

# Summarised inspection findings

**Blackwood Nursery Class**

South Lanarkshire Council

10 March 2020

## Key contextual information

Blackwood nursery class is located in Blackwood Primary School. At the time of the inspection there were 72 on the roll. This includes 40 children who attend either am or pm and 32 children who are now accessing 1140 hours. The nursery class has gone through significant change in the last year as part of the implementation of 1140 hours.

### 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 work of the setting is underpinned by a clear vision which has been reviewed recently. Practitioners, parents and partners have agreed what is important to the setting as part of the school. The values and aims contribute to an ethos where there is mutual respect and appreciation for the roles each adult plays in ensuring children are valued as unique individuals. Senior staff and practitioners demonstrate the values and aims of the setting in their interactions, leadership and focus on ensuring the wellbeing of children.
- Senior staff and practitioners strive towards offering children and their families the most appropriate early learning and childcare provision to meet their needs. They listen closely to children and their families as they make adaptations towards meeting the national policy change of 1140 hours. Practitioners work together, engaging in professional learning which is helping them to make important choices about the learning environment and the rhythm of the day. A focus on maintaining and improving further the quality of relationships with families is enabling everyone to work in partnership successfully. Practitioners consult well with children and provide them with leadership roles. Building on this work, children, over time, would benefit from greater challenge and aspiration in the leadership opportunities offered to them.
- Practitioners feel empowered by senior leaders, to make decisions and take forward initiatives which they feel will be important steps toward improving outcomes for children. They show a deep affinity to their work and use any collegiate time well to share their knowledge and understanding with each other. This is offering children better experiences in learning outdoors beyond the school, exploring the nature of gender bias through play and building creativity through open-ended play materials. Practitioners value the opportunities they have to learn in depth about aspects of their work which interest them. The school demonstrates a commitment to the professional learning of practitioners. To enhance the expertise of practitioners further, a closer look at how self-evaluation approaches can identify the difference these initiatives are making to children's progress and achievements is needed.
- Practitioners value highly the bond they have fostered with families and local partnerships. Conversations about the progress children are making and how practitioners promote and sustain wellbeing feature regularly. These conversations support practitioners well in making decisions about priorities for improvement in family learning and engagement. The

significance of learning with and from families is helping staff to respond appropriately to individual children.

- Approaches to strategic planning for improvement in the setting are evolving. Planned self-evaluation activity is resulting in a wide range of evidence about children's learning and achievements. Further work is needed to ensure the strategies for continuous improvement, how they are implemented and interconnect are clearer. Practitioners are working hard to secure progress in children's health and wellbeing, early language and communication and early mathematical skills. They are not yet clear how well and by how much their chosen strategies and interventions are making a difference to outcomes for individual children and groups of children.

## 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 arrive at the nursery excited and eager to learn. Overall, most engage well in their play throughout their time at nursery. For most of their session, children choose where they would like to play. In a few areas, they would benefit from more adult support and direction to help them lead and sustain their play better. Children have free-flow access to the outdoor area throughout the day. Here, children engage well in different experiences, including exploring puddles and digging in the soil. They enjoy planting and harvesting their own vegetables. They engage well with the mud kitchen. Children enjoy the range of opportunities they have for physical play. For example, the space to run, to climb and to 'scoot at nursery' on the scooters. Children also benefit from their participation in the forest schools programme.
- Practitioners encourage children to follow their interests and to lead their own play. The nursery team are providing a greater selection of natural materials and loose parts across the playroom. This is enabling children to be inquisitive and to develop their own ideas. A few children enjoy using different materials to design and create their own transient art representations of Christmas trees.
- Practitioners interact with children in a kind and supportive manner. Children respond very well when engaging with practitioners on a one to one basis or in small groups. For example, with sensitive support from practitioners, a small group of children, sustained and developed their play very well in the home corner. Children's learning is less successful when they are brought together in large groups and a few children are not yet able to lead or sustain their own play in meaningful ways. There is a need for the team to review the balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences, particularly as many children are now accessing a longer nursery session.
- Overall, most practitioners use questions and dialogue well to support and extend children's learning. In a few areas, for example, the woodwork area, practitioners support children in a skilful way to learn about real tools and how to use them appropriately. A few children display high levels of concentration and perseverance in this context. Children make use of digital technology to enhance and extend their learning. They are becoming more skilled in using tablets to research areas of particular interest such as dinosaurs. Children make effective use of the interactive whiteboard to match different Christmas images. Senior leaders have rightly identified the potential to increase the use of digital technology across the playroom and outdoors.
- Practitioners record observations and use photographs to capture aspects of children's learning in their online learning journals. They should improve the quality of these observations to ensure they define clearly what children can do. Practitioners meet regularly with parents to discuss children's progress and to identify learning targets. They should develop how they

frame targets to help to make them more specific and measurable. Practitioners should ensure targets take better account of children's next steps in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

- Practitioners plan learning taking account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and children's particular interests. They have created a 'learning wall' which captures what children know and helps to take new learning forward. They meet weekly to review and plan learning. Practitioners plan a range of experiences and contexts to take forward short term planning objectives. While they plan for aspects of literacy and numeracy, there is a need for this to be done in a more focused way to ensure there is clear progression and challenge for all learners. Children are not yet fully involved in evaluating their learning experiences. There is great potential to involve children more in talking about their learning and planning what they could learn next.
- Practitioners make use of local authority tracking and monitoring documentation to support them to track literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for all children. This is helping them build up a picture of children's progress. A next step is to use this information to establish data to show how well children are progressing and what actions they need to take when planning learning to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners have created a clear curriculum map which outlines how Curriculum for Excellence will be delivered across the setting within its school context. Local guidance on how children progress through the early level is helpful for practitioners. Practitioners are meticulous in how they evidence coverage of the experience and outcomes children engage with during their time at nursery.
- Children make confident use of the well-planned learning environment with free flow access to the outdoors. Learning zones offer children a broad range of experiences and play materials which interest them. Practitioners use their professional learning to refresh the playroom and take account of children's interests. This also provides scope for innovation by practitioners who enthusiastically lead new areas of work. As they carry out their audits of children's engagement in the learning zones, they recognise that they can continue to increase the levels of challenge and depth in learning as children become more accomplished.
- Health and wellbeing, early language and communication, and early mathematics are offered daily by staff as core activities. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to progress their skills in different contexts through play. A clearer strategic overview of how they collectively drive forward children's progress over time is a next step. This would enable practitioners to see more clearly the effectiveness of their approaches in improving children's progress.
- Transitions into the setting and through to P1 are thoughtfully planned with children's wellbeing at the forefront. Practitioners work closely with families to provide tailored transitions which are positive for children and supportive for their families. As they move through to P1, children have opportunities to engage with older children in the school who act as reassuring buddies.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have strengthened their approaches to parental engagement. Across the year, there are a wide range of opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and the wider experiences of the nursery. For example, the nursery teacher has recently led a number of Bookbug sessions, which have been well attended, by children and their parents. Parents can also join and play alongside their children in the nursery as part of stay and play sessions. They can borrow books from the lending library to share with their children and 'Adventure Ted' is used to share learning from home. They engage well in the home challenges set by the nursery. Parents have access to children's online journals and appreciate that they are regularly updated.
- Practitioners are proactive in promoting parents' partnerships with different agencies to secure additional assistance and support. This includes the educational psychologist, local authority support workers and speech and language therapists.

## 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

- There is a strong, inclusive ethos in the nursery class. Practitioners have fostered positive relationships with children and their families and have a good knowledge of the local community. Overall, most children are settled and happy in the setting. Together, with the nursery team, they have created a helpful visual 'nursery class charter' based on children's rights. This provides helpful prompts for children. The charter should be revisited throughout the session to support a few children to engage meaningfully in play and to be more respectful of other children's feelings. For the most part, most children respond well to each other and a few are developing firm friendships. A few older children are helping a few children new to the nursery to become more aware of the daily routines and resources. Overall, practitioners encourage positive behaviour. They need time to reflect on their recent professional learning on recognising and supporting children who require support to manage their behaviour. It will be important that they develop a shared and consistent approach for taking this forward for the benefit of all children in the nursery. As most children are now accessing a longer day in the nursery, practitioners should review the pace and balance of the session. In doing so, careful consideration should be given to increasing the opportunities for children to come together with familiar adults and peers. It is also important to ensure that all children access outdoor learning.
- Practitioners, in collaboration with parents, have created a care plan for each child. Plans are reviewed regularly throughout the year. As part of care plans, parents discuss and review their child's wellbeing using the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners have attached helpful prompts across the nursery wall displays to demonstrate how the nursery is promoting children's wellbeing. To build on this, the team should now share the language of wellbeing with children in order that they have greater understanding of their own wellbeing.
- Overall, practitioners are adept at identifying children who may require additional support with their learning. They have helped to create an overview detailing the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. The team are proactive in securing guidance and assistance from local authority specialists and other professional agencies. Practitioners have put in place additional support plans to assist a number of children.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. They engage in regular professional learning, which helps to keep their knowledge up to date.

- Children are becoming aware of different religious and cultural celebrations, which are relevant to the context of the nursery class. As a result of recent professional learning practitioners are more aware of gender stereotype and bias. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their practice and children's engagement with resources and experiences on offer.

### 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

- Overall, children are making good progress in early language and communication. Most children are keen to converse with adults and other children. They enjoy talking about their learning experiences with visitors. Overall, children are developing their vocabulary in different play contexts, for example, in the home corner when they are making a 'Christmas dinner'. The majority listen well to adults and other children when playing together in small groups. A few children need support to listen to adults and to other children. Practitioners should consistently use the available visual prompts to support this. Children regularly access books independently and a few are able to retell and describe in detail their favourite books. Throughout the session, a group of children seek out adults to read to them and they enjoy using props and puppets as part of this experience. They are learning about rhythm and rhyme. Children demonstrate their understanding of familiar books by creating 'story maps' and discussing in detail key characters and events in a story. They are developing an awareness of the spoken and written word as practitioners help to scribe their Christmas stories. Most children recognise their own name as part of daily routines. Practitioners should increase additional challenge in this context by removing visual clues for a number of children. Children regularly mark make in the course of their play. A few children choose to write letters to Santa and a few create plans of the structures they plan to build. A few children are able to achieve more highly and should be encouraged to create their own story books and make more regular use of non-fiction texts.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most show an interest in numbers and can count to ten with a few able to count well beyond. A few children recognise numbers to ten. Most can identify different colours and a few can recognise and copy simple patterns. Most recognise simple shapes. They are less confident in identifying three-dimensional objects. They are exploring measure in different contexts and are at the early stages of using mathematical language in their play. In the outdoor area, a few children use scales to help them to begin to understand the difference between heavy and light. They are developing their understanding of symmetry.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children demonstrate well-developed self-help skills as they get ready to go outside and as they wash their hands before eating snack. Most children manipulate scissors, tools and knives well. Older children are encouraged to take responsibility as they risk assess the outdoor environments. Their gross motor skills are developing well due to their outdoor play and forest adventures. Most children are proficient in using the scooters. Practitioners should ensure all children are

supported to develop their gross motor skills by encouraging all to access the outdoor area. Children are beginning to learn about the importance of healthy eating as they discuss their daily snack and as they plant and grow their own vegetables. A few children demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of eating vegetables during their pretend play in the home corner.

- Overall, children are making good progress in the nursery. The team track children's progress over time through their online learning journals, individual trackers, year books, learning wall and practitioner judgements. The learning journals do not yet clearly illustrate the progress children are making over time. Parents have regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss their child's progress in learning.
- Children enjoy success in different ways across their learning. Most children demonstrate independence in their care routines, such as helping to prepare snack and brushing their teeth. They are becoming more responsible for the setting as they take on different leadership roles such as snack helper. Children who access extended hours have their lunch in the school dining hall and cope very well with all that this involves. Practitioners capture children's achievements in their online journals and on the nursery 'wow wall'. They encourage families to share their children's achievements from home. Children are not yet able to talk about their own achievements in a meaningful way.
- Practitioners take good account of the differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of children and their families. In doing so, all children are supported to make positive progress in their learning. The nursery team take account of the cost of the nursery day when planning experiences for all children and their families. They ensure all children have access to books at home. They offer information events and workshops to increase parents' understanding of child development and how they can support their child's learning at home. The team should ensure children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

## 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.