

Summarised inspection findings

Pentland Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

21 July 2020

Key contextual information

Pentland nursery class is based in Pentland Primary School. At the time of the inspection, 94 children aged three to five attended the nursery, 48 in the morning and 46 in the afternoon. The nursery is based in a large playroom with access to an outdoor area. The nursery is led by the senior leadership team of the primary school.

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

- Senior leaders, along with children, parents and practitioners recently reviewed the nursery's vision, values and aims. These are appropriate and are evidenced in practice, for example, practitioners show respect for all children. Practitioners should continue to review and refresh the vision, values and aims regularly with all stakeholders so they remain current and helpful.
- Leaders provide effective leadership of change in the nursery. Leaders continually challenge, encourage and support practitioners to strive for continuous improvement. The team shares a very clear set of improvement priorities. They show strong commitment to improving outcomes for children in close partnership with families. It will be important that the senior leadership team have a clear strategic overview of the nursery improvement journey. Practitioners have developed a comprehensive improvement plan, which includes relevant key priorities to continue to improve the nursery. For example, practitioners have identified the need to continue to develop their knowledge of children's schemas. Parents' suggestions for improvement have resulted in positive changes in the nursery, such as a more effective process for storing children's personal belongings in the cloakroom. Practitioners consult children regularly about improving the nursery, for example, on the purchase of new resources.
- Across the nursery, there is a strong commitment to shared professional learning. Leaders and practitioners share the strong learning culture in the nursery across the cluster and the local authority. As a team, practitioners and leaders are reflective and strive to improve learning outcomes for children. Practitioners have undertaken a range of high-quality professional learning to support their leadership roles. As practitioners develop these roles over time, leaders should monitor the impact in supporting continuous improvement. Practitioners should develop opportunities for children to undertake leadership responsibilities for key aspects of the setting.
- In planning for improvement, leaders and practitioners make very good use of research about children's wellbeing. Practitioners lead different areas within the nursery according to their interests, strengths and the needs of the children. This is one of the key priorities in their improvement plan. Practitioners collaborate to take forward shared initiatives effectively. They also support aspects of school improvement, including the development of block play in P1. This is at an early stage of development.

- Leaders and practitioners engage in a broad range of self-evaluation and reflective activities. They should continue to gather evidence from all stakeholders using national guidance, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' Practitioners should continue to have a key focus on continuing to improve the quality of learning and teaching. This should help practitioners to reflect on what they are doing well and what they could review and improve. They should also continue to develop their use of self-evaluation to promote increasing challenge and depth in learning.

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

- Practitioners provide a calm, welcoming and nurturing environment, where children are keen to explore and learn through play. They have established very positive relationships with children and their families. As a result, children feel safe and settled in the nursery class. Most children demonstrate good levels of engagement and are able to sustain their play. Practitioners give children full autonomy to lead their own learning and the majority respond well to this opportunity. Children value the space and time to follow their own interests. A minority of children require more adult direction and support to engage in purposeful play.
- Practitioners have created an enabling learning environment, which supports children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity. Children are benefitting from exploring an increasing level of natural and open-ended resources. They use these resources in different ways, such as inventing their own role-play and creating their own models with sticks and playdough. Children would benefit from access to a greater range of resources within different areas of the playroom. Children access outdoor learning throughout the whole session. The majority of children choose to play outdoors at some point during the session. In this context, children enjoy the space and freedom to explore. A few children make good use of this space to engage in energetic play and use wooden blocks to build their own space rocket. Practitioners should continue to monitor carefully the children who are not choosing to go outdoors. They should also support children to dress appropriately for going outdoors. This should help children spend longer outdoors and a minority to access the garden more often.
- Practitioners make good use of their professional learning to improve their practice. Overall, most practitioners use high-quality questioning and supportive dialogue to extend children's thinking. Children are confident to talk about their learning. Practitioners offer a good balance between child and adult-initiated learning. Practitioners listen well to children and value their contributions. There are missed opportunities for practitioners to monitor and intervene in learning episodes to support learning that is more meaningful. Children enjoy using their journals to reflect on their learning and show a good understanding of their prior learning. Children do not yet make regular use of digital technologies as part of their learning.
- Practitioners know each individual's needs and interests well. They observe children in a planned way and effectively make judgements about their progress. Practitioners make well-informed observations about children, which they capture in different ways, for example, in their learning journals. They use observations to plan children's next steps in learning. The team should align better their observations and children's next steps. Practitioners should also ensure they document more clearly children's progress in their learning journals. Practitioners should identify the most pertinent next steps to ensure they continually build on children's learning and benefit from appropriate challenge.

- Practitioners take a streamlined approach to planning. They use a seasonal backdrop for their medium term plan. Practitioners use a daily responsive planning approach to take forward children's evolving needs and interests. They document children's learning on wall displays and in floor books. Practitioners should take better account of children's next steps to ensure they have opportunities to learn across the curriculum. Practitioners should also involve children more effectively in planning their learning. In doing so, children could be given opportunities to influence and shape the learning environment to help improve their levels of engagement.
- Senior leaders and practitioners track children's progress in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. They capture and use this data and their good knowledge of children well to plan appropriate interventions. Practitioners also use local authority trackers to check on children's progress. There is scope to build on this to capture children's progress across a wider range of mathematics. For example, children's progress in learning about money, shape, time and information handling.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based firmly on play. It is responsive to children's interests and needs. The development of loose parts play, natural materials, woodwork and sewing offers children good opportunities to play with natural and creative resources. This supports children to develop their imagination, creativity and inquiry skills well.
- Practitioners use the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to plan a range of learning across the curriculum. Practitioners and leaders should take forward plans to refresh the curriculum rationale. In doing so, they should take full account of the design principles of CfE to ensure increased pace, challenge and depth in learning for all children.
- Practitioners make effective use of the local community and visitors to enrich learning. Practitioners extend children's awareness of the world around them. Outdoor learning is a strong focus in the nursery.
- Practitioners support transitions into the nursery and onward to the primary school well. Transitions are flexible and tailored to the needs of children and families. An effective programme is in place for children who need enhanced transitions. Practitioners in nursery consult with teachers in P1. This improves continuity in learning for children at transition. Practitioners should continue to develop approaches to support children who attend on a split placement with another setting.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents and carers feel welcome in the nursery. Practitioners have established positive relationships and effective communication. Parents and carers are encouraged to become involved in the life of the nursery in a variety of ways. They provide support on trips, help with resources and provide feedback regularly about a range of matters.
- Effective communication keeps parents informed about their child's learning. Parents appreciate the informal daily chats and more formal opportunities to discuss their children's learning, progress and care. 'Stay and Play' sessions offer parents opportunities to spend time in the nursery, allowing them to observe how child learns in the setting.
- Practitioners have taken very positive steps to strengthen parental engagement. This includes sharing learning profiles with parents. This is enabling parents to be more aware of and develop further the knowledge and skills children are developing in the setting.
- Parents are encouraged to share children's achievement from home. There is a home learning wall where children proudly display learning that takes place at home. Practitioners provide parents with very helpful information about how young children learn. They also give parents ideas about how they can support this at home.

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

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 nursery has a welcoming ethos and children are kind and caring towards each other. Very strong, caring relationships between practitioners and children are evident and the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners and children have embedded the wellbeing indicators well in the nursery. They support children and parents effectively to develop an awareness of the wellbeing indicators in a meaningful way. For example, home activities are aligned to the wellbeing indicators. Children talk well about how they can keep themselves healthy, and are well aware of healthy food choices. Practitioners use praise and language effectively to reinforce their expectations of behaviour. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. The leadership team and practitioners should continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights. Practitioners should continue to promote articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Almost all children are happy and settled in the nursery. Most are kind and considerate to each other. They are becoming aware of how to keep safe and healthy. Older children support new and younger children well. Most can explain the healthy options on offer at snack time. They participate in daily tooth brushing and as a result, are learning about the importance of dental hygiene. The majority of children access outdoor learning each day for fresh air and physical exercise. Across the setting, almost all children demonstrate high levels of independence.
- Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well. Parents speak very positively of their relationship with practitioners. This allows practitioners to provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and their families at an early stage. All practitioners are fully aware of legislative requirements for keeping children safe, and meeting their care needs. They implement them responsibly. Where needs are identified, practitioners have regular review meetings, involving parents, to discuss the pastoral needs of children. As a result, practitioners support children with additional support needs well with a range of targeted interventions.
- Practitioners plan for children using the local authority staged intervention process. This is detailed and robust for children with additional support needs. Practitioners monitor and review individual plans effectively to ensure each child makes appropriate progress. Practitioners should continue to develop individual plans for children who require additional support at an early stage. Practitioners timeously seek help from other professionals as required. Supportive partnership working with other professionals helps to meet children's needs, particularly in relation to language and communication. This results in the effective use of strategies to improve language and communication and of fine motor skills. These are well embedded in the nursery.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality well. The nursery has a strong sense of community where everyone is valued and included. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through recognising and celebrating a range of events in the calendar year. The

leadership team has a clear understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do. This helps practitioners to celebrate the multi-cultural context of children in the nursery. Practitioners should continue to promote gender equality effectively with children, to ensure potential stereotypes are consistently recognised and challenged.

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

- Overall, children make good progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing. A minority of children make very good progress in early language and mathematics. A significant number of children come to the setting with well-developed skills in early language and mathematics. For this reason, practitioners need to be clearer about how they are building on their knowledge and skills to ensure they make best possible progress.
- Children are keen communicators and enjoy sharing their experiences with peers and adults. As a result of positive adult modelling and interactions, children display a well-developed vocabulary. Most are able to respond well to simple questions about their play and prior learning experiences. Most children recognise their own name as they use art labels and self-register for snack. A few children write their names and other familiar words during their play. Most children are interested in books and participate well in group story times. They share a good knowledge of the books they engage with as part of 'story of the week'. Positively, they are encouraged to use different props and resources to explore further characters and events in a story. A few are capable of making use of a greater range of texts in daily routines, for example, baking. A few children are attaining beyond expected levels. They now need more challenge in literacy to ensure they continually build on their learning.
- Children are making very good progress in numeracy. They confidently count and recognise numerals in the course of their play. A significant number of children count backwards from 10. A few count on from any given number within 10. As a few children are exceeding expected levels, they need more opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills across their learning. A few children make use of mathematical language as part of their play at the sand and block play areas. There is limited evidence of the progress children are making across other areas of mathematics, for example, money, shape, time and information handling.
- In both indoor and outdoor areas, most children demonstrate highly developed fine and gross motor skills. They apply these skills in different contexts such as, sewing, woodwork and as they negotiate the terrain in the woodland space. This is an area of particular strength in the setting.
- Children's different achievements are actively encouraged and celebrated by the team. Parents also share children's successes from home and engage well with home learning activities. Positively, teachers continue this practice in P1. Children are confident learners, with most able to make decisions and try out new ideas. Children's key workers identify literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing targets. However, these are not always relevant for individual

children's stage of development. Practitioners have taken very positive steps to strengthen parental engagement. This includes sharing learning profiles with parents. This is enabling parents to be more aware of and develop further the knowledge and skills children are developing in the setting.

- Senior leaders have taken very positive steps to ensure equity for all. Practitioners have a good knowledge of the different contexts in which children live and signpost families sensitively to different agencies as appropriate. They offer a range of successful interventions to support targeted children develop, for example, communication and gross motor skills. The team also use of local resources well to provide equity of experience for all children. For example, they offer weekly visits to the local wooded area and facilitate trips to museums and art galleries in Edinburgh.
- Children learn about different jobs in meaningful ways, as they engage with a variety of visitors. For example, because of children's interest in animals, a parent spoke to the children about her job as a vet.

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.