

Summarised inspection findings

Riverside Primary School Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Riverside nursery class has two self-contained classrooms within Riverside Primary School. The nursery caters for children aged three to five years with a mix of part and full-time places. Registration is for 40 full-time children to attend at any one time. At the time of the inspection, there were 57 children registered to attend. Practitioners have worked with senior leaders to develop their practice to reflect Froebelian principles. The nursery class benefits from a full-time Excellence and Equity Lead who has a focus on supporting children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

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 has previously shared the whole school vision, values and aims. Senior leaders and practitioners recognise that the changing context requires a refreshed vision, values and aims more bespoke to the nursery class. They have worked together to develop these and are in the process of consulting with children and families to ensure shared ownership. The central team from West Lothian Council has supported practitioners in developing approaches to undertake this. Practitioners welcome and value this support. Once finalised, practitioners should promote children's understanding of the vision, values and aims to ensure they have a sound understanding of them.
- Over recent years, the nursery team have been on a journey of significant development. This has included the implementation of Froebelian principles to underpin practice. Practitioners and senior leaders have led change at a well-considered pace. Teamwork and a sense of community are strong features of the work of the nursery class. Practitioners work very collegiately and are very proud of their ongoing developments.
- Professional learning is empowering practitioners to lead well-informed change and be leaders of learning. They confidently articulate how their professional learning has improved children's experiences. Individually and collectively, learning has built professional confidence, increased reflective practice and led to positive change. Together, these elements have strengthened the capacity for continued improvement. Particular examples include the development of high quality block play and the introduction of sewing as a core learning experience. The nursery class supports childcare students from local colleges, which helps to develop the expanding workforce. Students feel very well supported by practitioners and enjoy their placements in the nursery class.
- Practitioners share their practice beyond the immediate setting through local authority and regional improvement collaborative events. They have visited other settings to look at aspects of practice and shared their development of the outdoor learning environment. This activity is supporting their understanding of quality early learning and childcare and informing current and

future developments. Practitioners could extend the use of social media to reach a wider audience.

- Practitioners have individual leadership roles that are personalised to their skills, interests and linked to improvement priorities. They work with senior leaders to develop and deliver an action plan, ensuring identified areas for improvement are taken forward. Senior leaders and practitioners have made a positive start to using How good is our early learning and childcare?. This is supporting reflection on what is working well and what needs to improve. This self-evaluation now needs to be more systematic and coherent to provide a robust evidence base to plan for continuous improvement.

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

- Children are happy, confident and independent within the calm, respectful and stimulating environment. They engage well and often focus for sustained periods in activities that promote curiosity, investigation and exploration. Children are enthusiastic about their experiences, for example, often choosing to access group activities with adults.
- Practitioners are caring, nurturing and promote a sense of fun in their interactions with children. They work well together, supporting each other and children between the playrooms and outdoors. Most practitioners use sensitive interactions to enable children to solve problems together. Children are very keen to talk about their learning through play and ongoing interests. Practitioners respect children's views and record them on planning walls and electronic journals. The quality of interactions needs developed further to take full account of the nature and timing of dialogue to best support children's learning.
- Practitioners have developed learning environments to a high standard, both indoors and outdoors. They offer a range of opportunities for children to develop and apply a wide range of skills. The outdoor environment provides many opportunities for children to use problem-solving skills and develop teamwork. Literacy and numeracy are visible in all environments. All environments offer high quality resources for children with well-considered natural and real-life resources.
- Practitioners and children learn together through a consultative planning process. This has an effective blend of child-led and adult planned and initiated learning experiences. Children's interests, and increasingly their learning needs, are discussed, recorded, planned for and carried out. Practitioners should consider how to provide further challenge and depth of learning through the planning process. This includes time taken to explore children's questions more fully using interesting provocations.
- Digital technologies are available for children to use to support their learning. This includes interactive boards, which promote literacy and numeracy development through games and researching areas of interest. Remote control cars, 'talking tins' and tablet computers provide children with opportunities to explore technologies while also developing a range of skills.
- Practitioners observe children as they play and plan next steps in learning. They discuss these as part of weekly planning meetings and record them in children's learning journals. Practitioners have identified that children and families need to be more involved in the creation and use of learning journals. Children could also play an increased role in planning their own next steps to help them be leaders of their own learning. Practitioners are using the language from the curriculum progression pathways to support their observations and plan next steps.

This has developed a clearer focus on children's learning. Practitioners should continue to build on this practice.

- Practitioners are developing their confidence in tracking and monitoring the progress most children make in their learning using local authority progression pathways. They now need to extend this to include all children as soon as they start nursery. There has been a focus on tracking children's engagement using a range of approaches. This is helping practitioners identify where children may require support to help them learn. Practitioners should continue to use information from tracking to ensure children receive appropriate challenge and support in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners are clear about their shared pedagogy and can articulate the benefit to children. A few practitioners have gained additional qualifications through professional learning in Froebelian principles. These practitioners have shared their learning and this is key in influencing and improving practice and the nursery environment. The curriculum rationale is shared with the school and takes account of national aspirations for all children. Senior leaders and practitioners could develop the rationale further to ensure it reflects the context of the pedagogy embedding in the nursery class.
- Practitioners use progression pathways to support curriculum planning and track the progress of individual children across the early level. Practitioners are increasing their confidence in using the language from the pathways within their planning and understanding what the experiences and outcomes look like in practice.
- Practitioners support children well to develop and apply skills for learning life and work, for example, through providing resources such as the workbench with real tools. Real-life learning opportunities such as visits to local shops, library and care home for the elderly promote the development of a range of skills.
- There has been a focus on developing literacy within the nursery, including through targeted approaches. This is resulting in children's vocabulary improving and improved skills in listening and talking. Practitioners promote numeracy and mathematics well through provision of core resources. This includes an extensive space for block play and the addition of open-ended materials throughout all areas.
- Home visits support children's transitions into nursery well. This supports the development of positive relationships at an early stage. Reviewing arrangements to support children to settle into nursery should ensure key adults are available to help build a positive attachment with the child and family. Arrangements to support children as they move across the early level support children well pastorally. Practitioners should work with senior leaders and staff working across the early level to promote a continuum of learning and experience across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Very positive relationships exist between practitioners and families. Parents are very positive about their involvement with the setting. There are opportunities for parents and families to be involved in their child's learning and nursery experiences including contributing to planning for children's learning. This supports the development of a strong learning partnership between home and nursery. Practitioners provide ideas for learning at home and share nursery songs and recipes. The bedtime reading initiative provides interesting reading materials for families to share at home. An open door policy allows a flexible approach to communication and support. 'Nursery natter' sessions allow practitioners opportunities to gather the views of parents and share information, for example, about healthy packed lunches. This could be a useful support for getting stakeholders more involved in self-evaluation. Parents could also be more involved in the creation of children's learning journals.
- Practitioners make good use of partnerships in the local community to enhance and extend children's learning. A link with a local care home provides regular opportunities for children to care for and think about others. Walks in the local area and visits to the library provide children with a sense of place.

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

- Children's wellbeing is at the heart of the work of the nursery class. Relationships between children and practitioners are very positive, responsive and trusting. Practitioners respect children who are valued individually for their own unique skills, personalities and learning dispositions. As a result, most children are confident, respectful and purposeful throughout their time at nursery. The child's voice is evident throughout the work of the nursery class. Practitioner's seek, capture and act upon the views of children, for example, they contribute to planning learning and making simple decisions that affect them. Children enjoy taking on leadership responsibilities such as helping to prepare snack. Practitioners could now build on the responsibilities adopted by children. This should have a focus on developing skills and attributes across the four capacities.
- Almost all practitioners model behaviours that promote wellbeing. Their calm and sensitive interactions support children to show consideration for others and their environment. Practitioners provide effective emotional support to all children, which is supporting them to make progress in their wellbeing, at their own developmental stage. Examples include experiences that develop self-confidence in individuals. Almost all practitioners use positive reinforcement well. Practitioner's label and praise positive behaviours such as perseverance and patience to help children understand their value. Most children are developing friendships appropriate to their stage of development. A few older children have well developed relationships with their peers. They understand the need for teamwork in their play and can describe how this can help achieve a common goal. Intergenerational links are helping children develop an awareness of the needs of others.
- The principles of 'Getting it right for every child' underpin the work of the nursery class. Children confidently describe ways they can keep themselves safe, for example, when using tools, kitchen utensils and playing outdoors. They now need to develop and apply a wider and deeper understanding of all the national wellbeing indicators. Practitioners should support the development of children's understanding in meaningful and engaging ways, for example, through the ongoing care of the nursery guinea pigs.
- Practitioners engage well and comply with statutory requirements. They understand the important role they play in safeguarding children. The implementation of personal plans is providing useful information for practitioners to inform support for children and families. Continued development of how plans are used and effective monitoring of these should help secure positive outcomes for all children.
- The team work well together to ensure all children have the support they need to learn and develop. Targeted interventions, for example, developing listening skills, are having a positive impact on children's progress. Children who require additional support to reduce particular barriers to their learning have additional plans in place. Practitioners need to carry out these

plans consistently to ensure children fulfil their potential. Plans need to be shared with the whole team to ensure a common understanding of how children's learning is to be supported and progressed.

- Practitioners treat all children fairly and with respect within an ethos where diversity is valued. Children are developing a simple awareness of cultures that are different to their own. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities in promoting equality. They promote gender neutrality through their interactions. They should now ensure that no artificial barriers to learning exist for children in the provision of resources and learning experiences.

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

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. Children enjoy and confidently share their experiences, thoughts and feelings with others. The focus on language acquisition is supporting children to develop vocabulary and as a result, they are making good progress. Extending this to include the development of challenging vocabulary with all children will promote increased progress. Most children listen well, for example, at story times and in small group situations. A focus on reading across the whole school is fostering a love of books. Children choose to spend time looking at books in all areas of the playroom, both for pleasure and to extend their knowledge. Practitioners use simple rules to support children to develop good listening skills. Children apply their developing skills in a range of contexts, including listening to and carrying out instructions. Most children show a keen interest in mark making in context, for example, writing a menu for snack, creating shopping lists and recording plans for building in the block play. A few children show keen interest in exploring letters and associated sounds. They are ready for further challenge to progress their skills further.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making good progress. They apply their developing knowledge of number spontaneously in their play, including outdoors. A few children enjoy the challenge of working with larger numbers and this should be progressed to secure maximum progress. In block play and sewing children explore concepts such as symmetry, measure and mathematical language. Practitioners support children well to extend learning. There is a need to record this more systematically to promote building on what children know, and that progress is measured. Children's progress in aspects such as information handling, money and time could be progressed at a brisker pace to secure increased progress.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are making good progress. Children explore a range of healthy food choices through snack foods. Children are capable of taking an increased role in the preparation of foods. The use of real tools such as hammers and saws are helping children develop their awareness of safety. Introducing children to the national wellbeing indicators, in situations such as this, would help make them meaningful. Most children have a good understanding of how their body works including their digestive system and the purpose of their brain. Access to the stimulating outdoor environment supports children to develop a range of gross motor skills. Introducing children to physical play, in a planned way, for example, in the gym hall, could support the development and consolidation of a wider range of skills. Children

are learning to be responsible and nurturing in their care and handling of the nursery guinea pigs.

- Overall, most children are making good progress in their learning over time. The majority of children are developing a range of skills across the four capacities that will help them on their journey as lifelong learners. This includes an understanding of the benefits of perseverance and concentration.
- Practitioners support children's achievements by offering praise and encouragement. Strategies such as the 'Golden Gallery' provide children with wider affirmation of their achievements. Through personal planning, practitioners gather information about children's wider achievements beyond nursery. Better use now needs to be made of this information to help children build on their skills.
- Practitioners and senior leaders actively promote and ensure equity. They have an extensive understanding of the local context of the nursery class. Practitioners identify potential barriers to wellbeing and effective learning in a sensitive and timely way. Senior leaders and practitioners should build on their use of all available data and measure the success of interventions to ensure equity. This should support evidence-based decisions about future planned 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.