

Summarised inspection findings

Our Lady's Primary School Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Our Lady's Nursery Class is situated within Our Lady's Primary School within the village of Stoneyburn and Bents. The nursery is registered for 26 children at any one time. This year the roll has decreased resulting in 11 attending. Early learning and childcare (ELC) placements are available for children from the age of two. Children can attend on a part time basis which includes morning and afternoon sessions and full days. The nursery is opened for 50 weeks of the year. A few children have recently started the nursery. The early years officer (EYO) has the day-to-day responsibility for the running of the nursery. Whilst the head teacher has overall responsibility for the nursery, the management of the nursery has been delegated to the principal teacher. In addition, a local authority ELC area support manager provides management cover outwith term-time and school hours. She also provides additional support on a weekly basis to develop and improve practice.

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

- Practitioners have reviewed and updated the nursery's vision, values and aims in consultation with children and parents. These underpin practitioners' highly effective practice. Children demonstrate the values during their play. They are happy in the nursery, independent and engaged in their learning experiences.
- Senior leaders support practitioners very well and encourage collaborative working. Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to professional learning. This includes undertaking additional qualifications and training. Practitioners make in depth use of national and local guidance and research, which is deepening their knowledge on current thinking in ELC. This shapes the high-quality practice within the setting.
- There is a strong culture of continuous improvement and senior leaders support and encourage practitioners to initiate and take responsibility for change. Each practitioner has a leadership role. They lead on key areas of improvement identified as a result of self-evaluation and data on children's development and learning. This work includes leading programmes to enhance children's early communication and literacy and develop their skill in woodwork.
- The EYO is currently using her knowledge and expertise to promote woodworking across the early level within the school and beyond. With partners from the local college, she provides very helpful support and guidance for practitioners to embed woodworking into their practice. As a result of this successful project, they are now sharing this good practice across the local authority. In addition, the EYO works well with teachers within Primary 1. This is supporting continuity in the curriculum and children's progress. Practitioners should continue to share their knowledge and expertise to build capacity further across the school community.

- Senior leaders provide strong leadership for nursery practitioners. They guide and manage change very well using a collaborative approach. Practitioners benefit greatly from the professional support and challenge. Increasingly, they look critically at their practice, which enables them to talk confidently about the impact of change on children's learning. Practitioners engage in regular professional dialogue. This includes discussions on how to improve further the quality of their practice and children's progress. This is leading to robust professional judgements about the progress children make in their learning.
- The views of all stakeholders are important to practitioners in helping them to improve further the service they provide for children and families. They involve children and parents regularly in self-evaluation activities. Building on this practice, practitioners could consider creative ways to gather the thoughts and ideas of stakeholders.

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

- Across the nursery, relationships between practitioners, children and parents are nurturing and respectful. There is a warm, welcoming ethos, based on children's rights where children feel safe and secure. Children play well together in their friendship groups, demonstrating kindness and empathy towards each other. Almost all children engage very well in their learning.
- Rich and varied experiences such as sewing and creating models provide children with additional challenge in their learning. Practitioners promote literacy and numeracy through play in a variety of real-life contexts. Children experience French as part of their daily routine. They enjoy digital learning through using large touch screens and tablets to carry out research around their interests and play. Practitioners recognise children would benefit from wider opportunities for digital learning.
- Practitioners support children skilfully through commentary, questions and by guiding them during their play. They use a very effective blend of adult-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences to meet the individual needs of all children. Practitioners give children time, space and freedom to develop their ideas, interests and to extend their play. The EYO is a very good role model and supports practitioners very well.
- Children access the outdoors daily, engaging in a range of exciting experiences. They have regular opportunities to explore the wider local environment, for example, to visit a local steading and woodland. This is supporting children very well to develop independence, resilience and skills for learning and life.
- Practitioners know children very well as learners. Almost all use observations effectively to inform timely interventions and relevant next steps in learning. Online learning journals capture children's progress and next steps well. Parents are encouraged to respond and comment on their children's experiences and learning. Practitioners continue to seek ways to engage parents further in their children's learning.
- Practitioners use a consultative planning approach informed by national and local guidance. They are confident in their approach to planning and recognise the flexible and responsive nature required to meet the range of children's developmental stages.
- The implementation of a local authority framework across the nursery has a clear focus on health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Practitioners capture these key areas of children's progress in learning very effectively. Senior leaders and practitioners come together regularly to moderate children's progress across the year. As a result, practitioners know

children very well as learners. There could be benefit in practitioners considering how to record and make sure children continue to develop the wide range of skills across the curriculum.

- Practitioners support children who require additional help with their learning very well. They tailor their interactions and plan focused interventions to ensure children continue to develop and learn.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use national and local guidance very well along with their knowledge of children to provide a broad and balanced curriculum firmly based on play. They celebrate and value each child as a happy, independent and engaged learner with an intrinsic desire for wonder and curiosity. Practitioners are responsive and flexible to ensure the curriculum provides developmentally appropriate experiences, particularly for younger children.
- Practitioners have been successful in improving the learning spaces for children to ensure they promote literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use self-evaluation and research to create stimulating and attractive learning spaces. Practitioners have a very good understanding of the benefits of learning outdoors. They provide high quality learning experiences in the nursery grounds and in the wider community to support learning across the curriculum.
- Children's individual needs are the focus for planning transitions into the nursery and on to school. Practitioners manage transitions to nursery from home with care and sensitivity. They work closely with families and support children to develop confidence and settle quickly into the setting. Practitioners and teachers across the early level work collaboratively to support successful transitions. They provide very good support to children as they move from nursery into Primary 1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Increasingly, since the pandemic, practitioners are re-establishing parental engagement opportunities. They provide sessions where parents can come into nursery to play alongside their child and find out more about nursery life. In addition, practitioners provide opportunities for parents and young children from the local community to come together. They gather in a local venue to hear stories, play games and sing songs. These sessions enable parents to meet other parents and discuss relevant topics with practitioners in relation to supporting their children at home. Verbal feedback from parents has been positive.
- Practitioners inform parents about their children's experiences and learning in a variety of ways. This includes informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, use of social media and sharing children's learning journeys. Twice per year, practitioners hold parents' meetings where parents can hear about the progress their children are making in their learning. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with the level of communication and feedback they receive about their child's progress.

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

- Practitioners are very good role models for children. They are kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. This supports children to feel safe and secure within the setting. Practitioners know children very well and use a range of very effective strategies to enable all children to participate in all aspects of the nursery and experiences within the community.
- The importance of relationships and children's wellbeing are paramount and underpins practitioners' practice. Children benefit from practitioners who are respectful, responsive and value children as unique individuals with their own needs and rights. Practitioners have a good understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They support children well to develop an early awareness of their rights through interactions and developmentally appropriate experiences. Children, for example, have been exploring the right to have a name.
- Practitioners encourage children to become aware of the national wellbeing indicators. Children share confidently about what they have to do to be safe and responsible when using woodwork tools and when out in the local community. Practitioners use the language of the wellbeing indicators consistently during play or when involved in relevant experiences such as snack and mealtimes. To support this further, practitioners provide home learning activities focusing on specific wellbeing indicators. These beneficial experiences support parents to explore and understand the relevance of the indicators in supporting their children to talk about their wellbeing.
- Children benefit from calm and unhurried healthy snack and mealtimes. They are independent and develop their social skills as a result of the positive role modelling of adults. Children are extending their vocabulary and conversation skills, for example, by sharing their individual preferences. Practitioners should monitor and evaluate key transition points during the nursery day. This could support a few children's needs more effectively.
- All practitioners comply and engage with statutory requirements relating to ELC. Personal plans identify clearly children's health and care needs. Practitioners' individual planning for children with additional support needs identifies clearly what children need from adults to support their development and learning. Parents, partners and practitioners evaluate individual plans to ensure strategies continue to be successful in enabling children to continue to make progress.
- Practitioners strive to ensure all children feel included within the setting. They adapt their environment, interactions and experiences to ensure children can access and engage with all aspects of nursery life. Practitioners value diversity and understand their role in recognising

and reducing barriers to inclusion and participation. They are aware that there would be benefit in reviewing their resources in order to ensure they reflect children's diverse world.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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

- Children are making very good progress in developing their early communication, language and literacy skills. They confidently express their thoughts and feelings and communicate well with each other and practitioners as they play. Children recall familiar nursery rhymes with actions. They enjoy sharing a book with adults and listen very well to stories. Children recognise their name with support. A few children also recognise other familiar words such as their friend's names. Children demonstrate their mark making skills in different contexts. Increasingly, they create drawings with detail.
- Children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children count forwards and backwards in their daily routines. They recognise and count numbers to 10, with a few children counting upwards to 20. Children are beginning to explore halves and quarters when preparing snack. They identify shape and patterns both indoors and outdoors. Children continue to develop their skills in measure when baking and engaging in woodwork. They know the days of the week and describe different seasons. Children are developing an understanding of data handling when voting for which book to read or which activities they would like.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is very good. Children learn to manage risk when going outdoors and increasingly take responsibility for their own safety. Almost all children understand the importance of being active and keeping healthy. They run, jump, balance and climb with confidence on crates, tyres and logs and when visiting the steading and the forest. With support, children are learning to regulate their emotions. They are encouraged to make and serve their own snack and have developed very good hygiene skills. All children are developing their oral health skills well as they engage in fun toothbrushing daily.
- From assessment information, online learning journals and practitioners' professional judgement, almost all children are making very good progress since starting nursery. The leadership team and practitioners monitor children's individual progress regularly. This identifies any barriers to learning and informs children's next steps. Practitioners' timely interventions ensure that children receive developmentally appropriate support and challenge.

- Children’s successes and achievements are recognised and celebrated meaningfully through praise and encouragement and wall displays. They enjoy regular opportunities to interact with older members of the community through ‘Chit Chat’ sessions.
- The practitioner team promote equity very well across the nursery. Practitioners identify quickly potential barriers to learning and put effective support in place for all children. They work closely with families and other professionals to implement effective strategies and interventions. Practitioners know children and their families very well and take full account of the differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Woodwork is an important feature of the nursery provision. The early years officer (EYO) has responsibility for leading on this area of work. She has engaged in professional learning and works closely with a local partner from West Lothian College. This has resulted in a woodwork project, which spans the early level within the school and beyond. She also supports other members of the team to develop their confidence in working with children within the woodwork area.

Children freely access woodwork opportunities throughout the nursery day. They handle tools confidently and safely. The EYO has created a child-friendly risk assessment, which children follow. Children are developing skills across the curriculum. They use relevant vocabulary and important numeracy and mathematic skills as they plan, design and create their models.

In addition, practitioners work across the early level under the leadership of the EYO. They provide weekly woodworking sessions for children within Primary 1. Practitioners also provide a weekly woodworking club, which children from across the school can attend.

As a result of this successful project, the local authority is now working with West Lothian College to extend this work to all primary schools across the authority.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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| 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.