

# Summarised inspection findings

St Andrew's RC Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

19 September 2023

## Key contextual information

St Andrew's Nursery Class is based in St Andrew's Primary School, Gorebridge, Midlothian. The nursery class is registered for 32 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection there were 27 children on the roll. Children attend full days, from 8:30am to 3pm Monday to Thursday, and 8:30am to 12:30pm on Fridays. The nursery environment consists of one large indoor space and extensive outdoor space. The Leader of Learning has overall responsibility for the nursery, with delegated management responsibility given to the principal teacher. The senior early years practitioner has overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the nursery. Most staff have been in post for just over two years, resulting recently in a more settled team.

### 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 positive relationships between practitioners, children and parents are a strength of the nursery. Children feel valued, safe and secure, as a result of the warm and welcoming ethos. Practitioners are role models for positive behaviour and demonstrate respect to children and each other. Children are forming friendships with their peers and demonstrate care and kindness.
- Most children engage well in their learning throughout the day. Children access the extensive outdoor space for extended periods of time. Access to outdoors is available almost all of the day, with most children choosing to play with the wide range of loose parts and natural materials. Indoors, children enjoy the block area, creating high towers and engaging in risky play as they climb. Practitioners provide provocations based on children's interests and create attractive learning spaces for children to explore.
- Practitioners have developed the outdoor space over time, creating well considered areas, where children can develop their independence, resilience and creativity well. Children investigate the properties of soil as they add water to create mud cakes, plant seeds and dig holes in the ground. Practitioners extend children's learning through engaging conversations and offer support when required.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are nurturing, sensitive and caring. Practitioners continue to develop their use of skilled questioning to ensure they promote children's sense of curiosity and enquiry. Children have access to digital technology and practitioners should continue to support children to deepen and extend their learning using their tablet devices.
- All practitioners capture children's engagement in a range of learning experiences. At times, they use floorbooks, learning journals and an online platform to document and record their observations well. Practitioners are rightly continuing to develop their observations of children's

learning, with a focus on capturing significant learning for all children. Practitioners share children's learning with parents through the online journals and transition reports. All children receive a transition report as they move through the nursery and into P1. Parents engage in regular informal conversations and parent consultations to share their child's progress and next steps.

- The current system for planning continues to evolve as practitioners develop further their observation and planning skills. Weekly planning meetings ensure practitioners build on children's interests as they use a mixture of intentional and responsive planning. They capture children's interests well and should continue to develop their planning cycle to capture children's voices fully, as planned. Practitioners should continue to develop the language of learning to enable all children to talk confidently about their learning.
- Practitioners track and monitor children's learning well through the use of local authority progression pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. As a team, practitioners discuss and evaluate confidently children's learning and next steps. Practitioners create children's targets in consultation with parents and should involve children more in the process. As a team, supported by the principal teacher, they should continue to develop their approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring, as planned.

## 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 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

- Practitioners' strong focus within the nursery on health and wellbeing supports most children to make good progress in their learning.
- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. Opportunities to engage in daily stories develop children's listening skills well. A weekly lending library supports children and parents to engage in rhymes and storytelling experiences at home. Most children answer questions and are confident in describing what they are doing. Staff's consistent use of visuals and signs supports well children who require additional support with language and communication. Children engage in a range of mark making experiences, with a few independently writing letters and numbers. Practitioners use singing, musical instruments and rhyme to support children's early literacy skills well. They should plan opportunities to develop further early literacy skills through real life contexts to support all children to make continued progress.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children explore the language of measure well as they build towers in the block area, talking confidently about size. Most children use number in their daily routines and through a range of problem-solving experiences. A focus on rhyme and number songs supports children to count confidently and to add numbers using one to one correspondence. Most children confidently identify a range of colours as they play. Children are introduced to coins and money, for example, in the ice cream shop. Children would benefit from an increased focus in numeracy across their environment and through real-life contexts. This will support all children to continue to effectively develop further their skills in numeracy and mathematics.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing, with a few making very good progress. Children share their feelings and emotions effectively with practitioners as they arrive at nursery, using puppets, books and emotion sticks. Children are developing their gross motor skills very well. They ride bikes confidently, with a few pedalling two wheeled bikes independently. Children engage in risky play in the garden as they navigate climbing apparatus and use the rope swing well. Children have opportunities to be snack and lunch helpers and are capable of taking on further leadership roles, for example, risk assessing outdoors.
- Practitioners are capturing progress over time for most children through professional dialogue, learning journals, floorbooks, progression pathways, child plans and children's learning targets. Practitioners should continue to streamline approaches to tracking and monitoring children's

learning to ensure they have a clear focus on children as learners and capture fully progress over time.

- Children develop an understanding of success effectively through consistent praise and encouragement from practitioners. Effective strategies support children to celebrate through the four capacities. Practitioners celebrate and share children's achievements on the 'perseverance pinecone'. A few parents share wider achievements from home and practitioners should continue to support all parents to share children's wider achievements.
- Practitioners have created a supportive and inclusive ethos across the nursery environment. They know the children and families very well and are proactive at identifying potential barriers to learning. They actively promote equity, taking full account of the differing cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of the children and families. Parents offer support to enable all children to learn about cultures and festivals. Practitioners support children well through effective partnership and introducing appropriate interventions. Practitioners monitor and reflect on the strategies in place, implementing well considered change when required. For example, reviewing visuals in line with updated speech and language therapy guidance.

## 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.