

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Brendan's Primary School Nursery Class**

North Lanarkshire Council

21 March 2023

## Key contextual information

St Brendan's Nursery Class is based within St Brendan's Primary School and provides early learning and childcare (ELC) placements for children from Motherwell and the surrounding towns. Children can attend the nursery from the age of two until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 60 children. The current roll is 42. There are two playrooms. One for children aged two to three years and another for children aged three to five years. Each playroom has an outdoor area. Children attend on a full day basis, term time only. Two lead practitioners provide day-to-day support to practitioners. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery.

### 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

- Over the last year, there have been significant challenges in staffing. In spite of this, the headteacher has continued to manage and lead the nursery effectively. She provides good support and guidance to the nursery team and manages the pace of change well.
- Practitioners, in consultation with parents, have created a new vision and values. The shared vision of 'Growing and Learning Together' demonstrates the importance practitioners place on positive relationships and partnerships with families. As practitioners embed the vision and values, they should support children's awareness and understanding of them in a developmentally appropriate way.
- The headteacher ensures the nursery is an integral part of the primary school and values practitioners and children's contributions to the school community. There is a strong sense of teamwork among practitioners. They are proud of the welcoming, supportive and nurturing ethos they have created for children and families. Practitioners value their collective knowledge and expertise and use this to build capacity within the team.
- Practitioners demonstrate commitment to professional learning and engage in a variety of professional learning opportunities. This includes professional enquiry and looking outwards to other ELC settings. Practitioners use these opportunities to reflect on their own practice. They recognise, through recent visits to ELC settings, that they need to improve how they plan for and assess children's learning.
- Practitioners work collaboratively with teachers in P1 to plan learning experiences in specific curriculum areas. They work in 'pedagogy trios' to observe, evaluate and give feedback on identified learning experiences. As a result of this way of working, practitioners have recognised ways in which they can improve their practice further.
- The headteacher promotes and supports a strong culture of improvement. Each practitioner has the opportunity to be part of a working group to take forward nursery improvements. These leadership opportunities are having a positive impact on children's experiences. For example,

practitioners' confidence in using digital technology has increased. As a result, children's skills in using the interactive board and tablets to record and share their experiences have improved.

- The headteacher has established effective quality assurance arrangements to identify the strengths and areas for improvement within the nursery. Practitioners are reflective and engage in a range of informal and formal self-evaluation activities. They use audits well to evaluate the quality of the learning environment. As a result, playrooms are welcoming and attractive spaces for children to develop and learn.
- The headteacher visits the nursery regularly. As part of her monitoring, she interacts with children, observes their experiences and samples their learning journeys and floorbooks. The headteacher should build on this to support practitioners in recognising the progress children are making in their learning. They require help to identify relevant next steps for children, which result in children making the best possible progress.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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 have created welcoming and inclusive environments, both indoors and outdoors. All practitioners use praise and encouragement well to celebrate children's successes. Senior leaders have identified a key worker for all children, which helps practitioners to know and understand children as individuals. Practitioners provide support and encouragement effectively during play, which helps build children's confidence. They interact effectively with children and use gestures, symbols and signing well to support children in learning and to extend their communication and vocabulary. This helps children to feel understood and secure in the nursery.
- Across the nursery, children are familiar with their nursery routines and engage well in a range of relevant play opportunities. Most children engage well in learning experiences for most of the time. Children use the welcoming environment effectively to explore and investigate a range of natural and open-ended play resources outdoors and during the forest experience.
- Practitioners observe children as they play. They record their experiences in individual online learning journeys. All children are proud of their learning journeys and enjoy sharing them with their parents and visitors to the nursery. Older children access digital devices independently to share their experiences effectively.
- Practitioners would benefit from professional learning to support them to improve further their skills in observing and recording significant learning of individual children. They need to be clearer about which specific skills they are assessing. This would help practitioners to identify what children need to learn next and make their judgements of children's progress more accurately. Practitioners have a few opportunities to engage in helpful discussions about children's learning with other practitioners and early level teachers at school and cluster level.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning across the curriculum using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early level experiences and outcomes. They are responsive to children's interests and provide resources and experiences to support children in their play. They now need to ensure planning meets all children's individual learning needs and builds on their prior learning.
- Practitioners have clear information about those children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. They use data gathered well to identify children who require additional support in their learning. Practitioners provide targeted support to help children to continue to make progress in their development and learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- All practitioners worked together successfully to review the playroom environments and spaces. This has helped them to develop interesting environments and spaces for learning across the curriculum. Children learn through play across the curriculum both indoors and outdoors. Older children make good use of the local forest to develop their confidence, and skills in working together creatively.
- Practitioners working with children under the age of three use national guidelines well to plan appropriate experiences for children. They promote strong, nurturing relationships and support children to develop their skills. Practitioners working with children aged three to five use CfE experiences and outcomes for all curriculum areas to plan learning experiences for children. Practitioners have early level progression frameworks for a few curriculum areas. They are not yet using these to plan individual children's next steps in learning and to identify the progress children are making. With the help of senior leaders, practitioners now need to develop progression frameworks across all curriculum areas. This should help them plan progressive learning experiences to meet the needs of all children.
- Practitioners plan a very effective programme of transition experiences to assist individual children as they move between playrooms. Teachers and practitioners across early level work together effectively to support children as they move from nursery to Primary 1. They plan experiences in a range of interesting and relevant contexts for nursery children to work with children in Primary 1. This is helping children to develop their confidence as they move from nursery to primary school.

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

- Since the pandemic, practitioners have been proactive in re-establishing opportunities to welcome parents back into the nursery. When families returned to the nursery, practitioners provided a 'hug in a mug' for each parent. Parents received this very well. Practitioners use a variety of approaches to involve parents in the life of the nursery. This includes providing parent groups where parents and children play and learn together. Practitioners provide home link resources, such as library books and specific materials to promote children's wellbeing. This support from practitioners is helping parents to build confidence in supporting their children's development and learning.
- Practitioners ensure parents are up to date with nursery information and events. They share information through daily exchanges, information walls, an online application and social media. Practitioners consult parents on a range of nursery matters, in a variety of ways. Parents feel that practitioners consider their views when making important changes.
- Parents receive information regularly on their children's experiences and the progress they are making in their development and learning. Practitioners meet with parents, provide written reports and encourage them to engage with children's online learning journeys.

## 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 value they place on relationships through their interactions with children. Their nurturing approach enables children to feel safe and comfortable within the setting. They are good role models for children and, as a result, children demonstrate care and kindness towards each other. When children find certain situations challenging, practitioners respond in a sensitive manner. This helps children to recognise their feelings and begin to understand how their actions can affect others.
- Practitioners encourage children to share their views. Together, they have recently developed child-friendly nurture principles linked to children's rights. Practitioners should continue to reinforce the principles through relevant experiences and routines. In addition, they have developed nursery rules. Practitioners may find it useful to review and adapt these with the children to reinforce positive relationships. They should build on their early work on children's rights in this area.
- Children are learning about the national wellbeing indicators through a variety of experiences. They demonstrate how they manage risk and keep safe during visits to the forest. Children identify what they need to do to be safe, healthy and responsible. Moving forward, practitioners should continue to use real-life experiences to support children's understanding of the full range of wellbeing indicators. They could support this further by introducing leadership roles for children.
- All practitioners are clear on their statutory duties in relation to ELC. Practitioners engage in professional learning to support their understanding of responsibilities associated with keeping children safe. They have relevant individual plans in place to support children's health, care and wellbeing needs. Practitioners could find it helpful to review and adapt children's individual targets that are too broad. Targets need to be specific and achievable within appropriate timescales. This will enable practitioners to monitor and assess the progress children are making in their development and learning more effectively.
- Children and families benefit from the highly inclusive, nurturing and respectful ethos within the nursery. Practitioners celebrate diversity. They promote inclusion through cultural events and the provision of relevant resources. Children benefit from being able to use digital tools to listen to nursery rhymes in their first language and in English. Practitioners know the varying needs of children. They work well with partners to provide effective support to families when required. This includes signposting parents to specific agencies that offer tailored advice and guidance.

## 3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- Most children aged two to three are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are beginning to take turns and share resources well. Children are developing their gross motor skills well through climbing and sliding on apparatus and running outdoors. Most children enjoy mark making. They would benefit from access to a wider range of resources and materials to develop their fine motor skills. Children will make their needs known by using words or through gestures. A few enjoy sharing their experiences. Most children are developing an early awareness of number as they count during daily routines and sing songs. They investigate volume as they fill and empty various containers in the water.

### Children aged three to five

- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Almost all children are settled and access learning experiences confidently. They develop their fine and gross motor skills well through a range of well-planned experiences both indoors and outdoors. For example, they use a range of tools outdoors in the forest.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in communication and early language. They describe and use skills of talking and listening well, such as, making eye contact and taking turns in a conversation. Children are beginning to use sign language as they sing songs and recite rhymes. Most children engage in mark making and a few are beginning to form letters to write familiar words. There is an over-reliance on overwriting and copying letters. Children will benefit greatly from meaningful and relevant experiences to develop their emerging literacy. This includes support to access a range of texts to read for enjoyment.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy. They are beginning to count up to ten in context and recognise a few digits. A few children count up to 20 confidently. Most children continue a simple pattern involving colour and common shapes. They now need to develop their knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A few children use the language of length in their play. All children now need experiences to help them develop mathematical language regularly in their play.
- Practitioners record information on children's experiences, however, there is limited information on the skills children are developing or achieving. This results in very limited, accurate detail on

the progress children are making over time. Practitioners should find it helpful to build on the positive start to recording the progress of children involved in targeted groups.

- Children celebrate their achievements within the nursery and wider school. Practitioners display weekly achievement awards and help children to share and celebrate these with their parents. Children are proud of these achievements and enjoy taking their certificates home.
- Practitioners have a clear understanding of the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of children and families. They provide support to enable all children to participate in a range of outdoor and indoor learning experiences. For example, making outdoor play clothing readily available to all 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.