



West Lothian
Council

Ladywell Nursery School

Standards & Quality Report

Session 2014/2015

Introduction

The West Lothian Context

West Lothian Council is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best start in life and are ready to succeed by following the principles of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

Within Curriculum for Excellence, every child and young person is entitled to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3-18. Those planning the curriculum have a responsibility to work in partnership with others to enable children and young people to move smoothly between key transition points, building on prior learning and achievement in a manner appropriate to the learning needs of the individual. This should ensure that young people are well placed to move into positive destinations and adult life.

The Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction and our priorities for West Lothian Council. There are eight priorities that we, and our community, believe can make a lasting and sustainable impact on the local area and improve the lives of residents in West Lothian.

Priority 1: Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years

Priority 2: Improving the employment position in West Lothian

Priority 3: Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children

Priority 4: Improving the quality of life for older people

Priority 5: Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality

Priority 6: Reducing crime and improving community safety

Priority 7: Delivering positive outcomes on health

Priority 8: Protecting the built and natural environment

The Corporate Plan informs Education Services Management Plan to ensure our work impacts positively on services for children and young people. Education Services focuses particularly on priorities 1, 2 and 3.

Education Services Management Plan

Education Services works towards achieving the key strategic aims of the council, in partnership with schools. In particular, Education Services aims to improve opportunities for children and young people by:

- Raising standards of attainment and achievement
- Improving employability and positive destinations for all school leavers
- Improving the learning environment
- Promoting equality of access to education
- Developing values and citizenship
- Promoting learning for life and encouraging a creative, enterprising and ambitious outlook.

Working with a range of partners, the key purpose of our work is to continuously raise attainment and achievement for all children and young people in West Lothian, ensuring that our young people succeed in securing a positive and sustained destination after school.

We want to know how well we are doing this and how we can improve. We are continuously evaluating what we do and how it makes a difference to our learners. In moving forward together we have been asking ourselves-staff, pupils, parents/carers and stakeholders- key questions which are contained within this Standards and Quality Report. Our self-evaluation is in the pages that follow, along with our key areas for development for session 2015-2016. This report is set within the context of CfE and GIRFEC and measured against the quality indicators within *Child at the Centre, How good is Our School 3?* and *CfE National expectations: Self-evaluation resource*.

The progress of the areas we developed in our 2014-2015 School Improvement Plan(SIP) is outlined in *Appendix 1*.

Context of the School

Ladywell Nursery School is situated in the Ladywell area of Livingston. Four years ago, it became one of three Early Years settings managed by one Headteacher. It is a non-denominational nursery school, catering for children aged 3-5 years old and is part of Inveralmond Cluster with the majority of children going to Harrysmuir Primary. Some changes were made to the building to accommodate a new provision for two year olds. The current roll is 50/40 children, aged 3-5 and nine two year olds. Staffing comprises of a shared Head Teacher, shared Principal Teacher based at Eliburn Nursery Class, one full –time class teacher, one class teacher providing the Reduced Class Contact Cover (RCCT),one full time Early Years Officer, two full time nursery nurses, three part time nursery nurses and one job share nursery nurse. In addition, a support worker is employed to work with identified children and another to cover the additional hours from the 600 hour legislation and provide RCCT cover for nursery nurses. Administration support is provided off-site by two Admin Assistants. This session, between September 2014 and March 2015 the nursery school was led by an acting headteacher.

Our vision is to improve the developmental and educational opportunities of children and families by creating a flexible, needs led service, accessible to all, adopting a multi- agency approach in the community. Strong partnerships exist with a number of multi-agencies and our Speech and Language Therapist supports individuals on a weekly basis.

The school was inspected in March 2014 and achieved a positive inspection, highlighting strengths as confident and happy children, a committed staff team, a welcoming and caring ethos and positive partnerships with parents.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve? (1.1; 2.1)

Children in the nursery learn and achieve well. They are settled and enjoy very positive relationships with staff and are forming friendships and learning to play well together.

Strengths

Children’s progress in learning and development is documented in each child’s Learner’s Journey. Evidence gathered through observation shows that most of our children are making good progress in the majority of curricular areas. The majority of children are making progress in early literacy and numeracy skills. The majority of children are beginning to express their needs, thoughts and feeling with increasing confidence. Children confidently use a range of technologies in order to support their learning.

Learner’s Journey’s are freely accessed by both children and parents. Staff also share and discuss their contents with children and with parents during Parent Consultations. Parents are also encouraged to share achievements and learning from home and although there has been an increase in this, we need to continue to review approaches to further improve this engagement.

Staff assess children’s learning and development through observation. These observations are

then summarised to track children's learning and development. From these summaries, next steps for each child are identified, shared and agreed with parents.

We recognise that the monitoring and tracking meetings between teacher and headteacher need to be re-established next session in order to ensure that the learning of all children is discussed in detail and that strategies are identified to ensure all children are supported and challenged.

Almost all children are settled in nursery, and are confident in following nursery routines. Their personal hygiene and independence skills are developing well. Staff know our children and their families well. We value all children in our setting and this is reflected in how we respond to them and how we celebrate their successes. Children's individual and personal achievements are recognised and celebrated through a number of ways, for example sharing success with others, rewards and through photos and displays of work.

We have links with the community and use this to enhance learning opportunities, for example the health visitor and dental nurse. Children are involved in enterprising events including raising money for charities and taking part in community initiatives.

Recent improvement plan priorities have focused on developing strategies in mental maths calculation from an early stage. Through cluster staff development sessions, led by Lynda Keith, the majority of staff have increased their knowledge of strategies to develop mental maths skills and are able to identify appropriate resources and use appropriate numerical language. However, almost all staff recognise that further knowledge of the stages in early arithmetical learning (SEAL) would be beneficial to enable them to scaffold children's learning in numeracy more effectively.

Ladywell provides a child – centred approach to learning. Learning opportunities and experiences are purposeful and promote all-round development. Relationships with children are warm and nurturing, creating a positive ethos for learning.

Almost all staff respond to children's interests and the majority provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Activities and resources support and challenge most children in their learning enabling them to progress at their own pace to achieve their next steps in learning. The majority of staff have developed their questioning skills to improve engagement and the majority intervene effectively to scaffold children's learning. We recognise the need to continue to further this skill.

A follow up training session in using Floorbooks as a means of planning and consulting with children, was organised for staff. This increased staff confidence in how to plan with children and provided them with strategies to improve this process.

Almost all children are happy to come to nursery. Our learning environment provides a range of activities to sustain children's interest, help them make decisions, solve problems and develop independence. Most children make independent choices about where they would like to play and demonstrate increasing responsibility and confidence. The majority of children show some concentration and perseverance when engaged in self - selected learning activities whilst others require adult support to sustain engagement. Almost all children are developing social skills and forming friendships.

Children benefit from outdoor play. Staff completed an outdoor play audit and from this we recognise the need to continue to develop and extend our outdoor learning environment, providing opportunities for children to develop problem- solving and investigation skills through the exploration of natural materials.

The provision for two year olds has become an inclusive part of the setting and has been constantly developing and evolving over the year. Staff have attended many training sessions to develop their skills and knowledge necessary for working with the two year olds. They have also made several best practice visits to other settings. The impact of this training and visits is evident in the evolving practices and learning environment. Through professional dialogue, conversations with parents and observation, it is very evident that the children in this provision are making good progress in their development and age appropriate learning.

Areas for Development

- Continue to develop staff pedagogy in developing appropriate opportunities for outdoor learning.

- Implement national guidance as outlined in “Building the Ambition”
- Continue to further develop the provision for two year olds and raise awareness of the setting in the community to increase uptake.
- Raising Attainment through increased collaboration to improve learning and teaching.(Cluster Priority)
- Re-establish monitoring and tracking meetings between teacher and headteacher.

How well is the school helping children and young people to develop and learn? (5.1; 5.3)

Staff in Ladywell Nursery School support children well to develop and learn. A calm and positive learning environment is provided and staff interact with children in a kind and caring manner.

Strengths

The rationale and design of our curriculum provides children with a broad, balanced range of learning experiences based on play and takes good account of national guidance. All-round development, cultural awareness, solitary and group play are promoted through activities.

These activities also cater for various learning styles and address individuals varying rates of learning. Free -flow indoor / outdoor play happens each day, encouraging and supporting children in making their own choices and decisions about their learning.

Staff use experiences and outcomes to plan, evaluate learning and track coverage which supports a coherent approach to learning.

Curricular Frameworks were introduced last session in the three core areas of learning.

However, further detailed statements of the learning under the outcomes have been developed, shared and discussed with staff who are now using these more effectively as a tool for planning, assessment, progression of learning.

Responses to observations of children during play are addressed spontaneously, developed through a floor book or brought to team planning as a possible line of development. Close observation of children at play indicates also when it is time to refresh the learning environment or activities.

Effective transition practices are in place for sharing of information about children and their learning to ensure continuity and progression. Enhanced transition arrangements are put in place as required for individuals.

Positive relationships and partnerships with families are at the heart of meeting the needs of our children. A variety of opportunities were available over the year to support parental involvement, fostering positive relationships with parents and developing their own skills and experiences as a learner.

To enable the children to build close relationships with staff, we operate a key worker system. At team planning meetings, staff share knowledge about children’s learning and their all-round development.

We strive to ensure that we meet all children’s needs with support from outside agencies so that each child makes progress in their learning, appropriate to their stage of development. The Ferre Laevers Leuven Scale for Well-Being and Involvement is used as a baseline tool, identifying children’s level of well-being and involvement.

Positive and pro-active steps are taken to ensure barriers to learning are promptly identified and addressed effectively.

Areas for Development

- Continue to identify and implement new approaches to promote the engagement of parents in their child’s learning and development through use of the blog, home-link activities and a parent consultation group.
- All staff to attend Building Learning Power Training in order to implement the BLP rationale and strategies to help young children become better learners.

How well is the school improving the quality of its work? (5.9)

All staff are committed to improving the work of the nursery. Staff reflect on nursery practice

and from this, identify aspects for improvement.

Strengths

Staff from the three Early Years settings meet regularly to share practice and plan improvements to ensure our children have access to a quality learning environment and experiences.

An action plan training session “Implemento” was attended by the headteacher which will develop alternative approaches to actively engage staff in drawing up action/ improvement plans.

Self-evaluation is a continuous process using a variety of tools to evaluate key aspects of our work. This year, staff from the three early years settings worked collaboratively, in pairs, to observe and gather accurate and robust evidence about effective engagement and assessment in all three early years settings through their use of the self – evaluation grids which were developed last session to support staff in identifying key aspects of good practice. Through professional dialogue with staff, it was evident that they valued the opportunity and the time given to them to observe, discuss and reflect in detail on aspects of nursery practice and then evaluate the quality of the work. We recognise the need to continue to build up self-evaluation grids for other aspects of our work and to provide more opportunities for staff to participate in this.

An annual programme for staff review and development is in place to support continuous development, allowing staff to identify needs in order to improve learning and teaching.

Evidence from all stakeholders is gathered to support evaluation and identify next steps to implement change and development.

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Children’s thoughts and ideas are listened to, developed through planning, small group time and completed questionnaires.

Staff development activities are linked to improvement priorities.

Areas for Development

- Continue to develop new opportunities to involve staff, children, parents, partners and the wider community in accurate and robust self -evaluation activities to effect improvement.
- Continue to develop staff capacity and confidence in self- evaluation through further development and use of additional self- evaluation grids.

How well is the school working with partners? (8.1)

Strong and effective partnerships exist with a number of agencies to support children and families.

Strengths

We work very closely with partners and parents to provide valuable support to address specific needs and provide positive outcomes. The nursery teacher is skilled in identifying children who require support from other services and staff work well with agencies for the benefit of the child. Our networks and partnerships provide effective support for our children and parents/carers. Our links with other educational establishments, community health and specialist services have shown a positive impact on learning and development of the whole child. Partnership working has improved learners’ achievements through targeted support to individuals and their families. This year, additional training was delivered to staff to further develop knowledge and approaches to meet the principles of GIRFEC.

Areas for Development

- Further develop partnership working to ensure the principles of GIRFEC are fully addressed.

How does the school ensure equality and inclusion and promote diversity across the school?

All staff and children contribute to a positive nursery ethos and create a warm, welcoming climate in which everyone is included, valued and respected. Fairness and equality is embedded into the daily life of our settings. Our curriculum reflects and promotes diversity, inclusion and equality. All children access the curriculum through play activities and experiences. Parents are encouraged and supported to play a role in their child's learning. Effective relationships and partnerships are promoted to address factors which can affect learning.

We have effective partnership links to ensure vulnerable children's needs are identified and appropriate supports accessed and implemented.

Improvement Priority 2015 -2016: Raising Attainment

Our key areas for development to take this priority forward are:

Area for development 1:

Raising Attainment through increased collaboration to improve learning and teaching.(Cluster Priority)

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Area for development 2:

Raising attainment through improved early years pedagogy as detailed in "Building the Ambition" to provide excellent play and learning opportunities for children.

Based on the above information, at this point in time, we evaluate ourselves against the quality indicators as follows:

Our school: Ladywell Nursery School

1.1 Improvements in performance	Good
2.1 Learners' experience	Good
5.1 Curriculum	Good
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Good
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Good
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Good

Appendix 1

In session 2014- 2015, Raising Attainment was the overarching priority in the SIP. This appendix details the progress made with the specific areas for development and again is set within the context of CfE and measured against the quality indicators within *Child at the Centre*, *How good is Our School 3?* and *CfE National expectations: Self-evaluation resource*.

Progress made with our areas for development Session 2014 – 2015

Area for development 1:

To raise attainment through improved curricular continuity in transition through mental calculation.

Some progress was made in this area. Staff attended the first cluster development session delivered by Lynda Keith. Staff said they had an increased knowledge of strategies to develop mental maths skills. They said they are now able to identify appropriate resources, use appropriate numerical language and provide appropriate learning experiences in number. However, staff did recognise that further knowledge of the stages in arithmetical learning would be beneficial to enable them to scaffold children's learning in numeracy more effectively.

Evidence indicated:

- Staff show increased use of everyday opportunities to engage children in developing skills in using numbers.
- Staff show increased knowledge of strategies to develop mental maths skills.

Next steps:

- Further develop staff knowledge of the stages in arithmetical learning (SEAL)

Area for development 2:

Continue to further build on and further develop Curriculum for Excellence explicitly in learning and teaching, across all areas of learning to ensure a coherent and progressive learning experience for all our children.

Limited progress was made in this area. However, staff development sessions were organised to increase staff knowledge of the learning that underlies the outcomes. From this, further detailed statements of learning were developed, and shared with staff. These statements are now being used more effectively as a tool for planning, assessment and progression of learning.

Planning documentation was further reviewed as a result of the implementation of 600 hours and the use of floor books as a tool for responsive planning to children's learning.

Evidence indicated:

- Through dialogue with staff, increased awareness of the language of Curriculum for Excellence and some knowledge of the learning, underpinning the outcomes, was evident, ensuring continuity of learning for children.

Next steps:

- Continue to further develop staff use of progression pathways and knowledge of the learning underlying the outcomes and how to develop these learning opportunities through Early Learning and Childcare.