

Summarised inspection findings

St Ninian's Primary School Nursery

West Lothian Council

22 August 2023

Key contextual information

St Ninian's Primary School Nursery is based within the building of St Ninian's Primary School, in Dedridge, Livingston. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) placements for children living in the communities of Dedridge, Adambrae and the Murieston area. Children can attend the nursery from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting can provide places for 40 children at any one time. Currently, there are 43 children on the roll divided, almost evenly, between children in their first and second year of nursery. Children attend across the extended year with options to attend full days, morning or afternoon sessions. There is one spacious playroom and children have direct access to a large outdoor area. The depute headteacher of St Ninian's Primary School and Nursery has delegated responsibility for the nursery. There is an early years officer (EYO), five full time equivalent early years practitioners (EYP), and a pupil support worker. A local authority early learning and childcare area support manager supports the nursery team one day a week.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 and children ensure that the nursery values of friendship, kindness, happiness and love are embedded in the daily life and work of the nursery. Almost all children demonstrate these values effectively in their interactions with adults and each other. They explain successfully how they are demonstrating the values and link this to their learning. For example, when they play together, children explain they are being kind when they share resources with their peers. Senior leaders and practitioners ask parents and children for their views regularly to ensure the values remain relevant to the unique context of the nursery. Practitioners help children and parents understand and link their learning to the values through the 'value of the month' focus.
- The depute headteacher is fully involved in the strategic work of the nursery. She is supported very effectively by the EYO who is a very good role model for all practitioners. All practitioners share the vision for the nursery to be a place 'where adventure, nurture and learning go hand in hand'. They demonstrate very positive relationships with each other and have a strong focus on working as a team to achieve the best outcomes for all children.
- All practitioners engage in annual review and development meetings. In these meetings, senior leaders support them to identify their key strengths, and personal and professional interests. Together, they link these to the nursery improvement priorities and identify leadership roles for all practitioners. Practitioners fulfil these leadership roles very effectively. This has resulted in children experiencing rich learning across a range of areas such as digital technology and outdoor learning. This session, practitioners led improvements to the lunchtime experience for children. This is helping children develop greater independence skills in a calm, social lunch

setting. Senior leaders should continue to support all practitioners develop further their leadership skills.

- All practitioners have a strong focus on the continuous improvement of the nursery. Senior leaders work together well to develop a clear, annual calendar for evaluation and improvement of the work of the nursery. Practitioners regularly seek the views of children, parents and each other when planning improvements to the nursery. They use this information well to make changes to nursery practice to improve outcomes for all children. All practitioners are fully involved in regularly reviewing the impact of improvement work and identifying further next steps for development.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to children's rights which are being increasingly understood by children. They have carefully created a very positive and nurturing environment for learning. As a result, almost all children are happy, confident and highly motivated by and in their learning. They engage for extended periods of time in their chosen activities in carefully designed learning spaces. Children have access to interesting, open-ended resources that promote curiosity, creativity and inquiry.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are caring and respectful. Practitioners confidently articulate the extensive knowledge they have of children. They use this knowledge very well to support each individual child to progress in their learning and development. Practitioners provide an effective blend of child-led, adult-initiated and adult-led learning experiences. They use a range of approaches, including 'skills time', to ensure children develop a breadth of knowledge and skills. Children are actively involved in a wide range of learning experiences that take very good account of their interests, as well as their developmental needs. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their learning and make many choices about what and where they will play.
- Working together, practitioners develop high-quality pedagogy based on their sound understanding of child development and of learning through play. All practitioners have participated well in professional learning to ensure an increasingly consistent high-quality in their interactions and use of questioning. As a result, most interactions between practitioners and children are sensitive and help consolidate and extend children's learning.
- Practitioners develop the use of digital technologies very well with children to enrich and support learning. Children take a lead role and confidently use an extensive range of technology. For example, they contribute to weekly summaries of their learning to share with families and use matrix barcodes to access resources. Practitioners should continue to develop the use of technologies, such as, supporting children to access their journals to celebrate their learning.
- Practitioners observe children as they learn. They record and share children's progress and achievements with families effectively using an online application. They use their observations well to plan next steps in learning. Practitioners are developing the use of local authority guidance to track children's progress and plan next steps in learning. Practitioners readily identify where children may benefit from support or more challenge in their learning and provide different learning experiences for individuals. They work closely and successfully with other professionals, where required, to provide individualised programmes and support. This has a very positive impact on children's learning experiences and how they are supported to make progress in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a progressive curriculum that is based on play and is highly responsive to children's interests. The curriculum builds on prior learning well. As a result, children experience learning that is motivating and sustains their engagement well, both indoors and outside. Practitioners share responsibility for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, often through high-quality, real-life experiences, including planting, sewing and woodwork. They also ensure children experience learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local community to enhance the curriculum and are re-establishing links post COVID-19 mitigations. This includes visits to nearby woodland, visits to local shops and cafes, a care home for older people and nearby building sites. Practitioners help children make links with the world of work successfully and explore their aspirations for future careers.
- Practitioners work effectively with colleagues across the early level to promote continuity and progression in children's learning and pedagogy. They support children and their families effectively through well-planned transition arrangements as they begin nursery and move onto P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents and children receive a warm welcome into the nursery at the beginning and end of each session. Practitioners support families well to play an active role in their child's learning experiences at home and in the nursery. For example, they promote reading at home with children and provide family learning programmes in the nursery.
- Practitioners keep parents fully informed about the life and work of the nursery. They provide parents with regular helpful updates on their child's learning experiences through daily interactions, social media posts, weekly online presentations and online learning journals.
- Practitioners regularly seek the views of parents about aspects of nursery provision. Most parents feel that their views are considered and that they influence improvements across the nursery.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners 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

very 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

- Across the nursery, warm, nurturing relationships are evident between practitioners and children and among children. All practitioners demonstrate high levels of care and understanding of children's needs. Practitioners work together successfully, with parents and children, to develop the nursery positive relationships charter. They use this charter effectively to engage children in conversations about the decisions they make regarding how they treat other children and adults. This is helping children clearly identify how they can improve their interactions with others in their play. As a result, almost all children play and learn well together. Practitioners have clear plans in place, and use a shared language, to support children who find it challenging to manage their feelings. Children experience consistent and sensitive support from all practitioners when they are experiencing negative feelings. This is helping children to recognise and control their emotions well and explain how they are feeling.
- All practitioners have a strong focus on helping children to understand how they can develop positive wellbeing. Practitioners and children work together to develop characters for each wellbeing indicator. This helps children understand and explain what each indicator means for them. Children talk about their wellbeing confidently using 'ask me about' stickers. They describe how they have demonstrated individual wellbeing indicators as they play and learn in the nursery. For example, children identify they have been safe when they play carefully in the woodworking area. Practitioners help children understand children's rights by linking children's rights to the wellbeing indicators and their daily experiences. Children demonstrated this effectively in a podcast about their Christmas experiences.
- All practitioners are clear about their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They know their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. Practitioners work with children and families to develop individual plans to support children's health, care and wellbeing needs. Practitioners should now develop further children's individual targets for wellbeing and learning. They need to ensure all targets are specific and achievable within appropriate timescales.
- There is a highly inclusive ethos across the nursery. All children treat each other with respect and are respected by practitioners. There are clear plans in place to support children who need additional support with their learning. Senior leaders and practitioners review and refresh these plans regularly with parents and partner agencies. This helps children requiring additional support make very good progress and be fully included in the life and work of the nursery. Practitioners are beginning to develop learning experiences which help children understand diversity and the multi-cultural society in which we live.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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

- From their individual developmental stage, children make very good progress in communication and early language. For example, almost all children listen well to instructions. They are developing their use of a range of sophisticated vocabulary through focused activities. Most children confidently communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. They are developing an awareness of how to question, such as, asking questions to gain an understanding of the thoughts of others. Practitioners promote reading for enjoyment in the nursery. Almost all children choose to explore texts and are familiar with a range of stories and rhymes. Almost all children explore mark making and early writing at their own developmental stage. Older children enjoy the challenge of exploring letter names, syllables and writing for a purpose, for example, they write captions and labels for displays.
- Children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They confidently use a wide range of mathematical language as they order, measure, compare and describe direction and position. Most children are developing confidence in counting and are aware of numbers in the environment. In play situations and routines, they explore values of different coins, simple fractions and time. As children collate information in surveys they develop their understanding of simple data handling.
- The strong focus on health and wellbeing, and the nursery values, result in almost all children making very good progress in this area. Children develop a range of gross motor skills as they balance, climb, jump and run in the attractive outdoor space and enjoy regular trips to local woodland. They take increasing responsibility for their own safety as they learn about and manage risks. Almost all children are developing fine motor control at their individual stage of development. They enjoy exploring real tools as they explore woodwork, sewing and prepare snack. Most children have a well-developed awareness of their own wellbeing.
- Almost all children make very good progress because of their nursery experiences. They are becoming increasingly independent, resilient and are developing the skills and attitudes to be successful learners. Practitioners use their extensive knowledge of children as individuals, along with their own professional judgement, to ensure children's learning is built upon. They do this using a very personalised approach to best meet the needs of individual children.
- Practitioners use praise very effectively to recognise and celebrate children's successes. This is encouraging positive attitudes and a culture of achievement. Recently, practitioners

encouraged parents to share children's achievements digitally from home. Children are proud of their achievements displayed.

- Practitioners ensure equity across children's experiences, for example, they carefully plan activities and events to ensure everyone can participate. They use their extensive knowledge of children's learning and differing cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds to help identify potential barriers to children's learning. Practitioners use available data and information well to deliver successful targeted interventions to support and accelerate the progress of individual children. They should continue to develop the use of all available data, for example attendance, and evaluate the impact of strategies used to make decisions about future interventions.

Practice worth sharing more widely.

Approaches to developing children's digital literacy in the nursery.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to develop their digital skills across the nursery. Practitioners recognised the need for children to become digital producers instead of digital consumers. They help children develop their knowledge of their moral responsibility and respectful use of recording image and film digitally. For example, children ask their peer's permission before they photograph them.

Children are beginning to be fully involved in producing online presentations to share learning with parents and the wider community on a regular basis. Children confidently use a wide range of technologies. Practitioners are developing their own digital skills alongside, and with, 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.