

Summarised inspection findings

St Francis Primary School Nursery Class

Glasgow City Council

20 December 2022

Key contextual information

St Francis Nursery Class is situated within St Francis Primary School and is located in the Gorbals area in the south of Glasgow. The nursery class has two playrooms, an outdoor space and access to the wider school grounds. The nursery class can accommodate 40 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. 63% of children have English as an additional language and 26% of children live within The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) one and two. Most children attend during term time for a morning or afternoon session, with the option of accessing their funded hours entitlement at another setting. A small number of children currently access their funded hours in the nursery class through an extended day place. Significant staffing changes have taken place in the past year, including a new team leader and several child development officers.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 headteacher and depute head support the nursery class very well, ensuring it is an integral part of the primary school. Staff demonstrate a blend of leadership roles across the nursery class, which helps achieve a consistent approach to delivering positive outcomes for children and families. The school and nursery class share a well-established vision, values and aims, which practitioners and parents revisit and review at the start of each term. The values are evident across the nursery class and are reflected upon and embedded in daily practice. Practitioners should consider how the vision, values and aims could become more meaningful and relevant to nursery children.
- Practitioners work very well as a team to get it right for all children. They have a clear, shared understanding and consistency of approach across the nursery class. Practitioners worked together to develop their knowledge of approaches to play pedagogy and this is evident in practice. Professional dialogue and engagement with the leader of early learning and speech and language therapist has supported practitioners to develop their practice well. Practitioners engage very well with parents and demonstrate a professional approach to their role in supporting all children.
- The team leader leads by example and is a very effective role model for the practitioner team. Weekly meetings support the team to reflect on their practice and review and discuss approaches to supporting children and families. The school has developed a culture of leadership at all levels, with all practitioners taking ownership of play areas, planning and leading learning. Staff encourage children to take on leadership roles including setting the table. Practitioners should continue to develop further children's leadership roles.
- Professional learning links very well to the identified priorities for improvement. This is increasing practitioner knowledge and confidence to implement well-informed changes. Practitioners engage in a range of appropriate professional learning opportunities. They use

their knowledge to support other practitioners and children in the nursery class very effectively, including children with additional support needs.

- Senior leaders include the views of practitioners in developing the improvement plan and share the plan with them. It has key priorities identified in order to take forward agreed areas of improvement. Practitioners play a key role in taking forward identified priorities. A robust quality assurance calendar is in place and highlights key focus areas, which senior leaders and practitioners review across the year. As part of the rigorous quality assurance process, the depute headteacher meets regularly with children to discuss their learning. This ensures the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for children.
- Practitioners have developed effective approaches to improvement within the nursery class. Self-evaluation and a reflective approach supports the practitioner team to implement and embed change in a realistic and manageable way. The pace of change is appropriate and well timed in order to allow practitioners to sustain changes effectively. Feedback from children, parents and practitioners contributes to overall improvement.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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, children and parents are very positive and nurturing across the nursery class. The school has a warm, welcoming ethos where children feel safe and secure. Children settle well into the nursery class, with practitioners providing supportive encouragement when required. Children play very well together in their friendship groups, demonstrating kindness and empathy towards each other.
- Almost all children are engaged in their learning as they choose from an extensive range of well-considered resources. Children develop their independence and resilience very well within the supportive nurturing environment. They are actively involved in learning through spontaneous, well-planned and purposeful play. The sensitively developed environment supports all children to engage across a range of inviting areas. Children access outdoor areas on a daily basis, engaging in a variety of exciting experiences in all weathers. As planned, practitioners should introduce free flow between indoors and outdoors at an appropriate time for all children.
- Practitioners have developed their knowledge and understanding of child development and early learning teaching. This is evident in their practice. A key worker system supports practitioners to display and model caring positive relationships. Practitioners interact in a sensitive manner to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. Skilled questioning between practitioners and children extends learning very well. Practitioners listen actively to children and allow them time and space to develop their learning. Children respond very well to the routines in the nursery class, which support their learning. These allow children to develop a positive sense of achievement and success.
- Practitioners know children very well as learners and most use observations effectively to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions. Children's online learning journals capture well observations of children's learning. All practitioners record children's engagement in learning experiences and demonstrate increasingly children's progress and next steps. Parents regularly share in children's progress and next steps through engagement with online learning journals. Parents are becoming more confident in responding and commenting on their children's posts.
- The nursery class has developed an effective system for planning children's progress. Practitioners are confident in their approach to planning and recognise the flexible nature required to meet individual children's needs. A blend of adult initiated and child initiated learning experiences meet the individual needs of all children well. The implementation of a local authority framework across the nursery class ensures a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. This is supporting all children to make very good progress in their learning.

- A robust system for tracking literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing captures effectively children's progress in learning. Practitioners, the team leader and depute headteacher meet regularly to moderate children's progress across the year. Most children can discuss their learning with confidence.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use national and local guidance along with their very good knowledge of children to provide a broad and balanced curriculum firmly based on play. All practitioners take responsibility for early numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Practitioners have a very good understanding of the benefits of learning outdoors. Children benefit from high quality learning experiences in the nursery and school grounds. Practitioners are now considering how they can make better use of the wider community.
- Children's individual needs are the focus for planning for transitions into the nursery class and on to school. As children begin nursery, practitioners offer very good support to families through well-established transition arrangements. They manage transitions to nursery from home with care and sensitivity. Practitioners work closely with families and support children to develop confidence and settle quickly into the nursery class.
- Practitioners and teachers across the early level work together to support successful transitions. Practitioners provide very good support to children as they move from nursery into P1. Families feel well informed about how to support their child for the transition to school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents share that developing very strong partnerships with families is a key feature of the nursery class. Practitioners establish positive trusting relationships and ensure that engagement with all families is inclusive and respectful.
- Practitioners provide regular communication with parents through informal daily chats, social media, school website, informative newsletters and progress reports. During the pandemic, they developed the use of digital applications to communicate with children. Practitioners have continued to build on this. Parents appreciate the online learning journals that provide them with a valuable insight into children's experiences at nursery. Practitioners are now planning to provide parents with further training in using these during 'Performance of Learning Week'.
- Practitioners promote a responsive approach to sharing learning between nursery and home through a range of home learning resources. For example, families are encouraged to support children's learning through the Bookbug app that builds on learning. The lead practitioner attainment shares ideas and resources for parents around early numeracy through the on-line platform. Staff encourage parents to volunteer in the nursery, including supporting a weekly lending library. Practitioners have reintroduced 'stay and play' sessions to offer parents opportunities to spend time in the nursery class. This allows them to join children in their play and observe how they learn. This supports parents very well to understand how they can support their child's learning at home.
- Practitioners work closely with families to share information about children's needs and progress in learning through progress reports and child progress meetings. Practitioners support families by actively signposting to partners and local community groups.

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. An area for development has been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- The wellbeing of all and getting it right for children and families is a key strength in the nursery class. Practitioners develop strong, caring relationships with all children and families. They show a high level of care for individual children. As a result, children feel safe and secure. Children are confident within the playroom and are able to show kindness and affection towards each other.
- Practitioners have a shared understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and support children well to understand them in a meaningful way. Children can discuss how to keep themselves healthy and safe and are inclusive and respectful of each other. Children take part in regular energetic play outdoors and are learning about nature and taking risks.
- Almost all children enjoy eating healthy snacks. They are developing independence as they serve themselves. Children who attend the nursery class for a full day enjoy a relaxed lunch in the playroom. They socialise well with practitioners and each other.
- All practitioners have a sound understanding of their statutory duties and take part in appropriate training to help keep children safe. Senior leaders provide regularly updated clear policies, which keep practitioners well informed of any new developments. Practitioners monitor and review children's individual plans regularly.
- The nursery class ethos is very inclusive. Practitioners and families work well together to support the individual needs of all children. As a result, practitioners are able to provide appropriate interventions when needed. Practitioners use the local authority framework well to record information about children's wellbeing. Regular 'supporting children and families meetings' enable practitioners to discuss children's progress and identify barriers to learning. This informs personalised planning for all children. This approach is helping to secure positive outcomes for children, while meeting children's individual developmental needs.
- Practitioners use their professional knowledge of children's social and emotional wellbeing, nurture and attachment effectively to support their wellbeing. This ensures that children are engaged and ready to participate in learning experiences.
- Practitioners have developed a strong sense of community where everyone is valued and included. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of diversity by celebrating events. Practitioners should continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by continuing to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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 ensures all children are making very good progress across all areas of their learning. Practitioners support all children very well to make progress in relation to their age and stage of development.
- Children are making very good progress in developing their early language and communication skills. Children use visuals, gestures and spoken language to share their views and needs. Children listen very well to stories and actively respond well to questioning. Children show a keen interest in the 'book of the moment' and 'rhyme of the moment'. As a result, they can recall and enact the key features of the story using a range of puppets. Children recognise their name with support through a range of learning opportunities. Mark making opportunities allow children to develop early writing skills. A few children can write independently for a purpose.
- Children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They develop their skills as they demonstrate counting in their daily routines. Almost all children can recognise and count numbers to ten, with a few children counting upwards to 20. Most children can identify shape and patterns throughout their numeracy rich environment. Children access extensive opportunities to develop their skills in measure and time in different play contexts.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is very good. Children can share how they are feeling through gesture and words. Children regulate their emotions well with support and as a result, almost all can engage well in their learning. Staff encourage children to make their own healthy snack and have developed very good hygiene skills. All children are developing their oral health skills well as they engage in fun tooth brushing daily. Children access outdoors daily and have time and space to develop their gross motor skills well as they run, balance on crates and learn to ride a bike.
- Almost all children are making very good progress over time as clearly evidenced in their trackers, online learning journals and practitioner professional judgement. The leadership team and practitioners monitor children's individual progress regularly. This informs children's next steps in learning, which are taken forward in a timely manner.
- Children's successes and achievements are recognised and celebrated well through praise and encouragement. The children choose the 'painting of the week', which is displayed in the welcome area for all to see. Attractive displays within the nursery share children's

achievements, with children asking confidently to put their work on the walls. The online learning tool shares children's learning and achievements with home. Practitioners encourage parents to share success from home. They should continue to monitor that all children experience celebrating wider achievement.

- The practitioner team promote equity very well across the nursery class. They work closely with families and other professionals to implement effective strategies and interventions. Practitioners take full account of children's differing cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. The team have daily conversations and weekly meetings to reflect on the impact of their strategies and make informed decisions about the way forward.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Leading and managing sustainable change through developing leadership at all levels, modelling and promoting high quality practice.

The practitioner team, with support from the depute headteacher and team leader work together very well to develop their practice. All practitioners attended the same training to develop their shared understanding and knowledge of approaches to play. The team leader continually models best practice and has supported leadership at all levels. As a result of the consistent approach within the setting, all children are making very good progress in their learning.

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.