

Summarised inspection findings

St Teresa's Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

21 May 2019

Key contextual information

St Teresa's nursery class is situated within the campus of St Teresa's Primary School and serves the area of Newarthill, North Lanarkshire. Children have the use of two large playrooms and a dedicated outdoor space. The nursery is registered to provide early learning and childcare for up to 40 children age three to not yet attending primary school. Children attend on a range of flexible patterns during term time. The team has gone through considerable staffing changes in recent years.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Practitioners in the nursery are working well as a team. They have developed good relationships with the support of the headteacher. She has guided the direction of change thoughtfully. After considerable periods of change, practitioners are now starting to develop confidence in their relationships and practice. The nursery's vision, values and aims are shared with parents in the form of their mission statement. This reflects the team's aspiration for all children to experience high quality early learning. It would be helpful now for practitioners to explore further their vision and how this can be realised in practice.
- Team members show a collective commitment to improvement. They are keen to bring about positive change and are active in seeking out examples of good practice. The lead practitioner has led the development of health and wellbeing approaches well within the nursery. Overall, leadership roles across the team are still at an early stage of development and need to be planned more strategically to ensure they achieve improvement. Moving forward, it is important that leaders focus on the nursery curriculum to optimise children's learning experiences.
- As leadership roles develop in the nursery, the headteacher and the principal teacher should continue with their plans to make regular use of, and strengthen, monitoring arrangements. This will support the team to reflect more accurately on what is working well and what needs to improve.
- With the support of senior leaders, practitioners are improving approaches to determining what is working and what could be improved in the nursery. They have valuable discussions at team meetings and are beginning to use a range of national practice documents to support their reflections. The team needs to ensure now that the pace of change is increased in the nursery. Well-planned improvements, which are specific to the nursery, should be carried out in a timely manner.
- The headteacher has identified key areas which require to be improved in the nursery, and is working well with the nursery team to ensure that these are addressed quickly. She is well aware that there is continued scope for improvement. The headteacher and principal teacher

plan to work closely with the nursery staff over the coming months to drive forward further changes which will have a positive impact on children's learning.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Overall, approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is a welcoming ethos in the nursery and families are greeted warmly. Practitioners have established positive relationships with children, which encourage them to feel relaxed, safe and secure. As a result, children are becoming confident and responsible. They play well together, have the time to follow their own interests, and enjoy choosing independently from resources both indoors and outdoors. We have asked practitioners to continue to review the learning environment and children's daily routines to ensure they maximise learning. At present, a few routines restrict children's learning and choices. For example, arrangements for outdoor play. Staff should extend opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills, across the curriculum.
- Children make decisions about their learning during play. Most children sustain their concentration well during their chosen tasks. A few children require more support to achieve this. They are motivated to learn, and play together confidently and cooperatively. Children are particularly interested in sensory activities and enjoy small group work. They would benefit from increased physical challenge during outdoor play. They would also benefit from using digital technologies more regularly to stimulate their learning further.
- Practitioners use children's interests as a starting point for planning and consult them about their choices in a developmentally appropriate way. The team uses a 'mind-map' approach that is allowing them to be responsive to children's ideas and find out what they already know. As these planning processes develop, it will be important to continue to deepen children's learning. Children are now ready for an increased role in leading their own learning. This would provide increased challenge and support children to develop the skills and language of learning.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals and respect their needs and unique personalities. Almost all practitioners have an understanding of how young children develop and they are building their understanding of how they learn. Practitioners interact in a way that promotes children's self-esteem and helps them to feel encouraged and valued. They are beginning to use questioning techniques to encourage children to extend their thinking, particularly in imaginative play. This now needs to be more frequent and consistent in practice across the nursery to ensure all practitioners take advantage of opportunities to deepen children's learning.
- The team are developing their understanding of children as learners. They make detailed observations of children's play which are recorded in their 'learning stories'. Parents can take these home to share with their children. There is scope to increase children's input into their folders. At present, the learning stories do not fully demonstrate their progress over time or support practitioners to plan for future learning. Observations should reflect children's learning

across the curriculum more comprehensively, particularly in literacy and numeracy. We have asked the team to reflect closely on children's progress and to strengthen the cycle of planning, observation and assessment.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum continues to develop and is firmly based on learning through play, with caring interactions with practitioners. Team members understand the importance of promoting strong and nurturing attachments as the foundation for learning. A few universal and targeted programmes support children's development in language and music. Practitioners need to ensure that they have sufficiently high expectations for children's learning. As part of the nursery's ongoing improvement work, all staff should prioritise reviewing critically the learning environment to ensure it better meets children's needs. The range of open-ended resources, and those which promote children's creativity and problem-solving skills, should be increased.
- The essential aspects of quality early learning and childcare need to be promoted more effectively. There should be a stronger focus on numeracy, mathematics and communication. Additionally, progressive learning experiences for children, which build on their prior learning, need to be strengthened. Practitioners need to continue to use the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan for children's learning across different timescales. Children would benefit if they were consulted about their choices for appropriate learning contexts. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop this practice to add increasing depth and challenge to children's learning. There is a need to focus more on the processes of responding to children's questions, investigation and reflection on learning. It would be useful to consider curriculum design principles and expectations for children's progress as part of this work. Links across the early level to promote a play-based approach to learning should be further developed.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnerships with parents is a strong feature of practice in the nursery class. Practitioners work hard to foster warm and respectful relationships with families. Parents engage readily in daily conversations with the team. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning in a variety of ways. This includes sharing 'wow moments' from home to be included in children's learning stories and participating in 'stay and play' sessions. Children take home group mascots and books to share with their parents. We have asked the team to further develop opportunities to promote meaningful engagement with parents. As planned, it would be beneficial to parents for the nursery to re-establish their lending library. This would help parents to access a range of useful books. A few parents report they would welcome more opportunities to learn with their children.
- Home visits prove to be very worthwhile. They are helping parents to learn about the work of the nursery and how their children's learning and development are supported.
- Parents enjoy being involved in the nursery's work. They volunteer to help with different trips and events, and the parent committee takes a key role in fundraising to reduce the costs of trips and events.

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 local 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

- Practitioners are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and positive environment for children and their families. Parents report that they are very happy with the care and support their children receive. Children arrive at nursery keen to interact with their key worker and friends. Overall, practitioners are kind and caring in their interactions with children. As a result, trusting relationships are evident. Almost all children are able to play either with or alongside other children. They interact well with each other, sharing resources and space in a developmentally appropriate way. Children have a good understanding of the 'nursery rules' and try hard to follow these throughout the session.
- Practitioners use praise well to motivate children and to recognise individual successes. Weekly group sessions promote children's self-esteem and build their emotional resilience. Children engage positively with these sessions, displaying a good understanding of the strategies they can use when they are upset. Practitioners report that the programme is having a positive impact on children's social and emotional wellbeing.
- Practitioners make good use of the wellbeing indicators to plan learning contexts and next steps. Children enjoy taking home the 'wellbeing rucksack' to learn more about 'Sid' and 'Shanarri', the wellbeing mascots. They also talk enthusiastically about the books they have been reading to develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Currently, children are learning about being safe. Most children can describe when it is safe to cross the road and a few children can describe how to use nursery resources, such as scissors, in a safe way. Most children offer appropriate suggestions for healthy eating choices. We have asked practitioners to review the organisation of snack. This is to ensure that it is a sociable and positive learning experience that promotes healthy routines and choices. The majority of children benefit from daily opportunities to access their outdoor learning area, which supports their wellbeing.
- Practitioners are confident in their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. With parents, they create an 'All about me' booklet which is used to support each child's care, learning and development. Practitioners review these regularly with parents. We have asked that the team consider the suitability of changing arrangements in the nursery to ensure that appropriate privacy is provided for children at all times.
- Practitioners know their children and families very well. They work in partnership with colleagues from health, speech and language therapy, and the 'communication and transitions team' to support children who require additional help with their learning. GIRFme plans are in place to support specific children to support their progress.
- All children and families are treated fairly and with respect. A long term plan is in place which promotes learning about diversity, different festivals and celebrations throughout the year. We have asked practitioners to ensure resources and documentation reflect fully the nursery's ethos of equality.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. They are becoming confident as they communicate during play. Children are developing their talking and listening skills through small group work. They are building an understanding of the patterns of language through planned activities which focus on rhyme. These approaches should now be integrated into practice more effectively across the playroom. Children regularly access books and a few recall familiar narratives. A few children also enjoy mark-making and create drawings to represent their ideas. The majority of children are becoming confident in recognising their own name as they self-register at snack and welcome time. Children would benefit from being given more real-life opportunities to develop and apply their skills in early language and communication across the curriculum. They would also benefit from experiencing more consistent high quality learning in early language and communication. This would enable them to make the best possible progress.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. They count naturally during play and nursery routines. Children demonstrate an understanding of size, amount and shape as they enjoy sand play and experiment with collage materials. A few children apply their counting, sorting and number recognition skills as they play games on the interactive board. Children are not yet experiencing opportunities for exploring information handling through their daily routines. The majority of children would benefit from additional support or challenge in this area of their learning in order that they make the best possible progress.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. They are caring towards each other and show respect as they independently share resources and take turns. They understand what it means to be 'responsible' within the playroom. Planned learning around wellbeing is helping children to develop the language with which to talk about their experiences and ways to keep safe. The majority of children understand how to support their own health through daily routines such as snack and regular hand washing, although this requires reinforcement that is more consistent. We have asked the team to provide children with more physical and adventurous play to support their developing physical skills and resilience. Children also require more opportunities to be consulted and develop leadership skills throughout their early learning experiences.
- Children are developing as confident individuals through the nurturing relationships they have with practitioners. The team now need to demonstrate more effectively the progress children are making over time and ensure significant learning is built upon. At present, arrangements for

tracking children's progress are not effective in supporting this. Children's achievements are celebrated informally through daily discussions, kind use of praise and the setting's 'wow moments'.

- Practitioners have a sound understanding of the needs and circumstances of children and families. They are proactive at identifying and reducing barriers to learning and work closely with other professionals when required. It will be important for the team to reflect closely on all strategies for intervention to ensure they are consistently implemented and therefore achieve the desired impact.

Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
 - Role of practitioners and leaders
 - Identification of learning needs and targeted support
 - Removal of barriers to learning
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- Practitioners value children as individuals. Regular wellbeing meetings allow them to discuss and plan next steps for the different needs of individuals and groups of children. Practitioners take account of children's prior experiences and build on pertinent information they receive from parents when children join the nursery.
 - Practitioners foster positive and warm relationships with children taking good account of their individual needs. Children benefit from having a dedicated key worker who knows and supports them well. They come together with their key worker and group for small group activities each day. Key workers take responsibility for developing a learning story for each child. This includes photographs and observations of children's learning across the curriculum. They also include personal targets for children and identify some next steps in learning. These are of a variable quality and next steps are not always appropriate or clearly defined. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to the learning stories and have regular opportunities to review them to learn about their children's progress. We have asked practitioners to support children to engage with the learning stories to allow them to talk about their learning and achievements.
 - Overall, the majority of tasks, activities and resources are at an appropriate level to help most children make progress over time. However, there is scope to increase the level of challenge to enable all children to make the best possible progress. There is also a need to increase opportunities for children to access more stimulating and exciting learning contexts. This will promote a deeper and more sustained level of engagement. We have discussed with practitioners ways in which they could develop the learning environment to help achieve this.
 - The team have developed positive partnership working and link well with partner agencies and specialists. This enables them to plan for the needs of children who may require additional support. At fortnightly wellbeing meetings children's needs are discussed. Where appropriate, plans are in place for children who require additional and targeted support to help them learn and maintain their wellbeing. Overall, children who face barriers to their learning are supported well. There is now a need for the evaluation and analysis of information gathered on all children's progress to be more robust.

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.