

Summarised inspection findings

Loanhead Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

24 March 2020

Key contextual information

Loanhead nursery is based in Loanhead Primary School. The headteacher manages the nursery. After a series of staff changes there is now a permanent core team in the nursery. The recently appointed senior practitioner leads the early years team. Twenty-four full-time children, 12 morning and eight afternoon children attend the nursery. The nursery has one large and one small playroom with an outside area.

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 nursery's vision, values and aims were reviewed recently with the school. These were developed in partnership with parents and practitioners. The vision, values and aims should continue to be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis with children and all stakeholders. In order for them to be meaningfully embedded with the children. Practitioners should present them in a child friendly way.
- The headteacher ensures nursery practitioners are involved in all aspects of the whole school. Practitioners and teachers in the school work together on specific joint improvements such as forest schools. All practitioners are positive about the support they receive from the headteacher and senior practitioner. They encourage practitioners to be reflective, attend further training and acquire additional qualifications in order to improve their practice. A professional enquiry on numeracy, led by the headteacher, has had a positive impact on children's learning experiences in the nursery. The senior practitioner attends the collaborative conversations run by the authority early years team which has allowed her to learn from good practice. The authority's early years principal teacher supports the nursery improvement well.
- The headteacher and senior practitioner have fostered distributed leadership well by enabling almost all practitioners to have leadership roles. Practitioners take on leadership and development roles within the team according to their interests and strengths, and the needs of the nursery. They have undertaken a range of training and professional learning to support these leadership roles. As practitioners develop these roles over time, the senior practitioner and the headteacher need to monitor their impact in supporting continuous improvement. Practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to take on more leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the setting. They should continue to look outwards in the sector to familiarise themselves with current thinking and research in early learning and childcare, in order to support improvement.
- The improvement plan has relevant key actions leading to improvement. For example, the focus on significant observations has improved practitioners' observations of children's learning. However, these improvements are at the early stages and are still to be embedded

fully across the nursery. The leadership team and practitioners should continue to gather evidence from all stakeholders using the helpful national guidance in 'How good is our early learning and childcare?'. Practitioners need to reflect further on what they are doing well and what they could review and improve. As planned, practitioners should continue to place a key focus on continuing to improve the quality of learning and teaching and evidencing progress. The headteacher should reintroduce monitoring approaches that take account of all aspects of practice.

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

- Relationships are positive across the nursery and, as a result, children appear safe and secure. A few children are still settling into the nursery and have adapted well to their new environment. The majority of children are beginning to form friendships with their peers and are learning to play cooperatively with others. A few children need support to engage appropriately with their peers and practitioners manage this in a sensitive manner.
- The majority of children are actively involved in learning through free and spontaneous play as well as planned opportunities. A minority of children require support to engage fully in their learning, in particular, in the indoor space. Practitioners are developing the learning environment, providing opportunities for children, which link, to their current interests, for example, birds. Practitioners should continue to review and refresh the learning environment, in particular with a focus on creating a cosy space for children to rest. Children are developing their independence well as they move freely across the indoor and outdoor environment. Outdoor learning enables children to develop their resilience and a healthy sense of risk.
- Practitioners are aware of the different stages of child development and continue to develop more fully their knowledge of early learning pedagogy. Most practitioners interact in a sensitive and responsive way, to promote children's independence and confidence. There are a few good examples of practitioners using questions appropriately to support children to extend their thinking. All practitioners should continue to develop skilful questioning skills in order to support children to extend and deepen their learning. Children have time and space to follow their interests and lead their learning through play, however this is not always purposeful. Digital technology, for example, interactive whiteboard, supports children to develop their numeracy skills well. Children have access to a camera, bee bots and tablet computer to help their learning. Practitioners should continue to use digital technology to support children's learning.
- Practitioners know children well and are beginning to identify significant aspects for children's learning. Practitioners, as a team, worked to develop effective observation skills and are beginning to document significant learning in children's individual profiles. Children are confident and keen to share their learning using the learning profiles as limited support. In order to fully reflect children's and parent's voices, practitioners need to review and refresh the learning profiles. Parents discuss their child's progress through daily contact with practitioners and attend wellbeing meetings every six months.
- Children's interests, alongside a backdrop plan, inform the recently introduced planning process for children's learning. The local authority's principal teacher for early years has helped practitioners to develop their practice further. Practitioners use Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to some extent to support their planning. Their use of floorbooks capture children's group interests and engagement in their learning. Practitioners

respond to children's individual interests through responsive planning and are beginning to evidence this in profiles. Children need to be involved fully in documenting their learning, allowing them to develop further the language of learning. Practitioners are at the very early stages of tracking children's progress in literacy and numeracy using local authority guidance. Practitioners should continue to develop their approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring in order to develop further children's learning and development.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners take good account of national and local practice and guidance 'Building the Ambition'. They refer to Curriculum for Excellence as they plan learning. The curriculum is based firmly on play. Practitioners have begun to make positive changes to how they plan on a daily basis for full time and part time children in order to meet all of their needs. Practitioners need to continue to review their daily routine and learning environment, taking full account of the increased hours for the majority of children.
- The nursery team continue to develop their approaches to planning. They have introduced responsive planning taking account of children's interests and long term planning, for example, seasons as a backdrop. Practitioners need to continue to develop a shared understanding of how they can develop learning and developmental pathways, which focus on challenge, depth and progression of children's skills across all curricular aspects. Individual practitioners lead on literacy and numeracy, with literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing is seen as the responsibility of all. This is beginning to support effectively the development of these areas across the nursery.
- Practitioners take good account of children's individual needs when they start nursery, with a settling in period tailored to suit children and parents. Children have useful opportunities to engage in school life, including planned transition events in the last term of nursery. Children have a P5 buddy to support them have a smooth transition into Primary 1. In addition, teachers visit and individual reports on children enhance their transitions to Primary 1. The introduction of literacy and numeracy trackers and joint work on numeracy, involving practitioners and teachers is beginning to support children's progress across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Nursery practitioners have strong, positive relationships with parents. They work well with families and encourage a partnership approach to developing children's progress. The strong relationships encourage parents to discuss any concerns about their children as early as possible. Effective partnership working with other professionals supports both children and their families and is having a positive impact. For children attending other provision, there are good partnership links between the other setting and the nursery.
- The senior practitioner and practitioners use a variety of helpful ways to increase parental involvement and communication in the life and work of the nursery. They have 'Stay and Play' sessions and open play when parents can come to the nursery at any time. Practitioners offer other helpful parental input such as workshops on helping parents learn with their children and sleep better. They are attending professional learning on engaging parents further in their children's learning. The nursery communicates well with parents, using a variety of mediums including emails and regular newsletters. Parents have attended useful curriculum and storytelling workshops.

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

- There are strong, caring relationships between practitioners and children. Children's wellbeing is paramount. Practitioners know each child extremely well and are highly attuned to their needs. Practitioners and children are at the early stages of using the wellbeing indicators. They are embedding children's knowledge of how to be safe and healthy by involving them in carrying out meaningful practical activities such as risk assessments. They need to continue to build on their practice to support children and parents develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators in a more meaningful way. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. They often use children's votes to make a decision. The senior practitioner and practitioners need to continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This should be implemented in conjunction with the development of the understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- The nursery has a welcoming ethos and children are kind and caring towards each other. Parents speak very positively of their relationship with practitioners. Children talk well about how they can keep themselves healthy, and are well aware of healthy food choices. Practitioners use praise and language effectively to reinforce their expectations of behaviour. They are skilled at supporting children to discuss their emotions and make decisions on appropriate actions to resolve difficulties.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. This allows them to provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and their families. The headteacher, senior practitioner and practitioners are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements for keeping children safe, and meeting their care and learning needs. They engage in various meetings, such as wellbeing, pastoral and child planning to highlight both strengths and areas for children who require further support. Practitioners support children with additional support needs well. The early years support team provides additional support for both practitioners and children with additional support needs.
- Planning, using the local authority staged intervention process, is detailed and robust for children with additional support needs. Practitioners review plans at regular intervals. In order to track progress more effectively, practitioners should ensure that progress on individual targets is documented in a more frequent basis.
- Practitioners are proactive in seeking relevant help at an early stage from other professionals for children with additional support needs. Positive partnership working with other professionals helps ensure the needs of all children are met, particularly in relation to language and communication.

- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well throughout the work of the nursery. The nursery setting has a strong sense of community where everyone is valued and included. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year. Practitioners explore gender equality with the children to ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged. The nursery team has a clear understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do.

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 language and communication, engaging well in conversation with adults and peers. The majority of children listen well at story time and enjoy books, both fiction and non-fiction, for example, as they research birds. A few children need to develop further their concentration and listening. The majority of children are beginning to recognise their name and a few write their name independently. Children enjoy mark making indoors and outdoors, with a few signing in on arrival and recording the different type of birds outdoors. Children need to develop their progress in language and communication, for example, in order to confidently ask questions and describe their learning.
- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress, with a few making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children count in daily routines, for example, in small group time and snack time. The majority know numbers to ten with a few counting beyond. A focus on measure by a few children is supporting them to use measuring sticks and tapes appropriately. A few children are beginning to use the language of measure well, for example, measuring water levels on sticks in puddles. A recent visit to the shops introduced children to money, with most having little understanding of coins and their value. Children can describe colours of paint as they enjoy making paint at the mixing station. Children should continue to develop their progress in numeracy and mathematics in real-life contexts. For example, continue to develop fully their understanding of money and the value of coins.
- A focus on health and wellbeing is supporting the majority of children to make good progress, with a few making satisfactory progress. Children experience a positive snack and lunch experience, encouraged by practitioners to make healthy choices. They are becoming increasingly healthy and active as they have free flow access outdoors and weekly visits to the local woodland. Children take risks when supported appropriately by practitioners, for example, negotiating the icy chute. They take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, including tooth brushing. Children need continued support to self-regulate their emotions and consider others feelings in order to increase further their progress in health and wellbeing.
- Children's progress over time is not clearly evident in documentation or captured well in their learning profiles. Practitioners have focused on developing their observation skills and these need to inform the progress children are making in their learning. Learning profiles are beginning to show evidence of children's significant learning, with most containing written observations and a few photographs. Practitioners need to develop further children's profiles in

conjunction with children and parents to evidence progress over time and clearly identify next steps in learning.

- The majority of children are developing their confidence and independence well as they move freely across the learning environment. Children are developing a sense of success through daily praise and encouragement from practitioners. Practitioners, in conjunction with parents, should revisit effective ways to record children's achievements, in order for all children to develop as successful learners.
- There is an ethos of mutual respect and trust. Practitioners are aware of potential barriers to learning for individual children and contact external agencies for advice and support as appropriate. Children receive early intervention and support which is enabling them to progress in their learning, for example, talk time. Practitioners need to record the interventions to demonstrate and ensure that these impact on children's progress and 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.