

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Ninian's Primary School and Nursery Class**

Stirling Council

18 December 2018

## Key contextual information

St Ninian's Primary nursery class is located in the recently refurbished original school building next to the primary school. The school is located in the St Ninian's area of Stirling. The nursery class is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) to 30 children and offers morning, afternoon and full time sessions. The staffing in the nursery includes a senior early childhood educator, four early childhood educators and a Modern Apprentice. A peripatetic principal nursery teacher provides curriculum support. At the time of inspection, 27 children attended the morning session with 17 in the afternoon with 15 children attending full time places.

### 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 ethos in the setting is welcoming and nurturing, with positive relationships evident between children and practitioners. This results in children being happy, settled and enthusiastic about their learning. Most children respond well to each other and the majority participate in cooperative play. Practitioners work together to create a learning environment that promotes independence, collaboration and resilience. Children engage in spontaneous play, which is freely available both indoors and outdoors. Most children are motivated and engaged in their play and very much enjoy their time in the setting. A few children would benefit from opportunities that provide increased levels of depth and challenge to ensure they make the progress they are capable of.
- The outdoor area has been developed and resourced with a focus on the promotion of experiences reflecting children's interests and ideas. As planned, the continued development of this area will fully realise the potential of this resource and extend children's learning.
- Practitioners are warm and caring in their interactions. Practitioners know children well because of dialogue with their families. They are increasing their knowledge of them as learners. Practitioners have a good understanding of child development. This means they adapt their language, support and encouragement well to individuals. There is now scope for practitioners to develop their questioning techniques further to better support and extend children's thinking. This will ensure children achieve their potential and successfully build on prior learning.
- Digital technology is used appropriately to support children's learning and to encourage enquiry. For example, through the use of programmable toys, tablet computers and programmes learning in literacy and numeracy is consolidated.
- Practitioners are increasingly making use of their observations recorded in electronic journals to support the planning process. Overall, experiences meet the learning needs of most children with their interests and ideas used in a responsive way. Individual electronic learning journals

and planning sheets demonstrate the range of activities and learning children are involved in. Applied learning walls have been researched and introduced to support this. As identified through the setting's quality assurance processes, a more focused, individualised approach should be developed. This will ensure processes increasingly reflect the progress children are making in their learning.

- A positive start has been made to tracking and monitoring individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Individual learning intentions and success criteria are in place for all children. Practitioners are committed to developing their knowledge and skills further in order to ensure that they have the sharpest focus on what children need to learn next. Children would benefit from more focused conversations about their individual learning to help them review their achievements and plan for what they might learn next. This will support children to reflect on themselves as learners and should consistently build on previous learning.
- Children who require additional help with their learning are supported well through an individualised approach. This is having a positive impact on children's development and learning.

## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- The information gathered from a range of inspection activities indicates that children are making good progress over time across all areas of the curriculum.
- There is an appropriate focus on health and wellbeing. Children understand the importance of hand washing and tooth brushing and can talk about why it is important to eat healthy foods. Children are developing good independence skills. They demonstrate developing fine motor control, for example with tools such as scissors and tongs. The majority are able to communicate their needs and feelings, according to their stage of development. Most children have a growing awareness of fairness and the emotions of other children. They understand the need for the established nursery charter linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They are becoming confident communicators, using a wide range of vocabulary. This is as a result of the focus on weekly words and associated planned learning experiences and related resources. Most children engage in conversations with adults and will ask appropriate questions. They are beginning to listen and take turns. Children enjoy hearing rhymes and stories and recall key events and characters with a few predicting what will happen next. A small test of change with a focus on phonological awareness evidences an increased awareness of sounds and letters amongst children and their families. Most children are aware of environmental print and understand that text has different meanings.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, children are making good progress. They count naturally through play and during nursery routines. Most show developing number recognition skills with a few children beginning to explore numbers beyond ten. Children use appropriate mathematical language as they play to compare the size, length and weight of different objects. Children are developing an understanding of shape through a variety of learning experiences. Most children recognise two-dimensional shapes and a few are able to name simple three-dimensional objects. Most children are becoming aware of mathematical concepts. They apply this during art and junk modelling activities and can choose strategies to help them solve problems. Mathematical language is being developed and used to compare and describe height and length through block play. Children use comparative language when playing at the water tray and show a developing understanding of weight and volume.
- Overall, children are making good progress in most areas of their learning and development. They are gaining confidence and are developing as independent learners. They enjoy using musical instruments and are able to sing songs that promote rhyme and rhythm. At the

creative area, they make choices and are developing a wide range of skills. This results in children creating interesting pieces of artwork using a variety of resources. Children demonstrate sustained levels of engagement in the role play area and enjoy the opportunities to explore imaginative roles and the wide variety of resources provided.

- Children's achievements are celebrated through praise and encouragement. Parents share their child's achievements from outside the setting through contributing to electronic journals. An overview of children's achievements will contribute to the overall picture of children's progress over time.
- As discussed, children's progress over time is not yet tracked systematically. It will be important for practitioners and senior leaders to have a more robust overview of the progress children are making within the setting. This information should ensure continuity and progression within and across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.
- The senior early childhood educator and practitioners have a clear understanding of delivering equity for all children. The setting provides and delivers parental engagement programmes to support parents and carers to enable them to support their children's learning. Parents spoke very positively about these initiatives. Practitioners value the individual circumstances of children and families as well as factors that may influence a child's participation in learning. This information is used to promote inclusion and equity.

### 1. Quality of care and support

- The nursery promoted a caring, nurturing ethos. Parents told us that they felt included in the nursery and that they found staff friendly and approachable. Staff knew children well, through the effective key worker system we could see that most children had built an attachment with their keyworker and sought their reassurance and support when needed, highlighting that children felt safe and secure at nursery.
- Respectful, nurturing relationships had developed between staff and children as well as with parents/carers. We met with groups of parents who spoke very positively about the impact of parental engagement and learning within the centre. Parents had been consulted about what kind of groups/ workshops would be of benefit to them. Their suggestions were taken into consideration and a number of parent groups such as; craft groups, word aware groups and a 'family connects' programme had been set up and well attended.
- We were confident that children and families were being well supported. Staff were knowledgeable about children and families individual needs. We discussed with the management and staff team how more robust and meaningful personal plans would enable staff to support children more effectively. The setting should, in line with legislation, further develop personal plans which set out how children's individual needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices. Staff should ensure that personal plans are updated as and when children's individual needs change.
- Children who required additional support were well supported. There were strong links between the nursery and other agencies to provide timely, consistent strategies to support children. Visual aids and Makaton were being used to encourage children who required support in communication. We observed the positive outcome of Makaton in the nursery promoting inclusion, as all children and staff were enjoying learning to sign.
- Systems were in place for the management of medication. Parents provided written consent prior to the centre accepting or administering medication to children. The centre ensured that parents whose children required long-term medication, such as inhalers for asthma provided inhalers that were stored safely in the centre. It was clear from our discussions with staff that they were aware of the actions they would take if a child became unwell; however, signs and symptoms of illness needed to be recorded in more detail. We discussed with the management and staff team how they should work with, and support parents to provide more specific details of the signs and symptoms that children would present if medication needed to be administered.
- **Care Inspectorate grade: very good**

### 2. Quality of environment

- The safe, nurturing environment promoted curiosity, investigation and discovery. Children were able to choose from and access independently a wide range of resources. Children and staff had settled into and were enjoying the benefits of their new building. Playrooms were well resourced, with quality resources and some natural materials that stimulated

children's curiosity and offered challenge. We observed children leading and directing their own play indoors and outdoors. Staff were respectful and skilled in supporting and intervening to promote positive outcomes for children.

- The playrooms, reception areas and 'The Nook' (parent's room) were safe and aesthetically pleasing, with plenty of natural light, calm décor and high quality furnishings. The premises were cleaned and maintained by Stirling Council. The setting benefited from the support of janitorial staff. There were appropriate systems in place for recording maintenance issues. Staff were vigilant in minimising the spread of infection and following infection prevention and control procedures.
- Staff were committed to ensuring and promoting children's health and safety. They enabled children to participate and learn about risky play and supported them to make decisions about the risks. An example of this was children being encouraged to use garden tools and kitchen utensils safely and respectfully in their play.
- Children benefitted from fresh air and physical activity daily. The outdoors was used as an extension to the playroom, a member of staff was based outdoors daily, this enabled children to choose to play outdoors spontaneously. Staff ensured that children wore appropriate outdoor clothes in all weather conditions which protected them. The management team should continue to work with and liaise with the local authority and environmental health department to enable children to have the use of the 'STEAM growing garden' in order to extend learning opportunities outdoors.
- Snack and lunchtimes were a particularly nurturing and sociable experience for children. The large dining table and chairs provided a homely welcoming place for children to eat and chat with staff and their peers. We observed children over snack and lunchtime. We noted that children were encouraged to be independent during meal times. A child helper helped staff to set up and prepare snacks, during lunchtime staff sat with and ate with children.

**Care Inspectorate grade: very good**

### **3. Quality of staffing**

- The established staff team were motivated and committed to the continuous development and improvement of the service. We found staff to be motivated, experienced and committed to providing a high quality of care and education to the children.
- Staff held appropriate childcare qualifications and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff were aware of the codes of practice of the SSSC and maintained records of their training and personal development.
- The impact of training that staff had been engaged in had been positive. Staff could tell us how core and specific training helped to support individual and specific children. Staff were motivated to put their learning into action. They talked about their plans to attend further training to further develop and improve their own personal skills and the setting as a whole, enabling them to review and improve outcomes for children.
- The management team should work with and support staff to further their skills and expertise in how they monitor, track and record children's learning and progression. More

effective monitoring by management of staff performance and practice would build staff confidence in this area.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

#### **4. Quality of management and leadership**

- The registered manager of the service was the head teacher of the primary school. This was a new appointment since the care inspectorate last inspected the service in November 2015. The head teacher and depute head teacher had overall responsibility for the nursery and the staff team.
- Through our observations and discussions with the staff team it was clear that the day-to-day running and monitoring of the service was carried out by the senior early year's educator, with support from a peripatetic early year's principal teacher. As planned, the registered manager should now take a more strategic role in supporting, monitoring and auditing children's progress and staff practice and performance.
- The service involved children and families in the service. There were good opportunities for parents and children to give feedback and offer suggestions and ideas about the quality of the service.
- The effective parental engagement programmes provided opportunities for parents/ carers to learn about the strategies and frameworks used in the nursery curriculum. This enabled them to continue to support their children's learning and development at home.
- The staff team knew each other well and regularly had formal discussions with each other about their work and the future development of the service.

**Care Inspectorate grade: good**

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements or recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no recommendations.

## 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.

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