

Summarised inspection findings

St Timothy's Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

8 November 2022

Key contextual information

St Timothy's Nursery Class is situated within the primary school. The setting has one playroom and a large outdoor area. Children attend from the age of three until starting school. The setting is registered for 48 children at any one time. Currently, the roll is 70 children. Children access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) and can attend the setting on a part day, full year basis or full day, term time basis. All children have lunch within the setting. Two principal lead early years practitioners have responsibility for the day-to-day running of the setting. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting.

Senior leaders within the school and practitioners within the nursery played a significant role in providing hubs during the height of the pandemic. In addition, they had many challenges to overcome in relation to the absence of staff and children due to COVID-19 and requirements to self-isolate.

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 class has a shared vision, which sets out clearly practitioners and parents' aspirations for children who attend the nursery. Practitioners, in consultation with stakeholders have recently refreshed the nursery's vision, values and aims. As part of this process, practitioners have taken into account the changing context of ELC. Senior leaders and the practitioner team demonstrate the values very well through their daily interactions with each other, children and families.
- Senior leaders within the school are very supportive of the practitioner team. They are approachable and have created a culture of trust and respect. Within the nursery, a 'Staff Charter', created by practitioners, outlines what they will do to ensure their colleagues feel included, valued and respected. The charter demonstrates the commitment to having a 'united, effective, and supportive workforce' with children, families and community at the centre of their work.
- Senior practitioners within the nursery lead and manage the setting well. Their effective leadership has created a team of practitioners who value each other's skills, knowledge and expertise. The leadership team successfully implemented 1140 hours of ELC. In addition, they use professional learning well to address national guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me. As a result, children's experiences have improved in the outdoor space. Together, with the support from partners, they strive to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Each practitioner has a leadership role to take forward an aspect of nursery improvement. This includes areas such as early language, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners feel empowered and valued as a member of the team. Their leadership roles and professional

learning is supporting them to improve the quality of children's learning experiences. This is having a positive impact on children's development and learning.

- All practitioners within the nursery could benefit from having clear strategic guidance from senior leaders within the school. Senior practitioners will benefit from support and challenge from senior leaders within the school to enable them to reflect critically on their practice. In addition, they will require guidance on how to improve self-evaluation processes to support continuous improvement. This should include support with improvement planning with clear measurable targets that will demonstrate the impact of change, particularly in relation to measuring children's progress over time.

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

- Relationships are very positive between children and staff. Children are relaxed, well behaved and confident in playing and talking with other children and adults. Children who have just started nursery are sensitively cared for as they settle. They engage well in a good range of responsive play activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Children regularly choose to play in the attractive and stimulating outdoor area. They have access to a wide range of open-ended resources and natural materials to support their play. Children enjoy being outdoors having fun with their peers as they engage in energetic play. Practitioners plan this area well to ensure there is a good range of real, imaginative and natural experiences. This supports children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity well.
- Practitioners' interactions with children are gentle and contribute to a respectful, caring culture in the nursery. They have a good understanding of child development and how children learn. Practitioners give children time and space to lead their own learning, explore and discover. Their conversations with children support and extend children's learning effectively. For example, extending children's vocabulary during imaginative play and when investigating mini beasts.
- The practitioner team, with the support of senior practitioners, work together to plan key focuses for children's learning. At the same time, they are very responsive and provide experiences that reflect children's interests and ideas. Moving forward, the staff team would benefit from developing further their approaches to planning. There needs to be a clear focus on key skills, progression and challenge for each child across the curriculum.
- Practitioners know children well. They capture focused observations and learning stories as children play and record these in profiles. Practitioners should consider how they can use these profiles more effectively to support children to reflect on their achievements and begin to talk about their next steps in learning.
- There are good systems in place for tracking and monitoring the progress of children who require additional support with their learning. Practitioners should build on these approaches for all children to help demonstrate clearly each child's progress across the curriculum. Practitioners could benefit from regular tracking meetings with senior practitioners. This will be helpful to establish a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating children's progress to inform future planning.
- A range of evidence-based strategies are in place to support children to make progress in key areas such as early communication, language and wellbeing. Practitioners monitor the impact

these approaches are having on children's outcomes. They report that assessment information demonstrates that a few children have made significant progress in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that is play based, engaging and responsive to children's interests. Planning continues to develop in line with national guidance and reflects experiences and outcomes in key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners recognise the curriculum is not yet focused sufficiently on skills across the broad general education. They would benefit from further support from the local authority and senior leaders within the school to review and develop further curriculum planning. Rightly, the development of a relevant curriculum rationale built upon the shared vision, will be a focus for all practitioners moving forward.
- There is an established process for transition into primary school. A well planned 'Learning Friends', programme, provides nursery children with regular visits to the P1 class throughout their pre-school year. Practitioners share Information on children's progress with teachers to support children's learning as they move onto primary school. Senior leaders within the school should now explore opportunities for practitioners and teachers to collaborate across the early level. This could be helpful for them to develop a shared understanding of early years pedagogy. In addition, this should support further continuity and progression for children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners welcome the increased opportunities for parents to be physically within the setting. This is supporting the development of positive relationships and offers opportunities for parents to engage with their child's learning. Regular contact with parents enables practitioners to share information on children's progress and achievements.
- Senior practitioners are proactive in providing early opportunities for parents and extended family to be involved in the nursery. This includes parent groups and garden tidy days. Practitioners share with parents the benefits of engaging in their child's learning and the life of the setting. This helps parents to understand how their involvement contributes to their child's progress and the improvement of the setting.
- Children are confident and comfortable to share their views and ideas with practitioners. This includes sharing what they like about nursery and ideas to develop experiences and learning further. Children know practitioners value their views due to the respectful and responsive approach of practitioners.

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

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

- The wellbeing of children is central to the work of the setting. Practitioners view children as unique individuals with their own needs and rights. They have a clear focus on improving outcomes for children. Practitioners are kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. This supports children to settle well into nursery and feel safe and secure. Practitioners are positive role models for children, which is promoting positive relationships between children. Children demonstrate care and kindness to each other and older children provide support for children who have newly settled into nursery.
- Practitioners know children very well. Prior to starting nursery, home visits give practitioners the opportunity to meet children and their families in their home environment. Practitioners use this time effectively to begin building relationships with the family and to gather information on children's health, wellbeing and previous experiences. Children's personal plans demonstrate that children receive good support to make progress through universal and targeted approaches. Practitioners' interactions and use of specific programmes support children well to be emotionally aware and develop positive social skills.
- Children are developing their awareness of the national wellbeing indicators, in particular being safe, healthy and active. Home link bags with useful resources, including puppets, help practitioners and parents to discuss wellbeing with children in a developmentally appropriate way. Practitioners could support children more effectively to develop an understanding of the full range of indicators through relevant contexts.
- Children benefit from healthy lunches within the school dining hall. They enjoy their lunch in a calm and relaxed environment. Practitioners support children to have good social skills and table manners. Moving forward, practitioners could consider how to develop further children's independence skills during lunchtime experiences.
- Practitioners are fully aware of statutory requirements in relation to ELC. They are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Each child has a personal plan, which outlines care and health needs. Children who require additional support have an individualised support plan, which outlines personalised targets and key strategies to meet their needs. Practitioners update these plans in consultation with parents and, where appropriate, support agencies. This ensures strategies continue to be effective in reducing barriers to learning and supporting children to make the best possible progress.
- Children and families benefit from the highly inclusive, nurturing and respectful ethos within the nursery. A few children and families whose English is not their first language are supported well. Practitioners translate information and signage demonstrating the commitment to include all stakeholders in the life of the nursery. There is scope to develop further children's

awareness and understanding of diversity through a wider range of resources and developmentally appropriate experiences.

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 key areas of their learning. Children are respectful of one another and play well together. They are socially confident in the nursery and ask for help when needed. Children choose where they want to play and particularly enjoy exploring the outdoor area. With practitioners support, they are exploring and talking about different emotions. Children demonstrate good independence at snack and in daily routines.
- Almost all children listen well to adults and other children. In the outdoor mud café they are confident in asking the 'customers' what they would like and writing their orders. They enjoy when adults read them stories and most children can talk about a favourite book and character. Most older children are exploring letters and sounds including the initial letter of their name. Supported by practitioners, a few children use signing and pictures to communicate with adults and other children. Almost all children have made good progress in line drawing and a few are making good attempts at writing their name.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, most children demonstrate a good understanding of numbers and counting objects using the interactive white board. Most children use mathematical language to talk about measuring and estimating when using building blocks.
- Children are confident in climbing and balancing in the outdoor area. They are developing an understanding of food through planting, growing and cooking activities. Children enjoy exploring the natural world and can identify and name different insects and minibeasts during a bug hunt. Outdoors, children use natural materials such as twigs, leaves and stones to create pictures. They would benefit from increased opportunities for independence and creativity in the indoor art and craft area.
- Practitioners have begun to track children's progress over time. They recognise they need to develop this further to demonstrate more effectively the progress all children make both within the nursery and out with the setting. Practitioners recognise that gathering information about the skills and knowledge all children are developing and demonstrating will help to plan future learning. This will contribute to individual children's future attainment.
- Practitioners know children and families well and have a clear understanding of their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Their sensitive and personalised interventions have a

positive impact on children’s development and learning. This includes ensuring all children receive the right amount of support to access the wide range of play experiences.

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.