

Summarised inspection findings

Lawfield Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Lawfield nursery class is accommodated in Lawfield Primary School. The nursery caters for children aged three to five years. The nursery offers full and part time places. It is registered for 48 full time children and 18 part time children. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 full time children and 14 part time children on the roll. In January 2019, an excellence and equity officer was appointed. This is having a significant impact on improvements in the nursery setting.

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

- Practitioners create a welcoming and calm environment where children are eager to learn through their play. They greet each child warmly, and ensure a positive start to the session. Practitioners use this time effectively to discuss with parents and carers any immediate concerns or to share information. This helps children to feel valued, safe and secure. Practitioners know children and their families very well. Most children engage independently with the variety of activities on offer that support their learning across the curriculum. They happily play alone or in small groups, having completed their self-registration. There is considerable scope to develop further the indoor environment. Practitioners should review and refresh areas and resources to ensure they meet fully the needs of all children. More opportunities for children to be inquisitive and creative should include an increased focus on using sensory, natural and open-ended materials. This needs to promote curiosity, inquiry and creativity, particularly in the outdoor area. Children would benefit from more regular opportunities to build on the physical skills experienced in the forest visits. They need more help to understand and self-regulate risk. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the school and wider community.
- Children have freedom of choice of where to play, and practitioners have developed a clear rationale for the focus of self-directed play. Practitioners understand the importance of this to help develop children's cognitive and social skills. There is scope for children to be involved more meaningfully in important routines, such as preparation of snack and tidying up. This will help them learn and reinforce their developing skills. Practitioners recognise the importance of developing the role of the adult in the nursery setting. This is being supported by planned professional learning within the local authority. Practitioners understand the importance of listening to children as a guide to assessing their progress and extending their learning. They are becoming increasingly skilled at encouraging them to talk about their learning. It will be important to continue to build on this positive start to ensure consistency in all discussions. Practitioners need more support to recognise and promote good questioning to help children develop higher-order thinking skills.
- Practitioners have responded very well to the advice and guidance provided by the local authority. They value and can identify the impact of a good range of professional learning

opportunities on children's learning. Practitioners are confident about the difference this support and training has made to their daily practice. They are eager to continue to improve and share their knowledge and skills with parents and the primary school. They need to develop further the use of digital technologies to ensure children are developing a full range of skills for learning, life and work.

- Practitioners are developing well new approaches to planning children's learning. The excellence and equity officer is leading effectively this development. This has motivated practitioners to be more engaged and focused on discussing children's learning. Practitioners appreciate the support and guidance that is leading to a more coherent approach to planning. They now respond better to children's needs and interests. Practitioners benefit from their 'daily huddle' to review and plan children's learning. They have worked well as a team to improve their observations of children's learning, and a clear shared agreement on what constitutes a quality observation supports this improvement well. Practitioners value working as a team to review and debate these observations. They use them appropriately to help identify progress as well as influence responsive planning. They should continue to develop this approach to ensure consistently high quality observations which inform appropriate next steps for children's learning.
- This session, learning profiles have been further developed into 'learning books' which document children's progress in learning. Early signs are encouraging, with relevant information linking appropriately to individual learning priorities. Most children have ownership and pride in their 'learning book', and are very eager to talk about their learning. They share confidently their learning experiences and developing understanding of their progress with adults. Practitioners recognise that these 'learning books' need to take account of the views of parents and include information about children's wider achievements.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- Across the nursery, children are making good progress in early language and communication. Children's individual targets for literacy help to support them to make the best possible progress. Most children are keen to converse with familiar adults and other children. They are developing their vocabulary well in different play contexts. For example, in the construction area children can use appropriate subject specific vocabulary to describe a castle. Most children listen well to adults during small group times, and when playing board games. Most are able to respond well to simple questions about their play and prior learning experiences. Most children recognise their own name. A few are capable of accessing and making use of a greater range of texts in daily routines. Across the setting and outdoors, children demonstrate readily their developing skills in early writing appropriate to children's different stages of development. An increasing number of children write their name and other significant words. A few children have a good knowledge of letters and sounds, and apply this well throughout their learning. Children draw good representations of the structures they build in the block area. They engage well with books independently and seek out regularly practitioners to read to them. A few can identify their favourite books and talk about the characters. They make good use of books in different contexts, for example, outdoors and in the construction area to support their learning.
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. The majority can count to ten and beyond. They count as part of routines, for example, during snack and lunch. The majority are exploring the concepts of volume and measurement within different contexts such as the sand and water. In doing so, with prompting, they are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language such as full and empty. A few children can discuss different sizes and identify the biggest and tallest. The majority recognise two-dimensional shapes, and are developing their understanding of three-dimensional objects. There is considerable scope to develop further children's understanding of numeracy and mathematics.
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. Overall, they are kind and considerate to each other. Practitioners support them to talk about their emotions. The focus on the nursery's vision, 'feel safe, supported, and successful' is helping children to identify how to be safe and supported in the nursery. Building on this, the team should develop children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators and their relevance to their experiences in the setting and beyond. Almost all children play independently and most are developing self-help skills, as they get ready for outdoor play and trips to the forest. They are developing their understanding of how to support their own health and wellbeing through handwashing

and discussing their healthy snacks. Most are developing their fine and gross motor skills well, across the playrooms and outdoors. It is important that practitioners maintain high levels of supervision in the outdoor area to minimise potential risks. There is considerable scope to develop children's understanding of managing risk. They would benefit from increased challenge in their physical play to develop further their gross motor skills.

- Children are encouraged by the team to succeed in different ways across their learning. Practitioners identify termly an appropriate literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing target for each child. They provide effective support to help children achieve success in overtaking these targets. They detail this progress well in children's 'learning books'. The team are not yet capturing children's achievements from home. At a recent parents' evening, children enjoyed sharing their targets with their parents. Practitioners have taken very positive steps to strengthen parental engagement. They should strengthen this further by involving parents in identifying and sharing children's achievements from home.

- Across the setting, there is a strong nurturing and inclusive ethos. The team take good account of children's circumstances to ensure equity for all. They seek actively advice and guidance from a range of agencies to enable children to make the best possible progress. They are fostering strong approaches to family engagement, which are having a positive impact on children and their families. For example, the daily bedtime read programme is enabling children and parents to access a wider range of books and enjoy sharing them together. Parents are welcomed to a weekly coffee morning where they meet with practitioners and representatives from other agencies, for example, the health visitor. This supportive arrangement enables parents to get assistance or advice at the earliest opportunity. This is helping to minimise or remove potential barriers to learning. The team offer a range of successful interventions to support children develop their early communication and language skills. The nursery team have taken positive action to provide equity of experience for all children by, for example, offering weekly visits to the local wooded area and providing trips to museums in Edinburgh.

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.