

Summarised inspection findings

St. Mary's Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

St. Mary's Nursery Class is situated in a separate building, across the road from St. Mary's Primary School. The nursery class has two large playrooms and an open area for children aged three to five and one large room for children aged two to three. Each room has direct access to the outdoors. The nursery is registered to provide early learning and childcare for a maximum of 68 children. At the time of inspection there were 40 children aged three to five on the roll and eight children aged two to three. Children access their 1140 hours entitlement from 8.45 am – 2.45 pm during term-time.

The headteacher is the named manager of the nursery. The headteacher and depute headteacher provide overall senior leadership of the nursery. Two Early Learning and Childcare Lead Practitioners (ELCLPs) lead the nursery on a day-to-day basis. There have been several changes in the staff team, with new practitioners joining in recent weeks. Additionally, there are ongoing staffing changes due to local authority restructuring. The nursery is a non-denominational setting and whilst predominantly linked to St Mary's Primary School, it also links with several different primary schools.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
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 display the values of safe, kind, responsible and inclusive to create a happy ethos throughout daily life in the nursery. The headteacher has identified correctly the need to refresh and revise the values, through consultation with all stakeholders. This will support children and parents to have more ownership of the values over time.
- ELCLPs and practitioners strive to do their best, contributing well to the ongoing development of the nursery, making use of appropriate professional learning opportunities. They share their learning well across the team to ensure the nursery continues to improve. Almost all practitioners have undertaken key professional learning together, such as Solihull Approach training, to support their understanding of the needs of their children and families. Practitioners use their knowledge and skills well to support and meet children's individual needs.
- ELCLPs lead and nurture the team skilfully on a day-to-day basis. They are highly valued by stakeholders and the practitioner team and know the strengths and areas of development for the nursery well. Practitioners are developing their individual leadership roles in line with their skills and interests, for example in literacy or outdoor learning. These roles are improving children's learning experiences. All practitioners are committed to developing their leadership roles further in, for example, key areas of the curriculum or in supporting specific learning needs. The headteacher surveys practitioners annually as part of their professional review, to ask for their views on improving their own practice and accessing professional learning. The

practitioner team would welcome planned opportunities to be more outward focused and visit other settings.

- ELCLPs and practitioners use various audits to evaluate key areas of the playroom and practice. Practitioners meet weekly and discuss what is working well and what could improve further in aspects of the nursery. This includes reviewing key learning areas within the playrooms or outdoors. The reflective team identify and discuss changes and improvements when needed. The overarching school improvement plan includes one key nursery priority to take forward. This relates to the use of observations. As identified by the headteacher, the senior leadership team need to ensure they have more systematic approaches to self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvements across the nursery. This includes the need for more robust monitoring and evaluating of the impact of changes, using national guidance.
- Senior leaders should ensure that they evidence the difference their changes and improvements are making to children's experiences and outcomes. This should help the practitioner team to ensure that positive change is embedded 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

- Practitioners are caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They have successfully created a welcoming family atmosphere and built very positive relationships with children and parents. Children are engaged in their play and practitioners support them well. Children confidently make decisions about where they want to play and access resources freely. This supports and extends their interests.
- Practitioners understand how young children learn and develop. They give children the appropriate amount of time and freedom to lead their play and develop their own ideas and creativity. Practitioners play alongside children to support children's learning and help them record their learning, for example, in design books and class story books. Their interactions with children are caring and support early childhood development well. Parents report positively about the opportunity to share nursery experiences through stay and play sessions.
- Children engage well with interesting experiences both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners provide a broad range of experiences across the curriculum supported within a literacy rich environment. Practitioners offer quality interactions and use open-ended questions with children. They are very responsive to children's learning needs and interests. Children are independent as they get ready for outdoors and enjoy free flow play to large outdoor spaces. Children have limited access to digital technologies in their learning. Practitioners should extend children's experiences in using digital technologies in their learning and play.
- Practitioners know individual children well as learners. Practitioners are continuing to develop their skills in the use of observations to capture and record children's progress and achievements. Each child has an electronic learning journal. Parents contribute to children's learning journals. Practitioners' observations included in the learning journals are helping them to make accurate judgements about the progress children are making. Practitioners should continue to develop children's role in leading and talking about their own learning and extend opportunities for ownership of their learning journals.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning well using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), grouping experiences and outcomes together. This helps practitioners plan experiences that are developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet all children's individual learning needs. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop further their skills in monitoring and tracking children's progress across the curriculum.
- Practitioners support children who require additional help with their learning well. They plan carefully to ensure learning experiences meet the needs of the children. This is having a positive impact on the progress children are making in their development and learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners implement the curriculum through play effectively. The curriculum is underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child and nursery values. Practitioners offer children rich learning opportunities across the curriculum both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners promote strong, nurturing attachments for children in their care.
- Practitioners use the local authority CfE progression pathways and national guidance to support their long-term planning for children's learning. As a next step, practitioners should start to capture more routinely, the rich quality in the moment planning and provocations staff and children are engaged in.
- As children begin nursery, practitioners offer very effective support to families through their transition arrangements. Children quickly become confident and settle into the nursery environment well. Practitioners and teachers support children effectively as they move from nursery into P1. Practitioners and school staff should continue to develop further approaches to joint early level working throughout the year. This will support continuity of learning and progress for children across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners encourage parents to be involved in the nursery through a variety of approaches, such as joining stay and play sessions. These sessions help parents to engage in their child's learning and share in their experiences.
- A few parents are members of the school Parent Council which supports the nursery by fundraising to enhance children's experiences. Parents and partners contribute well to the nursery and children's learning, through, for example, sharing their experiences, languages and cultures.
- Practitioners use an online platform well to share children's experiences, learning and progress with parents. Practitioners should now consider involving parents in reviewing their child's learning journal on a regular basis within the nursery. This would support parents to be more fully informed about their child's learning and progress.
- Most parents drop off and pick up children from outdoors. Parents would welcome the opportunity to be inside the playrooms more regularly at drop-off and pick up times to see their child in their daily playing and learning environment.

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.

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

- As a result of positive and caring interactions, almost all children settle quickly and feel safe and secure in the nursery. Practitioners nurture children and clearly demonstrate the values of being safe, kind, responsible and inclusive. Almost all children are kind and respectful to their peers, demonstrating age-appropriate behaviour.
- ELCLPs and practitioners show a key emphasis on getting it right for all children. Children are gaining confidence in engaging with the wellbeing indicators through, for example, listening to wellbeing stories at together time. Practitioners need to use the language of the wellbeing indicators more explicitly with children and parents, linking this to their work on children's rights.
- Practitioners ask children their views on their choices of learning and are responsive to their needs and requirements. Practitioners should continue to develop approaches to involving children in decisions which affect them, recording this as appropriate.
- Children engage in an enjoyable lunch routine. Practitioners take part in social conversation with children during lunch. Children develop their leadership skills through the snack routine, indoors and outdoors. Children help prepare snack and are becoming increasingly independent as they pour their own water and milk.
- Most children enjoy learning and playing regularly in their inviting outdoor areas, where they can explore, develop their curiosity and have fun. Children's outdoor learning experiences support their wellbeing, developing their resilience and confidence well.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of the expectations in terms of fulfilling their statutory duties. Practitioners know their children and families very well and aim to do their best to meet their needs. Children have a 'what matters to me' personal plan, which includes a review of targets and next steps. Senior leaders and practitioners should now ensure that all children's targets and next steps support progress in learning more clearly.
- Senior leaders are proactive at seeking support from outside agencies. They create appropriate individual education Getting It Right For Me (GIRFME) plans for children with barriers to learning, involving parents and partners throughout the process. Parents and carers report positively on the sensitive approach taken by practitioners in supporting children who may require additional help with their learning. Practitioners meet the varied needs of individual children well within the setting.
- Senior leaders and practitioners promote inclusion and equality well throughout the setting. They treat children, families and visitors with respect. Children learn about the diverse world in which they live through the wide range of resources in the nursery and by celebrating cultural

events throughout the year. Senior leaders and practitioners make effective use of parents' skills and knowledge to support this aspect of children's learning.

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

- Most children make good progress in early communication language and literacy. They confidently communicate with known adults and engage in conversation. Children enjoy listening to stories in groups and on a one-to-one basis. They are developing a positive attitude towards books and reading. Children confidently answer questions about the text and a few children can retell and sequence the story. Most children mark-make in a variety of contexts and contribute their story to the class book. A minority of children are beginning to explore initial letter sounds. Children require more opportunities to explore initial sounds in their name and in familiar words.
- Most children make satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Overall, children need more support to develop further their skills in early numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children count confidently during play and routines. Most children can rote count to 10 and a few can count beyond this. Children explore volume and capacity while they play with water and outdoor messy play, filling, and emptying containers. They use relevant mathematical language with practitioners to describe shape, size and length. Children require more opportunities to develop further their skills in using money and handling information.
- Most children make good progress in health and wellbeing. They learn to manage risk when outdoors. Almost all children develop gross motor skills well, such as running, balancing and climbing during play outdoors. They develop their fine motor skills well through threading, cutting and chopping the fruit for snack. Most children are confident in hygiene routines and understand the importance of washing their hands indoors. Practitioners should remind children to follow due hygiene procedures for outdoor snack.
- Children are becoming confident, resilient and independent learners. Practitioners have started to use an online platform to help them track individual children's progress and learning in health and wellbeing, literacy and science, technologies, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. Practitioners are at the early stages of tracking children's learning and progress over time. Practitioners should extend tracking approaches, ensuring that children's significant learning is identified and very effectively built upon.
- Practitioners offer meaningful praise and encouragement to support children in their play. Practitioners encourage parents to access the recently introduced online learning journals at

home and share children's achievements from home. As a result, children develop confidence and are proud of their achievements.

- ELCLPs and practitioners promote equity through their supportive and inclusive ethos. They know and understand the varying needs of children and families very well. Senior leaders and practitioners should monitor the effectiveness of strategies they use. They need to use their evidence more effectively to demonstrate impact and inform decisions about future interventions.

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.