

Summarised inspection findings

Juniper Green Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

29 November 2022

Key contextual information

Juniper Green Nursery Class is accommodated in a self-contained wing within Juniper Green Primary School. Children have access to a large playroom with a smaller playroom attached and benefit from direct access to an attractive outdoor area. They also have access to a sensory room gym hall and other areas in the main school building and wider campus. Children attend from the age of three until starting school. The setting provides places for 64 children at any one time. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 55 with 39 children new to the setting in August 2022. Children access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) by attending the setting on a full day, term-time basis. The nursery operates Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 3.10 pm and Friday 8.30 am to 11.50 am. A depute headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is very well supported in the day-to-day running of the nursery by two early years officers. The nursery staff team have embraced the challenges presented by COVID-19 in a positive way. The team has had significant staffing changes over the last few years, with the current team established in August 2022.

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

- Working together, senior leaders, practitioners and families have undertaken a review of the vision, values and aims to ensure they reflect the aspirations of everyone. Senior leaders have taken care to share the vision, values and aims through attractive displays, in a meaningful way for children and families. This is also illustrated and brought to life through regular communication with families, for example high quality use of a digital application. Practitioners demonstrate clearly their commitment to the vision through their strong professional values. Together, they strive for continuous improvement, to deliver the highest possible standards for children. The depute headteacher provides very effective leadership and has a clear sense of direction for the future of the nursery. She is ably supported by two early years officers, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the provision. Families and practitioners have a great respect for senior leaders, who are highly visible and provide very positive role models as lead practitioners.
- Practitioners are very reflective in their practice, both informally and through regular and robust self-evaluation. Individually and collectively, practitioners are encouraged to undertake professional learning to support ongoing developments. Examples include Froebelian practice, Forest Schools and the use of signing to support communication. Senior leaders protect time for professional dialogue so that staff can share professional learning and reflection on their practice. This is helping to build capacity for improvement and secure an appropriate pace of change. Practitioners feel empowered to lead developments in the nursery. The depute headteacher has ensured the strong ethos of distributed leadership is underpinned by robust professional review processes. The practitioner team have shared targets, linked carefully to improvement priorities, to lead developments across aspects of their practice. Practitioners also have personalised targets that reflect their interests and professional learning that nurture

creativity and develop expertise. Practitioners welcome this approach and are very proud of the difference they are making to the quality of children's experiences.

- Senior leaders and practitioners prioritise securing positive outcomes for all children at the core of their work. They have responded very positively to challenges brought by the pandemic and learned from different ways of working. The practitioner team is relatively new due to changes brought about by expansion to 1140 hours of ELC. They quickly formed as a strong and cohesive team and are very proud of their effective teamwork. Children and families are active participants in determining what is working well and what needs to improve. Their views, together with robust self-evaluation processes, have enabled practitioners to lead and implement change by identifying priorities for improvement. Current priorities are relevant and build on previous improvements, learning from the pandemic and linked to theory, national guidance and good practice. Building on the approach of senior leaders, practitioners are now ready to monitor and evaluate the impact of new developments. This will help to inform future actions and ensure continuous improvement.

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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Nurturing and consistently positive relationships are evident between practitioners and children. This results in a safe and secure environment where children are happy and settle very quickly. Almost all children take the lead in their learning and engage in meaningful, sustained play experiences, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners have created well-resourced areas that promote children's creativity and independence. They carefully take children's views and ideas into account when planning resources for each area. Practitioners evaluate regularly the learning provision in all areas of the playrooms. This ensures high quality continuous provision of experiences and spaces in which children learn very well.
- Children's views are central to the ethos of the setting. Practitioners are responsive to children's play, promoting curiosity and independence through natural interactions and high quality questioning. They confidently capture and explore emerging opportunities for learning. Practitioners have a very good understanding of child development. They provide a wide range of open-ended experiences, which take account of children's interests and stage of development. They are developing consistent approaches to recording child-led learning through their use of 'learning notes' and 'hatching ideas'.
- Practitioners know the children very well as individuals. They talk regularly together to share information about children's progress. Along with senior leaders, they have developed systems for sharing holistic information that creates a robust overview of each child. Recent self-evaluation has resulted in changes to how practitioners record information in electronic learning journals and learning journey folders. There are extensive opportunities for children and parents to contribute to these. Practitioners have identified the need to ensure the consistent use of learning journals for all children. They should continue with plans to develop approaches to recording children's progress to ensure this reflects accurately their achievements and next steps.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning termly through a calendar plan and link this to experiences and outcomes. Staff's daily responsive planning takes account of children's interests and developmental needs. As identified in the improvement plan, the staff team is now ready to increase pace and challenge in learning further, particularly for older children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that delivers all key aspects of ELC. They make use of local authority tools to track children's progress. As the team refine their processes for planning, it would be helpful to use all available tools to plan for continuity and progression. This will help to ensure children's learning consistently builds on prior learning.
- Practitioners have a very good understanding of the benefits of learning outdoors. Children benefit from high quality learning experiences in the nursery and school grounds. The embedding of regular, planned visits to the school wildlife garden will enrich children's experiences further.
- As children begin nursery, practitioners offer very good support to families through well-established transition arrangements. Almost all children quickly become confident and settle in the nursery environment. Practitioners and staff working across the early level are working together to support continuity and progression and ensure successful transitions. They have established a working group to take forward developments in play pedagogy and promote working together. Practitioners and teachers provide very good support to children as they move from nursery into P1. Practitioners and school staff are keen to continue to develop approaches to joint working throughout the year.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Strong partnerships between families and practitioners are a key feature of the setting. Practitioners work closely with families to share information about children's needs and progress in learning. They ensure that engagement with families is inclusive and respectful. Parents receive regular information about their child, both informally and formally and welcome this. Electronic learning journals and digital applications provide families with a valuable insight into children's experiences at nursery. Practitioners developed the use of digital applications to communicate with children and families during the pandemic, and have continued to build on this. They promote a responsive approach to sharing learning between nursery and home through a range of home learning resources, including a bedtime stories library. Practitioners should continue, as planned, to work with parents to ensure a shared understanding of how children learn through play.
- Practitioners are enthusiastic about being able to restart previously well-established opportunities that contribute to children's progress and achievement. Events such as 'stay and play' and visits to the wildlife garden are now possible as restrictions ease. Such events are very well supported by families. Parents welcome opportunities to meet with other families at open days and regular 'brew and blether' sessions. Practitioners are also able to offer shared learning opportunities for families.

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. 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

- Relationships and the promotion of wellbeing are key strengths of the setting. All practitioners deliver very high standards of care. The values of kindness and respect exemplified in 'Juni way' connects the nursery community as members of the 'Juni family'. Practitioners ensure that every child grows, learns and flourishes within an ethos of nurture, trust and warmth. Children and practitioners are valued as individuals, each with their own needs and rights. Practitioners' interactions with children, families and each other are consistently non-judgemental, responsive and caring. This helps all children to quickly settle into nursery and feel safe and secure.
- Practitioners provide very positive role models to young children. As a result, children demonstrate a well-developed awareness of each other. Practitioners sensitively offer support to children to encourage kindness and consideration of each other. They support children to learn about the national wellbeing indicators and school values as integral to their nursery experience. For example, children demonstrate an awareness of safety in real life, such as managing risk associated with wasps in the nursery garden.
- During routines such as snack and lunch, children already demonstrate very good levels of independence as they prepare, collect and eat their food. Children benefit from the flexible approaches that allow them to make choices about when they want to eat. Older children take pride in their leadership roles, for example preparing food and setting the table in the homely environment.
- Practitioners are fully aware of, and comply with, statutory requirements in relation to ELC. They are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe and understand how policies and legislation inform their work. All children have a personal plan that outlines how care and health needs will be met. Practitioners provide very good support to children who face potential barriers to their learning. They work very effectively with other professionals and families to carefully plan and implement strategies that help children make the best possible progress. The wider school environment is used successfully to deliver personal support for identified children, for example the school gym hall and the sensory room.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equity for all in a sensitive way. They work together to ensure there are no barriers to participation so that all children can access all areas of learning. Children are developing a very good awareness of diversity through taking part in a range of events across the year. Practitioners are working to enhance this further through a careful audit of resources. This will promote an inclusive environment that reflects fully the nursery community.

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

- Almost all children are independent learners. They confidently make choices about their learning and extend this across the different areas of the setting. They are kind and friendly and communicate respectfully with each other. The embedded ethos of health and wellbeing is having a positive impact on children's development.
- Almost all children are making good progress appropriate to their stage of development, for this time of the session. Practitioners can talk with some confidence about children's progression in learning. Senior leaders have identified that approaches for tracking children's progress and setting next steps needs to be developed further with the new staff team.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They develop physical skills during outdoor play and in the construction area. They develop their balance and coordination when using balance and climbing toys and loose parts. Children develop their fine and gross motor skills through a range of appropriate resources, such as scissors and tweezers. They are kind and polite to each other and share resources well.
- Most children are making appropriate progress in early language and literacy. Most children engage in mark-making and emergent writing to create signs for the nursery or to write letters and invitations. There is a range of texts to support learning across the playrooms and children access these regularly. Storytelling features across the day with individuals and groups of children taking part enthusiastically. Children enjoy listening to stories and talk about their favourite characters. Most children engage in conversation with adults and their peers and they talk confidently about their ideas and learning experiences.
- Most children are making appropriate progress in numeracy and mathematics. They are developing and applying early numeracy skills across a few areas of the setting and within the 'maths' area. The majority of children use correct mathematical language when measuring and weighing and can match this to numbers. Most children recognise numbers zero to five, and older children recognise and use much larger numbers during their play.
- Children's achievements from home are celebrated through a 'Star Moments' display. Parents are encouraged to share achievements from home using the electronic journal system. Practitioners promote opportunities to extend and share these achievements with the whole nursery community.

- Practitioners demonstrate an understanding of the importance of promoting equity across all aspects of their provision. They know families very well and have a sound knowledge of factors that help build a picture of the whole child. They identify strategies to support the holistic development of all children. Practitioners should now develop further how they evidence the impact of strategies to support individual children. This will help them to make 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.