

Summarised inspection findings

Danestone Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeen City Council

13 December 2022

Key contextual information

Danestone Nursery Class sits within the grounds of Danestone Primary School, Aberdeen City. The nursery has experienced significant changes, including new build accommodation, increase in opening hours and patterns of attendance and significant changes in staffing. This includes the appointment of two new senior early years practitioners. The setting previously offered funded places to 20 children aged three to five years on a term time basis and this has now increased to funded places for 56 children aged three to five years attending term time or 47 weeks. The increased opening hours have had an impact on staff working patterns and the time available to come together as a full team.

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

- Positive relationships between children and practitioners are evident. As a result, children feel safe and secure. The recently developed learning environment is supporting children well to develop their independence as they engage in their play. Children develop friendships and most show care and consideration for their peers, including sharing resources and taking turns. Children need more support from adults to care for their environment, including tidying up their resources throughout the day.
- Almost all children are engaged in their learning as they explore their well-resourced learning environment indoors and outdoors. Practitioners encourage and support children well with free flow access to outdoor learning and between playrooms. Children access the extensive outdoor space on a daily basis. They manage risk when outdoors and take responsibility for their own safety. Practitioners should now provide further opportunities to engage children in leadership roles, for example, children risk assessing the outdoor environment on a daily basis.
- A keyworker system is in place and this allows practitioners to know their children well as individuals. Practitioners are at an early stage of using developmental overviews to record children's developmental stages. Staff are not yet using these overviews to build on children's prior learning and create next steps in learning. A few practitioners use skilled questioning to support and extend children's learning. Children have time and space to follow their interests, developing their confidence and independence well.
- Practitioners use online learning journals to record observations, share photographs and provide descriptions of children's learning experiences. These do not yet show or demonstrate children's progress in learning. Practitioners should now continue to develop their skills in observing and recording regular observations of significant learning for each child. Parents are encouraged to contribute and comment on their child's online learning journal.

- A system for tracking children's learning is in place, however this needs developed further to capture children's progress over time. Approaches to recording children's progress need to be proportionate and manageable. Practitioners need time to work together as a team to develop a shared understanding of capturing, recording and extending children's progress and learning.
- Practitioners engage in a range of approaches to plan children's learning. These include responsive planning, a focused approach to observing individual children and the use of newly introduced floorbooks. These approaches are not yet effective in developing and extending children's learning. Practitioners need to continue to develop these approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring to ensure all children make progress across the curriculum.

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 are making satisfactory progress in communication, early language and mathematics. Practitioners are working with senior leaders to develop their understanding of children's development and progress within Curriculum for Excellence.
- Most children use their listening and talking skills confidently at nursery. During role-play, children listen and talk very well to express their imagination and invent play with their friends. They demonstrate that they can follow instructions from practitioners. Children engage in interesting social conversation at the meal table and practitioners support this well. A few children make written marks for meaningful purposes as they play. Practitioners need to encourage children more to integrate early mark making into their play. Children enjoy stories and incorporate characters into their imaginative play. They need more experience and encouragement from practitioners in using books and print meaningfully to enrich their play at nursery.
- Most children use the language of measure meaningfully, especially outdoors. Children maximise their access to sand and water as they explore volume and weight. They compare size readily as they play with blocks. Practitioners provide children with many beautiful resources to help them explore and understand number. Children need more challenging questioning and interaction from practitioners to enable them use number meaningfully in all aspects of their play. This will help them make better progress.
- Outdoors, children like to challenge themselves. They climb, balance with confidence and develop their gross motor skills well, for example, when controlling footballs. Children cooperate and share happily with their friends. At mealtimes, children are learning to use cutlery well, make choices and serve their own food and drinks. They discuss readily with practitioners the fruits which they prepare and eat for their healthy snacks. Practitioners support children well as they learn about their own and others' wellbeing.
- Children sing familiar songs with confidence and enthusiasm. They accompany each other using musical instruments and can express their ideas in dance. Children demonstrate creativity well with paint and loose parts. They have fun combining materials such as sand, pebbles and water to observe the effects. Children need more challenge from practitioners to build their knowledge and understanding of early science and technologies.

- The nursery is at the early stages of building a clear picture of children’s progress from their starting points. Most children are confident and very keen to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Practitioners need to be clearer about how, as a team, they build on what children can already do. This will help children to make better progress in all areas of their learning.
- Practitioners use praise and encouragement warmly to acknowledge when children have persevered, achieved what they were working on or showed kindness to others. They encourage families to share experiences and achievements from home. Practitioners are beginning to recognise how they can build on these at nursery.
- Practitioners are supportive and inclusive in their work with children and families. As a team, they are working together to continue to learn more about and understand the needs of their community. Practitioners respond well to the preferences and needs of families. For example, they work closely together to promote children’s health and wellbeing, particularly where children have all-day placements. Senior leaders and practitioners are proactive in seeking the involvement of other professionals when children need extra support to help them learn.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.