

Summarised inspection findings

Torphins Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

7 November 2023

Key contextual information

Torphins Nursery Class is part of Torphins Primary School and is managed by the headteacher. The day-to-day management is delegated to a senior early years practitioner. There is also a lead early years practitioner and two early years practitioners. An early years teacher visits twice per term to offer advice and support. The nursery is registered for 20 children aged three to five years attending at any one time. However, current staffing permits only 16 children at any one time. Children access their 1140 hours by attending for five days each week between 9 am and 3 pm. Not all children access their full entitlement, and a few children have a split/blended placement with another local early years setting. The nursery has a small room in hatted accommodation in the playground. Children have direct access to a small enclosed outdoor area. They can also make use of the larger school playground at certain times to use wheeled toys and large-scale equipment.

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

- Staff have created a happy, safe and respectful environment which supports children's learning and development effectively. Relationships across the nursery are consistently responsive and caring and the nurturing ethos is underpinned by the national wellbeing indicators.
- Children have time, space and support to develop their individual interests. As a result, they are highly motivated and engaged during their play. Many show sustained concentration and use the well-resourced spaces very imaginatively. They apply their problem-solving skills when using loose parts to create aeroplanes and helicopters and show interest in exploring a range of sensory materials.
- Staff use their knowledge of children's interests and stages of development very well in their responsive interactions. The team demonstrates a well-developed understanding of early years pedagogy and the different ways in which children learn. They use open-ended questioning and explanations to extend children's thinking and to develop new ideas. Staff are making increasing use of the national practice guidance document *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*, to plan the nursery spaces and experiences. They have used this knowledge to set up areas both indoors and outdoors, with open-ended materials that encourage children to be curious, explore and investigate.
- Staff observe children at play and note their responses to play activities. They use this information to plan learning for groups and individuals. Staff celebrate and share children's achievements with parents using an online platform. They know children well and talk knowledgeably about what they have achieved. Staff recognise gaps in children's experiences and plan targeted activities to address these. Staff now need to provide a higher level of challenge for a few children who require it. Staff should build on their skills and confidence in

using assessment information to track and monitor progress over time and across all areas of the curriculum. They should begin to involve children more fully in discussing their next steps.

- Staff have worked together to develop their approaches to planning. They achieve an appropriate balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led experiences. Their planning approaches are very child centred, and staff show skill in taking forward children's interests building on prior learning. The staff team meets regularly to reflect on plans and activities and to share responsibilities across the playroom.
- Staff continually develop and improve learning through the improvement planning process. They have correctly identified the need to extend numeracy opportunities both indoors and outside. Staff training supports improvements effectively. Most recently, staff have undertaken professional development on understanding schemas in young children and in using Makaton. This has supported staff to deliver a broad and well-balanced range of stimulating experiences.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Almost all children are making good progress in early language and literacy. They take turns to listen to each other and talk, sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings confidently with their friends and adults. They talk enthusiastically about learning both in the nursery and at home. Children access a range of mark making opportunities which allow them to develop early writing skills. Many are keen to write the names of their friends and families on drawings at the writing table. The children engage with a variety of texts and can identify the difference between fact books and story books. They have learned some Makaton signs and use these in routines throughout the day. Staff should now increase the opportunities to develop children's skills in early literacy by creating more access to books in all play spaces and offering more mark making opportunities.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most can count confidently and show good number recognition skills. Many can sequence number stones or tiles in the correct order. Most children can sort and match appropriately and can identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, circles and squares. When building constructions and using loose parts, they use mathematical language such as taller, shorter, lower and bigger, correctly. Children can understand the sequence and timings of their daily routines. Staff now need to increase the range of numeracy experiences to enhance children's progress further. They should make more use of mathematical storybooks and offer wider provision outdoors.
- Throughout the nursery children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They play well together, sharing resources and taking turns. The children are developing control of their fingers and hands using scissors, garden tools, puzzles and magnetic tiles. They enjoy regular access to large physical activities such as throwing and catching balls, riding balance bikes, and hopping, skipping and jumping. Children benefit from fresh air and exercise on their forest and park visits. They are beginning to identify their feelings and have been building their understanding of these through stories. Practitioners have recently improved children's experiences at snack and mealtimes. They now need to develop these further to extend children's social skills and independence.
- Staff are inclusive and welcoming to all children and their families. They have a sound understanding of their needs, and of the socio-economic context within their local community. Staff respect all children as individuals and promote equity. They treat everyone fairly and with respect. Staff warmly welcome parents into the nursery to play alongside their children, to share their skills and to enjoy a family lunch with them. This partnership with families ensures

that they are very well informed about nursery activities and can support and extend children's learning at home.

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.