

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cathkin Primary School Nursery Class**

South Lanarkshire Council

2 May 2023

## Key contextual information

Cathkin nursery class is based within Cathkin Primary School. Children attend from Rutherglen and the surrounding areas. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged two until they begin primary school. Fifty children can attend at any one time. The current roll is 43. Children attend for full days during term time. Whilst the headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery, she has delegated full responsibility to a depute headteacher.

The depute headteacher is supported by a team leader and a team of practitioners. A local authority peripatetic teacher provides additional support to the nursery. During the pandemic, practitioners worked regularly in a local hub. Within the last year, the nursery has experienced some challenges with staffing.

### 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

- Senior leaders and practitioners have a sound knowledge of the cultural and socio-economic context of their community. The vision for the whole school sets out their aspirations for children to be all they can be. Practitioners within the nursery have adapted the school values into child friendly language. They use 'be safe, be kind, be ready' meaningfully with children. This helps children to gain a developmentally appropriate understanding of the values.
- The depute headteacher provides good leadership for practitioners. Together, as a team, they provide very good support to each other, children, and families. Weekly staff meetings are led by the depute headteacher. This gives practitioners the opportunity to discuss children's wellbeing, their experiences and undertake self-evaluation activities. In addition, the peripatetic teacher provides valuable support to improve practice further. Recently, she has been instrumental in supporting practitioners to adopt a more responsive approach to their planning. The team are motivated by this and demonstrate an openness to develop further to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders encourage leadership at all levels. Each practitioner has a leadership role for key areas of improvement within the nursery. This includes block play, working with parents and outdoor learning. Practitioners implement clear action plans to help them progress their key areas of improvement at an appropriate pace. Children's experiences and the level of parental engagement have improved because of practitioners' leadership.
- Practitioners value professional learning opportunities and are encouraged to access a range of learning including additional qualifications. They are motivated to extend their knowledge and skills. Practitioners support children and families more effectively as a result of their professional learning. This includes their participation in courses on attachment theory and supporting children and families with English as an additional language.

- The team use national guidance to help them evaluate the quality of ELC they provide. They engage in a variety of useful self-evaluation activities including consultation with children and their families. Practitioners clearly identify the strengths and areas of development for the nursery. All senior leaders should develop a more systematic approach to monitoring the quality of learning and teaching within the nursery. This should support practitioners to continue to develop further the quality of their practice.
- All practitioners contribute to the school improvement plan. In addition, they have specific action plans for the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners should now review and streamline the approach to identifying priorities and planning for improvement. In doing so, they should ensure priorities within the school improvement plan are relevant and meaningful for the nursery.

## 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

- Across the setting, respectful and nurturing relationships between practitioners, children and families are a strong feature of practice. Children feel highly valued and settle quickly with secure attachments.
- Children's engagement has improved because of recent changes staff have made to spaces, resources, and approaches to planning for children's learning. Children are supported to become increasingly independent through their use of these improved spaces. Practitioners' use of new open-ended resources increases opportunities for children to be creative and explore their own ideas. Practitioners should develop further approaches to support children to lead their own learning. Most children concentrate well on their learning throughout most of their day. A few children find it difficult to concentrate on chosen activities at key times of transition. Practitioners should review the use of a small selection of resources to ensure they are developmentally appropriate for younger children.
- Practitioners frequently interact with all children in a supportive, interested way. The team ask open-ended questions and listen attentively to children. Across the nursery, children are very familiar with daily routines. Practitioners use songs and rhyme, eye contact and simple signing effectively to sustain children's interest. The team should continue to develop further their skills in their observation of all learning spaces. A few children would benefit from increased interactions with adults as they move between experiences and spaces.
- The team are enthusiastic and focused on improvement as they develop their skills in recording how children learn and progress. Practitioners rightly recognise they need to be clearer about which specific skills they are assessing. Practitioners work well with the visiting teacher to improve how they plan learning. The team are beginning to offer an improved balance between adult-directed and child-initiated learning. They now need to ensure planning builds effectively on children's prior learning to ensure they make the best possible progress.
- The team co-operate and share ideas effectively to improve the quality of the documentation of children's learning. Practitioners record skills and link key milestones in online learning journeys. They now need to develop their skills further in observing and recording children's significant learning to build a clearer picture of children's learning and development. They should continue to ensure children, practitioners and families understand the purpose of, and contribute to, children's next steps in learning.
- Practitioners have detailed information about children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. They promptly identify children who require additional help in their learning. The depute headteacher and practitioners use their in-depth knowledge of children, families and

their needs well. Practitioners effectively implement specific strategies to work with children to support their specific needs.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that is play-based and increasingly responsive to children's interests. They provide a wide variety of experiences across different areas of learning. The team's planning of spaces, experiences and interactions include careful attention to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners should continue to use national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me' (2020) to support their work, including informing the rationale for their curriculum.
- Practitioners plan initial, personalised transitions into the nursery in partnership with families very well. The team are sensitive to the individual needs, preferences, and temperaments of individual children. Practitioners and parents have close, trusting relationships. This supports open and honest dialogue about children. Practitioners implement a well-planned programme of activities to support children as they transition into primary school. They provide additional sessions and activities to support a few children. The team should develop further their work across early level to ensure continuity for children.

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

- Parents are welcomed warmly into the nursery at the beginning and end of the day. This gives parents and practitioners an opportunity to share relevant information. There is a strong sense of community within the nursery, built upon positive relationships.
- Practitioners support and encourage parents to join nursery activities. This includes 'Welcome Wednesdays' when parents can come into the nursery playroom and play and learn alongside their children. Parents are encouraged to attend storytelling sessions and engage with the lending library to support children to develop a love of books.
- Practitioners use a range of approaches to communicate and consult with parents. The team shares information on children's experiences through children's online learning journals. Practitioners should continue to encourage parents to engage meaningfully with their children's learning and share achievements from home. Parents receive information regularly on their child's learning and development.

## 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

- Practitioners demonstrate the nursery motto of 'children are at the heart of our nursery' through their nurturing and responsive relationships with children. The wellbeing of children and families is paramount to the work of all staff. This supports all children to feel safe and secure within the nursery. Children continue to make good progress in their development and learning as a result of these positive interactions with practitioners. There is a clear focus on getting it right for every child and family connected with the nursery.
- Practitioners use a variety of resources well to support children to explore and recognise a range of feelings and emotions. Children have the opportunity to talk about how they feel and why, at daily emotional check-ins. Practitioners gather information on children's wellbeing, health and previous experiences when children transition into the nursery from home. They use the wellbeing indicators effectively to support discussions with parents. This helps practitioners understand the needs of each individual child. Practitioners are at a very early stage of introducing the wellbeing indicators to children. The majority of children are able to identify ways to keep safe and are aware of healthy foods. Practitioners should continue to support children to gain an awareness of the full range of indicators through routines and meaningful real-life contexts.
- Children choose their lunch with the support of their parent/carer as they arrive at nursery. Older children benefit from a calm, social and unhurried lunchtime within the school dining hall. They are encouraged to be independent as they collect their lunch, pour their water and clear away their plates.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are clear about their statutory duties in relation to ELC. They understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and keeping them safe. Each child has a detailed care plan, which outlines individual care and welfare needs. Practitioners work in partnership with parents to review and update these plans regularly.
- Practitioners have relevant planning in place to support children who require additional support. They review individual children's targets to ensure identified strategies are successful and support children's development and learning. Practitioners should review a few children's targets to make sure children are able to experience success within an appropriate timescale.
- Practitioners value and respect diversity. Children are developing an awareness of different cultures as they celebrate a few festivals. Practitioners use photographs well to explore with children the similarities and differences within families. The team should continue to build on this practice to provide a wider range of experiences and resources. A next step is to help children to develop further their awareness 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 under three

- Children concentrate intently as they explore a variety of resources. They develop a positive sense of self as they express their feelings and join in songs. Children explore mathematical concepts, such as volume, through their play with sand and natural materials. They are curious and engaged as they begin to sort and categorise objects by colour. A few children need increased, developmentally appropriate opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills.

#### Children aged three to five

- Almost all children play together well, particularly during imaginative play in the home corner. Children develop their gross motor skills as they dance, balance or jump when playing outdoors. Snack and lunch helpers are confident and successful learners who are proud of their important role. Practitioners should continue to increase leadership roles for all children.
- Children make good progress in communication and early language. They share a good knowledge of familiar stories and songs. A few children have fun with sounds and rhyme as they identify and match initial sounds. Practitioners could develop children's skills further through a wider range of developmentally appropriate experiences. Most children recognise their name as they mark make. Children enjoy sharing their ideas and knowledge about the natural world in detailed line drawings. They would benefit from increased opportunities to write for a purpose.
- Children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They develop an awareness of shape, symmetry and length as they build complex models. Children use mathematical language with understanding as they make playdough. A few children would benefit from opportunities to develop further their skills in numeracy through their play, routines and real-life contexts.
- Senior leaders monitor children's progress termly. Practitioners identify termly literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing targets for each child. They now need to review how they record children's progress over time. This will help practitioners to be clearer about the progress children make and where they require additional challenge in their learning. Children would benefit from increased involvement in evaluating the progress towards their personal targets.

- Practitioners recognise the challenges families may face as a result of the current cost of living crisis. The team work very well with partner agencies to ensure equity for all children and families.

## 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.