

Summarised inspection findings

Newport Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

20 December 2022

Key contextual information

Newport Primary School nursery class is located within the main primary school building. The nursery class provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm during term time. Children attend from the age of three. The nursery is registered for 24 children at any one time. The current roll is 28 children, aged three to five years old, due to split placements. The principal teacher provides day-to-day management under the leadership of the headteacher. An early years peripatetic teacher supports the nursery four days every three weeks. The nursery provision consists of a playroom that has direct access to a well-resourced outdoor area. Practitioners and children in the nursery class make use of spaces in the wider school environment, such as the gym hall and a nursery garden within the large school grounds. They also access a local woodland space once per week for 'Forest Kindergarten' activities.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- Senior leaders and practitioners reflect the nursery vision and values very effectively in their everyday interactions, practice and approaches with children and families. The nursery team refer to and use the values successfully to promote positive and respectful behaviour.
- Children are involved in meaningful decision making including the recently developed charts to gather children's food preferences when eating at the 'Forest Kindergarten'. Children risk assess the outdoor learning space and practitioners support children well to review and develop their learning environment.
- The headteacher and principal teacher provide clear and very effective strategic guidance and direction to the nursery team. They are visible in the setting and approachable. Practitioners value this support and feel empowered and confident to lead improvements. There is very strong and effective teamwork, and collaborative working across the setting.
- All practitioners and the early years peripatetic teacher undertake leadership responsibilities effectively for key developments within the setting. These include parental engagement, nurture, outdoor learning, technology and modern languages. The early years peripatetic teacher and staff across the school are involved in an improvement cycle, focused on nurture. The principal teacher should continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of these roles.
- Practitioners use career-long professional learning opportunities to build their knowledge and influence their practice. The local authority early years development team provide helpful, targeted support and professional learning opportunities. Practitioners have evidenced the positive impact of collegiate working on improving outcomes for children. The principal teacher has correctly identified the benefits of practitioners working closely with primary staff and practitioners from other settings. The principal teacher will re-establish outward looking approaches to support improvements that have not been possible during the pandemic.

- Senior leaders have developed and embedded robust self-evaluation activities and quality assurance processes. These are effectively supporting the team to make confident, evidence-based improvements. This results in an appropriate pace and shared responsibility for change. The team plans to develop further peer moderation to support developments in the future. This will enhance further the setting's self-evaluation processes.
- The principal teacher and early years peripatetic teacher, observe aspects of practice in the playroom and provide regular, helpful feedback to the team. They very effectively model play pedagogy, high quality interactions and nurturing relationships. This is linked to professional learning and research and is supporting sustained and consistent change that is improving outcomes for all children.

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

- All children enjoy their time in the setting. They are motivated, highly engaged and enthusiastic in their play and learning. The well-organised indoor and outdoor environments support children's independence and opportunities for personalisation and choice. Practitioners' planning of the environment supports children to lead their own learning, develop their skills, imaginative play and creativity.
- Almost all children sustain lengthy periods of engagement during the weekly 'Forest Kindergarten' outdoor learning experience. Practitioners provide children with well managed and enjoyable activities in the natural environment to increase children's sense of wonder. As a result, children are developing their physical and social skills well in a calm, positive and nurturing space.
- All practitioners are caring, responsive and support children effectively in their learning. Most practitioners use a wide range of questions to extend children's thinking. They should develop further their use of higher order questions and consistent use of commentary.
- Practitioners use a variety of digital technologies effectively to support and enrich learning experiences. This includes capturing observations of nature and researching areas of interest identified through responsive planning. Children access online resources and games, using matrix bar codes, independently to consolidate their learning.
- Practitioners know children well as learners. They record individual observations of children's learning within personal learning journal documents and on a learning wall. Parents can view the learning wall which supports their inclusion and engagement in their children's learning. Practitioners plan to increase family voice in personal learning journals and gather an increased number of successes and achievements outside nursery. This will ensure practitioners develop further the holistic view of the child.
- Practitioners link observations to a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and outline the progress children are making in their learning. Senior leaders and practitioners use a helpful recently developed resource linked to national guidance to support their practice. This is helping them to improve consistency of observations, interpretation and documentation of learning. Senior leaders correctly identify the need to moderate with other early learning childcare colleagues and school staff across the early level. The increasing use of the National Benchmarks will develop further practitioners' professional judgement and understanding of national standards.
- Practitioners plan well for children's learning over a variety of timescales and effectively use the language of learning from early level CfE experiences and outcomes. They provide a balance of adult initiated, child initiated and intentional promotions. Practitioners include

children's voice in responsive planning through an approach called 'Little Voices, Big Ideas'. They ask children what they know about different contexts, ideas and themes including celebrations and festivals. Overall, experiences meet the learning needs of all children well. A few children would benefit from opportunities that provide greater levels of challenge to ensure they make the progress they are capable of. As planned, it is important that practitioners continue to review planning documents. This will ensure that they maximise challenge and breadth of learning for all children.

- Senior leaders and practitioners have established and implement robust processes for tracking and monitoring. They agree next steps for individual children during termly tracking meetings. These processes are enabling practitioners and senior leaders to make increasingly confident judgements about children's progress. Senior leaders and practitioners should ensure the skills progression framework currently used across the school is used in the nursery class. This will enable practitioners to build upon and connect the skills children are developing for learning, life and work.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Children learn through play across a curriculum that is child centred and responsive. They benefit from an environment with a calm atmosphere that is well resourced. Children have a strong sense of ownership of the spaces. These spaces enable children to benefit from a breadth of experiences. Practitioners use the local authority progression frameworks for all curriculum areas to build on children's prior learning effectively.
- Senior leaders plan to share the updated curriculum rationale with parents. This will support further understanding of play and pedagogy within the setting, and across the early level and beyond.
- All families report that their child settled well or very well into the setting and practitioners take account of individual needs. Practitioners and staff follow a clear plan detailing visits and experiences which support effective transition from nursery to primary one. The sharing of the school's mascot, 'Buttercup' the sheep was welcomed by children and their families. This helped children to feel comforted during points of transition and re-engagement with the nursery environment. Parents feel well supported and appreciate the variety of communication and information.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are valued as partners in their child's learning and practitioners are committed to involving parents further in the life of the nursery. Practitioners seek parents' views and involvement in improvement. This takes the form of a partnership approach named 'Quick Question Time' every three weeks. Practitioners work very hard to ensure parents know that their views have influenced change and this is improving outcomes for children and their families.
- Parents are invited to participate in a wide variety of interventions and programmes. These include a national programme supporting families with the enjoyment of reading and a lending library. A weekly blog and regular use of a digital communication platform provides positive and regular communication between practitioners which is appreciated by parents. Parents feel supported and included. The use of the 'learning wall' and the planned re-introduction of 'stay and play' sessions will develop this further.
- Senior leaders plan to continue the re-establishment of links within the community that were affected by the pandemic and mitigations. These activities will prioritise the promotion of skills linked to the world of work and develop children's skills for life and learning.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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 ethos and culture of the setting supports very positive and nurturing relationships. Children are learning about wellbeing in a supportive environment. Practitioners support sharing, turn taking and children's independence skills very well. Children feel safe, secure and confident in the setting with practitioners who know and understand them well. They are aware of how to stay safe and express this clearly and relate it to real life contexts. For example, bonfire night and managing their own risk in local woodlands.
- Children demonstrate their values of being respectful, honest, responsible, kind and polite within the playroom and throughout their play. They support and care for each other, share and respect resources and demonstrate high levels of age-appropriate empathy, self-control and self-awareness. Practitioners provide regular and familiar routines, which contribute meaningfully to children's wellbeing. Children prepare snack, bake and dress for wet weather and outdoor play confidently.
- Practitioner interactions with all children are warm and caring. They respond appropriately to children's feelings by offering praise and encouragement. Children have a variety of opportunities to explore and express their feelings and emotions. They are learning to manage their own emotions and recognise how others feel. This is achieved through stories and the use of questioning by practitioners. The recent introduction of a feelings tree and use of restorative approaches and resources linked to the rights of the child strengthens this work. Practitioners are using recent training to develop further an agreed language to support mental health and wellbeing for children and families.
- All practitioners comply and actively engage with statutory requirements and codes of practice. They are aware of their responsibilities in relation to statutory duties. All practitioners understand the setting's approaches to child protection and safeguarding to improve outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders work in partnership with families and children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. They very effectively identify strategies and use resources to support children consistently. For example, personal communication passports. As a result, all children make very positive progress in their learning and development. Senior leaders work and liaise with partner agencies effectively to ensure children have access to support as required. For example, educational psychologists and speech and language therapy. All practitioners continue to support children to understand diversity and challenge discrimination.

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

Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing

- Most children are making good progress in early language and very good progress in communication. Almost all children can talk using a wide range of vocabulary and communicate their thoughts accurately and clearly. The majority of children are able to hear and say some single sounds made by letters. Children's literacy skills include mark making in floor books with a few children writing early words and using texts to communicate meaning. Children enjoy exploring books with adults and can identify the author, illustrator and the purpose of the blurb.
- Most children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. Most children can identify and recognise numbers from zero to twenty. The majority of children use one-to-one correspondence to count a given number of objects to ten and a few can count to twenty. A few children are able to demonstrate counting beyond twenty with a few recognising and naming three digit numbers. Children use string to measure and confidently use measuring cylinders at the water tray using the language of measurement. Most children confidently link daily routines and personal events to time sequences. The majority of children would benefit from more opportunities to recognise and use a range of coins. A few children would benefit from more challenge in mathematics and numeracy.
- Most children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They work very well together solving problems and sharing ideas. Almost all children benefit from eating socially at snack time and lunchtime. They regularly handle, taste and talk about different foods and have a developing awareness of where some of our foods come from. They show high levels of independence at mealtimes and understand the need for personal hygiene and dental hygiene.

Children's progress over time

- Overall, children make good progress in communication, early language and mathematics. They make very good progress in health and wellbeing. A minority of children make very good progress in communication. A significant number of children come to the setting with well-developed skills in early language, communication and mathematics. Senior leaders and practitioners need to continue to embed the tracking and monitoring processes. This will give a clearer overview of how children's prior knowledge, and in particular their skills, are developed to ensure they make the best possible progress.

Overall quality of children's achievement

- Practitioners highlight children's achievements using the learning wall and children's personal learning journals. They also celebrate achievements in the setting through appropriate use of praise. Practitioners should continue to encourage parents to share children's achievements and prior learning using the 'Learning at Home' sheets and digital communication tool. This could also be more directly linked to the skills for life and learning.

Ensuring equity for all children

- Practitioners are inclusive and welcoming to all families and children. They celebrate different cultures and languages well using a range of resources. They are developing children's awareness of themselves as global citizens. Practitioners provide effective support for children with additional support needs. Practitioners understand their role in promoting equity and provide sensitive and valued support and advice. As a result, all parents feel comfortable approaching the nursery team if they have concerns.

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.