

Summarised inspection findings

St Constantine's Primary School Nursery Class

Glasgow City Council

10 September 2024

Key contextual information

St Constantine's Nursery Class is located within St Constantine's RC Primary School in Govan Glasgow City. The nursery class has one large playroom, a sensory room, and open access to an outdoor play area. The nursery class is registered to provide early learning and childcare to a maximum of 30 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection there were 17 full-time children and 12 children attending morning or afternoon sessions. Children attending part-time do not all yet access their 1140 entitlement. The nursery is led by a principal teacher, a team leader and a well-established team of experienced practitioners.

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 headteacher delegates the leadership of the nursery to the principal teacher and team leader. Together with staff, they support children and their families very well. They all know the community well and understand the challenges many families face in their daily lives. The team is engaged in consultation to refresh their shared vision, values and aims to better reflect the needs, interests and aspirations of their community.
- Practitioners work well as a team to support children in their play and learning. All practitioners model warm and caring communication with children, each other and families. As a result, children thrive in a calm setting where every individual is respected and valued.
- The nursery team has identified appropriate priorities to continue to improve experiences and outcomes for children. Practitioners are proud of their leadership roles across the nursery practice. All staff have chosen areas to lead and develop. This includes health and wellbeing, emotional development, family learning and engagement, literacy skills, community links, and social dining opportunities. They are highly-motivated in these roles and work well together to share ideas and promote continuous improvement across the nursery. These developments are having a positive impact on children's experiences. Practitioners engage in daily meetings and discussions to foster a culture of reflection and professional dialogue. They make use of 'challenge questions' to prompt planned team discussions. Moving forward, the team should protect time to engage in robust self-evaluation of both the quality and outcomes of their work. They should agree shared next steps and manageable timescales. Parents are updated regularly on the improvement work and their views gathered during discussions and surveys. Practitioners should continue to involve children and families in self-evaluation as they move forward.
- All practitioners engage in regular professional development reviews, which lead to clearly identified areas for individual learning. This approach is increasing practitioner knowledge and confidence to implement changes and improvement. Practitioners learn from each other in their daily practice and engage in visits to local settings to develop further their knowledge. Nursery leaders should consider the balance of the needs of the setting and individual interests when

planning professional learning. They should continue to engage in professional dialogue and moderation across the nursery class, school and with other settings.

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

- There is a calm, welcoming atmosphere in the nursery class. Relationships are viewed as key in supporting children to engage in their learning. Practitioners know children well as individuals and support and reassurance are offered quickly where needed. All children are treated with warmth and respect by the team and are encouraged to treat each other in the same way. As a result, all children feel safe and secure in the nursery environment. Children are motivated by the range of experiences provided in the learning environment and are confident in making choices about where to play indoors and outdoors. They have time and space to revisit their learning and almost all engage well.
- Children enjoy using the interactive whiteboard for games and drawing. They are encouraged to use the tablet to scan digital codes to access storytelling online. Practitioners are also developing more creative uses for the tablet, for example to support emerging literacy skills.
- Interactions are supportive and nurturing. Practitioners know and value the development of early language skills. They join children in play and encourage them to express their individual thoughts and feelings. As a result, most children enjoy talking to adults and peers. Practitioners are developing approaches to supporting children for whom English is an additional language. For example, families have been invited in to tell stories in their own language. Labelling around the environment is beginning to include scripts in children's home languages. To improve outcomes for all children, the team should now develop more consistent approaches to asking open-ended questions focused on supporting children to extend their thinking.
- Practitioners are developing their approaches to observing and documenting learning. Practitioners know the children well as individuals and identify aspects of their progress in learning. They are developing their approaches to gathering information about individual children's learning and linking this to planned experiences. They capture observations and next steps and use 'focus child' sheets to share this information with families.
- Intentional planning is well established and is clearly linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. Children's interests and needs influence planned experiences. Leaders have correctly identified observation and planning processes as areas for development, particularly approaches to responsive planning. Practitioners should continue to engage with national and local guidance to support them to improve this aspect of the service.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum based on play, a shared understanding of the fundamental importance of emotional wellbeing and the importance of early language development. Practitioners are developing the learning environment to promote and extend children's understanding of literacy and mathematics skills. Children are encouraged to follow their own interests and make choices throughout the session. Practitioners should review the curriculum in order to offer greater challenge to competent, capable children. They should continue to develop planning processes to ensure a better balance of intentional and responsive planning, and to ensure that children are effective leaders of their own learning. The team should continue to develop their shared understanding of national guidance to support and inform their developing practice.
- Children have access to a variety of outdoor spaces throughout the day, although these were partially closed during the inspection period due to a health and safety issue. Children are encouraged to participate in energetic play, and adults support children in the development of physical activity and skills. The outdoor area provides a range of learning experiences to encourage, for example, problem-solving, exploratory play and role play. The team promotes outdoor learning and offers wider experiences for the children through regular experiences in the park and other links to the community.
- Children and families are well supported as they begin nursery, ensuring that all children settle and become confident in the nursery environment. The team recognises the importance of transitions. They have been developing approaches to play and learning across Early Level. They collaborate well with primary stage colleagues to support children as they move on to primary one through a well-established transition programme.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- All families are encouraged to be involved fully in their child's learning. Practitioners create positive relationships with families, with daily informal conversations and regular communication leading to increased engagement. Entry to nursery class and then transition into school is managed well by the team. Children moving on to school enjoy a well-planned programme of activities enabling them and their parents to become confident in the new environment.
- Practitioners communicate very well with families through a variety of methods. Children's learning is shared informally through conversation, on an online platform, learning walls and displays. Parents feel their children are safe and well cared for in the nursery class. They note that all nursery staff are friendly and approachable. Families who have English as an additional language very much appreciate the support available.
- Opportunities for families to engage in the nursery include 'Stay and Play', coffee mornings, 'Play Along Maths', fundraising events and parents' evenings to discuss progress. All of these activities have supported parents to be comfortable with the nursery and engage more frequently in family learning activities. Nursery staff report that more parents now feel confident to engage in play and learning activities with their children at home.
- Nursery staff ensure families facing challenges due to the cost of living crisis have access to a free clothes and food bank.
- A number of children do not currently access their entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC. The staff team should engage with parents to provide guidance and support on how this may be resolved.

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

- Positive relationships and a strong focus on children's wellbeing are key strengths in the nursery. Practitioners interact sensitively with children and there is a very positive ethos across the nursery. Most children are articulate and confident. They are kind and respectful to each other and adults. Children are developing friendship groups within the nursery class, play together well and take care of each other. Practitioners model positive behaviours, which is supporting children to develop social skills well.
- Children experience an inclusive environment where mutual respect, honesty and trust is evident. During the day, all children have access to outdoors where they can be active and enjoy fresh air. They also have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity in the gym hall to develop their gross motor skills. The team should consider how they might promote further the language of wellbeing in the nursery. This will support a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators amongst the team, children and parents. It will also aid communication and planning of support for individual children. Children have regular opportunities to talk about their feelings and emotions during planned small group sessions. This is supporting children to build confidence in explaining their feelings and in managing challenges and situations.
- Children have opportunities to share and take turns throughout the nursery session, for example, waiting to have an opportunity to explore outside with water flumes. They enjoy completing jigsaws with a friend. They are developing their independence skills well, serving themselves at snack and lunch and most children get themselves dressed for outdoors.
- Practitioners keep their knowledge and practice in keeping children safe up to date through regular training and guidance. Children's individual health and wellbeing needs are met well, as a result of the effective systems in place. Practitioners know their children and families very well, with support offered in a respectful and sensitive manner. These relationships are cemented through home visits when children commence nursery. Children and families receive timely and targeted support where appropriate through a range of partnerships with outside agencies. Children who may require additional support with learning have individual plans, which contain strategies to support their learning. These plans should be kept under review to ensure targets are fully assessed, and clear next steps identified.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equality. Practitioners treat children and families fairly and with respect across the nursery. They support children who may face barriers to learning well, using a range of suitable and engaging resources and strategies. Interventions to support learning should be evaluated regularly to ensure they are having a positive impact on children's learning.

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

- Almost all children are confident in communicating with their peers and with adults, and most children are articulate in expressing thoughts and feelings. They are developing their early language skills, effectively supported by initiatives focusing on vocabulary-building put in place by the team. Almost all children enjoy mark-making as they play, and the work collected in their folders demonstrates the progress they have made. The team should extend their skills further by providing more opportunities for children to mark-make for a purpose. A few children choose to look at books independently in the nursery and most enjoy listening to stories read by an adult. Children enjoy choosing books from a well-organised lending library with 'homework' activities that support children to share their learning with families. Adults encourage children to use their knowledge of print and number as part of routines, such as finding and counting their name at snack time. Engaging children in experiences that will impact positively on their literacy skills should continue to be a priority to improve outcomes for children.
- Most children make good progress in mathematics and numeracy. Children demonstrate an interest in number and are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they play. They explore pattern and texture with natural materials in the sand, and maths concepts in water and construction areas. They demonstrate their enjoyment of maths games on the smartboard, discussing shapes and sizes with each other. A few children would benefit from experiences that offer more challenge in both literacy and numeracy.
- Almost all children make good progress in health and wellbeing. They are becoming increasingly resilient and independent, learning to persevere when they meet challenges. They relate well to adults and to their peers, developing positive friendships. Children build their physical skills outdoors as they run, balance, kick and throw balls with their friends.
- Staff involve parents in identifying targets for individual children termly. The process to review, monitor and document progress has been identified as an area for development. As the team develops their approach to observing and documenting learning, children will benefit from increased opportunities to reflect on their learning and skills with adults. Parents report that information about their children's progress and success is shared effectively.
- The team is aware of the importance of children's achievements at home and encourages families to share children's experiences with staff. They promote opportunities for children to develop skills and talents with parents and carers. The nursery team should continue to develop approaches to recognising and celebrating children's individual achievements.

- Practitioners know the children's needs and circumstances very well. They engage well with parents to support any gaps in vocabulary and literacy development. Children enjoy choosing books from a well-organised lending library with 'homework' activities that support children to share their learning with families. This ensures all children have access to books in the setting and at home. Parents have gained confidence in supporting their children to engage with text and books.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefitted from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff told us how they undertook home visits with families to discuss and support children's initial transitions into the nursery. We recognised this a particular strength of the nursery team's overall approach to supporting children's emotional health and wellbeing. It encouraged genuine partnerships that respected parents' knowledge of their children. It helped children to develop close, positive relationships with staff during the settling-in process and supported continuity in their care and learning.

Staff involved parents and carers when making shared decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the staff team to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs. Personal plans and individual journal observations were regularly reviewed and included care support strategies and next steps for learning. Staff told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's learning and play interests. Plans and records for children with identified additional support needs took account of multidisciplinary assessments and inputs. These supported a personal planning approach which was solution focused and identified children's strengths, personal challenges and development outcomes.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

1.3 Play and learning

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience a breadth of learning opportunities. Staff worked hard to provide a variety of quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements.

We found that children's voice was highly valued. Staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play. We observed some well-timed use of open-ended questioning that extended and challenged children's current thinking. We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. This included opportunities to retell stories using puppets, role play, drawings and digital technology. Through discussion, it was evident that staff had a shared understanding of child development and used this to plan for progression in children's learning and extend the breadth and depth of available learning opportunities. Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through wider play opportunities within the local community. This included: a programme of regular park and forest kindergarten based play sessions; opportunities to care for the local environment through litter picking outings;

exploring planting and growing in the 'Moogety' community garden; walking trips that raised awareness of local architecture that led to three-dimensional model making based on children's photographs of buildings within the community. Children's play experiences beyond the setting were regularly recorded within the children's floor books and wall displays. This supported children to revisit their learning as well as discuss their shared knowledge of the local area with staff, families, and their peers.

We discussed with staff planning and observation approaches that would help children to be more meaningfully and actively involved in leading their own collaborative play choices. Staff agreed that more flexible use of current planning tools based on observations of children's most engaging and involving play experiences could strengthen opportunities for children to shape their play environments. This can extend opportunities for staff to reflect on when children display deep level engagement in their play and support them to provide children with greater autonomy as to how their ideas for play will be taken forward.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment that was clean, bright, welcoming and well ventilated. The reception area was well organised to make parents and children feel welcome. Staff photographs were in the reception area so that parents and carers knew who was caring for children. Key information about the service as well as child friendly community events was displayed to help parents feel well informed and included. Playrooms were furnished to a high standard. The main playroom was set up to support children's free movement and extend their play opportunities between play been indoors and the secure outdoor play space. Toys and resources including natural materials were easily accessible and organised to promote curiosity and support children's choices.

The main playroom was homely with some soft furnished spaces for children to rest and relax and read stories. This contributed to a calm environment where children could engage in shared conversations without interruptions from any intrusive noise. The children benefitted from use of a 'butterfly room' where they could engage in a PATHs programme of experiences that promoted the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills.

At the time of our inspection the children's access to the full outdoor secure nursery play space was restricted. This was due to a rodent management issue that was in the process of being tackled by local authority pest control officers. Overall, we found the indoor and outdoor environment was safe and secure contributing to children's health and wellbeing. Children's safety was promoted through detailed risk assessments for all environments and activities accessed by them. Staff told us how they engaged children in meaningful discussions about safety outdoors and children's ability to assess and manage their own risks during play. All risk assessments were regularly reviewed, and staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards in the way of children's safety and wellbeing. Children were also kept safe and healthy because of the robust infection control practices that were in place within the setting.

We discussed with staff how regular planned outdoor play and walking trips within parks and woodland spaces beyond the setting had increased opportunities for children to experience fresh air and enjoy challenging play. The nursery's joint forest kindergarten outdoor play programme with Primary 1 children provided opportunities for small groups of nursery children to take positive risks and to be challenged in their play within local park spaces. We identified a need for staff to continue to monitor and review children's use of the nursery's secure outdoor play space to ensure it is regularly adapted to offer children a variety of rich learning experiences and resources.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior management team through consultation with all nursery stakeholders were developing a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families and the wider community. They had created conditions where all staff felt confident to initiate changes and share responsibility for the process. Positive working relationships between the management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.

Staff told us how the principal teacher for early years provided a clear focus for their shared teamwork including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that this leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care. It had contributed to children's emotional health and wellbeing being a central feature of transitions into the setting. This ensured the care children experienced was delivered by familiar key adults who were perceived as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and responsive to their needs.

We found that strong leadership of the service supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to help children to reach their full potential. Staff were familiar with national quality frameworks for early learning and childcare. The principal teacher followed an inclusive and supportive approach to quality assurance and improvement. This included regularly observing and monitoring key aspects of the nursery team's daily practice. This was followed by shared professional reflection and discussions with staff on how their daily roles positively impacted on outcomes for children. We found this helped to channel each staff team member's enthusiasm for taking forward current ideas and developing and implementing best practice guidance. It helped to ensure that care, play and learning experiences were consistently meeting the needs of children.

The management team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. This feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the nursery class's priorities and targets for change. We highlighted practical consultation strategies for widening family engagement in the improvement planning process. The staff agreed these would help strengthen the capacity of service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

4.3 Staff deployment

Effective staff deployment within the nursery meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff throughout each element of the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Effective use was made of the differing experience, knowledge and skills of staff to ensure children's experience across the whole day was positive and that they were safe. Staff worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with the children across the day. Staff communicated very well with their colleagues when a personal care task took away from their play area based responsibilities. Staff supported children with additional learning needs to feel respected and included in daily experiences.

A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme had helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. Each member of the nursery team had undertaken professional development that supported a leadership role in an area of the curriculum that they had identified a particular interest or strength. This included learning for sustainability, phonological awareness, health and wellbeing, numeracy and PATHs. We noted that British Sign Language and Makaton training had led to better targeted and personalised support for children with communication difficulties. Staff had developed parental 'Stay and Play' sessions as well as home learning initiatives linked to a number of these areas. We found that staff development opportunities had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and parental engagement in their children's learning.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

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.