

# Summarised inspection findings

**Pinkie St Peter's Primary School Nursery Class**

East Lothian Council

19 June 2018

## Key contextual information

From May 2015, Levenhall Nursery School was accommodated within Pinkie St Peter's Primary School under the leadership of the school's headteacher. Since August 2017, the nursery school has been re-designated as Pinkie St Peter's Primary School Nursery Class and provides early learning and childcare (ELCC) for children aged 3 - 5 years.

The setting is registered for 50 children in morning and afternoon sessions. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 75.

### 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 vision, values and aims of the school are shared with the nursery class. Practitioners within the nursery bring these to life in a way that is meaningful to young children. The nurturing and respectful ethos demonstrates the values in action. When reviewing the vision, values and aims, consultation, with all stakeholders will be important. This will ensure they continue to reflect the provision of ELCC within the school community.
- The setting reports that all senior managers take responsibility for the nursery. Currently, there are three nursery teachers deployed to the setting over the period of a week. We would suggest that this is reviewed to provide greater consistency to the team. It would be helpful for clear roles and remits to be identified to ensure a coherent approach and clear strategic guidance for the nursery practitioners. Observations of learning and teaching are carried out by senior managers to support nursery teachers in their practice. There will be benefit in extending this to all practitioners to support continuous improvement for all.
- Practitioners undertake professional learning to build knowledge and support their practice. As a result, practitioners were able to demonstrate how this had positively impacted on children's learning. This included woodland visits and a project to support children's skills in using balance bikes.
- Practitioners are aware of the priorities within the school improvement plan that directly affect the nursery. Together, with nursery teachers, they discuss the progress being made. As demonstrated as part of the inspection, practitioners are motivated and committed to improvement. They see the benefit of having a role in leading change and being involved in decisions that affect them including shaping the school improvement plan. However, they have had limited involvement in self-evaluation activity using How good is our early learning and childcare?. They engage informally with each other to discuss what is working well in their daily activities and what could be improved. Practitioners will benefit from regular opportunities to evaluate their work using tools appropriate to ELCC. There will be benefit in the team considering how they will look, inwards, outwards and forwards as part of a continuous improvement cycle.

- While a few practitioners are taking responsibility for specific areas, there is scope to strengthen distributed leadership by recognising and maximising the skills and expertise of all practitioners within the nursery class.

## 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 come to nursery motivated to explore the range of interesting and stimulating experiences. Most, confidently make choices and decisions about their play and benefit from opportunities to flow freely between indoors and outdoors. They engage well and can sustain an interest in spontaneous play situations as well as adult-directed activities. The open-ended play opportunities outdoors, enable children to develop their independence and creativity. Practitioners recognise that children will benefit from increased use of open-ended resources and natural materials indoors.
- Positive relationships are evident between practitioners and children. As a result, most children are happily settled into the nursery. Children who are new to the setting are provided with effective and sensitive support to help them make the transition from home to nursery. Children are observed to be valued and respected. Their views are listened to and acted upon. This includes children making decisions about resources within specific areas of the nursery and the development of the garden.
- Practitioners interactions are warm and caring. They are responsive to children and support them very well during play. Their skilled interaction and use of questions to scaffold children's learning is supporting children very effectively.
- During the inspection the use of digital technology to support learning was limited. Children access a digital library where they listen to familiar stories. Computers and interactive whiteboards are available, however, were not used regularly during the inspection. Practitioners recognise this is an area for improvement. We discussed with staff ways to increase the use of digital technology to support learning and teaching.
- The setting has correctly identified that the process for observation, planning and assessment requires to develop further. We discussed with nursery teachers, ways to streamline this process to be more coherent.
- Planning is becoming more responsive to children's ideas and interests. However, observations of children's learning as they play are limited and are often focused on activities and experiences. A sharper focus on learning will enable practitioners to identify more clearly, relevant next steps in learning for individual children. Practitioners may find it useful to make use of resources on the National Improvement Hub, particularly in relation to developing observation skills. Monitoring of forward plans has identified the need for practitioners to ensure differentiation when planning for children's learning and assessment. They are now taking steps to address this. It will be important to take account of children's prior learning, particularly for those who are returning for a second year in nursery.

- Children's skills within literacy and numeracy and more recently health and wellbeing are being tracked. Practitioners should now consider how they will use this information more effectively to improve planning and children's learning.
- We have asked practitioners to consider ways to give children greater ownership of their learning. Consideration should be given to developing an effective tool that enables children to reflect on and talk about their learning. This will also support children to talk to practitioners about what they might learn next. This tool should also be able to demonstrate the progress children are making over time.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners have begun to use a recently introduced curriculum framework provided by East Lothian Council. The curriculum within the nursery is firmly based on play and active learning. The balance of adult-directed and child-led experiences supports children's confidence, independence and enables them to lead their play. Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing feature highly within curriculum planning. As a team, there will be benefit in revisiting the seven design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This will support practitioners to reach a shared understanding of how these principles influence planning and the evaluation of learning. Increasingly, floorbooks are being used to demonstrate children's involvement and learning in relation to a specific context. We discussed with staff ways to develop these books further to demonstrate children's depth of learning and experiences across the curriculum.
- All practitioners take responsibility for developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This is evident through interactions and experiences in both the outdoor and indoor environments. As recognised, opportunities for children to learn through real-life contexts within their community or through visits could be increased. This will promote and develop skills for learning and life and an awareness of the world of work.
- The recent development of individual personal plans is enabling practitioners to engage with parents to gather information on children's prior experiences. This has not yet been completed for all children. We discussed with practitioners ways to involve children in this process.
- Transition arrangements for children settling into the nursery are managed sensitively to meet the needs of children and families. Children are involved in a range of school events. This is helping children to become familiar with the school environment. As children move onto primary 1, assessment information is shared with teachers to support continuity and progression. As identified, increased collaborative working across the early level will further support continuity in the curriculum.

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

- Practitioners have created a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere for families. The team work well with families to provide appropriate support. Parents to whom we spoke to during the inspection spoke highly of the practitioners finding them caring and approachable. Parents help with issuing story book sacks as a home link resource. Parents attend the nurture group both for individual support and targeted parenting groups.
- To develop children's early awareness of the world of work, a few parents/grandparents have given their time to share their experiences. Practitioners are keen to encourage other parents to share their experiences. Visits to the local community, for example the local park, are made possible with the willing support of parents and carers. Building stronger links with the wider community is a priority of the setting. This will support them to build on the relationships already in place and integrate opportunities for learning partnerships across the curriculum.
- The setting has parents evening twice a year to discuss children's progress. Parents also receive communication through newsletters, texts and digital technology. As discussed, practitioners should look at ways to improve the communication with parents in order to share achievements and keep parents informed about their children's progress and what they can do to support it.
- There are opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. This includes 'stay and play' sessions and involvement in supporting their children during specific physical activities.

## 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, equity 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

- There are strong caring relationships in the setting and the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners know each child well. They model a restorative approach to children promoting positive behaviour. Children are beginning to use the language of this approach to resolve conflicts. They use a wide range of appropriate materials like puppets to discuss with children the importance of feelings. They speak and listen to children in an inclusive way which helps them to feel valued and included. Practitioners work effectively with parents in a variety of ways both individually and in groups to support their children's wellbeing. Parents and children attend the nurture group to receive individualised appropriate support which has had a positive impact on their lives. Parents we engaged with during the inspection spoke very positively about the high level of support they have received.
- Practitioners have a shared understanding of wellbeing. In the playrooms and outside, practitioners are beginning to incorporate the wellbeing indicators in relevant activities. Practitioners are planning to continue to introduce all of the wellbeing indicators by tying each of the indicators to a 'Superhero'. They now need to continue this work further to help parents to develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners should also consider ways to encourage the children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This could be implemented in conjunction with the continuing development of the wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities in relation to statutory studies. There is detailed planning using the local authority staged intervention process for children with additional support needs. Almost all individual plans are effectively monitored and reviewed to ensure each child makes appropriate progress. However, as appropriate, the contents of these plans should be made more widely accessible to all practitioners in order to ensure that relevant interventions are carried out consistently. As identified within the Care Inspectorate report June 2017, all practitioners should ensure that personal plans are established for each child within 28 days of starting the service. As yet, these plans are not fully embedded into practice. All new children to the setting now have a personal plan. However, those children returning to the setting still require to have personal plans created. The setting has organised, in the near future, dates for meetings with parents to establish these. As discussed, practitioners should involve children in planning meaningful targets.
- Practitioners are proactive in seeking appropriate help at an early stage from other agencies for children with additional support needs. Positive partnership working with other agencies has been established to support children within the setting. Practitioners have used information and guidance from other professionals to better meet the needs of all children,

particularly in language and communication. Practitioners have also attended appropriate external training, such as working with children with autism spectrum disorder, in order to ensure they have the skills they need to support all their children.

- Inclusion and equality is promoted throughout the work of the setting. Practitioners are ensuring in a developmentally appropriate way that children have a growing awareness of gender equality. They have a clear understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do. To build on this information, there would be benefit in maximising the use of available data to further support early intervention.

## 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

- Evidence from observing children's learning and play, individual trackers and speaking with children and practitioners suggests that most children are making good progress in their learning
- In health and wellbeing children are making good progress in their learning. The culture of the setting supports children to be aware of their feelings and emotions. Children are developing an awareness of sharing and understand what it means to take turns during their play. Most children are familiar with the nursery routine. They are developing their physical skills well during gym sessions and outdoor play. Children have an appropriate awareness of how to keep healthy. A few children can describe the effect exercise has on their bodies. A range of interesting experiences supports the development of fine motor skills. Children's early leadership skills could be developed further through a wider variety of tasks such as risk assessors.
- Children are making good progress in early literacy. Most are confident to engage in conversations with adults. Most listen well during story/group time. They talk about events and characters in stories. There is scope to develop and deepen children's higher order thinking skills during story time. Most children mark-make using a variety of media in different contexts. A few children explore letter sounds in their name and can identify other words beginning with the same sound. Most children are beginning to identify their name. A few can identify the names of some others.
- In numeracy and mathematics, children are making good progress, with a few children making very good progress. They develop their counting skills naturally through play and nursery routines. A few count forwards and backwards from different starting points. Most children recognise 2D shapes and explore more complex shapes through their play. Most use appropriate mathematical language as they explore natural materials and everyday objects during outdoor play. Children are beginning to develop skills in information handling as they display the result of a survey on favourite colours. As recognised, children will benefit from increased opportunities to develop their awareness of money through real-life opportunities.

- Through specific learning contexts and outdoor learning children are developing early science skills. This includes experiments with colour, planting and growing and learning about wildlife.
- While trackers are in place and used to demonstrate what children have achieved, these alone did not provide sufficiently robust evidence to demonstrate the progress children were making over time.
- Practitioners use praise appropriately and consistently to recognise children's achievements. They are supported to develop positive self-esteem through the vision of 'I think, I will, I can'. Celebrating achievements is important to the setting. Children are encouraged to share their achievements when in nursery and from home.
- A supportive and inclusive ethos exists within the setting. Practitioners are aware of families different, cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. Where barriers to learning may exist, practitioners are responsive to ensure appropriate early interventions.

## Setting choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- **Universal support**
- **Targeted support**
- **Removals of barriers to learning**

- Practitioners know children and their families well and are sensitive to their needs. They work together effectively as a team to consider children's needs. Increasingly, they match learning activities and resources to the age, needs and abilities of individual children. They now need to consider appropriate learning targets for individual children in consultation with the children. This will consolidate the children's view of themselves as learners who make progress. These learning targets should build on prior learning and be reviewed and evaluated as part of the personal planning process. This should include parents and children. Practitioners have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. It will be important for them to continue to develop children's awareness of the indicators through meaningful activities.
- Practitioners are very committed and keen to develop their skills by taking part in professional learning to ensure that they are able to support the children in the best possible way. They work within a staged intervention approach to provide support for children who require targeted intervention. They identify needs timeously and are proactive in delivering agreed support strategies in consultation with other professionals. Practitioners involve parents from an early stage and they ensure that effective partnerships are sustained. Parents benefit from support from the nurture setting both individually and in groups.
- Practitioners work closely with key partners to remove barriers to learning and provide an inclusive, nurturing and learning environment. They should continue with their plans to work closely with other relevant partners such as health visitors. Practitioners have close relationships with families which allow them to be responsive to the family circumstances of all children. They should continue to ensure that they communicate with those parents who are not at the setting frequently so they are able to support them to help remove any barriers to learning, for example, as discussed, evening workshops.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.