

Summarised inspection findings

David Livingstone Memorial Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

16 May 2023

Key contextual information

David Livingstone Memorial Primary nursery class is located within the primary school and is managed by the headteacher. The nursery is registered for 23 children aged from three to five years and is currently at capacity. All children receive their 1140 hours entitlement and almost all attend for five days each week from 9 am until 3 pm. The nursery operates term time only. The depute headteachers of the school (1.0 full-time equivalent) share delegated responsibility for liaising with the nursery team and monitoring the quality of provision. A recently appointed nursery team leader manages the day-to-day running of the nursery. An Excellence and Equity Lead Practitioner has been allocated to the nursery for one term to support the development of the improvement plan and to facilitate family learning. Within the past few years there have been significant staff changes within the team.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 nursery team was involved fully in the development of the vision, values, and aims of the setting. These set out staff's high aspirations for children, and for their families. Senior leaders and all nursery staff model the values of respect, care, and responsibility very well through their daily interactions. The nursery team has developed supportive, trusting relationships with each other, children, and families. Parents report that the nursery has a very happy, welcoming ethos in line with its values.
- The depute headteachers play an active role in monitoring developments within the nursery and supporting staff. Together with the nursery team leader, they lead the planning and implementation of change, in consultation with staff. They manage change at an appropriate pace to ensure it is fully embedded, as a result. All staff feel consulted and supported which motivates them to deliver high-quality learning experiences for children in a stimulating, well-planned environment.
- Senior leaders empower staff to lead change and development. Most staff take leadership responsibilities, linked to their interests and expertise. They display these responsibilities on the nursery leadership board. These initiatives are leading to identifiable improvements, for example, staff lead aspects of science, family learning, and wellbeing. This has resulted in rich experiences in outdoor investigations, planned workshops for parents, and the development of wellbeing books, puppets, and activities. Staff develop their knowledge and understanding of early years guidance and current thinking which enables them to evaluate their approaches to play pedagogy. The findings from their ongoing evaluations support them to focus on developments which lead to improvement. Staff leadership roles could align more closely with the school improvement plan priorities.
- Senior leaders protect time for professional dialogue and collegiate learning so that all staff can make their views known. Weekly staff meetings ensure that the team support and discuss

developments. Staff training is a high priority and all staff have enhanced their knowledge and skills by attending useful courses. Staff support each other very well and work effectively together as a cohesive, committed team.

- The nursery team is aware fully of what is working well and what needs to improve. They have made effective use of the self-evaluation framework in *How good is our early learning and childcare?* to identify areas they wish to develop further. They are becoming increasingly reflective in their work and show skill in responding to children's needs and ideas. The nursery improvement plan outlines well-judged priorities which the nursery team is taking forward very successfully.
- The nursery team consults children and families fully so that they have opportunities to influence the life and work of the nursery. Children and families feel valued and included, as a result. The nursery team keeps parents very well informed of curriculum developments through regular newsletters, online learning journals and social media platforms. This ensures that they keep parents updated on the nursery's activities, experiences, and priorities.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Nursery staff are cheerful, caring, and supportive. They are readily available to children throughout the day and children approach staff regularly to involve them in their play. Children who are new to nursery, or unsettled, are very well nurtured with one-to-one support for as long as they need it. Children are settling well and becoming increasingly confident in moving around the nursery spaces independently, as a result.
- Most children engage highly in their learning and show sustained concentration in the wide range of spaces and activities, both indoors and outside. Children's voice features in all aspects of the nursery. They lead their learning and choose resources to enhance their play from the wide range on offer. They also select materials from the 'indoor choosing book'. Staff make highly effective use of open-ended questions and explanations to extend and challenge children's thinking. Staff listen carefully to children's thoughts, ideas, and interests, and respond positively. They have used children's ideas successfully to select new outdoor resources, and to develop spaces effectively within the playroom. Staff are considering ways to extend children's voice in the life of the nursery.
- Staff work very effectively together to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. They plan as a team sharing their skills and expertise. They create rich learning spaces equipped with natural and real-life objects to encourage children to investigate and be creative. Planning is very child-centred. Staff develop children's ideas and document the learning successfully in floorbooks and learning journals. This approach meets children's needs very effectively. Staff support children for whom English is an additional language very well using listening and talking games. Staff ensure that library areas reflect children's first languages.
- Staff know children very well as learners and provide support, or additional challenge, to ensure they achieve their potential. Staff record individual observations of children in their learning journals which they share with parents. They track children's learning in early language, early mathematics and health and wellbeing, as well as other curriculum areas. This provides robust information which helps staff to plan children's next steps in learning. Each key worker meets with children and families regularly to agree learning targets. They document progress in achieving targets in each child's journal and care plan.
- Staff plan well over different timescales and make 'planning in the moment' a key priority. They provide a skilful balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated experiences. They meet regularly to analyse and discuss their observations and agree any changes to the provision. They reflect and review how they can meet each child's unique learning needs. As a result of effective communication and skilled observation, staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of what is working well, and what further improvements could be made to the learning experiences.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Staff offer a curriculum that is play-based and highly responsive to children's needs, ideas, and interests. Planning takes full account of the principles of Realising the Ambition: Being Me. It reflects the experiences and outcomes in key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff show a sound understanding of the wider development of skills across the broad general education. The provision within the playroom and outdoors reflects all eight areas set out in national advice on the curriculum. The curriculum links well with the nursery's vision, values, and aims. Staff have identified the need to increase the use of the visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum further.
- There are effective transitions in place for children starting nursery and for those moving on to P1. Children starting nursery can build up their time and familiarity with the nursery at a pace that suits them. Staff work very closely with parents seeking key information from them to make sure they meet children's unique needs. Parents are welcome to stay and help their children become familiar with the nursery. Parents appreciate the very helpful information they receive about their children through the learning journals. Children moving into primary school make regular visits to P1 throughout their pre-school year. Senior leaders within the school could explore opportunities for staff at early level to develop a shared understanding of early years pedagogy. This would help staff to ensure challenge through play when children move on to the primary school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The Excellence and Equity Lead Practitioner is responsible for developing family learning through strong links, effective communication, and a range of learning opportunities for parents. This is helping parents become more involved in their child's learning. Parents are welcome in the nursery. Staff keep them very well informed by using noticeboards, online platforms, and social media. They benefit from regular stay and play sessions where they can share learning with their children in the nursery. Regular contact with parents enables staff to share accurate information on children's progress and achievements. All parents are enthusiastic about children's learning journals. They add comments, photographs, and achievements from home to share with staff.
- Staff know children and families very well and are aware of any potential barriers to learning. This knowledge will be useful as staff move forward with extending links with parents and the wider community. Staff are keen to extend the work with partners to enrich children's learning, as identified in the improvement plan.

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

- A focus on wellbeing is a key feature of the life and work of the nursery. Positive relationships are a key strength of the setting. Staff have created a calm, nurturing environment for children. There is a supportive ethos where all staff treat children and families with respect. Staff are positive role models supporting children to understand how to treat each other with care and kindness. Staff play alongside children and help them to share, cooperate, and develop friendships. Children are highly engaged, happy, safe, and settled both indoors and outside. Staff display a sound understanding of children's needs and rights.
- Children are developing an understanding of their own wellbeing through a variety of interesting learning experiences. Whilst outdoors, children risk-assess their play and talk about how to keep themselves safe. They are developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and fresh air. Snack times offer an appropriate focus on healthy eating, and the development of social skills through shared meals. Staff should continue to review lunch arrangements on an ongoing basis to ensure they are meeting the national guidance on mealtimes.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the wellbeing indicators and discuss these with children using age-appropriate stories, props, and puppets such as 'Safe Sam'. All staff carry out an emotional check-in with children each day to ensure they offer support where needed. This is helping children to develop strategies to manage their feelings and emotions. Staff have used Realising the Ambition: Being Me to guide their work on positive interactions with children.
- Staff manage transitions into nursery very well. They establish caring and supportive relationships with families and gather key information about what matters to each child. These strong links between nursery and home reduce potential barriers and anxieties for families and children. The very flexible routines, which are wholly child-centred, allow children the freedom to explore and participate at their own level. Children can attend for short sessions until they are fully settled and confident. Staff maintain a reassuringly high level of communication with families during settling-in periods, and when children move on to P1.
- All staff are aware of all statutory requirements in relation to early learning and childcare. They have undertaken child protection training and understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Where children need additional support, staff follow the local authority guidance to access specialist support from external agencies. Staff involve children and parents in creating individual plans for children, where these are needed. Staff support all children very well to achieve their potential.
- All staff promote inclusion and equality throughout the nursery. They treat children and families fairly and implement the nursery values well. Staff are developing currently the playroom provision to reflect a stronger focus on diversity and disability.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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 are making very good progress in their learning and development. Staff provide evidence for each child, showing how they make progress. The well-resourced spaces both indoors and outside provide children with rich, wide-ranging opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in real life contexts.
- In early literacy children listen attentively to stories and show a keen interest in books. They enjoy taking books home from the lending library. Most children are keen to talk and are developing new vocabulary through play discussions, picture talks, stories, rhymes, and word games. Staff place a strong emphasis on talking activities and access specialist advice from speech and language therapists to offer targeted support to individual children. Most children are keen to make marks and to write letters and words. A few children write their name, and most recognise it in print. Staff offer valuable writing opportunities outdoors and children make marks in sand and soil using sticks and feathers.
- In early numeracy children show a growing understanding of simple mathematical language such as longer than, higher than and less than. They measure the height of tall towers outdoors and learn about volume as they pour water from different sized containers. Most children can sort, match and count, and most can identify number patterns on dominoes. They enjoy weighing and measuring baking ingredients when making playdough. Staff support children's understanding of numeracy well through number songs and rhymes. Children enjoyed playing number games and activities with their parents at the numeracy 'stay and play' afternoon.
- In health and wellbeing, children are developing their physical skills by climbing and balancing outdoors. They can throw and catch balls and ride bikes and scooters. They show imagination and creativity in their artwork and when role playing in the home area. They are developing an understanding of early technologies and science through construction activities and minibeast scavenger hunts. They grow plants and monitor the numerous minibeasts using the nursery bug hotel.
- Staff celebrate children's achievements through wall displays, floorbooks and learning journals. Staff highlight day-to-day achievements through praise and positive feedback. Children have a 'can do' attitude and are enthusiastic about trying new things they would like to learn. The recent appointment of an Excellence and Equity Lead Practitioner has strengthened the focus on family learning and parents have a range of opportunities to become involved fully in the life of the nursery and in 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.