

Summarised inspection findings

St Francis' Primary School Nursery Class

Inverclyde Council

5 November 2024

Key contextual information

St Francis' Primary School nursery class is situated within St Francis' Primary School, Port Glasgow. The nursery provides early learning and childcare for children from the age of two until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 15 children aged from two years to three years and 24 children aged from three years until starting primary school. The current roll is 32 children. Of this number, 25% of children require additional support with their learning. Children can attend from 9am–3pm during the school term. Most children within the two to three year old playroom are new to the setting. The nursery consists of two playrooms and an outdoor area.

The headteacher, who has overall responsibility for the nursery, has been in post since January 2024. Staffing in the nursery consists of a nursery depute who has the responsibility for the day-to-day leadership, a senior practitioner, seven early years education and childcare officers and two part-time early years support assistants. Most practitioners work part-time hours.

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	

Children aged two to three years

- Relationships between practitioners and children are very positive. Most children are at the stage of playing alongside each other. A few children play together for short periods of time appropriate to their stage of development. Practitioners encourage children to take turns and share toys. Children explore the range of experiences enthusiastically, choosing resources to support their play. They explore natural objects as they fill and empty containers. Most children play in the sand and enjoy the feeling of the sand between their fingers and toes.

Children aged over three years

- Practitioners welcome children and parents warmly into the setting. They support and encourage children to say how they are feeling when they enter the room and self-register. Practitioners are proactive in responding to how children are feeling throughout their day and provide reassurance to ensure they settle well into nursery.
- All children can choose to play indoors or outdoors across their day. Overall, they engage well with the range of nursery experiences. They have access to a variety of open-ended resources, including natural materials, that support them as they play. Children have the opportunity to learn about risk and how to stay safe, for example when cutting and chopping fruit and vegetables.

- Most children play well together. Where conflicts arise, practitioners support children well to resolve and manage social situations through timely interventions. They use the expertise of partner agencies to help them plan for children who require additional support to regulate their emotions.
- Practitioners' caring and nurturing approach helps children to settle well into nursery. They provide children with care and attention that helps them to feel secure within their playroom. Practitioners engage positively with children as they play. They play alongside children, role modelling language to assist them to communicate. Overall, practitioners interact well with children and engage readily in conversations. Practitioners should use a more consistent approach to using commentary and open-ended questions. This should help children to extend and deepen their learning. Practitioners could make increased use of technology to support learning and teaching.
- The quality of practitioners' observations is improving because of professional learning from senior leaders. They would benefit from continued support to ensure consistency in the quality and quantity of observations. There should now be a clearer focus on children's significant learning. As a result, practitioners should be able to identify key skills that children are achieving, particularly in early language, literacy, numeracy and maths. Practitioners know their children well as individuals. They now need to know them in depth as learners.
- Practitioners use a highly responsive approach to planning which helps them to plan experiences based on children's interests. They now need a more effective balance of planning for children's learning. Practitioners should make more effective use of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. This should help them to identify clear next steps that offer children suitable levels of support and challenge in their learning. Senior leaders meet with practitioners termly to discuss children's learning and progress. This is based on practitioners' observations and professional judgement.
- All practitioners are aware of individual children who require additional help with their learning. They work in close partnership with parents and other services to plan personalised support for children. Practitioners should adjust how they plan for children who require additional help with their learning. They should include the identification of long and short-term targets which will support practitioners more effectively when reviewing children's progress.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

3.2 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 aged two to three years

- Children are becoming more confident within the playroom and progressing in line with their stage of development. They develop independence as they wash their hands and serve themselves at breakfast and snack time. Children explore the outdoors enthusiastically and develop physical skills as they use wheeled toys, climb and balance on apparatus. They develop fine motor skills as they attempt to peel vegetables and manipulate playdough. Practitioners offer good support to enable children to engage in outdoor play that offers them additional challenge. Children develop their vocabulary and mathematical language in line with their stage of development through stories, songs and interactions with practitioners. They make marks and representations using paint and chalk.

Children aged over three years

- Overall, children are making good progress in their learning as a result of their experiences.
- Children make good progress in early communication, language and literacy. The majority of children engage in conversation with their peers as they play. They learn about features of a book during story time. A few children sequence and predict the story through pictures. All children would benefit from books around the playroom to support and extend their learning. Most children are becoming aware of their name in print with the help of familiar pictures. Overall, practitioners could support children's communication, early language and literacy skills more effectively through a richer literacy environment.
- In early numeracy and mathematics, children are making satisfactory progress. Children develop skills in early numeracy through play when using interactive games and construction materials. Most children count to five. A few children use relevant mathematical language when playing with dough. Moving forward, children need increased opportunities to develop further their skills in using number, mathematical language and recognising shape. Practitioners could support this by continuing to develop learning spaces, experiences and interactions that will help children to develop these skills.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children access fresh air on a daily basis. They balance and climb on apparatus confidently. Children develop fine motor skills when manipulating intricate objects. Most children are beginning to explore and identify their emotions through daily check-ins. During lunchtimes, children benefit from the experience of sitting with practitioners in small groups which brings a cosy 'family feel' to the experience.

- Increasingly, children are becoming confident and independent within the setting. They continue to develop and learn as a result of the experiences provided by practitioners. Senior leaders and practitioners use an online tracker to check the progress children are making in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. As planning and assessment of children's learning improves, this should give practitioners robust data to make sound professional judgements about children's learning. This will help senior leaders to demonstrate more effectively the progress children make over time.
- Celebrating children's achievements is an integral part of the ethos of the nursery. Practitioners know children well and identify successes unique to each child. Children are proud to receive certificates of their achievements from the headteacher. Practitioners should now have a clearer focus on the specific skills children are achieving and share this with them. They encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journal by adding achievements from home.
- All practitioners are extremely supportive of children and their families and recognise quickly when there are potential barriers to learning or inclusion. They assist families in a timely manner. Senior leaders work closely with partner agencies to support children's wellbeing and learning. When additional help is required for children, practitioners identify clear strategies to support. They review these strategies at team meetings to ensure they continue to be effective in helping children to develop and learn.

Other relevant evidence

- Senior leaders and practitioners offer helpful home visits prior to each child starting nursery. This gives parents/carers time in their own homes to share information about their child's health, prior experiences and wellbeing needs. Practitioners use these worthwhile opportunities to learn about children's interests to plan for each child's first day in the setting. As a result of these home visits, early positive relationships are established and children settle well into nursery.

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.