

Summarised inspection findings

Stobhill Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Stobhill nursery class is a self-contained wing within Stobhill Primary School. The nursery caters for children aged three to five years. Since August 2019, the nursery has offered full and part-time places. Registration is for 32 children to attend at any one time, which includes 16 full-time places. From August 2020, all places will be full time. At the time of the inspection, there were 37 children registered to attend. There have been a number of changes to staffing over the last few years.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- The nursery shares the whole school vision, values and aims, including the Stobhill strapline of 'live, learn and grow together'. Practitioners, school staff and parents worked together to develop this. The school rules, linked to the values, are an integral part of, and underpin, nursery approaches. Practitioners need to make increased use of the language of the vision and values with children in order to promote their understanding of this in practice.
- The senior child development worker and equity and excellence lead practitioner have been in post for one year. They are working collaboratively with the headteacher and practitioners to lead change successfully at a well-considered pace. They do this using an effective blend of coaching and modelling. They are highly respected and valued by practitioners and are having a significant impact on improvements in the nursery setting.
- Professional learning is empowering practitioners to create a nurturing learning environment that meets the needs of children. Examples of such professional learning include the recent learning on numeracy. As a result, identified learning priorities for children have a sharper focus, are personalised and relate to wider aspects of this curriculum area. The setting supports the training of Modern Apprentices to develop the workforce. Apprentices feel very well supported by their mentors within the setting and thoroughly enjoy their professional learning experiences at Stobhill.
- Practitioners are empowered to adopt specific leadership roles. They demonstrate an enthusiasm and willingness to undertake additional responsibilities, for example leading the development of parental engagement. The team are eager to accept and apply advice to improve outcomes for children. Practitioners measure the successes of developments by reflecting on their practice and seek the views of children and parents. They are at the early stages of using national frameworks to support the measurement of success. Practitioners are reflective about their practice. Senior leaders' management of monitoring and self-evaluation needs to improve further, to build on the existing reflective practice of practitioners.
- Practitioners share their practice beyond the setting using social media, through the local authority, the regional improvement collaborative and at national events. They have visited other settings to look at aspects of practice including learning environments and block play.

This is supporting practitioners' understanding of high quality early learning and childcare provision and informing developments within the nursery class.

- The nursery class has a well-considered improvement plan in place. Practitioners, along with senior leaders, have worked well together to develop this. As a result, everyone has ownership of the improvement agenda and make valuable contributions to ongoing developments. The improvement plan has resulted in successful leadership of change. Examples of positive change include practitioners' development of the nursery environment, improvements in planning processes and a shared understanding amongst the team of the role of the adult.

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

- The ethos in the setting is welcoming and friendly. Relationships between practitioners and children are very respectful and nurturing. Practitioners have recently reviewed and made a number of changes to improve the learning environment. This has led to the creation of an interesting, enabling playroom. This includes increasing the use of a range of appropriate open-ended, natural and real-life resources and materials. Children make decisions about their play and move independently between the indoors and outdoors. The experiences and opportunities available support children to develop their creativity and curiosity well. As a result, children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at nursery.
- Most children are motivated and engage well during their time at nursery. A few children are beginning to sustain interest for longer periods, for example, building in the block play area. The majority of children interact well with each other. A few children benefit from sensitive support and guidance from practitioners to cooperate with their peers. Most practitioners require to develop further their interactions with children. Interactions require to be more skilful, including the use of commentary and effective questioning, to promote higher order thinking. Practitioners have identified the need to develop their role in successfully provoking and scaffolding children's learning. This should focus on practitioners consistently building on, extending and challenging children's learning more effectively.
- Children have regular opportunities to use digital technologies. They use the computer to research areas of interest and to play simple games. A few children are beginning to use tablet computers to record and reflect on their learning.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals, and are now starting to understand children more as learners. They carry out both 'snapshot' and more focused observations of children's learning. Practitioners have recently introduced learning priorities in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for each individual child. The setting is at a very early stage of using measures of engagement to assess the quality of children's learning. Practitioners now need to develop further their knowledge, skills and confidence in high quality observation and assessment of children's learning.
- Practitioners use learning journals to document children's progress and development. However, these do not yet clearly depict children's progress or achievements. Practitioners should continue to develop further the use of learning journals. This should include capturing the voice of the child and the views of parents and carers. A next step is to use the learning journals as a useful context to discuss learning with children.
- Practitioners have recently reviewed and introduced a new planning cycle to more effectively plan for children's learning. Children's interests, learning dispositions and needs influence the new planning process. Practitioners use floorbooks to document children's learning and are

beginning to use progression pathways to support the identification of children's next steps in learning. Practitioners need to develop processes further to track and monitor children's learning and development, making use of the National Benchmarks and progression pathways. This will assist practitioners to support all children in achieving the best possible progress in learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners have recently reviewed, and are developing, a play-based delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Developments are having a positive impact on children's learning. Senior leaders and practitioners require to work together to develop a sound, shared understanding of early years pedagogy to underpin the further development of the curriculum. Practitioners and teaching staff working across the early level should work together to create a curriculum rationale that supports a continuum of learning as children move from nursery into P1. The staff team should consider new national guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me' in this process.
- An effective programme is in place to support children's wellbeing as they transfer from nursery to P1. Children benefit from planned visits to classrooms and dining areas, as well as participation in a structured programme. This bespoke programme allows children to work with school leaders and introduces them to the values and expectations of the school. Practitioners collate a basic transition report as children transfer to P1. Improving the content of this would more accurately report on children's progression and learning.
- Practitioners are working in collaboration with the school and the wider community in the development and delivery of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Together they have created a programme to develop the key skills of STEM to the nursery children. This is at the early stages of implementation.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Very positive relationships exist between practitioners and families. There are good opportunities for parents to be part of their child's nursery experiences in different ways. This includes helping in the playroom, attending events and 'stay and play' sessions. The creation of 'Stobhill Tots' is widening the reach of the setting to younger siblings. Parents are very positive about their involvement with the setting. They very much appreciate the level of support they receive as families. A next step is for practitioners to involve parents more in the creation of children's learning journals.

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

- Practitioners have a clear focus on, and are successful in, securing children's wellbeing. Children have very positive relationships with their trusted adults in the setting. As a result of the relaxed and friendly ethos, almost all children are settled. There has been a well-considered focus on meeting children's wellbeing needs to support them to adapt from part-time to full-time places at nursery. Practitioners use strategies such as daily emotional check ins and simple leadership roles to support children to develop self-esteem and a sense of wellbeing. Children have been involved in developing these roles and responsibilities.
- Adults are very calm, sensitive and respectful in their approaches. Practitioners provide very positive role models for children and encourage children to be considerate of others. A few children require ongoing, and at times, significant support to help them develop the skills they need to 'live, learn and grow' together. Practitioners provide effective support to all children, which is supporting them to make progress in their wellbeing at their own developmental stage. Most children are developing friendships appropriate to their stage of development. A few older children demonstrate kindness and support to others. Practitioners should explore how rights-based approaches could extend and develop children's understanding of fairness and respect.
- Children demonstrate their independence through making decisions about how they will spend their time at nursery. They contribute to routines such as preparing snack, caring for resources and assessing safety in the outdoor area. Children share their views about what they like and dislike about nursery.
- Senior leaders pay careful attention to the wellbeing of practitioners. Practitioners have regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss their own wellbeing and that of children. This supports timely identification of challenges and possible solutions and strategies. Practitioners have a clear focus on getting it right for every child and the principles of this approach underpin their work. They are beginning to develop a shared understanding of how the national wellbeing indicators can promote wellbeing with children. Practitioners need to share and explore the indicators with children and families through a range of relevant and engaging experiences.
- Practitioners engage and comply with statutory requirements. They understand the important role they play in safeguarding children. Practitioners use inclusive approaches. Working in this way results in all children being included and treated equally. The team work very well together to ensure all children have the individual support they need to learn and develop. This helps children to be successful and participate as part of the nursery community. Practitioners, working with other agencies, offer a range of support to families as well as individual children. This is helping to reduce potential barriers to inclusion and secure progress.

- All children are valued and respected as individuals. Children are developing a simple awareness of diversity and equality through exploring a few religious and cultural celebrations. Practitioners should audit and review resources and learning experiences to ensure they fully represent and celebrate the full range of diversity from the immediate community and beyond.

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 communication and early language. The majority of children enjoy sharing their experiences with others. A few children need to develop and apply a wider vocabulary to help them express themselves. The focused introduction of vocabulary, for example linked to learning contexts, would introduce all children to new and interesting words. Most children enjoy listening to stories and have an awareness of traditional tales, which they are able to retell in their own words. The majority of children enjoy using story cubes to create their own stories that they share with familiar adults. A few children show a keen interest in mark making, keenly experimenting to write their own name. They enjoy the challenge of learning about letter names and exploring related sounds. Experiences such as baking and making playdough could better support children to apply their developing skills and knowledge of early language.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making satisfactory progress. During board games, children apply their understanding of number and number recognition. The majority of children can count to 10 and are beginning to recognise numerals. They can order numbers and a few are able to count backwards. A few children enjoy the challenge of working with larger numbers and explore simple addition and subtraction. A wider range of meaningful contexts to apply and develop skills will support children to make the best possible progress. These should build on children's interests and include play-based activities that allow them to explore and develop skills and knowledge in information handling, shape, time, measurement and money.
- In health and wellbeing, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress. Children explore a range of healthy food choices through snack and lunches. Involvement in the preparation of snack and making soup, help children explore new, less familiar foods. The use of tools, such as knives, is helping children develop their awareness of safety. Introducing children to the national wellbeing indicators, in situations such as this, would help make them meaningful. Practitioners talk to children about their emotions to help them make sense of their feelings and to develop appropriate vocabulary to express themselves. Access to the interesting outdoor environment and the gym hall supports children to develop a range of gross motor skills. Introducing children to more adventurous physical play would better support their development and consolidation of a wider range of skills.
- Overall, most children could be making better progress in their learning. Practitioners' use of focused learning priorities is at the early stages of supporting children to make increased

progress over time. These priorities should consistently build upon children's prior learning, development and skills.

- Practitioners support children's achievements by offering praise and encouragement. Through the introduction of an achievement tree, practitioners are beginning to record children's wider achievements. Practitioners need to ensure that these contribute to children's learning profiles. A next step is to create a holistic view of children's achievements that can be built on through their nursery experiences. Most children are ready to play an increased role in the life of the setting, whole school and wider community. This would allow them to develop a range of skills such as becoming aware of others, organisational skills and expressing their ideas.
- Practitioners and senior leaders actively promote and ensure equity. They have an extensive understanding of the challenges children and families may face. Practitioners identify potential barriers to wellbeing and effective learning in a sensitive and timely way. Senior leaders and practitioners should develop ways to use available data and measure the success of interventions to ensure equity. This should support them to make evidence-based decisions about future planned interventions.

1. Quality of care and support

Care Inspectorate grade: good

Children were happy, confident and having lots of fun when we visited. Children were able to choose their activities freely and were supported as necessary by staff. Children had the freedom to play indoors or outdoors for most of the day.

Staff knew children well and responded kindly and sensitively to children who needed reassurance or a cuddle. Children were developing the skills to be respectful and encouraged to be kind to each other. They were encouraged to resolve conflict themselves where possible which helps children become more resilient.

We reviewed children's personal plans which included information about children's wellbeing and care needs, staff were able to talk about individual children confidently and knew them well. These were reviewed with parents and there was clear recording of parents input. Children who have additional support needs were well supported and strategies were in place to support their learning and development. Parents described the support they received from and the positive relationships they had with staff. A parent told us 'staff had children's welfare and learning' at the centre of all they do. Stay and play sessions, home link visits and information meetings for parents organised by the local authorities Early Years team took place. For example, sleep patterns and strategies for children who may be having difficulty sleeping at night.

A healthy snack was provided during the session and lunch was provided for children who attended all day. Children were supported to be independent during snack and lunch times when selecting what they were eating and pouring their own drinks. Snack and lunch times were unhurried and sociable. Staff sat with children and talked with them about their food choices as well as talking about what they had been doing both in and out of nursery. Children were being encouraged to try new foods and develop positive relationships with food. We suggested staff monitor lunch time procedures to ensure the needs of all children, including those attending part time are met and for children attending full time who may benefit from rest.

Throughout the session, we observed children's interests being listened to and valued by staff. In order to extend and support further learning additional resources and loose parts materials were introduced throughout the sessions. Staff were responsive to children's emotions.

Children's achievements were recognised through play, observations of their learning and on an achievement tree showing children's achievements out of nursery. Parents told us that they valued the amount of communication and support they received from staff and that staff shared their child's successes with them.

2. Quality of environment

Care Inspectorate grade: good

The nursery has a well-resourced indoor space. The play areas are set out clearly which meant children could make choices about where and who they wanted to play with. The garden area had a good variety of activities on offer and children were able to choose their own resources which encouraged independence.

The routine of the day was mostly free flowing meaning that children's play wasn't interrupted allowing more depth of learning. However, children were halted in their play for group times where intended learning took place with staff. Children had opportunities for rest in a cosy story area and staff supported children where needed. There were opportunities for mark making and counting throughout the playroom and garden which were extended by staff during play activities. This promotes children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Open ended and natural materials were used in all areas which allowed children to develop curiosity, enquiry and imagination. Children were encouraged and supported to transfer materials from area to area which allowed children to explore different uses and problem solve.

Children were involved in risk assessing the outdoor space which allowed them to take ownership of the space. This supports children's understanding how to keep themselves and others safe. Staff agreed to review their risk assessments for the nursery environments, outings, both planned and ad hoc. Children were responsible and respectful of the indoor environment and wanted to help with routines such as snack preparation and helping throughout the nursery.

Children were supported in learning about how to keep healthy, we observed children washing their hands after being outside and before snack and brushing their teeth after lunch. This promotes confidence and independence in personal care routines.

Staff have been assessing the environment regularly. We looked at the improvement plan and it was evident that this was having a positive impact on the experiences on offer for children, for example the quantity and variety of loose parts resources. Staff told us that the outdoor space was to be further developed and we discussed the use of best practice guidance to help them plan. Children had been taken on short outings out with the nursery. We discussed with staff about extending opportunities for children learning in the local community.

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.