

Summarised inspection findings

New Machar Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

12 March 2024

Key contextual information

New Machar Primary School Nursery Class is situated in purpose-built accommodation within the grounds of New Machar Primary School. Children attend from New Machar, Kingseat and the wider surrounding area.

The nursery class provides 1140 hours early learning and childcare provision 50 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. New Machar Primary School Nursery Class is registered for 80 children aged from three to school age. At the time of the inspection 65 children were attending the setting.

The early years senior practitioner (EYSP) has the day-to-day responsibility for the running of the nursery. Whilst the headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting, the deputy headteacher leads development in early years pedagogy. There has been significant changes to staffing in the nursery class over the last three years.

The nursery has one large playroom with direct access to an outdoor play area and the wider school grounds and local community.

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

- There is a welcoming and nurturing ethos across the setting underpinned by the nursery values of achieve, include, motivate and safe. Relationships between staff and children are warm, kind and respectful, this helps build children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are beginning to support children to develop an understanding of their rights. Children feel valued, safe and secure and make independent choices about where they will play, moving confidently between indoors and outdoors. Children new to the playrooms settle quickly due to staff's support and care. Most children interact well and demonstrate a high level of engagement and motivation. They concentrate well for extended periods while leading their own play. A few children would benefit from accessing more challenging experiences that provide opportunities to develop their curiosity and creativity further.
- Across the setting staff are keen to develop their understanding of early learning pedagogy. Staff know children well, both as individuals and as learners. They plan for learning over different timescales in response to children's needs and interests. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led play opportunities which reflect children's individual interests and build on prior learning. Children are encouraged to contribute their ideas to planning their learning.

- All staff have responsibility for planning and evaluating play provision across the setting. Senior leaders and staff are now keen to work with partners, children and families in planning further developments in outdoor learning.
- Staff make observations of children's learning and development and share these with parents using an online platform. However, many observations are general and based on whole group experiences. Practitioners should continue to develop these observations with a focus on learning and specific skills children are developing and applying. This will help them to identify clear next steps across the curriculum for individual children.
- Staff use digital technology effectively to support children's learning. For example, children enjoy mark making on the interactive whiteboard and using a variety of electronic equipment to capture digital images.
- Relationships between children and staff are very supportive and based on mutual respect. All staff listen well to children and respond to their needs and requests. The majority of staff use questioning and commentary appropriately to support and extend children's thinking. However, the quality of interactions is inconsistent. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop their understanding of high-quality interactions to help all children extend their learning and understanding of their next steps.
- Staff use developmental overviews and Curriculum for Excellence tracking documents effectively to record individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children's progress is discussed by staff and the senior practitioner at regular tracking and attainment review meetings. They use this information well to identify gaps in children's learning and development and plan support and interventions for individual children. These interventions are regularly reviewed. Staff work closely with partners to provide the right care and support for children. A few children would now benefit from further challenge in their 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. Inspectors have identified good practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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

- In health and wellbeing, children are happy and confident. Most children are making good progress. Children play well together, and staff support a few children to resolve any conflicts in their play if required. Staff support children to recognise and express simple emotions well. Children are developing independence skills well, for example when dressing in their outdoor clothing and choosing play resources across the setting. They readily engage in physical play and demonstrate high levels of coordination and gross and fine motor skills as they play inside and outside.
- Children develop independence skills well as they help staff prepare a healthy snack and clear their dishes after lunch. Staff have recently changed the mealtime space and routines, this supports a calm, sociable experience. Children understand the importance of regular handwashing and tooth brushing.
- Most children make good progress in early language and literacy. They listen well to instructions and enjoy contributing their thoughts and ideas in discussions. Children enjoy when adults read them stories. They can answer questions and, based on their knowledge of plot and characters, can guess what happens next. Children enjoy songs and rhymes. They show an interest in drawing pictures using a range of materials. Most children recognise their name and a few attempt to write their name. Staff should continue to build on this positive start and encourage children to develop their skills further.
- In numeracy and mathematics, most children are making good progress. They count on, order and recognise numbers to 10 and apply these early numeracy skills in routines and as they play. A few children are keen to add numbers together. Children are developing an awareness of money through role play. They use appropriate mathematical language, for example when building with blocks or making playdough. Children identify simple two-dimensional shapes when constructing models. A few children are ready to extend and apply their skills further across all areas of numeracy and mathematics.
- Staff effectively track and monitor individual children's developmental milestones, health and wellbeing and progress in literacy and numeracy using a new tracking system. They share achievements and next steps for individual children with parents on a termly basis. Staff should continue to engage parents and children in creating and reflecting on focused next steps. Senior leaders should now continue to embed the use of the new tracking system and work with staff to evidence children's progress in their learning over time.

- Staff recognise, value, and celebrate children's wider achievement through displays and an online platform. The introduction of the values character 'Eve Achieve' has encouraged children to be able to recognise and share their achievements with adults and other children more confidently. Parents share achievements from home. Staff track these achievements and also provide a range of ways to recognise and celebrate achievement in the setting. This is to ensure that no child is missing out. For example, when children are carrying out early leadership roles and responsibilities, like helping with snack.
- They should now support children to understand what skills they are developing through these wider achievements.
- Staff understand the importance of promoting equity. Across the nursery, children are valued as individuals. Staff have a very good understanding of children's lives outside the nursery. They are aware of, and understand, the unique challenges within their local community. What is important for each individual family is captured well in the 'All About Me' files. Staff make very good use of this information about children's circumstances and family life to identify areas for support and minimise any barriers faced.

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.