

Summarised inspection findings

Longniddry Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

The nursery class is part of Longniddry Primary School. It offers places to 30 children at any one time. Children attend from the age of three to those not yet attending primary school. There are 37 children on the roll. Children currently attend on a pattern of Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday from 8 am until 6 pm for 50 weeks of the year. Children also attend alternate Fridays. 11 children attend another early learning and childcare provider.

The headteacher has responsibility for the nursery class. A centre manager has responsibility for the nursery when the school is closed. A new senior early years practitioner (SEYP) took up post in April 2022 following a considerable period of instability in staffing. The nursery has six practitioners who work different shift patterns across the week. They work together as a whole team on in-service days.

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 and practitioners ensure the nursery is an integral and much valued part of the school. The vision to 'create a nurturing community where everyone can contribute, achieve and be the best they can be' underpins the ethos of the nursery. The values of respect, creativity, responsibility, empathy and perseverance permeate the learning and teaching children experience daily. The headteacher is highly visible within the nursery. She knows the children, families and practitioners very well. She guides the strategic improvement journey and enables practitioners to receive appropriate professional learning and review.
- The headteacher and practitioner team have experienced significant challenges to staffing in recent times. This has had a negative impact on the pace of change. The appointment of the SEYP has brought much needed stability. She works closely with the headteacher. She is effective in leading the practitioner team as they strive to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The SEYP is building the capacity of practitioners at pace, underpinned by professional learning, which is increasing their confidence. East Lothian Council has planned changes to children's attendance patterns from August 2023. This will bring further change and practitioners are developing plans to respond to the needs of children and their families.
- Senior leaders devised a quality assurance calendar to ensure they take a close look at systems, processes and practice regularly throughout the year. This is a recent development as a result of the experience the SEYP brings. It takes good account of the actions identified within recent self-evaluation activity led by the SEYP. Practitioners use this tool to support them to identify what is working well and their priorities for improvement in a systematic way.
- All practitioners have a leadership role within the nursery to improve learning and teaching and enhance parent and community links further. This is a more recent development, and more

time is needed for their roles to make a significant impact. Practitioners use a systematic, collegiate plan, do, study, act approach to help them plan and carry out their roles.

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 enthusiastic, engaged learners. They settle quickly to play experiences which interest them and where they can play cooperatively with their friends. Children like to provide their own commentary about what they are investigating and experimenting with. This is because they know their learning is valued by practitioners. Children move with ease from one activity to another including indoors and outdoors. A few children lead their own learning confidently. Most children are ready to do this with more support from practitioners.
- Children use digital learning to play games reinforcing, for example, number skills. They can, with support, research information to help them find out new knowledge. Digital learning is not yet an embedded feature of children's learning experiences.
- Practitioners interact respectfully with all children and engage them in extended conversation. They are beginning to use simple formative assessment through the fun use of thumbs up to gauge children's views and understanding. Children respond well to this. Practitioners make good use of questioning to extend children's thinking. As planned, they should continue to improve how they provide children with the right level of challenge through their interactions with them.
- Practitioners record observations of children as they play in individual Learning Stories. They interpret what children do and say and document their learning, including photographs and children's own work. As planned, practitioners need to continue with their own professional learning to ensure the observations they make are significant. This will enable them to make more accurate judgements about children's progress. Children have individual learning targets. These are not yet linked well enough to their individual learning stories. Parents should become more involved in reviewing these targets with children.
- Led by the SEYP, practitioners are improving further how they plan for children's learning. They use a range of approaches to plan across different timescales. Practitioners find it challenging to plan together due to working patterns. This impacts on how effectively they share information. The planned changes to children's placements will offer new opportunities for practitioners to work collaboratively on planning learning and achievement.
- Practitioners keep a close check on children's progress in early communication and language and mathematics using a tracking system. The headteacher and SEYP have rightly identified that this system needs to be reviewed. This will help reduce bureaucracy and make it more manageable for practitioners. It will also support senior leaders to be clearer about the value they add to children's progress in nursery.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners have created attractive, engaging learning spaces for all areas of the curriculum indoors. Early language and mathematical opportunities feature throughout the playroom indoors and outside. Children's views are displayed around the playroom. This illustrates how well children understand the school vision, values and aims in all of their learning.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are in the process of reviewing the curriculum framework. This should ensure the rationale reflects fully the aspirations within the school vision, values and aims. The current nursery yearly overview is being developed further to take greater account of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). It also needs to take account of cross cutting themes such as sustainability. This will improve the opportunities for children to develop greater curiosity, inquiry and creativity.
- The outdoor learning environment should be reviewed, as planned, to ensure it offers rich learning opportunities in STEM. Practitioners recognise that resources such as loose parts and easier access to water would extend learning.
- Practitioners and teachers plan transitions for children moving through to P1 carefully. A well-considered programme is in place to help children become familiar with their new learning spaces. As planned, staff should work together to ensure greater continuity and progression across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are encouraged to spend time in the nursery during 'Stay and play' sessions. This helps build a shared understanding of how and what children learn in nursery. A few parents would like to learn more about early learning pedagogy and how they can support their children at home. Family members are encouraged to share their skills to enhance children's learning. For example, parents came into the nursery to talk about their skills in gardening and baking.
- Practitioners encourage parents to contribute to children's learning stories and share achievements from home. They are keen to deepen parental involvement in children's learning stories. This will ensure they capture all of the skills children are learning at home and as part of their community. A few parents would like more information about their child's progress throughout the nursery year.
- Practitioners provide parents with regular, informative newsletters and invite them to participate in self-evaluation through surveys and questionnaires. They are keen for parents to share their views about all aspects of the nursery.

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

- Practitioners place a strong emphasis on ensuring children's wellbeing through providing a healthy, safe and inclusive environment. They prioritise children's emotional and social wellbeing to enable them to enjoy their extended nursery day. Practitioners are nurturing and sensitive in their interactions with children. They know children well as a result of their high-quality relationships.
- Children demonstrate very positive wellbeing. They show love and affection for each other. Children make positive choices to play in pairs and small groups in close proximity to each other. They understand well, in their own way, what it means to feel included and respected. They talk openly with practitioners about how they can stay safe at nursery.
- Children are enriching their understanding of being healthy and well. They select when they want snack and who they wish to sit with. Children are independent in washing their hands, buttering their toast and pouring their drinks. They use their water bottles freely outdoors to stay hydrated. Children engage very well in social conversation and enjoy a relaxed lunch with their friends.
- Children talk enthusiastically about being active at nursery through their physical play. They jump and hop skilfully on their hopscotch mat. They cycle carefully, negotiating obstacles, and climb carefully on their climbing frame. They use the all-weather pitch enthusiastically to run freely and practise ball skills. Children develop their physical skills in a progressive way in the school gym hall.
- Practitioners provide a well-planned health and wellbeing programme in line with the school's programme. This ensures children begin to learn about their rights and personal wellbeing from the youngest age. Practitioners are knowledgeable about the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the national wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners are very well-informed about and confident in their knowledge, policies and processes in place to keep children safe from harm. They engage in regular professional learning. All children have personal plans which have recently been updated. Practitioners review these regularly with parents. Where children need extra support to learn and achieve, practitioners take appropriate action. They are proactive in engaging in dialogue with settings children attend as part of a shared arrangement of their nursery entitlement. As a result, children's needs are met very well.
- Children demonstrate very well how they include each other in their play. They show respect and tolerance. Practitioners support children well to learn about equalities beyond their direct experience. They ensure children have ready access to a range of resources which help children learn about similarities and differences.

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

- Children are making good progress in early communication and language. Almost all children talk confidently. They ask and answer questions and have a good vocabulary to label and describe what they are finding out. Children listen well to a story, as individuals and as part of a group. Most children choose books for enjoyment or to find information. A few children continue to be supported by practitioners to do this. Children appreciate the opportunity to visit the school library and choose a book to take home. The majority of children are beginning to use early writing skills and can form letters and numbers. They like sharing stories with practitioners who document their ideas. A few children are ready for more challenge to develop their interest in early writing in meaningful contexts.
- Children are making good progress in early mathematics. Most children show an enthusiasm for number and use counting well in their everyday routines. Most older children count with understanding and apply their skills meaningfully through their play. A few children are exceeding expectations for their stage and would benefit from greater challenge in early mathematics within play activities they choose for themselves. Children use money meaningfully through their play. Most children use appropriate terms to describe size. They are ready to develop their skills in measurement further. Children use the routine of their nursery day to help them understand time.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is very good. Almost all demonstrate high levels of independence when attending to personal care and maintaining hygiene. All children like to help by taking a turn with food preparation for snack and organise the menus for their friends. Children have well-developed physical skills and practise them confidently in different environments.
- Children are making good progress across the curriculum. They speak knowledgeably about the tadpoles and snails they have in nursery. Appropriate to their stage of development, children can describe life cycles. A few children like to plant and grow flowers and vegetables in their garden space.
- Children are making good progress since starting nursery. Practitioners keep a check on how much progress children are making over time. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to develop approaches to the tracking and monitoring of children's progress. This will ensure practitioners are more able to clearly identify the children who would benefit from greater levels of challenge in their learning.

- Children and practitioners are beginning to recognise children's achievements more regularly. Children love to sing their 'You are a Star' song at assembly time with the school as they receive awards for demonstrating the school values. Practitioners are beginning to highlight children's 'wow' moments and celebrate them. Children should be more involved in sharing their learning with the school and in playing their part in school Focus Friday Groups.
- Practitioners have developed positive relationships with families. They provide trusted support and advice. Practitioners understand the socio-economic climate facing families. They are vigilant and sensitive to the needs of any families who may need support.

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.