

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Catherine's Primary School and Nursery Class**

Renfrewshire Council

26 February 2019

## Key contextual information

St Catherine's Early Learning and Childcare class operates from two self-contained playrooms in a dedicated area within the school building. At the time of the inspection there were 42 children aged 2-5 on the roll of the nursery with eight children attending on a full time basis.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the setting, there is a very welcoming ethos and culture where all children are treated and valued as individuals. Relationships are nurturing and enabling, promoting self-reliance and independence very well. As a result children feel safe, cared for and at home in their playroom.

#### Children aged 2-3 years

- All children show high levels of motivation as they explore the range of play experiences and resources provided. Children enjoy warm, positive relationships with practitioners which supports them to try new experiences. They confidently explore the spacious sand area and are becoming aware of their body as they jump and dance. Interactions from practitioners are consistent, encouraging, and playful. The team demonstrate a sensitive and accurate understanding of individual stages of development. They use this understanding to provide well matched resources and play opportunities that emphasise sensory exploratory play.

#### Children aged 3-5

- In the playroom for children aged 3-5 and the enclosed outdoor space of the setting, children make choices from a range of interesting and attractive resources. Almost all children sustain interest in chosen activities and are fully engaged in their learning throughout the session. The team should continue to balance opportunities for children to actively lead their own learning with their effective targeted interventions.
- Children are highly motivated and keen to learn. Increased use of open-ended play materials is helping children to extend and explore their creativity and thinking more freely. The team have identified, through effective self-evaluation, the need to develop further approaches to inspire children's curiosity and wonder. Adult initiated learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is carefully planned and skilfully paced to engage and motivate learners. We discussed with practitioners how children could apply these skills more independently through contexts across the playroom, outdoors and within their community.
- Practitioners have a good shared understanding of early learning pedagogy. They know children very well and interact very effectively, when required, to extend children's learning.

Practitioners ask children for their opinions and views and record their comments about aspects of their learning. Children and parents help to identify children's relevant personalised next steps in learning. Digital technology is used well to support children's learning by researching topics of interest and children recording and sharing their work.

- As a team, practitioners have worked together to improve the quality of observations. These are now more focused on children's learning. The team make very good use of their observations and interactions with children in order to make accurate judgements about children's progress. They know children very well and involve them in recording significant aspects of their learning. Children are very proud of their learning profiles and are able to recall and talk about their experiences and achievements. The team should continue to ensure this work ensures the cycle of observation, assessment and planning of learning is well connected.
- Planning methods take account of the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence in relation to planned themes and seasonal events throughout the year. Staff capture and respond to children's interests and ideas. The positive work around the use of floor books offers children increasing opportunities to engage in dialogue about their learning. The team should continue to embed their new approaches.
- Practitioners promptly identify children who require additional help with their learning. They work together with a wide range of specialist agencies to support individual children. Individual plans detailing targeted interventions support the team to show the impact of their strategies on children's learning.

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

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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 2-3

- The youngest children are making very good progress. They demonstrate their delight in learning as they transport natural resources across their playroom. The strong focus on wellbeing, nurture and respectful relationships with families are key factors in securing children's progress. Independence and self-care skills are developing well through everyday opportunities such as snack and dressing for outdoor play. The team frequently celebrate success as children begin to use language to play alongside a friend. A few children discuss their play and record their voice using new talking photograph albums. As identified through self-evaluation, the team should continue to build on and extend their approaches to creativity.

#### Children aged 3-5 years

- Almost all children are making very good progress in communication and early language. Individually and in small groups, children confidently share personal experiences with peers and adults. Almost all children are developing a love of books through frequent stories, their book of the month and sharing favourite rhymes. Most children demonstrate a keen interest in mark making as they, for example, write their names and make book covers. We discussed scope to offer a wider range of relevant contexts where children can integrate and apply their skills. Now that the team have established 'learning zones', practitioners should develop further opportunities for children to apply and make connections across areas and learning.
- Almost all children are making good progress in numeracy and early mathematics. The strong focus on number supports children to develop skills in counting beyond ten and recognising numerals. This is evident in a range of structured activities and targeted interventions. Overall, children now need increased opportunities to explore a wider range of mathematical learning in greater depth and to make connections across their play and learning.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Well established nursery rules, a shared respectful ethos and embedded routines help children to understand how to look after themselves and others. Children are actively involved in, for example, the school eco-committee. Children are capable, confident and successful learners who know they have rights and that their opinions are valued. There is scope to build on and extend this work by increasing the range of daily leadership roles and responsibilities.
- Overall evidence from inspection activities demonstrate that children are making very good progress over many aspects of their learning. There is an opportunity with new leadership

roles to develop further approaches to outdoor learning, science and technology. Practitioners effectively support children's communication skills and early language, numeracy and health and wellbeing using a range of carefully planned interventions. Evidence from observations and dialogue with parents show these are having a positive impact on children's progress. Specific work on transition in learning across the early level ensures children receive targeted support when they need it most. We discussed with the team the use of floor books to capture observations of targeted interventions.

- Children's individual achievements from home and nursery are documented very well in individual profiles, floor books and up to date playroom displays. All practitioners pay careful attention to achievements within and out with the setting. As planned, these could be included in their new approaches to tracking children's progress in health and wellbeing. The team should maximise their long established community links to identify opportunities for children to apply their skills and achieve in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- There is an inclusive ethos with a respectful tone to all interactions with children and with families using the setting. This links to the strongly evident values that underpin the work of the setting. Practitioners are skilled and proactive in identifying children and families who may need additional support at an early stage. A very good range of strategies includes home visits, early intervention, effective partnership working, specific targeted interventions and consistent implementation of promoting positive behaviour strategies. These strategies contribute to minimising the impact of any potential barriers to learning. This ensures that all children are supported in flexible and meaningful ways to make very good progress.

## 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.