

Summarised inspection findings

Seafield Primary School Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

19 December 2023

Key contextual information

Seafield Nursery Class is located within Seafield Primary School in West Lothian. The nursery has one playroom and a small adjacent outdoor area. The setting is managed by the primary school headteacher with support from a newly appointed early years officer. A visiting early learning and childcare area support manager attends weekly to offer additional support. There are also three early years practitioners and two pupil support workers. The nursery is registered for 24 children aged 3-5 years attending at any one time. There are currently 23 children on the roll, five of whom also attend other settings. Children can access their 1140 hours entitlement in a variety of attendance patterns between 7.47am and 6.14pm for 50 weeks per year.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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's shared vision sets out clearly practitioners' and parents' aspirations for children. In consultation with parents, practitioners recently refreshed that vision, and the nursery's aims and values. These reflect the strong relationships within the centre, take appropriate account of the local context and are displayed throughout the setting. Senior leaders and the practitioner team are good role models for children. They demonstrate the values of being safe, friendly, kind and respectful in their daily interactions with children and families.
- The nursery team has experienced recent staffing changes and as a result, they are still developing their practice as a team. Practitioners are aware of what is working well in the nursery, and what needs to improve. They make use of a self-evaluation calendar and audit toolkits to monitor the overall quality of provision. Practitioners are becoming more reflective in their day-to-day work. When reaching their judgements, they now need to test the robustness of their self-evaluation evidence to ensure it is accurate. Leaders working with staff need to ensure that the next steps that they identify are taken forward. The newly appointed early years officer and headteacher are aware of the need to be more proactive in the leadership and management of change. They need to increase the pace of change, to ensure that key improvements are achieved more effectively and promptly.
- Staff have benefitted from a well-structured professional learning programme provided by the local authority. This has developed staff's understanding of aspects of early years pedagogy such as literacy, numeracy, family learning and additional support needs. Their improved understanding has enabled staff to develop new initiatives in the playroom. Practitioners have regular opportunities to take part in online training events with their cluster partner practitioners. All practitioners are gaining confidence and deepening their knowledge through these worthwhile learning opportunities.
- Practitioners are encouraged and empowered to lead improvements. Most of them effectively lead initiatives including those relating to health and wellbeing, numeracy and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Staff would benefit from extending

their knowledge of research, guidance and current thinking which underpins their development work. This will help them to evaluate the impact of their leadership activities.

- The nursery action plan is fully aligned with the primary school improvement plan and sets out clear areas for improvement. This includes embedding the principles of the UNCRC, ensuring rich activities in literacy and numeracy, developing outdoor learning and science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Practitioners can demonstrate the impact of the majority of these developments, most notably in children's wellbeing.
- Practitioners are committed to improving their practice and enhancing their skills further. They would benefit from further guidance and direction from senior leaders to support them to manage change effectively.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- There is a nurturing and positive ethos in the nursery class. Practitioners have fostered warm and caring relationships in the playroom. Children told us that the adults in the setting help them to feel safe and secure. Children are familiar with their daily routines and confidently make choices about their play. Practitioners listen attentively to children and involve them well in conversations.
- Overall, most children are engaged in learning and show sustained interest, exploring the nursery environment indoors and outdoors. Practitioners encourage children to develop their own interests, and they are developing skills in using effective questioning to extend children's thinking. Staff promote digital learning to help children carry out research and find out new information. Practitioners should offer children increased opportunities to use technology. This will help them to become more independent in their learning.
- Children access a range of indoor and outdoor spaces where they have opportunities to be curious and creative. In several playroom areas there are too few resources to enable children to lead and extend their learning. Practitioners should further develop the range of experiences and resources available for children in the outdoors, ensuring that children have opportunities to develop their gross motor skills through regular physical play.
- Staff develop their planning from daily observations of children and through dialogue as a staff team. Staff ensure that children's voice is valued as part of this process. The early years officer has taken steps to ensure planning processes are collaborative and that they take account of children's ongoing assessments. The team should continue to work together to improve approaches to planning.
- Practitioners observe children at play and record their observations of learning using a digital platform. The quality of observations is not yet consistently high. Practitioners do not always provide accurate evidence of the key skills children are developing. They do not yet ensure children's next steps in learning are clearly stated. Practitioners would benefit from further support to improve their skills in observing and recording instances of children's significant learning. This will help them to identify and plan children's next steps in learning, to better meet their needs.
- Practitioners share online learning journals with parents and encourage them to comment and contribute information. Although this approach is at an early stage, there are already a few positive examples of parents' contributions. Practitioners should consider how they can build on this promising start and involve children more fully in this process. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to reflect on and share their learning, beginning to set their own simple targets.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that is appropriately play based and is linked to relevant contexts such as the changing seasons. Staff have developed a curriculum rationale which takes account of the local context and is designed to develop the four capacities identified in national guidance. While children's planned experiences cover most aspects of Curriculum for Excellence, staff could make more effective use of their audits to strengthen the focus on investigative learning, physical development and expressive arts.
- Practitioners are starting to encourage children to voice their views and ideas about their learning. Children freely access a range of resources which encourage exploration and creativity. Practitioners provide an appropriate balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led learning experiences. This supports children to develop curiosity and take forward their own ideas.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local area to enhance the curriculum. Examples include woodland walks and trips to the local shops to buy fruit and vegetables. Children use their trips into the community to identify numbers, shapes and words in real life contexts.
- Transitions into nursery and from nursery to primary one are well managed. Children who require additional support or extra time to settle are offered enhanced transition programmes. These are well-matched to children's individual needs. Staff in P1 have made a very good start to building on the play pedagogy approach embedded in the nursery. Ongoing liaison between practitioners and early level teachers will enable them to share good practice and learn from each other.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have developed respectful and supportive relationships with families. Parents and children enjoy 'stay and play' sessions. Parents' views on these sessions are sought, and comments are used to adapt future sessions to meet parents' interests.
- Practitioners communicate very effectively with parents using regular newsletters, an informative noticeboard and daily communication. They use an online platform well which enables them to share information about nursery activities with families. Parents comment positively on the home reading bags which children bring home each week. Parents feel that this approach helps them support literacy and has enriched family story times. Practitioners recently audited parental engagement. As a result, they had introduced a parent suggestion box and reinstated their previous use of 'Lotus and Iggy the Seafield Bears' as a literacy home link project.
- Practitioners share information on children's progress in learning through new online learning journals. These are not yet fully embedded. Practitioners have not yet fully explored the potential for capturing children's interests and wider achievements. As the team embeds this new approach, practitioners will be well placed to reflect on the impact it is having on children's learning and parental partnerships.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- The nursery has a welcoming and supportive environment for learning. Practitioners are kind, calm and caring. As a result, children are happy and settled. Children readily approach staff for help and confidently access all the nursery areas. They are beginning to become familiar with national wellbeing indicators and a few children can talk about their feelings. Staff have developed age-appropriate characters such as 'Safe Sarah' and 'Responsible Rory.' These provide a child-friendly context for children exploring their emotions. Practitioners could consider a focus on one of the nursery values, or a wellbeing indicator, on a regular basis to keep these current and relevant for children. Staff have identified the need to strengthen parental engagement with both the principles of the UNCRC and the wellbeing indicators.
- Most children are kind and caring with each other and display positive behaviours. They respect resources and demonstrate age-appropriate empathy and self-awareness. A few children can talk about keeping safe, particularly during outdoor play. Practitioners use outdoor learning well to support children's wellbeing, helping them to develop resilience and take calculated risks. Wednesday Wanders are used effectively to give children fresh air, exercise and to explore the wider environment by visiting the park, local shops and woodland.
- Practitioners support children's growing independence, for example, through daily routines such as children dressing for outdoor play and selecting and tidying resources. They should review lunchtime arrangements to ensure a more positive experience which helps children to develop their social skills.
- All practitioners undertake regular training in safeguarding and recognise the importance of keeping children safe. They have a good understanding of the children and their local context, including the impact of the cost of living. They provide additional support and guidance for children and their families whenever this is required. Staff understand potential barriers to learning and work effectively with a range of partner agencies to access services. Children with additional support needs are included fully within the nursery.
- Staff promote inclusion and equality throughout the nursery. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of diversity by celebrating multi-cultural festivals. There is scope to extend children's awareness and understanding of diversity through a wider range of resources and experiences. Staff are aware of the need to continue to promote gender equality to ensure potential stereotypes are recognised and challenged.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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 majority of children are making satisfactory progress in the development of skills in early communication and language, mathematics and numeracy, and health and wellbeing.
- The majority of children talk confidently to adults and their peers. Practitioners support children to develop their descriptive language and vocabulary through questioning, interactions and through planned programmes of intervention. Children enjoy choosing stories from a range of high-quality texts in the library area and practitioners support children in retelling stories using their own words. Practitioners need to offer access to a wider range of texts across all learning spaces to further support skills in early literacy. They need to provide children with more varied opportunities to develop their mark-making skills, and to recognise and write their own name.
- Children are beginning to develop their understanding of number and shape through regular outings in their local community. They explore measure and balance in the mud kitchen. A few children use the routine of their nursery day to help them understand time. Almost all children in the pre-school year need to develop their skills in recognising numbers and counting. Practitioners should build on their self-evaluation of numeracy-rich environments by further developing opportunities for children to develop a range of mathematical skills.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are developing an understanding of their emotions. Daily check-in on arrival at nursery successfully engages children and families in discussion of their emotions, and helps children settle in. Children understand the importance of routines and are developing independence as they take part in daily tasks. They are learning about planting and growing, and the life cycles of insects. There is scope to give children more responsibilities, for example, by having them undertake leadership roles.
- Practitioners record children's progress over time using online trackers in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These trackers do not yet accurately reflect children's attainment. Practitioners should ensure that their professional judgements are based on observations, documentation and a range of accurate and reliable assessment evidence. Practitioners are at the early stages of developing whole team approaches to assessment to ensure that evidence of learning is captured for all children across the nursery day.

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.