

Summarised inspection findings

St Hilary's Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

St Hilary's Nursery Class is part of St Hilary's Primary School in East Kilbride. During 2017-18 the setting piloted a model of providing early learning and childcare to best meet the needs of children and families in the area. As a result, the setting has undergone significant change. The team continue to explore and adapt their work as they reflect on the changes to patterns of attendance, timings and routines needed to support this flexible service. The setting provides 58 places for children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. Children can now attend full days from 8.30am to 3.00pm. A few children attend for morning or afternoon sessions only.

At the time of the inspection 51 children aged three to five and 16 children aged two to three years were enrolled in the setting. Thirty-one children will start school in August 2019.

The setting operates from two separate playrooms each with direct access to outdoor areas. Children benefit from access to school facilities such as the school gym, reading area and dining hall.

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 vision values and aims were developed for the whole school family in collaboration with parents, children and partners. These are linked to the school motto 'Dream, Believe, Achieve' and are evident in day-to-day practice. They reflect the aspirations of the team to provide early learning and childcare for children in a safe and fun environment. The headteacher places high priority on supporting and nurturing all children. She works very closely with the team for the benefit of all children and families.
- The headteacher has a clear overview and vision for the future development of the setting. She is keen to ensure the nursery is part of the life of the whole school. The headteacher, with the recently appointed principal teacher, is developing new management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, to ensure maximum benefit for children and families. Practitioners receive clear guidance and direction from the team leader and nursery teacher. They have established strong working relationships and a sense of collective responsibility in wanting to take forward improvements across the setting. They support one another well to develop their practice.
- Since taking up her post, the principal teacher has successfully built on the culture of self-evaluation to evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, practitioners are developing their use of national guidance, research and their knowledge of early years pedagogy and play more fully to ensure continuous improvement. Ongoing professional dialogue, reflection and data analysis have resulted in a number of positive changes. Importantly, the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. Priority this session has been to find solutions for many practical issues

in order to implement the flexible childcare. Changes have not yet had time to lead to the desired improvement. They require more time, with monitoring and evaluation, to ensure maximum impact.

- The school's improvement plan includes relevant priorities for the nursery class. This year's plan has had a positive impact on improving the aspects of the setting, for example, developing 'We can and we will' guidance from the local authority. As planned, the team will now use information gathered from the range of self-evaluation activities to identify accurately key priorities to take forward next session. This will ensure improved experiences and outcomes for children and families.
- The motivated and hardworking team are valued for their individual skills and experiences. The team leader undertakes professional review and development sessions with practitioners. This allows them to identify their strengths. As a result, practitioners have been given leadership roles and are taking increasing responsibilities for aspects of the setting. This includes leading improvement plan priorities, such as outdoor learning. Practitioners appreciate the opportunities to collaborate and share practice with colleagues in other settings to help identify further improvements and to explore best practice. As discussed, there is scope to extend this outward looking approach and build on the success of these opportunities.

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

Children aged two to three

- Children aged two to three years are relaxed in their playroom. They benefit from sensitive, caring relationships with practitioners who help them to settle as they arrive. Routines for the session are flexible and responsive allowing practitioners to interact with individual children to support their play. The layout of the small playroom allows children space to be physical as they build with large soft blocks. We discussed that a cosy, home-like environment is more appropriate to meet the needs of some of the younger children. There is scope to extend opportunities for children to be curious and to investigate more open-ended, natural materials to enhance their concentration. Practitioners ensure children benefit from regular use of the secure outdoor area where they play with increasing confidence.

Children aged three and to five

- Almost all children are happy and settled. Key workers greet children warmly as they join their group to start the session. They make their choice from the lunch menu followed by a choice of activities. Throughout much of the day children choose from a range of planned and spontaneous experiences. However, a minority of children need adult interaction to help them to concentrate and sustain interest. There is scope to use time in key groups to encourage children to think about the experiences on offer and what they might learn. This would encourage them to sustain interest as they play. Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and this helps shape the direction of learning. In order for children to play a greater role in leading their learning, a language of learning now needs to be developed. We discussed how learning conversations would help children make connections between what they are doing and what they are learning, alongside the skills they are acquiring and using.
- Practitioners are caring and supportive as they interact with children. They value them as individuals and very naturally converse with children as they play. In the best examples, practitioners listen attentively to children and support them in developing their learning through skilled questioning. This helps children to sustain concentration. It would be useful to build on these positive examples in order to develop a more consistent approach. Most children confidently use digital technology to support learning for example, using the interactive board and tablet computers. In order to enrich learning further, the use of digital technology as a tool to support and extend children's learning could be increased.
- Children's voice is evident throughout the setting. Practitioners record children's interests and plan experiences to take them forward. They should continue to develop ways to encourage children to lead this learning. What children already know and what they would like to learn could be recorded using floorbooks or learning walls. Children need more opportunities to talk about their interests, to recall their learning and to learn about the skills they are developing. Outdoor learning is developing. Children have daily access to outdoors where they explore

their world and take part in energetic play. There is scope for practitioners to continue to develop the indoor and outdoor environments to enrich children's experiences. This includes providing more open-ended, natural resources to encourage more creative and challenging learning experiences across the curriculum. As planned, practitioners should explore opportunities to use the adjacent woodland to provide more rich opportunities for children to explore the natural world.

- Practitioners have regular planning meetings where they share knowledge of children's progress and plan future learning. They plan children's experiences across the early level, based on their current interests. Practitioners carefully track children's progress across the core areas of health and wellbeing, communication and early language and mathematics. They make regular observations and record individual children's progress in learning books. The quality of these observations is improving. Observations should focus on the learning that is taking place and identify next steps in learning, as appropriate. Practitioners should continue, as planned, to ensure children and parents are involved in identifying next steps. This will help parents to be aware of and support their children's learning at home. Children value their learning books and enjoy looking at them with adults. These should now be developed as a tool for children to recall their previous learning and to talk about their progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- This session practitioners are becoming familiar with recently adopted local authority guidance for the curriculum. This incorporates national guidance including Curriculum for Excellence, Pre-Birth to Three and Building the Ambition. Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and use these to plan learning across the curriculum. It will be important to maintain an overview of the experiences and outcomes which children experience to help provide a balance of learning experiences. There is scope to enhance learning further by reflecting on the principles of curriculum design, with a particular focus on relevance, challenge and learning in depth.
- The curriculum is based on play and offers opportunities for play indoors and outdoors. There are opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning, however there is scope to develop this further. Practitioners need to ensure all children, and in particular higher-achieving children, are provided with appropriate challenge in learning.
- Practitioners make good use of resources and learning spaces within the school, including for physical education, for lunches and in using the library. They use the local community to provide real-life contexts for children to apply and develop skills such as visits to the library and the local shops. Practitioners should extend the use of the local community and visitors to the nursery to help to enrich children's learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

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

- Relationships across the setting are built upon mutual respect and trust, creating a welcoming and friendly ethos for all families. The warm, caring interactions of the teacher and practitioners supports children to develop a feeling of being safe and secure in their environment. Settling in procedures allow practitioners the opportunity to get to know children and families well.
- Children under three years are settled in their playroom with trusted adults. They are becoming more independent at meal times and in their personal care. They enjoy playing alongside their peers both in and outdoors. Children aged three to five are developing friendships and are confident in their new daily routines. They are aware of the need to learn to work together and share resources appropriately. Most children's behaviour is observed to be in line with their stage of development. Practitioners should continue to promote positive behaviour and intervene in a way that is restorative to support children to resolve any small disagreements that might arise. Children talk about healthy lifestyles and foods that are good for growing bodies. Almost all children have the provided school lunch. Practitioners need to review timings of this routine to ensure it is an enjoyable experience for children.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of their role in nurturing children's health and wellbeing. They have a good knowledge of the principles of Getting it right for every child. Practitioners are focusing good attention on the language of the wellbeing indicators across aspects in their everyday work. They should proceed with their plans to explore the indicators in greater depth as a tool for assessing and planning with children and families. This will support children and their parents to develop a full awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, respected responsible and included. As planned, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) could be implemented in conjunction with the development of the wellbeing indicators.
- Outdoor play is an important part of the day. This is providing children with opportunities to explore and investigate in different environments. Practitioners should consider ways to introduce loose parts as part of the plans for the development of the outdoor area. This would offer children further opportunities to develop skills of creativity and inquiry.
- There are a few opportunities for children to help make decisions about matters that affect them. More consideration should be given to times for children to come together to take part in discussions and decisions. This could now include choices how they would like to learn in the outdoor area. This would enable them to lead a more active role in the life of the setting.
- The management team and practitioners are aware and actively engage with statutory duties to secure positive outcomes for children. Policies and procedures are in place to guide the team in their practice. These are being reviewed to ensure they fully reflect the expectations of the setting, as well as, important developments in early learning and childcare. Importantly there are appropriate procedures in place for safeguarding.

- Practitioners know each child well and are attuned to their needs. Children's individual care plans give useful information on children's personal circumstances. These need to be reviewed to ensure they capture all relevant information form a more effective personal plan for each child. This will enable practitioners to provide further support for children and plan progression in learning. The setting works well with a range of partners, including the early years specialist support teacher, to ensure that the needs of children requiring additional support are met. Children who require an additional plan to support their learning have one in place. These are appropriate and reviewed with parents and partners.
- The setting has a nurturing and inclusive ethos. Practitioners know their community well and treat children and families fairly and with respect. There is scope to increase the range of resources and learning experiences to enable children to develop a better awareness of diversity in society.

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

Children aged two to three

- Children aged two to three years are becoming more independent in a range of personal skills such as washing hands and feeding themselves. They are developing physical skills as they balance on tyres and play outdoors. There is a balance of free play and small group activities where children are learning to share and take turns. Children enjoy favourite stories and rhymes which is helping them to develop early language skills. Engagement with number rhymes and everyday counting as they play is encouraging children's very early development of skills in numeracy.

Children aged three to five

- Most children are making good progress in early language and communication. Almost all children talk to each other during play and can communicate their needs. They listen well to stories being read to them and a few enjoy sharing stories with each other. The majority of children create their own stories, which are scribed by an adult. This is helping them to see the link between the written and spoken word. Most children show an interest in mark-making and are developing skills as they draw pictures. Older children are beginning to form letters and words that are important to them. To maximise children's progress practitioners should continue to improve opportunities for children to develop and apply their skills in early language and literacy throughout the learning environment.
- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children count in context, for example the tins of food in the home corner or the number of pieces of fruit at snack. They are developing number recognition skills as they play games on the interactive whiteboard. The majority of children are gaining confidence in ordering numbers to ten and recognising numerals. In the home corner children weigh fruit using appropriate language. A few children show an interest in using measuring tapes as they play with construction however they do not yet understand their purpose. Improving opportunities for children to develop and apply their numeracy and mathematics skills throughout their play will support children to make even greater progress.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing their understanding of making healthy choices and show confidence in routines such as brushing their teeth. Most are developing self-help skills as they dress themselves to go outside and wash their hands before eating. Children are developing their physical skills well through planned sessions in the hall and playing outdoors. The majority of children demonstrate an

awareness of the needs of others and their own feelings. A few still require support from practitioners to regulate their feelings and emotions. We have asked practitioners to consider how to build on children's understanding of emotions to support those who find this more challenging.

- Children's achievements within the setting and from home are celebrated and displayed on the 'Good News tree'. Children are involved in risk assessing and tidying in the setting. There is scope to give children more opportunities for leadership and achievement. For example, they could, with adult support, plan, resource and look after areas within the learning environment. This will also help children to develop a sense of responsibility and apply their decision-making skills in relevant and meaningful contexts.
- Children arrive in the setting with a varying range of previous experiences. The supportive and inclusive ethos is promoted across all aspects of the setting where equity for all children is recognised.

Choice of QI: Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- Impact on children and families
- The promotion of partnerships

- The management team and practitioners have established positive links with parents and families in order to improve outcomes for all children. Parents are made to feel very welcome in the setting and find the team supportive and approachable. Almost all parents who responded to inspection questionnaire are very positive about the support they and their children receive.
- Good communication links between the setting and home help to keep parents informed about their children's learning. This includes informal chats at drop off and collection times, planned meetings newsletters and the use of social media.
- Families are actively encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways in the setting. They attend 'Termly Together Time' where they can join in, and play alongside their children and find out more about learning together. As discussed with the setting, there is scope to explore further ways of sharing learning opportunities at home.
- A parent committee provide good support through supporting events organised in and out with the setting such as the lending library, visits and fundraising.
- Practitioners are developing a range of partnerships in the local area and with other professionals to support the setting and enhance children's learning. For example, links with the local library allow practitioners to build on children's learning experiences. There is potential to develop these links and widen partnership working with a focus on providing children with additional real-life contexts for learning.
- As the setting moves forward with plans to develop further partnerships, it would be helpful to include all partners in the annual review of its vision, values and aims to ensure participation and engagement of all.

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.