

# Summarised inspection findings

**Canberra Primary School Nursery Class**

South Lanarkshire Council

4 June 2024

## Key contextual information

Canberra Nursery Class is situated within Canberra Primary School and serves the area of Westwood and Hairmyres within East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire. The nursery opened in August 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. Practitioners joined Canberra Nursery Class from different nurseries and had to work online for part of this time. When children joined the nursery, separate sections of the playroom were created for key groups in line with Covid-19 guidance. As a result, the team have only been operating fully as a team since 2022.

The nursery operates between 9 am and 3 pm, term time. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. The nursery is registered for 44 children, the current roll is 39. Almost all children access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare.

The building consists of a playroom which is split into two areas, The Studio and The Workshop. Children also have free access to a large outdoor space. Practitioners make use of the school's facilities such as the gym, dining hall, wildlife garden and the multi-use games area.

The headteacher has overall strategic responsibility for the nursery with a team leader responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery class. The team leader is supported by a team of six practitioners.

### 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 nursery 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 nursery and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher provides strong strategic leadership which is valued by practitioners. She embraces the nursery as part of the school and ensures children, parents/carers and practitioners are fully included. Practitioners are very well supported by the headteacher and team leader. The headteacher is highly visible within the nursery and guides and manages the pace of change very well. The team leader and practitioner team work together very effectively. They are professional and support each other particularly well. Practitioners respect and value the different skills and knowledge within the team and learn from this to enable continuous improvement of the nursery.
- Practitioners have undertaken additional qualifications and professional reading to deepen their knowledge and broaden their understanding of pedagogy. This has influenced the very effective learning and teaching approaches used by practitioners. As a result, children access high quality experiences and learning spaces which promote and support learning across the curriculum.
- Working collaboratively with school staff, practitioners reviewed and updated the vision, values and aims in 2022, taking into account the views of parents/carers and children. This ensured the vision, values and aims remained relevant to the ethos of the school and nursery. Practitioners model the values of respect, honesty, belonging, inclusion, safety and happiness

meaningfully. They demonstrate the values through their highly inclusive practice and strong relationships with children, parents/carers and each other. Children are beginning to demonstrate the values through their play and friendships. Parents/carers are complimentary about the work of the nursery including the skills of practitioners and their caring interactions with children.

- The headteacher empowers practitioners to lead change within the nursery and school, based upon sound knowledge and research. Each practitioner has a leadership role and is encouraged to be creative in taking forward improvements. This includes leading on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, sign language and science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As a result of these roles, children benefit from a wide range of high-quality experiences. This supports children to make very good progress in their learning. Nursery practitioners have influenced practice within the nursery, school and shared their practice with other early learning and childcare settings.
- The headteacher regularly carries out planned monitoring of learning and teaching. Practitioners value the helpful feedback which highlights strengths and areas to be developed further. The headteacher monitors children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing carefully and discusses this with individual practitioners. As a result of this professional dialogue, appropriate levels of support and challenge are agreed for individual children. This ensures children continue to make progress appropriate to their stage of development.
- Practitioners are reflective and discuss regularly what is working well and what could improve further within the nursery. They use national frameworks and challenge questions effectively to evaluate the quality of the provision. Moving forward, they should seek ways to communicate the impact of change more clearly. This includes sharing with parents/carers and children how their views have impacted on improvements within the nursery. Practitioners look outwards to other nurseries including those outwith their local area to identify high-quality practice and make positive changes. Children now benefit from worthwhile intergenerational experiences with residents in a local care home, for example. As a result of a wide range of self-evaluation activities, practitioners are confident to be involved fully in identifying and implementing key priorities for improvement.

## 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

- The ethos of the nursery promotes a strong sense of belonging, which leads to children feeling valued. Practitioners are calm, sensitive and nurturing and demonstrate very strong, respectful relationships with children. Children experience a very effective balance of self-directed and adult-directed play. Practitioners support children very well to follow their interests and provide opportunities to revisit and build on earlier learning. Children engage meaningfully and enthusiastically with the wide range of natural and open-ended resources. Practitioners make very good use of the school grounds. They support children well to engage with nature and develop a love of the outdoors. This enables children to take part in a wealth of experiences such as den building, mud sliding and stick whittling. Children extend their curiosity, creativity and enquiry very well as a result of high-quality experiences indoors and outdoors.
- Practitioners are passionate and enthusiastic about their work. They engage proactively in professional learning. This has helped them to develop a shared understanding of pedagogical approaches. As a result, they create learning environments indoors and outdoors that enable children to discover, explore and lead their own learning. Across the playroom and outdoor area practitioners use questioning very effectively to support and extend children's learning through play. They give children time to think and talk about their experiences and learning.
- The headteacher and practitioners know children very well as individuals. Practitioners record meaningful observations of children's learning and engagement during play. They share significant learning with parents/carers through online learning journals and meet with them to discuss children's progress. Together, they agree clear and relevant learning targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Practitioners use local and national guidance very well to plan for children's learning. They ensure a broad range of experiences across the curriculum. Practitioners use floor books to involve children meaningfully in planning and record their responses to learning experiences. They use this information to link children's interests and responses successfully to future planning, including adult-initiated learning. Practitioners use the local authority skills pathways, which are linked to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes, to track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing effectively. The headteacher works with practitioners to monitor the progress children are making three times a year. They use this information well to inform next steps in learning for individual children. Moving forward, the headteacher and practitioners should consider ways to extend approaches to tracking children's skills across all areas of learning. This will help them identify more effectively the breadth of progress children are making.
- Practitioners identify children who require additional help and challenge with their learning in a timely manner. This ensures children receive appropriate support as they need it. Practitioners

agree appropriate plans with parents/carers and include relevant personalised targets and interventions for individual children. As a result, children continue to progress in their development and learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Children benefit greatly from the creative and sensory play-based curriculum that is responsive to their interests. Practitioners use curriculum pathways well in key areas, particularly, in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children are developing a wide range of skills for learning, life and work through a variety of meaningful real-life contexts. This includes the 'Nature Adventures' programme and connections within the local community.
- Practitioners reflect and promote children's rights very well through the nursery's values, children's experiences and practitioners' interactions and approaches. As identified by practitioners, they should now develop further children's knowledge and understanding of their rights across the curriculum.
- Practitioners have a well-planned transition programme for children as they begin their nursery experience. They have flexible arrangements in place to suit the needs of children and families. Prior to starting primary school, children experience a range of well-planned activities to assist children as they move into P1. Practitioners share helpful information on children's progress with teachers to support continuity and progression in children's learning.
- The headteacher encourages practitioners to work across the early level to collaborate and develop consistent pedagogical approaches. The team leader supports the P1 to P3 practitioners to take forward play pedagogy. Practitioners should continue to work jointly with primary colleagues to develop a shared pedagogy and professional learning across the early level.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners ensure parents/carers are fully informed of key events, nursery information and children's experiences. They use electronic learning journals, social media, displays and very helpful newsletters which are detailed and informative. Practitioners hold regular parent/carer consultations which enable an exchange of information on children's learning and progress. They use helpful home learning bags to support parents/carers and children to play and learn together at home. Parents/carers are highly positive in relation to the amount of helpful information they receive and resources available to enable them to support learning at home.
- Parents/carers engage very well with their children's learning through electronic journals and by joining in themed 'stay and play' sessions. Practitioners plan these sessions very well to share with parents/carers how children learn key skills through their play. Parents/carers find these sessions enjoyable and useful. They comment on how they value the opportunity to share in their child's learning experiences. Children show their parents/carers around the playroom confidently and share their creations and drawings proudly.
- Practitioners value the views and engagement of parents/carers in the life of the setting and have recently established a parent/carer focus group. This enables parents/carers to share their views and contribute to nursery improvements well.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners 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 nursery'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 prioritise the wellbeing of all children as they strive to improve outcomes. They provide highly effective care and support to enable children to talk about their wellbeing and feel safe and secure in the nursery. They recognise each child as an individual with their own unique personality, interests and needs. Children have a strong sense of belonging within the nursery as a result of the positive, respectful and nurturing relationships they have with practitioners. Practitioners are positive role models for children and use specific programmes successfully to promote and support positive attitudes, relationships and emotional awareness. The team plan small 'belonging time' gatherings thoughtfully for children to gain confidence and friendships within their key worker group. As a result, children play well together and talk about the importance of being kind to each other.
- Practitioners help children naturally to become aware of some of the national wellbeing indicators through relevant, real-life experiences. As a result, children are becoming familiar with the language. They talk confidently about how to be safe and active. Practitioners' interactions with children and the ethos within the nursery demonstrate a strong commitment to children's rights. This supports children very well to have a voice within the nursery and as a result, children are confident in sharing information about their learning, their likes and dislikes.
- Children benefit from a calm and social lunchtime experience within the school dining hall. They are gaining confidence as they learn the routine of school lunches for when they attend primary school. Most children demonstrate independence well as they use cutlery and self-select from the salad bar. Moving forward, practitioners could consider ways to support the transition back to nursery. For example, once children have eaten their lunch, practitioners should give them the opportunity to return to the playroom rather than waiting for everyone to finish their meal.
- Overall, practitioners are clear on their statutory duties in relation to early learning and childcare. They attend appropriate learning to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Practitioners share key policies with parents/carers to make them aware of nursery procedures. Each child has an individual care plan which details clearly their care, wellbeing and health needs. These are reviewed regularly with parents/carers to make sure children's needs continue to be met.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equality within the nursery. They are a welcoming team who treat children and parents/carers respectfully. Practitioners know the children and their families very well. They work closely with parents/carers to reduce potential barriers to learning and inclusion. Practitioners share information on key services where families can access a range of advice. Children who require additional help with their learning have specific plans in place with clear targets to support their development and progress. Practitioners and senior leaders review these plans regularly with parents/carers to make sure identified

strategies continue to be effective and children's needs continue to be met. Practitioners value and celebrate diversity. They support children effectively to develop an awareness of the world in which they live. Practitioners provide developmentally appropriate experiences and resources which reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century society well.

### 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
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- Across the nursery children are thriving from the nurturing, calm ethos that is helping them to become confident and independent
  - Almost all children make very good progress in communication, early language and literacy. Children are keen to talk and collaborate with one another and with adults. They listen very well to instructions and participate in rhymes and songs in small groups. Most children are developing early reading skills and recognise words that start with the same sound. They are confident in using books to find information. During play experiences, almost all children are enthusiastic in mark-making. A few are writing signs and labels. The majority of older children are making good attempts at writing their name and drawing recognisable figures.
  - In early mathematics and numeracy, almost all children make very good progress. They sort by shape and colour confidently. Almost all children explore measuring with tape measures and use appropriate mathematical language, for example, when comparing sizes of footprints. Most children use a range of natural and sensory objects to count to 10 and beyond. Almost all children engage extremely well during block play. They use blocks and other objects to build complex structures and recreate famous buildings and places.
  - Almost all children make very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are kind and respectful of one another and are beginning to talk about their emotions and how to manage their feelings. They demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and confidence in the nursery. Children assess the risks in their outdoor area well and know how to keep themselves safe. They climb safely and are showing increasing skills in balancing as they navigate an obstacle course. Children are developing throwing and catching skills when using balls and hoops. They demonstrate their leadership roles confidently as they help to prepare snack and set the table for lunch.
  - The headteacher has implemented an effective approach to track the progress children are making in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This is helping the team to gather data on children's progress over time. Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of children who require additional support and challenge in their learning. They should continue to develop the tracking process by using all available data relating to children's progress. This would inform future planning and support practitioners to reduce potential barriers children may be facing to ensure equity for all.

- Children's achievements are valued and celebrated through electronic journals, floor books, assemblies and 'being me' displays. Practitioners use electronic journals successfully to share learning and achievements from nursery. Parents/carers also use these journals well to share children's successes from outwith the nursery. Moving forward, practitioners should consider ways to track these achievements to inform future experiences and build on children's prior learning from home. Practitioners provide a wide range of opportunities and experiences to support wider achievements and develop children's early citizenship. This includes intergenerational work, nature adventures and being part of the newly formed eco committee.
  
- Practitioners have a very good understanding of children's lives outside the nursery. Practitioners capture meaningfully what is important for each child. They do this through attractive wall displays which celebrate each child as an individual. Practitioners provide visual links for children to their home and family. For example, the 'belonging tree' displays family photographs which creates effective partnership with parents/carers and ensures a seamless transition between home and nursery.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

### **Professional learning and leadership roles.**

- Practitioners use professional learning, national and local guidance and research meaningfully to explore the work of theorists and pedagogical approaches. As a result, the nursery team has a sound understanding of early years pedagogy.
- Increasingly, practitioners use their knowledge, skills and interests to undertake lead and coordinator roles successfully to improve the quality of children's experiences, learning spaces and their own interactions with children. The headteacher established working groups which include teachers, support staff and nursery practitioners, bringing together the range of knowledge and skills across the school and nursery. The work of these groups has improved outcomes for children in the nursery.

## 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.