

Summarised inspection findings

St Edward's Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

6 June 2023

Key contextual information

St Edward's nursery class is located within the main school building. The setting has one playroom and free flow access to a secure outside space. The current roll is 32 children aged three to those not yet attending school. The nursery class provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare between the hours of 8.45 am to 2.45 pm during term time.

The headteacher is the designated manager. The principal teacher has strategic responsibility for the nursery class supported by a lead practitioner who has day-to-day leadership and management responsibility.

There have been significant staffing challenges in recent years with vacancies currently being advertised. Temporary staff have recently been added to the team.

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

- Senior leaders and practitioners reflect the whole school vision and values in their everyday interactions, practice and nurturing approaches with children and families. All practitioners demonstrate respectful and kind relationships with one another and with the children. They provide effective support to develop children's confidence. Senior leaders and practitioners are reviewing the current vision, values and aims to include the views of new parents, new nursery team members and children. This will better reflect the aspirations of all children and their families. This work will contribute to the whole school review of the curriculum rationale.
- The principal teacher and lead practitioner provide clear leadership and direction to the nursery team. They are visible in the setting, approachable, well respected and supportive. The lead practitioner has an accurate understanding of the strengths and what needs to develop further in the setting. Practitioners value the personal and professional support provided by senior leaders and feel empowered and confident to lead improvements. They work effectively as a team across the setting. The nursery team meets regularly for professional dialogue. This includes planning meetings and termly reviews.
- The lead practitioner models play pedagogy, high-quality interactions and nurturing relationships very effectively. The headteacher and lead practitioner observe aspects of practice in the setting and provide feedback to the team. As quality assurance processes continue to be re-established it will be important for this feedback to be more detailed and linked to national guidance.
- Senior leaders support professional enquiry and collaborative professional learning, and practitioners engage with a wide variety of professional learning opportunities. A next step for them will be to reflect more carefully on the focus of the professional learning they undertake and deliver, so that it links well with the setting's unique context and child-centred pedagogy.

- The majority of practitioners in the current team have leadership responsibilities for initiatives within the setting. These include numeracy and mathematics, a programme to support reading skills, and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of these roles. It will be important to ensure that leadership roles reflect future key improvement priorities. Senior leaders plan to outline these key priorities more clearly using a separate improvement plan that outlines key actions, the practitioners responsible and the timescales.
- Senior leaders have developed and established appropriate self-evaluation activities and quality assurance processes. These support practitioners well in using formal self-evaluation tools to reflect on the quality of provision. Staffing challenges have interrupted the cycle of self-evaluation and improvement. The whole team have responded positively to these challenges and are managing change effectively. Senior leaders plan to develop further peer moderation to support developments in the future and enhance the setting's self-evaluation processes. Shared reflection will help to build capacity for improvement with the new team. The nursery is well placed to continue to improve.

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 staff team provides a calm, welcoming and positive environment. Practitioners gather valuable information from parents when children start in the setting. This helps to ensure that all children are supported to feel valued, safe and ready to learn.
- Children engage with a range of quality experiences, with access to both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. The environment is well organised and provides spaces for children to explore independently. Practitioners and children should continue to review all resources and spaces to give children greater ownership and choice within their environment. This will provide more opportunities for children, without adult direction, to transfer their learning and play across the nursery. It will also allow children to develop further their use of open-ended resources to extend their play.
- Children and practitioners make good use of digital technologies to support and enhance their learning. They use an interactive board and devices to support literacy and numeracy, and to research areas of interest.
- Practitioners' interactions are consistently warm and supportive. All children benefit from nurturing relationships with the nursery team. Most practitioners make use of effective questioning to encourage children to talk about their experiences. Practitioners should develop further questioning and commentary to support children to talk about and plan for their learning. For example, practitioners could record children's views during the session with children.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with practitioners to discuss children's interests, needs and skills identified from observations undertaken. Senior leaders gather data to evidence the progress children are making in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. This data is used well to inform appropriate interventions and plan for future learning. The nursery has introduced online learning journals recently to track and monitor children's progress. These replace a previous online tool for tracking children's progress. Practitioners know children well and make observations about their play and learning. Observations are recorded within the new learning journals. Senior leaders should continue monitoring practitioners' observations to ensure they record children's significant learning consistently.
- Practitioners plan and track children's learning using CfE early-level experiences and outcomes. Senior leaders and all practitioners meet weekly to plan responsively and intentionally and for provocations. The meetings include discussions about individual children's learning and progress. It will be important to continue to monitor the balance between child-led and adult-directed experiences throughout the day. Involving children in this process will develop further children's ownership and leadership of their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Children learn through play across a curriculum that is child-centred, responsive and progressive. Practitioners respond to children's interests and build effectively on prior learning. Practitioners use tools within electronic learning journals to record learning linked to all CfE curriculum areas effectively. Practitioners deliver programmes of learning for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing during daily 'together time'. Senior leaders and practitioners should consider how these approaches can be woven into the children's play, aligning with the principles from Realising the Ambition.
- Senior leaders and practitioners support transitions from home to school and nursery to school very well. There is a well-planned transition programme outlined in a policy document. This includes an induction day for children and parents when they start nursery, a home visit and a phased start outlined in the setting's settling in policy. Children show confidence in using regularly the school dining hall for lunches and the gym hall for experiences, including physical activity. In addition, children visit the P1 class throughout their final year in nursery. Senior leaders share prior learning information with P1 class teachers in the school. The P1 teachers and the nurture teacher visit and observe children in the nursery where they have additional information shared with them from the nursery team. This supports teachers to build on children's progress effectively and to ensure continuity of learning across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners know their families and any potential barriers to learning very well. Practitioners build this knowledge through home visits and nursery visits for children and families. This enables key workers to be responsive to all children.
- Parents are fully involved in the setting. This includes evaluating the setting through surveys, participation at 'play and stay' sessions and use of the setting's Loving Lending Library. Practitioners value the parents' input and have strong, mutually respectful relationships. Parents groups are being re-established following the pandemic. Almost all parents agree that nursery practitioners share ideas on how to support their child's learning at home. This is leading to increased levels of engagement at the 'play and stay' sessions.
- Parents speak positively about the caring, nurturing relationships within the nursery setting. They are kept informed using newsletters and notice boards in the entrance area. A practitioner enquiry on parental engagement identified that online learning journals would provide parents with more opportunities to share their children's home learning. Almost all parents feel that their views are considered when making changes.
- The nursery class has very good links within the local community. Practitioners use these links, and related opportunities, to enhance children's learning. This includes children creating a weekly snack shopping list and going to the local supermarket. They also visit the local library in small groups on a weekly basis, using public transport. In addition, all children visit a local park every week to support their gross motor skills and awareness of the local area. It will be useful to evidence the learning experiences, outcomes and skills that children benefit from as a result of these 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 ethos and culture of the setting supports very positive and nurturing relationships. Children are learning about wellbeing in a supportive environment. Children feel safe, secure and confident in the setting with practitioners who know and understand them. Children settle well into the playroom. They are aware of how to stay safe and express this clearly in relation to real-life contexts. For example, children share their understanding of how to cross the road safely during trips to a local park. Each child is recognised as a unique individual, with their own needs and rights. Practitioners should continue to embed the use of the language of wellbeing with all children.
- All practitioners support sharing, turn taking and children's independence skills very well. Children prepare snack and dress for outdoor play confidently and independently. Daily routines also support wellbeing. For example, practitioners ensure that snack and mealtimes are sociable and happy. As a result, children develop independence and a wide range of life skills. Children are aware of healthy food and how making healthy choices improves their wellbeing. Children participate in toothbrushing and, as a result, are learning about the importance of dental hygiene.
- Practitioner interactions with all children are warm and caring. They respond appropriately to children's feelings by offering praise and encouragement. Children have a variety of opportunities to explore and express their feelings and emotions. They are learning to manage their own emotions and recognise how others feel. They achieve this through stories and the use of skilled questioning by practitioners.
- All practitioners comply and engage actively with statutory requirements and codes of practice. They are aware of their responsibilities in relation to statutory duties. All practitioners understand the setting's approaches to child protection and safeguarding to improve outcomes for children and keep them safe.
- All practitioners and senior leaders know each child and their personal circumstances very well. They work in partnership with families and children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. Senior leaders identify strategies and use resources very effectively to support children's learning. Senior leaders and practitioners ensure that all children make positive progress in their learning and development. Senior leaders work and liaise with partner agencies to ensure children have access to support as required. For example, educational psychologists and speech and language therapists provide targeted support. They have regular review meetings to discuss the pastoral and educational needs of children and involve children, families and staff members.
- Children and adults respect each other. The nursery has a strong sense of community within a wider local community where everyone is valued and included. Children feel included, engaged

and involved in the setting. Practitioners have an in-depth knowledge of children and their context, including the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. They value diversity and challenge discrimination. Practitioners' approaches to ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion result in improved outcomes for children. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to develop their use of resources that value and celebrate age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief.

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

- Overall, children make good progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing.
- Children are making good progress in listening and talking and are keen communicators who engage in conversations with adults. Children recognise their name and are encouraged to use mark making within daily routines such as self-registration, creating the snack menu and writing shopping lists. They share a good knowledge of the books they engage with during 'together time'. Most children listen attentively to stories and answer questions posed by the practitioners. They are encouraged to use different props and resources to explore the events and characters within the stories. Children would benefit from more opportunities to mark make freely during their play. This will support better their emergent writing and understanding of the purpose and meaning of text in real-life contexts.
- Practitioners place a strong focus on numeracy within the setting. Most children count and recognise numbers 0-10. A few children count and recognise numbers beyond 15. There are opportunities to apply early numeracy skills within daily routines and play experiences. Children are exploring volume and beginning to use mathematical language when pouring and filling in water play and at snack time. Practitioners should ensure children develop further their understanding of other mathematical concepts such as money, measurement and time within their play. Sometimes, they miss opportunities to build on children's knowledge and understanding of these areas.
- Almost all children are making good progress in nurturing their health and wellbeing. This is having a positive impact on their learning, development and achievements. Children are confident and are developing independence and resilience within the nursery environment. They try new experiences and engage with new learning confidently. Most children benefit from a wide range of opportunities outdoors and all children spend time in the gym hall. This is developing and consolidating their balance, coordination and gross motor skills. It will be important to evidence clearly the skills and learning outcomes individual children are achieving because of these experiences. All children play together well and are learning to cooperate and take turns. They experience and understand the seasons through outdoor experiences and are being supported to develop their sense of wonder in the natural world.
- Senior leaders can demonstrate children's progress over time using data from programmes of learning. Improvements in the observation of significant learning will better evidence a wider

range of children's learning and development and support more holistically children's learning over time.

- Children's achievements from home and nursery are recorded within online learning journals. Parents are participating well and contributing to the learning journals, particularly when sharing children's achievements. Senior leaders should ensure that these achievements link to skills for learning and life. This will support children and parents to understand the skills they are achieving as a result of the activities.
- Senior leaders and practitioners ensure equity for all children and families within the nursery. Parents and carers have strong positive relationships with the staff. They are welcomed and supported through a range of opportunities for engagement and participation. Regular opportunities are provided to welcome parents and carers into the nursery to share in their children's 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.