

Summarised inspection findings

Loretto RC Primary School Nursery

East Lothian Council

24 June 2025

Key contextual information

Loretto RC Primary School Nursery is based within the Loretto RC Primary School building. There is one main playroom, and children have free flow access to an enclosed outdoor area. Additionally, nursery children access primary school facilities such as the library, gym hall and dining hall. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting is registered for 30 children aged 3-5 years at any one time. It is open during term time from 8.30am to 3.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 12.15pm on a Friday. Currently, there are 24 children, with most children attending the setting on a full-time basis. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting. The senior early years practitioner (SEYP) has responsibility for day-to-day management of the nursery. The wider team includes two early years practitioners and one early years support worker.

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	

- The SEYP and practitioners work very well together. They have created a welcoming and caring environment for children. The nursery team feel included and valued in the life of the school. They share the motto of “believe and achieve” with the school. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to refresh the vision, values and aims for the school and nursery through consultation with families, children and staff. Moving forward, senior leaders should ensure that these are meaningful in the early years context and children are helped to understand them according to their developmental stage.
- The headteacher visits the nursery frequently and meets regularly with the SEYP. She is well known to children and families and as a result knows them well. The headteacher and the nursery team are developing an understanding of overall strengths and areas of development for the nursery. Moving forward, senior leaders and the local authority should provide strategic support to the nursery team to help them manage the direction and pace of change.
- Staff are supported well by the SEYP to develop their confidence and knowledge of local and national guidance. There is now a need to ensure that practitioners’ professional development and review plans link to improvement priorities and professional learning needs. Senior leaders should ensure practitioners have access to training and development that is relevant to the context of the setting and children’s needs.
- The SEYP and practitioners are keen to develop their practice and undertake leadership roles linked to their strengths and interests. While these roles are at the early stages of development, they are beginning to support improved experiences for children, for example in relation to music and outdoor learning. Practitioners would now benefit from opportunities to visit other settings to support their professional development further.

- A quality assurance calendar is in place, however this is not yet supporting continuous improvement. Going forward, the headteacher and SEYP should ensure that quality assurance activities, such as observing practice in the nursery, take place routinely on a more formal basis. This will help practitioners develop their practice and support senior leaders to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Practitioners have consulted with children and involved them along with parents in making changes to the environment, for example the outdoor 'mud kitchen'. This has helped develop the outdoor area and increased children's learning opportunities. Children should now be provided with leadership roles, for example, through linking with pupil leadership groups in the primary stages.

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

- All children benefit from warm, caring and responsive relationships with practitioners. Practitioners know children and families very well. All children are happy and settle quickly into their routines. All children enthusiastically and independently explore the indoor and outdoor environment with their peers.
- Practitioners provide children with play opportunities which cover a range of curricular areas across the playroom and outdoors. Practitioners are beginning to consider how they might develop and extend these learning experiences. They have correctly identified the need to ensure children are engaging in experiences that promote curiosity and enquiry. All children would now benefit from a wider range of literacy and numeracy opportunities.
- Practitioners are developing skills in asking open-ended questions to extend and challenge children's deeper thinking. Practitioners would now benefit from support to develop their skills around interactions with children and pedagogical approaches. Practitioners should ensure that they extend opportunities for children to lead their own learning, for example by supporting children to explore different contexts for learning.
- Practitioners provide limited digital technology learning opportunities for children. They should promote further the use of digital technologies to enhance children's learning, for example through use of tablets and programmable toys.
- Practitioners plan fortnightly for children's learning using a blend of intentional and responsive approaches, in line with experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and national practice guidance. Practitioners are beginning to take account of children's individual learning styles, interests and stage of development. There is scope now for practitioners to build upon children's prior learning and include children's voice as part of the planning process.
- Practitioners observe children and record their learning using comments and photographs. These are displayed in floor books and in learning profiles. Practitioners should now provide more detailed observations to capture children's learning. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners to identify specific next steps in children's learning.
- Senior leaders support practitioners to track children's literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing termly using local authority guidance. Staff should now ensure a more robust system is in place for planning tracking and monitoring the progress of individual children to ensure they are making good progress over time.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a range of play experiences that are responsive to children's interests. The team would benefit from improving their understanding of play pedagogical approaches and national practice guidance. This should help them to provide better learning experiences that support a wide range of needs of children.
- Practitioners provide experiences that support literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. They are at the very early stages of understanding how they can support children to develop skills. Practitioners need to develop their understanding of skill progression within key areas and across the early level.
- Practitioners effectively manage children's transition into nursery, recognising and valuing individual children's emotional wellbeing. They have well established arrangements in place to support children's transitions into P1. Children welcome and enjoy the ongoing opportunities to play alongside P6 'buddies'. This is resulting in children being familiar and happy in their school environment.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are welcomed warmly into the nursery at the beginning and end of the session. Relationships are respectful and open which contributes to a strong sense of community. Practitioners should continue to gather and act on feedback from parents and increase their involvement in self-evaluation activity.
- Practitioners support and encourage families to join nursery activities such as ‘busy finish’ sessions. These are welcomed and well attended by parents and families. Parents contribute to children’s learning, through, for example, sharing their experiences, languages and cultures. Practitioners should continue to provide opportunities for parents to be fully involved in the life of the nursery.
- Practitioners provide parents with information about the nursery and events through an online platform and newsletter. Parents can view and engage with their child’s learning profile within the playroom or at home. Practitioners should continue to seek ways to encourage parents to contribute to their child’s learning profile.

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

- Almost all children are developing well their independence and resilience. All children are supported well by practitioners using emotional resilience strategies. This results in children being able to regulate their emotions and understand how others feel within a nurturing space.
- Children are developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and children's rights. As planned, practitioners should continue to support children's knowledge and understanding of what the wellbeing indicators mean to them, linking this to relevant contexts.
- Children engage in a relaxed, unhurried lunch routine. Practitioners take part in social conversations with children during lunch. Children develop their leadership skills through being 'kitchen helpers' as they help prepare snack, becoming increasingly independent as they pour their own water and milk.
- Practitioners understand statutory requirements well in relation to child protection and safeguarding. Senior leaders are proactive at seeking support from outside agencies. As a result, staff work with partner agencies where necessary to provide effective support, plan targets and implement strategies to meet individual children's needs.
- Almost all children enjoy learning and playing in the outdoor area and school grounds, where children can explore, develop their curiosity and have fun. Children confidently access outdoor play and have opportunities to develop gross motor skills, for example, using bikes and climbing equipment. Children's outdoor learning experiences help to support their wellbeing, resilience and confidence well.
- Practitioners provide a nurturing, inclusive and welcoming ethos that supports children to enhance their development. Practitioners celebrate diversity through celebration of cultural festivals and by providing access to a range of resources. Practitioners should continue to build on this positive practice to develop children's appreciation of diversity within their setting and local community.

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 are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. Most children talk confidently to their peers and other adults. Almost all children engage in listening to stories. A minority independently access a range of books within the story area. Some mark-making opportunities are available across the playroom, including opportunities for children to write their name, however these are limited. Children would now benefit from a wider range of opportunities to mark-make in meaningful contexts to develop their skills further.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in early mathematics. Children use water and objects independently to explore volume. A majority of children enjoy counting. Children would benefit from support from adults to role model mathematical language and extend learning. Children enjoy exploring shapes within their local environment. Most children are ready to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, such as measurement, through a range of real-life contexts.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are caring and respectful of their peers and are developing friendships. They are learning how to brush their teeth properly. They should now be encouraged and supported by practitioners to develop responsibility and respect for their environment and resources. Practitioners should continue to support children to understand the importance of good hygiene practices.
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress over time appropriate to their stage of development. Children are proud of their learning profiles and enthusiastically share what they are learning. Practitioners should now support children to reflect more regularly on their learning and next steps.
- Practitioners value children's wider achievements from within and beyond the setting. Practitioners should ensure that these are displayed within the nursery to help children recognise their achievements. Children should also be supported to identify skills that they are developing through these achievements.
- The nursery team know children and families well and take account of cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds. They have created an inclusive and nurturing ethos to ensure all children have equal access to learning opportunities. The nursery team work closely with a range of partners to ensure that children and families are well-supported.

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.