

Summarised inspection findings

Lanark Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire Council

11 February 2020

Key contextual information

Lanark Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is situated within Lanark Primary School, South Lanarkshire. The ELC offers full and part-time places to children aged three years and to those not yet attending school. The ELC is registered for 32 children and is currently trialling 1140 hours for a few children and 600 hours for most children. The ELC has experienced a number of changes since August 2019, with additional hours for a few children, changes in sessions and the recruitment of additional practitioners.

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

- In consultation with children, parents and practitioners, the school and ELC created a revised vision and values. The values underpin the ethos of the ELC and are an integral part of daily life. Throughout daily practice, the values are evident across the ELC environment. Children understand the values and use relevant language in a meaningful way.
- The practitioner team has positively embraced the recent changes in provision to meet well the needs of children and families. They have been supported and guided very well by the depute headteacher who has responsibility for the ELC. Regular management meetings led by the depute headteacher, are attended by the team leader and teacher. This leadership approach is supporting the process of change, ensuring it is manageable.
- Practitioners engage in professional learning within the ELC, school, learning community and local authority, to support children and improve practice. For example, practitioners have recently taken part in Makaton training to support all children to engage fully in the daily routine. Practitioners value the opportunities to visit local establishments. They demonstrate a personal and collective commitment to their role and value each other's strengths and the contributions they make to the newly-formed team. Professional development and review processes are supporting practitioners to discuss and identify possible leadership roles, for example, literacy champion. Practitioners should now agree identified areas they can lead, reflecting their skills and previous knowledge.
- The joint school and ELC improvement plan shows clear, identified priorities for improvement, which are relevant to the ELC. For example, staff have identified the need to embed fully the wellbeing indicators for all children. Early indications of the impact this is having for most children are emerging. Practitioners review and discuss their progress towards achieving their priorities on an ongoing basis. They should continue to explore taking on leadership opportunities linked to the improvement priorities. This will develop further their skills in leading and managing change.
- The leadership team carry out a range of monitoring activities, including reviewing practitioners' planning folders and systems for tracking children's progress. The results of such

self-evaluation activities informs the setting's priorities for improvement. All practitioners contribute to this process, alongside school colleagues. Practitioners are reflective in their practice and have daily, informal conversations. Building on this positive start, the team now need to ensure processes for self-evaluation are robust and measure the changes and improvements they make in their practice. In order to support these processes, practitioners should continue to develop their use of national practice guidance, *How good is our early learning and childcare?* (2015).

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

- Positive relationships between practitioners and children ensure the ELC has a welcoming and nurturing ethos. As a result, all children are safe and secure. Children settle quickly and clearly enjoy their ELC experience. Most children are developing their confidence and becoming more independent as they move freely between learning spaces indoors and outdoors.
- Most children are engaged well in their learning through free, spontaneous and planned learning experiences. The learning environment offers a range of interesting experiences, however these are overly adult-driven at times. Practitioners should continue to review the balance between adult-directed and child-led play experiences. Practitioners are continuing to expand the provision of loose parts and open-ended resources indoors and outdoors. This is developing further children's curiosity and creativity. A few learning experiences extend and sustain children's interest well, for example, children show their keen interest in numbers, using pretend phones to call 999. Practitioners should continue to support all children to lead their own learning, and to talk regularly about their learning as they play.
- Responsive and nurturing relationships support children to achieve success. Most practitioners use open-ended questions well to extend children's learning, encouraging them to problem solve, promoting enquiry learning. Children have time and space to follow their interests, supported by a flexible routine. Practitioners listen effectively to children, ensuring they have a voice in the ELC. Children participate in learning walks across the ELC and school, recording their observations and views in an age appropriate manner. Digital technologies are available, including remote control cars, interactive board, computers and tablets. Children use the tablet in the woodland to take photographs of their peers and experiences.
- Practitioners know children well and work with parents to set targets for all children. Children's learning journals capture and document a few observations of learning. However, these do not yet fully demonstrate the progress children are making. As planned, practitioners need to continue to develop their approaches to observing and recording significant learning. Most children do not yet have ownership of their learning journals. In consultation with children and parents, practitioners should continue to explore ways to involve them more in this learning experience.
- Practitioners' observations, consultation, children's interests, parent suggestions and backdrop plans inform weekly planning. This includes area planning led by practitioners. Effective systems are in place to check on and record children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners should continue to review and reflect on approaches to planning. This should ensure all children are fully engaged in planning, leading and identifying their own learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners have reflected on local and national practice guidance such as, 'Building the Ambition' and 'Together We Can and We Will' documents to inform improvement of the learning environment. Their further engagement in professional dialogue and collegiate learning should help to ensure they have a shared knowledge to support improved outcomes for all children. Practitioners take account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan a range of learning experiences. As the system for planning is reviewed and adapted, practitioners should continue to reflect on the learning opportunities and experiences they offer. This should ensure the curriculum is broad, relevant, challenging and matches the learning needs of children.
- Transitions into, across and out of the ELC, meet well the needs of children and their families. An 'All about Me' document supports the transfer of information from home as children settle into the ELC. Throughout the academic year, events such as weekly assembly, gym hall visits and pupil leadership team meetings provide opportunities for children in the ELC to become familiar with the whole school environment. This supports a smooth transition into primary school.
- The ELC provides good opportunities to support children in learning about skills for life and work. The children visit local shops such as the opticians and supermarket and set up areas within the ELC to learn about people in the community who help us. Practitioners should continue to explore inviting further visitors to the setting or arranging visits within the wider community to ensure they provide rich and responsive learning experiences.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

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

- The welcoming and friendly environment for all children and families supports positive relationships, built upon mutual respect and trust. The ethos of the ELC is nurturing and respectful. Practitioners are kind and caring. As a result, children feel settled, safe and secure. Settling-in procedures include an initial visit to the ELC for children, and a parent information session. This supports further the development of meaningful relationships.
- A key worker system allows children and families to feel supported and involved in all aspects of the ELC. Children are developing friendships with their peers and are very kind and respectful. They work well together in teams, for example, using a rope to navigate a hill outdoors. In line with their age and stage of development, children's behaviour is very positive.
- Children's rights are promoted across the nursery and the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child are evident in practice. For example, through the newsletter to parents, one wellbeing indicator is focused on each month. Children and practitioners use the language of the wellbeing indicators well during daily practice. For example, children describe accurately the steps taken to keep safe in the woodland area. Building on the very positive start, practitioners are continuing to embed the wellbeing indicators further in order to help children talk confidently about their own wellbeing needs.
- Children are happy and confident both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor learning supports children to be healthy and active as they have fun with their peers, for example, toasting marshmallows in the school woodland area. This supports them to develop confidence and resilience and impacts positively on their sense of wellbeing. The opportunity to share and take turns with their peers is evident, for example, waiting to take turns on the rope swing.
- Children enjoy a healthy snack in the setting, serving themselves and enjoying this social experience. They have opportunities to discuss the snack menu and visit the local shop to buy their snack items. They are developing their personal hygiene skills well. Children have opportunities to be helpers, for example, snack helper and ordering lunch daily for their peers. Practitioners should continue to build opportunities for all children to develop their leadership skills. For example, a next step is to allow children to risk assess outdoors.
- In line with current early learning and childcare guidance, practitioners engage and comply with their statutory duties. They have a very good understanding of what is required of practitioners and leaders to secure positive outcomes for children. Practitioners sensitively take full account of children's individual needs. Children who require additional support have plans in place, which have relevant targets. These should now include clearer evaluations to show the progress children make.

- Children, parents, practitioners and partners are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. Practitioners follow the 'Lanark Statement of Commitment for Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion'. As a result, inclusion, equality and diversity are valued throughout the work of the ELC. For example, the well-resourced book corner allows children to discuss equality and diversity in a meaningful and age appropriate manner. Children make continued progress through effective strategies, such as introducing visuals, which are regularly reviewed.

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 early language and communication skills. Most children talk naturally to each other as they play and are keen to share their thoughts and ideas with practitioners. Most children are developing well their skills in listening to each other and to adults. They listen attentively and enjoy stories and rhymes in small group sessions. Children's mark making skills are developing well as they explore a wide range of writing tools in the playroom and outdoors. Most children are able to identify their name as they self-select at registration and snack time and a few children are beginning to write their name. Most children would benefit from further opportunities to write for a purpose throughout the different areas.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children count with increasing confidence as they play at the dough table and the majority can recognise numbers on the logs outdoors. Children confidently use mathematical language when weighing out objects. They demonstrate an understanding of shape and colour as they construct with building blocks and magnetic shapes. Children's awareness of numeracy and mathematics could be developed further across the setting, particularly in real life contexts, such as making decisions and solving problems.
- Through a variety of experiences, almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing, with a few children making very good progress. Children are happy and relaxed in their environment with nurturing relationships allowing them to settle quickly. Children make healthy choices for snack, serve themselves and wash their own dishes. The children demonstrate independence by putting on their jackets and changing shoes for outdoors. Children have opportunities to develop their gross motor skills through daily outdoor play and access to the school gym hall twice weekly. The children are developing a good sense of balance and co-ordination in using large apparatus. In order to support children to make informed healthy life choices, they should be introduced to national initiatives and programmes to raise awareness of important health and wellbeing issues.
- The depute headteacher meets with practitioners termly to discuss children's progress in learning. Professional dialogue and tracking information supports practitioners to discuss individual children. They do not yet track children's progress over time. A next step is for practitioners to become more skilled in recording significant observations in children's learning journals.
- Children's achievements within the setting are linked to the four capacities and are celebrated during a weekly assembly for 'star of the week'. Practitioners use praise and encouragement

well to allow children to develop a sense of success. Staff could provide opportunities for all children to contribute to the life of the ELC and school through being an active member of a pupil leadership team.

- Practitioners' approaches to ensuring equity are evident throughout the setting. They have a good understanding of the potential challenges that children and their families may face. Practitioners would benefit from developing their skills in using data and information more effectively to support further all children to make continued progress in their learning. Practitioners should now look at ways to support children through targeted interventions.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnerships
- Impact on children and families

- Relationships between the practitioner team and parents are very positive within the ELC. Parents engage well with the setting, through open afternoons, information sessions, 'Bookbug' and ongoing daily dialogue. To engage parents further in the life of the setting, a newly formed 'Chit Chat' group has been established.
- Practitioners have worked hard to develop effective partnerships, for example, collaboration with colleagues in the Lanark Learning Community. As part of moderation activities, ELC practitioners have participated in peer visits to neighbouring settings. This was a valuable experience. Practitioners spent the day sharing good practice and learning collaboratively. They work with a range of local colleges, supporting students through their courses. Practitioners have established effective partnerships with, for example, external agencies and their local shops. These are having a positive impact on children, for example, increasing the development of life skills. Walks to the shops and library are supporting children to explore further their local community.
- Communication with parents includes the effective use of social media, informative newsletters and noticeboards. Parents are encouraged and supported to join the school and ELC parent council. Informal and formal feedback to parents keeps them informed about their children's progress. As planned, the development of 'learning walls' within the setting will further support parents to share in their child's learning by contributing ideas and suggestions from home.

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.