

Summarised inspection findings

Woodside Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeen City Council

27 February 2024

Key contextual information

Woodside Nursery Class is situated within Woodside Primary School and serves the residential area of Woodside within Aberdeen City. The nursery has two playrooms and two outside spaces. Opening hours are from 8 am – 6 pm all year. Children attend various patterns which enable them to access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. This includes full-day, part-day and part week places. Children attend from the age of two until starting primary school. Currently, the roll is 86. The nursery is registered to have 72 children at any one time. A high number of children attending the nursery require significant additional support with their learning. There is also a number of children who have English as an additional language. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. This responsibility has been delegated to the depute headteacher who is the named manager of the setting. The nursery team consists of two senior practitioners, nursery practitioners and support assistants.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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 benefit from positive relationships with practitioners which helps them to settle well into nursery and feel safe and secure while they are there. The majority of children explore the experiences provided within the playroom. A few children sustain interest in experiences, for example, when 'writing' Christmas cards for their parents/carers and chopping vegetables in the 'pretend house'. Practitioners should ensure children can access a wider range of activities to meet the varying needs of children, including the youngest children. Children would benefit from more opportunities and resources, indoors and outside, that will excite, challenge and motivate them to lead their own learning.
- Practitioners continue to develop and improve the indoor learning environments. They would benefit from further professional learning and use of national guidance such as 'Realising the Ambition'. This should help them to improve further the quality of interactions, experiences and the use of learning spaces. Practitioners should consider the extent to which the environment, both indoors and outdoors, reflects the cultural and linguistic profile of children.
- Children benefit greatly from senior leaders and practitioners who are very caring and nurturing towards them. They are highly attuned to the emotional needs of children. The quality of practitioners' interactions to support and extend learning needs to be more consistent. A few staff use questions well to scaffold and extend children's learning. All practitioners could make increased use of visuals and objects of reference for children who need these tools. This should help communication between adults and children, and enable children to engage fully in nursery experiences. Senior leaders, in consultation with practitioners should review and adjust the deployment of practitioners. This would support practitioners to build on children's learning and offer suitable levels of challenge more effectively.

- Practitioners know children and families' circumstances and needs very well. They make observations of children and record these in online learning journals. They also use this information to complete children's progress trackers. The quality and number of observations should be more consistent. At times, observations are too generic and not always focused on children's significant learning. As a result, learning journals do not always reflect children's progress over time.
- A significant number of children have additional individual plans to support their development and learning. These plans outline clearly children's needs and the interventions to be implemented. Practitioners work well with partner agencies and parents to deepen their understanding of individual children's needs and the most effective strategies to support their development and learning. Practitioners are beginning to see the positive impact of strategies and how they have helped children to settle into nursery and engage in play alongside their peers.
- The team have very recently reviewed and updated their processes for planning for children's learning. As practitioners adjust and evaluate approaches to planning, they should ensure experiences, spaces and levels of interaction meet the learning needs of all children. This will enable them to monitor closely the impact on children's learning across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support staff to make sure there is an appropriate balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led learning.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- Overall, children make satisfactory progress in early language, numeracy and mathematics and in their health and wellbeing.
- The youngest children are developing their sense of self. They would benefit from practitioners modelling of simple, reduced language, strengthened by consistent implementation of approaches to develop social use of language. This could support children to anticipate the flow of the nursery day and to make simple choices within their play.
- Overall, children make satisfactory progress in early communication, language and literacy skills. A minority of children initiate conversations with adults to share their thinking. They recall the detail of information shared with them in subsequent conversations. Individual children demonstrate an interest in vocabulary when sharing their books. They use clues from the illustrations to help them understand the story and the meaning of key words. Children should develop further their listening skills to support them to take turns in conversations. Individual children engage their early writing for a purpose within the environment. All children would benefit from increased environmental print and images around the playroom to support their early communication, language and literacy skills.
- Children make satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children explore measure through play. They gather and organise information as they vote for the book of the week. Individual children demonstrate their capacity to engage 'big' numbers in conversation and play. Children now need to develop further their skills in counting and explore number through play and real-life contexts. This will ensure a strong foundation on which to build future learning.
- In health and wellbeing, children make satisfactory progress. The majority of children are happy in their play. They understand and manage their emotions. A minority of children benefit from assistance to negotiate relationships with their peers. All children would benefit from free flow between inside and outside throughout their day. This should help children to self-regulate and adjust to their surroundings. It will also provide opportunities for all children to deepen their engagement in play without interruption.
- Practitioners should continue to develop how they gather reliable evidence of children's progress over time. Moving forward, practitioners need to ensure they are building on what children already know and can do. This will help practitioners to gather more reliable

evidence of children's progress over time. Children who require additional support with their learning have made significant progress in transitioning from home into nursery. They are becoming familiar and more confident within the environment.

- Practitioners acknowledge and celebrate children's achievements through praise and the presentation of certificates. They invite families to celebrate children's wider learning outside the nursery through online learning journals. Moving forward, and as improvements are made, practitioners should focus on how they will support children to develop as contributors, citizens, and learners.
- Senior leaders' and practitioners' use of tracking and monitoring supports well their awareness of the range of outcome gaps for children. This includes children who experience barriers to their learning or those with English as an additional language. They meet termly to discuss and monitor children's progress and the impact of early intervention strategies for children who require additional support.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children and their families were greeted by friendly staff, promoting positive relationships and sharing information. Parents/carers were able to enter the setting at arrival and pick up times and were sent photographs of their child at play. This promoted an inclusive ethos and helped reassure parents their child was safe and having fun. A few parents said they would like more opportunities to be further involved in nursery such as more stay and play sessions.

Children were treated with loving and caring interactions. Staff were patient and kind, and children responded with affection. However, at times the deployment of staff made it difficult to provide children with the care and help needed. On occasion there were too many staff outdoors and not enough staff in the playroom. At times, staff were focused on tasks, which meant there were not always enough staff available to help, support and supervise children (See area for improvement one).

Staff were respectful and mindful of children's dignity when supporting them with their personal care. Children were happy to go with staff to get their nappy changed and came out smiling.

Children's health and well-being was well supported by information in their personal plan. Information about children's interests, preferences and care needs was updated by staff as their needs changed. Additional care plans had been created to help staff meet the individual needs of some children. Advice had been sought from other agencies to develop strategies to support children and these were evident in some areas of practice. This contributed to children with an identified need feeling safe and happy.

Some children did not receive a positive and relaxed lunchtime experience. Tidy up time prior to lunch was disorganised and noisy and impacted on staff's ability to effectively supervise handwashing. The seating arrangements meant children were squashed and meant a few children were not comfortable or relaxed. A few children ate very little and were not offered an alternative in a more supportive and quieter environment. We discussed these concerns with the manager who advised improvements to lunch times were ongoing (area for improvement two).

Opportunities for sleep and rest could be better to support children's emotional security and well-being. There were some cosy spaces for children to access, however, at times the noisy and busy environment made it difficult for children to relax, rest or play quietly.

Area for improvement

To support children's health, well-being and safety, the provider and manager should ensure staff are appropriately deployed and have the time needed in order to meet children's care and learning needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: My needs are met by the right number of people (HSCS 3.15) and People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me. (HSC 3.16).

To promote children's understanding and enjoyment of healthy eating and drinking, the manager and staff should improve mealtime experiences. This should include but not be limited to ensuring the environment is calm and relaxed with comfortable seating and table arrangements.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible. (HSCS 1.35).

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

1.3 Play and learning

Planning approaches had undergone recent changes and were in the early stages of implementation. There were some activities and resources planned in response to children's interests, and some intentional planning to meet children's learning needs. This meant children were happy and busy. Whilst there were observations of children at play, some were generic and did not inform next steps to support individualised progress and development. The manager advised staff training and support was ongoing to develop their skills and understanding in planning, teaching and assessment.

Children with additional support needs were supported by committed staff who wanted to do their best. Help and guidance from agencies such as autism outreach helped them develop their skills and confidence when working with children with an identified need. This led to improved outcomes and happier children. In order to further support children to reach their full potential and develop a broad range of lifelong learning skills, the National Guidance, Realising the Ambition should be used to inform and plan next steps in their learning.

Some children were not fully supported in their learning and development by challenging and stimulating experiences. The learning environment had undergone changes and some areas such as the construction area looked inviting and well resourced. However, there were not enough natural materials, loose parts or sensory play to engage children in problem solving, imaginative and creative play. The outdoor environment was limited in resources and was not welcoming or inviting. Whilst staff interactions were kind, there were not enough opportunities to extend and deepen children's learning. This meant not all children were sufficiently challenged for their stage of development. Group activities to support transition at key times such as lunch and pick up times were not supportive of some children's needs. Some children were not engaged and found it difficult to follow instruction and join in (see area for improvement one).

Literacy and numeracy development was evident in some play experiences. Some children enjoyed reading a story and there were opportunities for writing and mark making. There were some resources to support early maths and some children enjoyed playing games which helped them recognise colours, shape and numbers.

Area for improvement

To support children's learning and development, the manager and staff should ensure children experience high quality play and learning relevant to their age and stage of development. This should include but not be limited to ensuring:

- staff are knowledgeable and trained in supporting children's learning
- the learning environment sparks children's curiosity
- group times are used effectively to support all children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation, and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and senior staff had worked hard to create an ethos for positive change involving all stakeholders. In order to do this, they had focused on developing relationships and improving staff morale. Staff told us they felt well supported by the leadership team and were motivated to develop the service and improve outcomes for children.

The shared vision, values and aims with the school included being safe, respectful and ready to learn. This supported staff and families to know what was important for the service to meet the needs of the children.

Some parental involvement to support continuous improvement of the service was in place. Questionnaires have been issued to parents and they had been consulted when separating the playrooms into individual play environments. Parents were invited to the Parent Council and were encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and nursery. Parents spoke positively about the service provision and welcoming ethos. The manager advised ways to further develop parental engagement was part of the improvement plan and was ongoing.

Self-evaluation of the service had undergone significant change. The leadership team recognised the importance of building relationships and valuing the contributions of staff. This led to improved morale, better working relationships and a staff team motivated to improve the service provision. Staff meetings to share information, support consultation and develop practice had been implemented and led to an improvement plan. This focussed on key areas including developing the learning environment, staff interactions and parental engagement.

Quality assurance systems had been reviewed and were beginning to impact on improved outcomes for children. Children's personal plans and information to support children with an identified need had improved as a result. Other areas such as auditing accidents and incidents to ensure a safe play environment for children should be further embedded into practice.

Children's experiences benefitted from monitoring of staff practice and support and supervision meetings. This helped identify areas for staff professional development and as a result training in nurture, care and understanding of ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) was ongoing.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and three areas for improvement.

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.