opportunities for all practitioners to develop their own skills in taking forward identified priorities for improvement.

- Practitioners continue to develop the use of self-evaluation across all aspects of the nursery. The team share informal, daily and weekly dialogue to inform improvements and changes in practice. The team use the national self-evaluation framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to evaluate the quality of provision. The team now need continued strategic support from the senior leadership team to guide them as they build on the sound practice, which exists in the nursery.

## 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

- Relationships between practitioners and children are warm and caring. As a result, children are observed to be safe and secure in their environment. Children are encouraged to move freely between indoors and outdoors, allowing them to become resilient, independent and confident in their learning. Most children are observed to engage fully in their learning, many for sustained periods of time. Children appear happy and clearly enjoy their time at nursery.
- Children are actively involved in learning through free-play, planned and spontaneous play experiences. Indoor and outdoor environments offer children a rich and varied range of resources to support their learning and development. The increased use of natural materials and loose parts is supporting children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity. Children are observed interacting positively with each other, for example, displaying respectful and kind behaviour to their peers.
- Practitioners are respectful and patient as they carefully listen and respond to children's verbal and non-verbal communication. They actively engage in conversations with children to encourage them to talk about their interests and ideas. The majority of practitioners use open-ended questions well to support children's learning. Practitioners should continue to develop their use of skilled questioning to challenge children in their thinking and build upon their natural motivation and curiosity to learn. Children have opportunities to explore digital technologies, for example, interactive boards and tablet computers. Practitioners should continue to use digital technology to support and extend children's learning.
- Practitioners know individual children well and make observations of their learning, however these do not always identify the significant learning taking place. Observations are recorded in children's personal learning journals, floor books and are shared with parents. Parents have access to their child's personal learning journal and have opportunities to review and comment on their child's learning. As planned, all practitioners should engage further in professional learning on quality observations to secure a more consistent approach across the nursery.
- Practitioners meet regularly to plan for children's learning using a range of sources to inform future plans. Planning approaches include the use of floor books and the recently introduced 'learning walls'. Practitioners are becoming more confident in the planning process and should continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this area. Individual trackers are in place for each child and are used to capture information in relation to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. We discussed the need to continue to review and evaluate approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring, ensuring processes are streamlined and not overly bureaucratic.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- See Choice QI 2.2 Curriculum

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

- Partnership with parents is very positive and this was evident at drop off and collection times. Parents are involved through initial visits to the setting, stay and play and daily engagement. Opportunities for parents and children to learn together are offered, for example, parental engagement programmes such as PEEP and Bookbug. There are plans in place to start these again soon. Parents receive regular communication from the nursery, which includes daily informal conversation, social media, newsletters and more formal parents meetings.
- Almost all parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive and reported that they were very happy with their child's experience at St Leonard's nursery. Overall, pre-inspection questionnaires were positive about the nursery. A few parents suggested that they would like more information and encouragement to join the new parent groups. As the new groups develop, practitioners should continue to ensure the details are communicated to all parents. The development of activity bags to take home allows parents and children to engage in learning at home.

## 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

- Relationships across the nursery are built upon mutual respect and trust. As a result, children feel safe and secure. There is a welcoming and friendly ethos, which supports children and families to settle quickly into nursery. Positive relationships underpin the work of the nursery, as a result, children are treated as individuals in a caring and respectful manner. Practitioners focus on supporting children to build positive relationships with each other and helpfully model this in their interactions. When necessary, they intervene in a way that is calm, restorative and supports children to reflect on their actions.
- The principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the use of the wellbeing indicators are evident within the nursery, for example, on wall displays. Building on the positive start to introduce these, practitioners should continue to develop a shared understanding with all children and parents of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. These should be promoted and included across all aspects of their work. This would promote the language of wellbeing and support further the development of positive outcomes for children and families in their community.
- Children are observed to be happy and confident, both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor learning supports children to be healthy and active, for example, skilfully using the climbing frame. Children are observed developing friendships with their peers as they explore and investigate their environment. Practitioners described their weekly visits to the local woodland area as an additional benefit to the emotional wellbeing of children. A continued focus on emotions is evident across the setting, for example, recently exploring being kind and unkind to your peers.
- Children contribute to snack planning by making decisions, discussing, ordering and organising purchases. They have a choice of snacks in the setting in line with 'Setting the Table' guidance. Children take responsibility for serving themselves and clearing away their own dishes. They are developing their personal hygiene skills, for example, tooth brushing. We discussed the need to increase opportunities for all children to take a leadership role, for example, risk assessing outdoors and as part of an eco-committee.
- Overall, statutory duties are engaged and complied with in line with current early learning and childcare guidance. There is an understanding of what is required of practitioners and management in their requirement to fulfil statutory duties to secure positive outcomes for children. A range of policies and procedures are in place, as discussed, these should be easily accessible and shared with all practitioners, students and professionals. Individual needs of children are responded to in a sensitive and caring manner. Children who require additional support have a multi-agency plan in place. This comprises of a range of information, including an individual support plan and information from key professionals. We discussed with the senior leadership team streamlining the paperwork to ensure the plan is clear and concise.



- All children and families are treated with respect in a fair and just manner. Practitioners treat children fairly and respect their individual likes and dislikes. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children and parents in relevant meaningful learning about equality and diversity.

### 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

- A strong focus on health and wellbeing across the setting has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Nurturing relationships support children to settle quickly, offering the opportunity for children to succeed and develop at their individual pace. Children are developing their social and emotional skills well. This is evident in practice, as they use their cosy corner to learn about and discuss their emotions using a range of resources.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in communication and language. They confidently engaged in conversation with practitioners and enthusiastically discussed their learning with inspectors. Opportunities for mark making are freely available, with a few children writing their name independently. Children paint pictures and are encouraged to mix their own paints. Self-registering, using wooden discs is encouraging children to recognise their name. Further opportunities for children to recognise and write their own name should be explored.
- Children have access to a range of books and enjoy stories independently and as part of a group. Children engage with non-fiction books, for example, as they learn more about their chicks. As planned, using their early literacy data, practitioners should continue to build on opportunities for all children to develop further their communication and language skills.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Opportunities to count in routines and planned opportunities for number recognition are supporting children to develop their mathematical skills. Most children are observed to count to ten, with a few confidently counting beyond ten. Opportunities to engage in numeracy and mathematics is evident across the setting, for example, counting ingredients to make individual bowls of playdough. Children display an awareness of shape and other mathematical concepts as they engage in games on the interactive board and during construction play. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop further children's awareness of numeracy and mathematics across the setting.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing, with all children appearing happy and settled in their environment. Children make healthy choices at snack and are encouraged to develop their independence skills, for example, confidently make their own toast. Children have daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. They are observed outdoors riding the balance bikes and using the balance pots to walk independently. They have opportunities to visit the school gym on a regular basis. Children play independently across the learning environment and are developing their self-help skills.

- Through inspection observation, relevant information in personal learning journals, floor book evidence and dialogue, children in the setting are observed as enthusiastic learners who are making good progress in their learning. Children's individual achievements are captured and celebrated in a range of ways, for example, on the 'Success Wall'. We discussed with practitioners the scope to develop and capture wider achievements.
- Equity is promoted across almost all aspects of the work of the setting. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos, as a result, there is a climate of mutual respect and trust. The setting takes good account of the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children, for example, using visual timetables to support learning. As discussed, there is a need to continue to monitor the uptake of the local woodland outings, ensuring all children have the opportunity to experience this activity. This will also ensure children receive their full entitlement to early learning and childcare.

## Choice of QI : 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
- Learning and development pathways
- Pedagogy and play
- Skills for life and learning

- Practitioners plan for children's learning taking full account of Curriculum for Excellence. They make appropriate use of experiences and outcomes and guidance from the local authority. Literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing are seen as everyone's responsibility and are promoted well throughout the setting. Positive changes to indoor and outdoor learning environments have improved opportunities for children to be creative, increasingly independent and apply their skills as they problem-solve using natural and open ended resources.
- The curriculum offered in St Leonard's nursery is broad and varied and is based firmly on play. It takes good account of children's interests, for example, a recent focus on babies. Moving forward, practitioners should work together to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum. This should take account of the context of the setting, reflecting parents' aspirations for children and up to date research in early learning and childcare. All practitioners should continue to develop strategies and experiences that support children to lead their learning, develop their own solutions and deepen their play.
- Children's health and wellbeing is a priority in the setting and practitioners provide a variety of experiences to support children's development in this area. Building on this positive start, practitioners should now develop further their knowledge and understanding of the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This would help to support breadth, challenge and depth in children's learning across the curriculum.
- The nursery transition programme supports children well as they move on to school. This includes on-going visits to the school, taking part in shared experiences and playing in the playground. Children have transition days during the month of June where they spend time in the primary one classroom and have experience of lunchtime in the school dinner hall. Staff from across the early level should be encouraged to work together more regularly to share expectations and their understanding of early learning pedagogy.
- Parents who have particular skills, for example, a joiner, visit the setting to share their skills and knowledge and highlight the world of work. Children benefit from opportunities to engage with resources in the wider community, for example, the recycling lorry and litter picking in the bus depot. There is scope to build on this practice. Practitioners should continue to maximise real-life opportunities for children to develop and apply their skills.

## 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.