

Summarised inspection findings

Sikeside Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

25 February 2020

Key contextual information

Sikeside Nursery class is situated in Sikeside Primary School, Coatbridge. The overall leadership and management of the nursery is the responsibility of the headteacher of the primary school. Day to day responsibility of the nursery is led by the excellence and equity lead graduate practitioner. The lead graduate practitioner is supported by the lead early years practitioner. The nursery comprises of two playrooms, a nurture/quiet area and their own outdoor area. Regular use is also made of the local forest area, situated behind the school. There are two separate morning and afternoon sessions, with provision for 50 children at each session. In the week prior to the inspection, nursery children started accessing lunches, in a move towards 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 nursery's vision, values and aims were developed several years ago in conjunction with the school. The vision for the nursery is being reviewed.
- As a team, practitioners are very reflective and continue improving their practice to make a positive impact on learning outcomes for children. Since the lead practitioner took up post in 2018, she plans effectively for continual improvement of the nursery using evidence based on robust self-evaluation. She ensures that the changes to the nursery are continually monitored to ensure that they make maximum impact on children's outcomes.
- The pace of change is appropriate to allow all practitioners, to be fully consulted and empowered to implement changes. A comprehensive plan has been developed, which includes relevant key actions leading to improvement in practice. For example, a review of the environment, including a focus on outdoor play is leading to children having increased time outdoors. Encouraging children to lead their own learning has increased children's engagement in their learning. Practitioners have utilised effectively national guidance such as Building the Ambition, to support their improvements. All practitioners should continue to gather evidence from all stakeholders using the helpful national guidance, '*How good is our early learning and childcare?*' This will help practitioners to continue to reflect on what they are doing well and what they could review and improve.
- The lead graduate practitioner has fostered distributed leadership well by enabling all practitioners to have leadership roles. Practitioners take on roles within the team according to their interests and strengths and the needs of the nursery, for example, health and wellbeing and other targeted interventions to support individual children's needs. Practitioners have undertaken a range of training and professional learning to support these leadership roles. The lead early years practitioner mentors other practitioners. She has had a key role in promoting family learning provided in the nursery along with community learning and development officer. The headteacher supports the lead graduate practitioner in aspects of the nursery work. The

lead graduate practitioner monitors improvements across the nursery, evidencing impact of changes on learners. However, there is now a need for more formal monitoring of nursery practice, including by the senior leadership team in the primary school.

- Practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to take on more leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the setting, including through more involvement in the life of the primary school. They currently visit and link with other settings. Practitioners should continue to look out with the setting to familiarise themselves with current thinking and research in early learning and childcare. This will support continuous improvement. The lead graduate practitioner and lead practitioner encourage practitioners to attend further training and acquire additional qualifications in order to improve their practice.

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 are strong and nurturing relationships between practitioners and children. As a result, children are happy, settled, and enthusiastic about their learning. Over the last year practitioners have worked together to significantly, change the nursery environment. This has resulted in children now enjoying a stimulating environment, which is increasingly promoting the development of their creativity and curiosity well. Children are motivated and most demonstrate a sustained level of engagement in their play. They confidently make choices and select materials to develop their creativity and play from a good range of quality resources, including loose parts and plenty of natural materials.
- Children are listened to and their views are used to support the development of their learning environments and experiences. Practitioners encourage children to take risks and develop their skills. They are encouraged to follow their interests. The outdoor area provides a good variety of opportunities for children to investigate and solve problems. Regular visits to the forest are enriching children's experiences as they take increasing responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Practitioners should extend children's involvement in learning to manage risk.
- Practitioners show a good understanding of how young children learn and develop. A few practitioners are undertaking further professional study and regularly share their learning with colleagues. Interactions and effective use of praise by practitioners contribute to the positive climate for learning and achievement. Practitioners engage in conversations with children to extend their talking and listening skills. There is a good balance of child-led and adult-led learning. Practitioners use questioning techniques appropriately to support children's understanding. They should continue to extend questioning to develop richer learning and challenge in children's thinking, whilst promoting curiosity and inquiry. Children enjoy use of digital technology through a variety of means and this is continuing to support and enrich their play and learning.
- Practitioners know children well, assessing learning as they observe children and interact with them during play. Children's 'learning journeys' capture key observations. They are accessible to parents. Observations and reflections of monthly planning inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning. Children's current interests and recent learning experiences, such as their favourite movies, dinosaurs, autumn and Hallowe'en are illustrated well by practitioners. Practitioners now need to develop 'learning journeys; further by encouraging parents to add their own comments about children's learning and share achievements from home. There is also scope for practitioners to engage children further in conversations about their learning and identify meaningful and challenging next steps.
- Children's interests are the starting point for planning appropriate learning experiences. Practitioners plan experiences and activities, such as "Book bug" support reading, and are

tailored to meet children's individual needs. The use of observations help practitioners to document children's learning and experiences over time. Practitioners should continue to involve children more in the process of planning for their own learning. They monitor and track children's progress through their 'learning journeys' and after each medium term planning block. Continuing this approach will further identify progress more clearly across all key aspects of early learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The curriculum is responsive to children's needs and is centred around play. Good use is made of national guidance such as Pre-birth to three and experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to support the planning and assessment process. Practitioners use medium term planning blocks along with a longer-term backdrop overview for planning. Practitioners are highly reflective. They review planning blocks of learning and adapt these in light of children's experiences and progress.
- There is a focus on health and wellbeing for all children, along with literacy and numeracy opportunities embedded throughout play experiences. The focus on natural resources and open-ended materials offers children good opportunities to develop their imagination, creativity and inquiry skills. There has been a focus on the development of outdoor learning over the last year, resulting in daily access to the nursery outdoor area and weekly visits to local forest. Practitioners need to continue to extend opportunities for outdoor learning. They make good use of parents and partners to enrich learning, for example, in sharing their skills and promoting the world of work. Practitioners should continue to support children to make more explicit links between their own learning and skills for life and work.
- Practitioners have taken a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and this is now a feature of learning across the nursery. Practitioners lead workshops for parents and children to learn together. This has been reinforced by a visit to an outdoor centre for children and parents. Children enjoy opportunities to learn in all activities relating to STEM, both indoors and outdoors.
- We would encourage the nursery now to take forward their plans for early level working across nursery and primary.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have strong positive relationships with parents. They work well with families and encourage a partnership approach to supporting children to make the best possible progress. The strong relationships also encourage parents to discuss any concerns about their children as early as possible. Effective partnership working with other professionals allows support to both children and their families to have a positive impact. For example, the lead practitioner and the link community learning and development officer jointly provide highly valued parental workshops. These focus on learning at home including STEM, the importance of social and emotional development children and parenting programmes.
- Practitioners have tried a variety of ways to increase parental involvement and communication in the life and work of the nursery. They have 'stay and play' sessions. Parents are asked regularly for their views to improve the nursery. Practitioners respond to parents' views, for example, in the creation of a booklet with photographs and biographies of members of staff, as a result of feedback from parents. The nursery communicates well with parents using a variety of mediums including social media, emails and regular newsletters.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting 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 setting and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

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 very strong, caring relationships in the nursery, and the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners know each child extremely well and are highly attuned to their needs. Practitioners and children are continuing to develop their use of the wellbeing indicators. Children take home 'wellbeing bags' to support their understanding of these indicators. Practitioners now need to continue to build on their practice to support children and parents to develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators in a more meaningful way. They need to continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These could be implemented in conjunction with the development of understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners use praise and language effectively to reinforce their expectations of behaviour. Recently, practitioners have taken the opportunity to begin learning about the positive effects of mindfulness for themselves and the children. Children are active and are developing a range of gross motor skills whilst they ride balance bikes and create challenges in their outdoor area, or explore the woods with increasing skill and confidence. They talk well about how they can keep themselves healthy and are well aware of healthy food choices following a local authority programme delivered by practitioners.
- Practitioners use the wellbeing indicators well to plan for children who require additional support. Practitioners have recently completed care plans for all children in consultation with parents. Children who require additional support with learning are supported well on a day-to-day basis.
- Practitioners should continue to pursue working jointly in partnership with other professional to plan and meet the needs of children with additional support needs in accordance with education authority's policies and practices. The senior leadership team and practitioners require further training to ensure confidence in fulfilling legislative requirements and codes of practice.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well throughout the work of the nursery. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year. There is a focus on working with families and children with English as an additional language. As planned, practitioners should continue to explore gender equality more deeply with children to ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged. There are effective strategies and targeted approaches and interventions in place, particularly in literacy, to support children who may face additional challenges.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They talk confidently as they play and are keen to share their ideas and thoughts with practitioners. Children use a wide range of vocabulary, which is extended well by practitioners. Children are developing an awareness of rhyme and enjoy playing with the sounds and patterns of language. Older children are beginning to recognise letters, identify sounds and confidently verbalise syllables of their name. Children show an interest in books and listen attentively to stories. A few children choose to read books individually, and most children use various well-planned areas of the nursery environment, including cosy quiet areas, to support them with their early reading skills. Most children are developing an interest in early writing and use a variety of resources indoors and outdoors to practice and develop their skills across the curriculum. A few children are making very good progress in early writing, being able to spell and write their own names and short words. The majority of children show high levels of imagination and apply this in their play. They invent games and stories and use resources well to represent their ideas. As discussed, there is scope to build on and extend opportunities for children to apply their early literacy skills in meaningful real life contexts, both indoors and outdoors.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making good progress. A few children are able to count beyond 10 and recognise and use numbers in a wide range of contexts, indoors and outdoors, for example, in their science activities. Practitioners develop children's mathematical thinking by providing regular opportunities to apply their skills in relevant real-life and play-based situations, for example, in the forest. They learn about weight through a wide range of baking and cooking opportunities and explore volume through resources for water play. In the construction area, children plan and build structures, learning about height and length as they use mathematical language appropriately in their play. Science activities, for example, with raisins or the hedgehogs, provide further creative opportunities where children are exploring shape, pattern, measure and volume as they develop their fine motor skills. There is scope for practitioners to provide further opportunities for children to explore information handling in response to their questions and interests as a few children are not able to do this. Children enjoy using the interactive whiteboard for a variety of reasons, including playing games that enable them to apply a range of mathematical skills.
- A strong focus on health and wellbeing is resulting a positive impact on children's learning and development. Almost all children are making good progress. Children demonstrate very positive relationships with one another, they are caring and co-operate well. Children show a

great enthusiasm whilst in the woods, which practitioners use effectively to promote children's interest in nature, seasons and living things. Children are learning about making healthy choices at snack, baking and lunchtimes and use real cutlery appropriately, as they prepare snacks or undertake baking activities.

- Observations in children's 'learning journeys' provide evidence that children are making good progress in their learning during their time at nursery. Children are confident to try new experiences, engage with new learning enthusiastically and are making continuous progress. The team need to continue to develop monitoring and tracking of children's progress and achievements over time, working with colleagues from other settings.
- The supportive and inclusive ethos in the setting creates a climate of mutual respect and trust. Practitioners take good account of the socio-economic backgrounds of children and their families and have a very good understanding of individual circumstances. They recognise the importance of parental involvement to improve outcomes for children. They work well in partnership with other professionals to provide tailored support and promote equity, including, for example, providing family learning programmes in the nursery with CLD partners. The nursery team have undertaken work on the cost of the school day, and are proactive in ensuring that no child misses out in opportunities.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- The team understand and prioritise the importance of the transition from home to the setting. As part of the transition parents and children attend stay and play sessions. Practitioners have a good understanding of child development. They use this to provide sensitive support tailored to the needs of children and families new to the setting. As a result, children observed have formed very positive relationships with adults and other children in the setting. Practitioners ask parents to share information about children's skills and interests from home to build on children's learning.
- The setting makes good efforts to build on the learning that takes place before children start nursery and continues as children settle into the setting. Practitioners work effectively to provide support for children who experience changes and may require short or longer-term support.
- Transitions throughout the session, between activities and access to local resources are well managed. Children have a very good understanding of their routine and interruptions to children's play are minimised wherever possible. This allows them develop their own ideas and pick up their play quickly.
- There is a well-established programme of pastoral transition activities on offer in the third term. Children, parents and practitioners work well together to support children to develop their confidence in moving on to Sikeside Primary School, along with the two other primary schools which the nursery serves. There is potential to build on and develop more opportunities for shared learning across the early level.

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.