

Summarised inspection findings

Machanhill Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

25 February 2020

Key contextual information

Machanhill Nursery class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) to 43 children aged three to five years. At the time of inspection, all children attend on a full time basis. The team work from one main playroom that has a separate entrance, cloakroom area and outdoor space. Children access frequently the main school building to use the gym hall, library and dining area. The team includes full and part-time ELC practitioners, a lead practitioner, teacher and part-time excellence and equity lead. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. However, the depute headteacher has the management remit for the nursery.

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

- The well-established nursery class is a valued, integral part of the school and community. The school and nursery class share the same vision and values. Practitioners, children and parents understand these. An emphasis on promoting respect and happiness is evident in all aspects of the setting. The team should continue to involve new families, and the community in engaging with their values to ensure they are current and relevant.
- The team have maintained consistency and progressed improvements during a period of significant change. Practitioners have worked well together to implement extended hours for families. Led by the effective depute headteacher and experienced lead practitioner the team frequently discuss and reflect on changes. Practitioners now need to evaluate how improvements, for example to the indoor learning environment, have impacted on children's learning. This will support them to identify and plan their own next steps in their improvement journey.
- Almost all practitioners have delegated leadership roles. The team are active participants in new, focused working groups. Whilst these groups are at an early stage of development, practitioners feel empowered by their responsibilities. The team need to develop skills and confidence in evaluating the impact of improvements on outcomes for children. A few children have leadership roles. They are proud of assisting practitioners with key tasks. The team recognise that they should increase the range of leadership roles for all children.
- Across the team, practitioners have a commitment to their continuous professional learning. Practitioners have dedicated time to engage in professional dialogue and collegiate learning. Their recent training and visits to other settings have improved their practice in supporting children's early literacy. Commendably, a few practitioners are also engaged in further study. However, staff do not yet have a clear, shared pedagogy across the early level. Supported by the headteacher, the team should explore and develop further their shared understanding of high quality early learning and childcare.

- Practitioners are beginning to use national guidance including ‘How good is our early learning and childcare?’ to support their self-evaluation. Observations of learning are beginning to improve due to effective support from the depute. The team have improved important aspects of the learning environment using advice from external specialists. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop an enabling learning environment. The team also need to continue to develop further their systems to monitor, evaluate and improve their practice and outcomes for children. Practitioners ask parents and children on a regular basis for their views. At present, their evaluations focus on what they have enjoyed. The team should now explore a wider range of strategies to involve children and parents in leading improvements.

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

- Practitioners have respectful and nurturing relationships with children. Children are friendly, they feel valued, safe and secure within the inclusive ethos. Almost all children are confident and motivated in their play. As a result, most children concentrate well on their chosen activities or when engaged in structured activities led by practitioners. Planning of learning should continue to support the development of children's creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills.
- Practitioners know children and their stage of development well. They use this information to support children to achieve. Most use questioning well to support children to develop their thinking skills. All team members engage readily in conversations with children to encourage them to talk about their experiences and share their ideas. They need to encourage children to share their interests, achievements and prior knowledge to inform their planning in a more meaningful way. Children should make important decisions about what they want to learn and lead their own learning.
- Practitioners use digital technologies well to support and enhance children's learning. Children enjoy using the interactive whiteboard, programmable toys and tablets to play number games. The majority of children follow instructions and take turns well as they interact with technology.
- Practitioners make frequent observations of children's learning and can talk confidently about their progress over time. The team record these observations in children's individual online learning journals, which helps them to plan for children's next steps. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the learning journals, for example, to share learning from home. However, practitioners could develop further their observations and children's learning stories. This will provide a coherent and individualised story of children's learning over time. Children are ready to have greater ownership of their learning journal. They need to have learning conversations with practitioners to help them reflect on their learning and to think about what they might learn next.
- Practitioners work collaboratively to develop a holistic view of children's progress. They gather some information on children's progress using a variety of methods. The team needs to streamline assessment information. Practitioners need to improve their understanding of children's progress through, for example, working with other settings. The team does not yet have a shared understanding of expectations of children's progress across the early level.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence to plan a range of learning across the curriculum. They plan together as a team taking some account of children's interests and development needs. Practitioners are aware they need to streamline planning documentation. The team need to have greater flexibility and responsiveness in the planning for children's learning to allow children to take the lead in the planning process.
- The team is providing useful opportunities to develop children's learning and development in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across different areas of the playroom and outdoors. Children need more opportunities to apply their skills independently across learning.
- Practitioners support families well during transitions into the setting. Children benefit from well-established pastoral transitions from the setting into primary school. Practitioners are keen to work more closely with school staff to develop a shared play pedagogy. Working together, they need to extend the transition programme throughout the year to support increased continuity and progression for children across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The team deliver a good range of opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning. These include termly stay and play sessions, family cookery workshops and literacy activities. Parents, family members and community volunteers help with outings and fundraising. They donate and create equipment such as the popular mud kitchen and a new pirate ship. Recently, practitioners and parents have met to discuss ways to increase the level and range of parental engagement, forming a new parents' group. As planned, the team should work in partnership with families to extend this area of practice.
- Practitioners plan and offer workshops and home learning resources to support parents to engage in their child's early learning. These workshops are popular and well attended. The team should continue to expand the range of ways they support home learning. The team should evaluate, share and celebrate the impact of this work with families on children's learning.
- Practitioners use a website and well-populated social media to promote a good range of current information for families. Parents feel well informed about the work of the nursery class. A few parents are interested in exploring more ways to receive and share information.

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

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 use their knowledge and understanding of children, families and the local community to support effectively their wellbeing. The team use a wide range of information about children's needs well to inform all aspects of their work. They invest time and attention to develop trusting, respectful relationships with children and families. As a result, children are confident and secure in nursery. The team support children effectively to share, take turns and begin to understand one another's feelings and rights. Children are beginning to resolve conflicts independently over sharing space or resources.
- Practitioners have worked together with children and families to improve how children start their extended day at nursery. Adapting the routine and structure of the day has improved relationships with children and families. Parents report these changes have ensured a calm, welcoming start to the session. On a few occasions, in popular areas of the playroom, noise levels are high. The team should continue to monitor and evaluate their routine and ensure a noise level that promotes children's learning and wellbeing.
- All children have a clear care plan, written in partnership with families. Practitioners review regularly these plans with parents. The whole team understand and implement the clear strategies ensuring that children who require additional support with their learning receive consistent and appropriate support. Practitioners adapt activities, environments and practice due to helpful advice from other professional agencies. Practitioners should continue to review and improve their skills in recording individualised targets for children to support further their learning. The school needs to involve nursery practitioners when reviewing the whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour.
- Almost all children have good skills in dressing themselves for outdoor play, when washing their hands before snack and helping to clear away their dishes. Children are independent and resourceful as they access materials to extend their play and transport resources between areas. Practitioners' careful planning and effective support for children in the large school dining hall ensures they have a sociable and enjoyable experience. Children are ready for increased responsibility in the setting.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. Practitioners have regular professional learning that keeps their knowledge up-to-date. The lead practitioner maintains an accurate overview of record keeping in the setting to meet key requirements.
- Children benefit from the freedom, and energetic play in their outdoor area. Children relax, sing and are absorbed for extended periods during well-planned sensory experiences which enhance their wellbeing. The team have a good understanding of the national wellbeing indicators. Increasingly, they support children to begin to make meaningful connections

between their experiences and wellbeing. Practitioners now highlight children's achievements due to recent improvement work. A home learning project 'Adventure Ted' links learning between parents and practitioners. The team should also work together to ensure their approach to health and wellbeing builds effectively on what children already know. Children grow in confidence and learn about safety during visits to Chatelherault Country Park. Practitioners need to extend the scope of their work to support children to build their resilience and apply their skills in unfamiliar contexts.

- Practitioners value cultural diversity and they plan for religious and cultural celebrations, which are relevant to the community of the children attending the nursery. The team invest time in supporting children to understand and value the different, unique abilities of all children. To increase children's developing understanding of fairness, practitioners should explore a wider range of topics such as gender.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. Children listen attentively during daily interactive story experiences. Most handle and discuss books with confidence and enthusiasm during visits to the local library. Children engage frequently with fiction and non-fiction books and texts in the large, comfortable book corner. Most children demonstrate a keen interest in books and stories. Children learn about written language and develop their early writing skills well through mark making in different contexts. A few children revisit books they have made about experiences out with nursery. The majority of children recognise their name in print and show an awareness of the letter names and their sounds as they copy words and letters. A few children are proud of their developing skills as they confidently write their own name to 'sign in'. Children need to apply and develop further these literacy skills within all areas of their play.
- Most children are making good progress in early numeracy. Most are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they talk about length. Children use terms such as long, short, longest, shortest with understanding as they compare strands of cooked spaghetti. A few children measure and record their creations in the construction area. Children are developing confidence in counting through daily routines and during free play. With support, a few children use practical materials to count on and add two numbers together. Children now need to apply and develop further their skills through real-life contexts.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They show care and respect for each other. Children are beginning to develop a sense of fairness with the support of caring practitioners. They are independent in daily routines such as snack time and getting dressed to go outdoors. Children are developing their gross motor skills well during weekly physical education sessions and as they climb, explore and cycle in the outdoors. They are developing an awareness about keeping safe in the cold weather during conversations with practitioners and as they assess risks in the outdoors. Children now need to apply and develop further their skills and prior learning in health and wellbeing.
- Over time, children are making good progress across their learning. Practitioners do not yet track progress in other areas outwith literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children should use their learning journals with practitioners to understand the progress they are making.

- Practitioners capture and celebrate children's achievements from within and outwith the setting. Parents are encouraged to contribute to this. A few children celebrate their success as they achieve awards in dancing and participate in sports. Children are active and responsible citizens as they visit local community projects and the care home. Practitioners should use information about achievements to build consistently upon children's prior learning and skill development.
- Identified children who need specific interventions or support are making good progress. Enhanced resources for sensory play, partnership working with the local library and professional learning on language acquisition has a positive impact on the progress of individual children. The team now need to measure the impact of interventions on the progress of individuals and groups.

Choice of QI : 2.5 Family Learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early Intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

- The team have long-standing positive relationships with families. Practitioners work hard to ensure families feel welcome and valued in the life of the setting. Effective personalised support provides advice about specific topics such as managing children's behaviour. The team are aware of, and respond promptly to, changes in family circumstances. As a result, families feel well supported by the team and participate well in regular opportunities to discuss their child's learning. To extend this work it will be important to engage with all families in order to understand and minimise potential barriers to participation. By developing a wider range of opportunities, families will be able to choose the right type of engagement for their own circumstances and needs.
- The team recognise and value the importance of parents in supporting their child's learning, development and emotional wellbeing. Extended families and younger siblings attend a range of activities and events such as rhyme time and termly stay and play sessions. This enables practitioners to build good relationships with families at a very early stage. The team respond with high levels of sensitivity and respect to changes in individual family's lives. At present, much of the support responds to children's individual needs and is delivered and planned by the team. Over time, the home learning environments and needs of the local community should more directly influence early intervention work. Practitioners recognise that they need to build their skills in measuring the impact of working with, and for, families to support home learning.
- Families regularly attend the established programme of parental engagement opportunities. At present, there are a few family learning events on offer such as popular cookery workshops. These provide opportunities for children and family members to share enjoyable learning experiences together. At present, there is not yet a shared vision or purpose for family learning across the nursery and school. This means the team are not clear about how to measure the impact of their work on children's progress. The team should now work with the local community to build family learning programmes. The specific needs, interests and talents of local families should directly influence opportunities. Practitioners should work with all stakeholders to evaluate and celebrate the impact of this work on outcomes for children.

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.