

Summarised inspection findings

St Ninian's Primary School Nursery Class

Dundee City Council

14 May 2024

Key contextual information

St Ninian's Primary School nursery class is located within the primary school building. The nursery class provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare between the hours of 9.00am and 3:00pm during term time. The nursery is registered for 39 children aged three to those not yet attending school and 15 children aged two to three years. The current role is 42 children, including eight children under three years. The nursery also offers parents the opportunity to purchase care outwith the entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. The headteacher has responsibility for the leadership of the nursery. She is supported by a senior early years practitioner (SEYP) and a nursery teacher. The nursery provision consists of two playrooms which each have direct access to outdoor play spaces. Practitioners and children also have access to other areas of the school such as the gym hall.

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

- Practitioners reflect the school's vision and values effectively in their everyday interactions, practice and approaches with children and families. The nursery team use the values well to promote positive behaviour and support children to be nurturing, respectful and kind towards each other. The senior leadership team have identified the need to make the nursery's vision and values more accessible to parents and are exploring ways to achieve this.
- The nursery team have developed positive relationships with each other. The SEYP has day to-day responsibility for the setting and is supported well by the nursery teacher. Together they spend time each day in the playrooms providing effective support to practitioners. Practitioners work well together and know that their skills and experience are valued by the senior leadership team.
- Practitioners demonstrate a professional approach to their work and are keen to continue to develop their knowledge and practise through ongoing study. Practitioners have leadership roles to take forward initiatives, which support improvements within the setting, and develop their skills. For example, practitioners lead areas such as outdoor learning and family learning experiences. Practitioners have visited other settings to learn from others. This is allowing them to identify and implement good practice. It will now be important to monitor and evaluate new developments to ensure maximum impact on learning.
- The headteacher and nursery team have developed an improvement plan that includes relevant improvement priorities. Senior leaders and practitioners accurately identified important improvements such as outdoor learning and support for children's wellbeing. The team follow a planned self-evaluation and monitoring process using national indicators of quality. They would benefit from the support of the senior leadership team to guide them further in their self-evaluation activities and to support the development of a quality assurance calendar.

- The team gather feedback from parents on a few aspects of the work of the nursery such as the availability of family learning activities. Senior leaders should now seek the views of parents on other aspects of the work of the nursery such as the quality of the curriculum and children's experiences.

- The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. Together with the depute headteacher, she works with the nursery team to monitor practice. The headteacher meets regularly with nursery leaders to share information, discuss self-evaluation and improvement priorities. The headteacher should now work more closely with nursery staff. This will provide the senior leadership team with a clear overview of practice and allow them to provide appropriate, focused challenge and support.

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 under three years enjoy warm, nurturing and positive relationships with adults who care for them well. Practitioners make effective use of space in the indoor and outdoor areas to motivate and engage children's interests. Children access resources independently and lead aspects of their own play. Sensitive interactions support children to transition well from home to the playroom. Staff ensure children and their families are welcomed into the nursery. This helps children to settle and feel relaxed within the nursery.
- Children aged from three years to five years receive a warm welcome into the nursery class. Practitioners support them very well, know them as individuals and recognise their emotional and developmental needs. Children are happy, safe, secure and developing confidence. They are motivated, engaged and enthusiastic in their play and learning. Children are developing their independence and take responsibility for a few aspects of their learning. Children should now have more opportunities to take greater responsibility within the playroom and outdoors.
- Practitioners make good use of conversation to find out about children's interests, ideas and prior knowledge. They should continue to build their skills in extending children's thinking through a more consistent use of open-ended questions and commentary. Overall, children experience an appropriate balance of time between choosing activities and time spent in adult directed tasks. However, practitioners should review the organisation of lunchtimes as children spend too long before and after lunch in adult directed activities. Children enjoy freely accessing the enclosed outdoor area. Practitioners have correctly identified the need to improve planning for outdoor learning experiences. Children have opportunities to use digital technologies such as a smartboard and tablet computer. They should now have increased access to a range of digital technologies indoors and outdoors to support their learning.
- Practitioners regularly discuss individual children's development. This enables them to provide a range of learning experiences relevant to the needs of most children. Practitioners capture examples of children's experiences in learning journals. This includes photographs and comments. Practitioners should continue to develop their skills in observing and recording children's significant learning. This will improve further the quality of children's learning journals, help them make increasingly accurate judgements about the progress children are making and identify appropriate next steps in learning.
- Practitioners use a variety of planning formats including floorbooks to plan and record children's learning. They should build on this approach, ensuring they focus more clearly on developing children's voice. Practitioners have rightly identified the need to develop approaches to responsive planning. This should help them to take better account of children's interests in their planning. Staff engage in regular professional dialogue to discuss the progress

children are making in their learning. They monitor and track children's progress through their learning journals using local authority guidance. The SEYP and the nursery teacher track progress in learning using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. As a next step, practitioners should link observations in children's learning journals to CfE experiences and outcomes to aid this tracking process. It will also be useful for senior leaders and practitioners to link with other early years settings to compare approaches to recording and tracking children's learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide an early years curriculum based firmly on play. They have recently revised approaches to planning for children's learning taking greater account of national guidance. This will help practitioners plan more effectively for appropriate challenge for children. Practitioners are developing the learning environment to support children's literacy and numeracy skills. They should make further use of the national practice guidance to help them review their use of spaces to enhance learning opportunities. Practitioners should now ensure they plan for progression in learning across all curriculum areas.
- Practitioners make good use of the local community to enhance children's experiences. They organise useful cooking groups for parents and children at the local community hub. Regular visits are made to the library, parks and open spaces by practitioners and children to enhance learning. This is helping children to understand their environment and learn in a range of different contexts.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have positive relationships with parents and value opportunities to engage with them. Practitioners facilitate learning events such as stay and play, cooking classes and messy play. These sessions raise awareness with families of how they can support their children's learning at home. Practitioners share information about children's learning and nursery developments through an online platform. As they welcome parents into the nursery, practitioners should consider how they can improve ways to share information through noticeboards and displays.
- Practitioners regularly share children's learning and experiences with parents through an online platform. Parents use this platform to comment on children's learning. A few parents provide examples of learning and achievements from home. Practitioners share a useful written summary of children's progress each term with parents.

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

- All practitioners have a strong focus on supporting children's wellbeing in the nursery. This ensures children experience a consistent, caring environment. Children are developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and most talk well about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Practitioners treat children with respect and support their individual needs and preferences well. This is enabling children to develop self-awareness and make choices about their learning. Practitioners recognise the need for supportive transitions. A few children could be supported better when moving between key phases of the nursery day such as lunchtime and wraparound care.
- Almost all parents are confident that their children are well supported in the nursery. Practitioners role model positive behaviour and work well together. Children are very well behaved. They show kindness and empathy towards each other and towards practitioners. Practitioners create a safe, nurturing environment where almost all children are settled and are developing their skills and confidence well. Children have a few opportunities to contribute to decisions when playing. They would benefit from assuming leadership roles during snack and lunch times and when preparing for outdoor play by contributing to risk assessments. Senior leaders should consider how children can be enabled, at a developmentally appropriate stage, to have their views and ideas represented on school groups such as the eco committee.
- All practitioners are very clear of their statutory duties and understand what they need to do to keep children safe. They take part in regular professional learning to develop their knowledge and receive regular updates to ensure they have current knowledge. Practitioners understand their roles and are clear about following procedures.
- Prior to children starting nursery, practitioners collect and record important information about each child. They use this information effectively to support them to meet the individual wellbeing needs of children. There are strong relationships with other agencies. Practitioners work closely with a range of partners to put in place strategies to support identified children to make progress.
- There is an inclusive ethos throughout the nursery. All children and families are treated with the highest levels of respect. Practitioners show a very good understanding of children and families' individual circumstances and support them very well. Practitioners continue to support children to understand diversity and challenge discrimination. Practitioners should continue to develop the use of resources and toys to support children's understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

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

- Children aged two to three years are making appropriate progress in their learning and development. They are growing in confidence as they explore the environment and make choices from the activities on offer. Appropriately nurturing interactions from practitioners, including the use of songs and stories, is supporting children's early communication skills well. Children enjoy accessing the outdoor play space and tending seedlings they help cultivate. Their skills in physical development will be improved through access to a wider range of suitably challenging equipment.
- Children aged three to five years are making good progress in early language and communication. Almost all children interact well with adults and other children and communicate their thoughts clearly and with confidence. They listen with interest to stories in small groups and recount the events. Children should make improved use of non-fiction texts to support their play. Children develop knowledge of the language and layout of books well when visiting the local library. They show a keen interest in mark making and enjoy sharing their writing as they compose letters. Children should now continue to develop early literacy skills when playing at a wider range of contexts in the playroom and outdoors.
- Children are progressing well in early numeracy and count with increasing confidence when playing. Children are developing good early mathematical skills through a wide range of toys and resources available. They are learning about two-dimensional shapes as they play with construction toys and complete matching games. Children develop skills at using money when making purchases at the 'shoe shop'. A few children develop their understanding of simple graphs when organising information, detailing how they travel to nursery. Children use appropriate mathematical language as they compare the capacity of containers when playing with water. Children should continue to develop early numeracy and mathematical skills through real-life contexts and throughout the nursery.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing across the curriculum. They are developing good fine motor control and coordination through the range of experiences available. Children enjoy climbing towers made from crates outdoors. However, the wheeled toys available do not always provide sufficient challenge. Children understand how to keep themselves safe when playing outdoors. They show familiarity with routines such as hand washing and dressing for outdoor play. They are developing their awareness of healthy lifestyles through the range of food offered during snacks and at lunchtime.

- As a result of their nursery experience and from information gathered from learning journals, children are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Children with additional support needs are making appropriate progress in relation to their individual developmental stage.
- Practitioners highlight children's achievements using the 'wow' and learning walls, and children's personal learning journals. They also celebrate achievements in the setting through appropriate use of praise. Practitioners should continue to explore ways to encourage parents to celebrate and share children's achievements, for example through learning journals.
- Practitioners work well to develop a supportive and inclusive ethos that promotes equity. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to make use of all data and information, including that relating to socioeconomic backgrounds. This will help to plan appropriate interventions to meet the needs of individual children.

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.