

Summarised inspection findings

Methven Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

24 September 2019

Key contextual information

Methven Primary School nursery class is situated in a separate building in the school campus and was opened in August 2015. The setting is managed by the recently appointed headteacher. The team consists of three full-time early years practitioners and one play assistant.

The setting provides early learning and childcare for a maximum of thirty children aged from two years until they are of an age to attend primary school. At the time of inspection there were 5 children aged under three years and 30 aged from three to five years. Twelve children will start school in August 2019.

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 teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The skilled and dedicated practitioners provide high quality care, education and support for children and their families. The practitioners have high expectations and strive to secure the best outcomes for children.
- Across the setting there is a strong, positive and inclusive ethos. The development of relationships, children's voice and responsibilities are at the heart of the setting. Practitioners are respectful of children's rights and believe that children have the right to have their views and ideas acted upon. As a result, children know they are listened to and their opinions matter. The collation of children's views in a range of ways results in children feeling valued participants in the life of the setting.
- Children under 3 years are settled and gaining in confidence. Caring practitioners very sensitively support them as part of a 'Strong Start' programme. Flexible routines allow practitioners to address the needs of each child carefully. Practitioners provide a varied range of developmentally appropriate resources, including natural materials and real objects, to support children to learn and investigate through play.
- Children aged 3-5 years are friendly, polite and very well-mannered. They are excited as they arrive at the setting each day, ready to explore and investigate the stimulating learning environment. Practitioners place importance on providing high quality experiences indoors and outdoors, using natural resources to encourage children to be imaginative and creative. The use of open-ended materials provides opportunities for children to make choices and decisions in their learning. Children engage very happily with the wide range of challenging learning experiences, helping to develop their skills of problem solving and enquiry. Children have space and time to follow their own interest and have a key role in leading their own learning. Through this, almost all children sustain a level of engagement in their play for extended periods. The outdoor area provides children with access to nature and natural resources. Children enjoy the outdoor learning experiences. As discussed with the head teacher and

practitioners there is a need to review the flexibility of access to the outdoor learning area. Children would benefit now from being able to choose when they would like to play outdoors.

- Practitioners are consistently nurturing in their approach. The strong team have a very good understanding of how young children learn and develop and put this into practice to support all children. They interact in a sensitive manner, which helps build children's self-esteem and confidence in learning. The skilful use of questioning extends children's thinking and promotes curiosity and inquiry.
- Practitioners know all children well, both as individuals and as learners. They do their best to meet children's differing needs and ensure planning for learning is developmentally appropriate. Good use is made of experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to plan learning which is responsive to children's ideas and interests. Practitioners have a clear understanding of the link between observation, assessment and planning. They make very effective use of their observations of children's learning, using this information to plan future experiences and inform next steps in learning for individual children.
- Practitioners take their lead from children to identify specific learning contexts. Across the setting children engage in meaningful real life contexts to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Developing the use of digital technologies further could enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Systems to support the tracking and monitoring of children's progress across learning are robust. This is helping to ensure the best outcomes for children. Practitioners record children's progress in core areas of the curriculum alongside the national wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child. (GIRFEC) They have an understanding of how to analyse data from developmental milestones and assessment information. This information helps practitioners to make accurate judgements about children's learning. As a result, practitioners know children and their progress on an individual basis.
- Practitioners regularly engage in professional dialogue to moderate and reach a shared understanding of children's progress and learning. They use the National Benchmarks well to assist them in setting targets for children who are exceeding their developmental milestones. As discussed with practitioners, this could be extended to include colleagues from the primary school to ensure consistency in learning and teaching as children move to P1.
- All children have ownership of their "special books" which capture their experiences and progress over time in the setting. Older children are confident to talk to visitors about their learning experiences. Careful attention is given to visual representation of the wellbeing indicators to allow children to discuss what they mean. Children enjoy reflecting on their learning and talk with enthusiasm about what they can do now in comparison to when they were younger. They have regular learning conversations with practitioners to identify what they might want to learn next and to set their own meaningful targets. Children know when they have achieved a target and can talk about their progress. This supports them to be increasingly involved in leading their learning and recognising themselves as learners.
- Regular informal, as well as formal, consultations offer parents and carers opportunity to find out about their child's learning and progress. Practitioners are aware of the individual circumstances of the families attending the setting and make very good use of this information to provide positive outcomes for all. This includes working with a range of health professionals where appropriate to ensure children access support that best meets their needs.

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

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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- Children are successful learners because of the supportive nurturing and stimulating environment created by very motivated practitioners. Practitioners build consistently on what children already know and have achieved within the setting and outwith. The wide range of data used, confirms that children have continued to make significant progress in their learning taking account of their age and stage of development.
 - Strong relationships between practitioners and the youngest children and their families, ensure that children are settled, happy and thriving. Children are curious and motivated by the interesting range of real objects and natural resources in the playroom. They take part in experiences that enable them to explore malleable materials. Most are building their vocabulary to communicate well with each other and adults, and learning to listen to simple instruction. Children learn about number, colour and shape through their play experiences. They are developing independence well through snack time and other routines.
 - There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing with the principles of GIRFEC underpinning the work of the setting. Practitioners use their thorough knowledge and understanding of the national wellbeing indicators very effectively to support children's health and wellbeing. They apply this knowledge consistently in their practice. As a result, children can express their feelings clearly and are kind to others. Their ability to regulate their own emotions is well-developed.
 - Children are happy and relaxed in the setting. They enjoy the company of their peers and practitioners. They are developing friendships and show consideration in their play, as they learn to share and negotiate with each other. Practitioners promote positive behaviour by supporting children to develop respect for others. They use praise effectively to recognise children's positive behaviour and promote their self-esteem.
 - Children have very good fine motor control and can demonstrate this through using a variety of writing tools, threading and playing with loose parts. They are increasing their physical skills through weekly gym times, and planned activities to develop cycling skills. They look forward to taking part the weekly 'Methven Mile Walk'. Most children get themselves ready to go outside, help themselves to snack and are learning the rules of personal hygiene. Children have a good awareness of risk and can apply this effectively in outdoor learning contexts.

- Almost all children are making very good progress in communication and early language appropriate to their developmental stage. Children take part in extended conversations with adults and their friends. They demonstrate a wide vocabulary, particularly when talking about topics of interests such as 'Mollie the Pet Therapy Dog'. Children describe events and ask appropriate questions to deepen their learning. They listen attentively to stories and demonstrate a developing awareness of early reading concepts, including rhyme and letter sounds. Older children are able to recognise their name and other familiar signs within the local environment. They are developing their awareness of the purpose of writing through the use of recipes and making lists for snack.
- Children are making very good progress in developing their skills in early mathematics and numeracy. In planned activities and daily routines, they are developing good one-to-one correspondence skills and developing an understanding that numbers represent quantities. A few of the older children confidently count to 20, and beyond, in sequence. They recognise and match numerals. Children understand simple data handling as they record, on simple bar charts, their findings on favourite pets. They gather and display their results. Through exploration of an interesting range of materials, children have good opportunities to develop early mathematical concepts. As planned, practitioners should continue to provide a challenging range of experiences for children to develop and use skills in numeracy and mathematics across learning.
- Children are making very good progress across all aspects of their learning and development. They benefit from the range of high quality experiences over time. As a result, children demonstrate knowledge of the changing seasons and the effects on their growing and planting activities. At the time of the inspection, children were growing a range of herbs to use in sensory activities. Practitioners promote curriculum areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through investigative play. Children access and use a wide range of technologies. They have an interest in how things work through exploring at the 'tinker table', and they show skill in using woodwork tools. Through woodland walks, children are aware of their local environment and its wildlife. This supports their developing awareness of the natural world.
- All children are able to access the range of learning experiences provided. The supportive and nurturing environment is helping children to become confident, resilient and independent learners. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated in a meaningful way. At Methven Primary School nursery class, children are developing the necessary skills for life and learning.

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.