

Summarised inspection findings

Letham Primary School Pre-School Class

Angus Council

28 November 2023

Key contextual information

Letham Primary School Pre-School Class is part of Letham Primary School, Letham. The setting is registered for 40 children from three years to those not yet attending school. It has been capped at 32 children this session. At the time of inspection, the setting had 20 children on the roll. This includes 14 children who are now in their second year of learning at Letham. The setting operates term time with children receiving their entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) by attending 9:00 am to 3:00 pm each day. The pre-school class has undergone significant change over the last few years. To prepare for the delivery of 1140 hours of ELC, the setting has been extended and the outdoor space developed. There is now a playroom with a separate dining room and two outdoor areas. The staff team has increased and undergone a number of changes in recent years. The Senior Early Years Practitioner (SEYP) leads the day-to-day running of the setting with the headteacher having overall responsibility. The SEYP is supported by early years practitioners, early years assistants and a modern apprentice.

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

- Practitioners have created a warm and nurturing environment for all children. As a result, all children are happy, settled and show confidence when using the spaces both indoors and out. Across the setting, positive relationships are evident between staff, children and parents. Children have established friendships and play well with each other. They are kind to each other, share and take turns.
- The SEYP is a strong role model for practitioners. As a team, they promote children's confidence and self-esteem very well through sensitive and responsive interactions. They know children well as learners. Overall, practitioners use questioning effectively to extend children's learning with a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use focused, open-ended questions to encourage children to share their opinions and ideas. Practitioners should continue to develop their use of high-quality questioning to deepen and extend children's learning in their play.
- Practitioners support children to use digital technologies to take photographs. They could make increased use of digital technologies as an integral part of children's learning.
- Practitioners have a shared understanding of high-quality observations, led effectively by the SEYP. They record both planned and spontaneous observations in children's individual folios. Most parents comment on children's learning and share where they observe key skills in their play at home. Children enjoy talking about their folios and should now have increased ownership. Practitioners link their observations to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to identify the skills children develop as a result of their play. As planned, practitioners should engage with colleagues beyond the setting to moderate children's

progress across the early level. They should use National Benchmarks to support them to develop further their understanding of national expectations.

- Practitioners use a balance of responsive and intentional planning. They plan experiences across the curriculum supported by local authority progression pathways. Practitioners place a high value on children's voice. Working together, they plan carefully the resources available to support children's individual needs and interests. This includes resources that support sensory and schematic play to meet the age and stage of individual children's development. This collaborative approach supports all practitioners to have a clear understanding of what children can do and their next steps. Practitioners should review how well-considered, adult-directed experiences could enhance further children's engagement and learning. Practitioners could, through modelling, support children to incorporate the natural and open-ended materials in their play.
- The SEYP meets termly with practitioners to track the progress children make towards developmental milestones. Practitioners' detailed observations support them to have a good understanding of the progress children make as a result of their experiences. They use tracking data well to identify children who would benefit from additional support with their learning. As a team, practitioners should now refine how they plan for children who require support with their learning. Currently, targets are too broad and do not evidence the progress children make. Practitioners' planned use of national practice guidance should support them to create targets they can measure more clearly.

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

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 health and wellbeing. Children are increasingly confident assessing and managing risk during their play. Most children show confidence when climbing on large tyres and using the firepit. They can talk about how to be safe when toasting bread on the fire and why it is important to wear special gloves. Children engage in conversations about healthy food choices and can self-serve and pour their own drinks during snack. Children enjoy the responsibility of being the snack helper and use knives carefully to cut fruit. All children would benefit from having increased responsibilities during lunchtimes. This should promote further their independence and allow them to take on leadership roles in relation to their nursery values.
- Most children are making good progress in early communication and language and speak to their peers and familiar adults confidently. A literacy-rich environment supports children well to find out information about their interests. For example, children look for minibeasts in the outdoors and use non-fiction books to find out more about them. Almost all children enjoy listening to stories and benefit from practitioners who spend quality time reading to them in the story shed. A few children use puppets to retell stories and interact with their peers. Almost all children listen well to instructions and can carry out simple routines. A few children are beginning to form letters and copy words through the range of opportunities for mark making. Children would benefit from increased and regular opportunities to sing songs and rhymes to support them to identify simple letter sounds and rhyming words.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They use mathematical language appropriately with their peers as they problem solve within the outdoor area using larger loose parts and construction blocks. Children use smaller loose parts and natural resources to develop their numeracy skills within the spaces, including sorting and matching, recognising patterns and counting. Practitioners should continue to explore opportunities for children to develop further their numeracy skills through real life contexts.
- Practitioners capture well children's progress and achievements in children's folios using photographs, observations and next steps. Most parents contribute regularly to the folios and share children's achievements from home. Families benefit from sharing in their children's learning through stay and play sessions. Children enjoy sharing personal achievements from home to celebrate success on the 'Apple Tree Achievement Wall'. Practitioners identify clearly future possibilities for children in their folios. This enables the full team to support all children's learning effectively.

- Most practitioners know families and their context very well and have a clear understanding and knowledge of their needs. Practitioners are aware of those children who require further support in specific areas of learning. They work together in a nurturing manner to ensure they include children and meet individual children's needs. They provide sensitive and well-timed support, using interventions that help children to improve their concentration, engagement and communication skills.

Other relevant evidence

- The team has developed a stimulating and engaging outdoor environment, led ably by the SEYP. All children are highly-motivated by the inviting spaces and resources. They access confidently cosy nooks, physical play experiences and sensory activities, such as water play and musical exploration. All children demonstrate independence and sustain their interest in their chosen activities in the outdoor space. Practitioners should now review the indoor environment to ensure it provides experiences that motivate and engage children to the same level.

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.