

Summarised inspection findings

Anstruther Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

25 June 2024

Key contextual information

Anstruther Nursery Class is situated within Anstruther Primary School, Fife. The nursery class has one large playroom, a sensory room, several additional spaces and an outdoor area. The nursery class is registered to provide early learning and childcare to a maximum of 60 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection, there were 40 children in the morning and 13 in the afternoon. Children access their 1140 entitlement and attend morning or afternoon sessions. There have been recent changes to the staff team. The deputy headteacher with responsibility for the nursery class has become the acting headteacher. A new senior early years officer and new early years officers have joined the existing nursery team.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The acting headteacher, in her former role as deputy headteacher led the nursery class very well and ensured it was an important part of the school. The nursery values, play, care and share are relevant and meaningful to children. The values are evident across the nursery class and staff reflect upon them and embed them in daily practice. Children talk confidently about the values and describe their meaning. Practitioners share the values with their family through the play, care and share bears. Children share their experiences from home in an attractive floorbook.
- Practitioners work very well as a team to meet the needs of all children. They have a clear, shared understanding of the needs of children and take a consistent approach across the nursery class. Practitioners, alongside the peripatetic nursery teacher, demonstrate an effective blend of leadership roles across the nursery class. This helps to deliver positive outcomes for children and families. They engage very well with parents and demonstrate a professional approach to their role in supporting all children.
- The senior early years officers lead by example and are very effective role models for the practitioner team. Daily 'huddles' and regular meetings support the team to reflect on their practice and review and discuss approaches to supporting children and families. The acting headteacher has developed a culture of leadership at all levels. Practitioners take ownership of creating and evaluating action plans, which link to improvement priorities. Practitioners encourage children to take on leadership roles, for example, risk assessment outdoors. Practitioners should continue to develop further children's leadership roles, building on existing practice.
- Practitioners work together well to develop their knowledge and skills. They engage very well in annual professional development reviews, which lead to meaningful and relevant professional learning. This is increasing practitioners' knowledge and confidence to implement well-informed changes. Practitioners engage in professional learning opportunities within the nursery class and engage in visits to local settings to develop further their knowledge. They

should continue to engage in professional dialogue and moderation across the nursery class, school and with other settings.

- Practitioners, led by the acting headteacher, have developed highly effective approaches to improvement within the nursery class. The improvement plan is developed by all practitioners, taking full account of areas for development identified throughout the year. It has key priorities, which have a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and families. Practitioners are empowered to take forward and lead aspects of the improvement plan. This is leading to a positive culture of improvement within the nursery class.
- A robust quality assurance calendar is implemented effectively which highlights key focus areas, which senior leaders and practitioners review across the year. Self-evaluation is embedded across the nursery class and a reflective approach supports the practitioner team to implement and embed change in a realistic and manageable way. The pace of change is appropriate and well timed in order to allow practitioners to sustain changes effectively. Parents are updated termly on the improvement work and their views are sought through surveys. Practitioners should continue to involve children and families in self-evaluation as they move forward.

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

- Practitioners create warm, nurturing relationships between children and families, which are a key feature of the setting. Practitioners know children very well and are kind and caring. Almost all children are highly engaged in an exciting range of experiences outdoors and in the playroom.
- Children explore and develop their curiosity, creativity and inquiry in the outdoor environment. They make very effective use of carefully selected natural materials and loose parts. Children are confident in their environment and are encouraged to develop independence. All children have freedom to explore, make choices and follow their own interests. Learning is enriched and supported by effective use of digital technologies. Children enjoy playing with digital games on the interactive whiteboard, electronic toys, walkie-talkies, audio books and tablets.
- All children enjoy spontaneous and planned play opportunities where adults facilitate their learning. Practitioners have a strong understanding of child development and how children learn. They use open-ended questioning and differentiated experiences to provide support and challenge for children as they play. Practitioners should continue to use appropriate resources further to meet the wide range of developmental needs of children.
- The nursery team have introduced an effective planning system, which takes account of local and national guidance. Practitioners seek children's opinions about what they would like to learn. The intentional and spontaneous planning approach is very responsive to children's interests and takes account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes well. Practitioners offer a very good balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led learning experiences. This approach meets almost all children's learning needs effectively.
- Practitioners observe children well and record information about their learning in personal learning journals. This includes children's voices, written observations and photographs. These approaches provide robust and detailed information that clearly demonstrates children's progress in learning. Children share their learning experiences confidently through discussion and reflection, at times using their personal learning journals well for reference. The team also use an online platform to share learning with parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to both the journals and online platform and practitioners provide effective suggestions to support learning at home. Practitioners should continue to refine their observations, recording significant learning for each child and identifying next steps where appropriate.
- Practitioners provide very good support to children who require additional help with their learning. They plan with parents and partners to ensure appropriate interventions enable children to access the full range of experiences. Practitioners review these strategies regularly

to determine the progress children make in their learning. Parents and partners comment on the very effective support provided for children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum is based on play and provides children with a wide variety of experiences across all curriculum areas. Literacy and numeracy experiences are embedded within the indoor and outdoor environments. Progression pathways and trackers are used well to identify significant learning and plan next steps.
- Practitioners use responsive and intentional planning well to ensure equity for all children. This ensures breadth and balance of planned experiences. Children are beginning to lead their own learning through the effective use of learning walls and their personal learning journals.
- Practitioners use the wider community effectively to enhance the curriculum for children. This includes observing seasonal changes, visits to nature and beach kindergarten, and the lifeboat shed. They are implementing well, their approaches to Developing the Young Workforce through linking with local businesses and the world of work.
- Practitioners support children well at transition times. They tailor transition arrangements to meet individual needs when children start nursery. Practitioners and P1 staff work together to ensure children have a smooth transition when they start school. Practitioners should now review and adapt how they share information with P1 colleagues to ensure continuity and progression of the curriculum and learning for children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Partnerships with families are a strength across the nursery, with families encouraged to be involved fully in their child's learning. Practitioners create positive relationships with families, with daily conversations and regular communication leading to increased engagement. Practitioners settle children well when they are new to nursery, with parents invited to visit the setting prior to their child starting.
- Practitioners communicate very well with families through a variety of methods. Children's learning is shared informally through daily conversation, an online platform, learning walls and attractive displays. Parents have the opportunity to attend two formal parents' evenings each year to discuss their child's progress in learning. Practitioners encourage families to share learning and achievements from home, capturing this on a wall display.
- Opportunities for families to engage in the nursery include, craft sessions, Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP), Bookbug, 'swap shops' and a ceilidh. Parents engage in discussion about their child's personal learning journal during a coffee and cake sessions. This has led to increased parental engagement with the personal learning journals. Practitioners should continue to have a focus on family learning to improve outcomes for children and families.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Positive relationships and practitioners' strong focus on improving children's wellbeing are key strengths of the nursery. All practitioners are nurturing and caring towards children. Practitioners interact sensitively with children and there is a very positive ethos in the nursery. Children are confident and are kind and respectful to each other and adults. Children are developing friendship groups within the nursery class and take care of each other. Practitioners model positive behaviour, which has a positive impact on children's relationships and behaviour.
- Practitioners have created an attractive display to share the wellbeing indicators in a relevant and meaningful way with children and families. Children are beginning to use the language of wellbeing in their daily play. Practitioners should continue to develop this at an appropriate pace to ensure children understand the meaning of the wellbeing indicators. Practitioners are introducing children's rights through discussion and links to displays. They should continue to develop this, as planned. Children risk assess activities in the outdoors and within the playroom confidently. They are supported well by practitioners to make safe choices through engaging with developmentally appropriate resources.
- Children have opportunities to share and take turns throughout the nursery session, for example, taking turns outside on the bikes. They are developing their independence skills well, serving themselves at snack and most get themselves dressed for outdoors. Children move in and out of the nursery confidently, engaging well in risky play outdoors. They access the outdoors daily, developing their resilience and confidence well. Children develop their gross motor skills well, for example, by taking part in gymnastics in the gym hall. Staff's increased focus on children's emotions is supporting children to recognise and identify how they are feeling.
- All practitioners understand their responsibilities and statutory duties in relation to keeping children safe. Practitioners keep their knowledge and practice up to date through attendance at regular training. Children's individual health and wellbeing needs are met well as a result of the effective systems in place. Practitioners know their children and families very well and offer support in a respectful and sensitive manner. Children and families receive timely and targeted support through effective partnerships with outside agencies. Children who may require additional support with learning have detailed plans which contain effective strategies to support their learning.
- Practitioners promote inclusion and equality actively. Practitioners treat children and families fairly and with respect. They support children who may face barriers to learning very well, using a range of suitable and engaging resources and strategies. Interventions to support learning are introduced and evaluated regularly to ensure they are having a positive impact on

children's learning. The practitioner team have created engaging spaces to support all children in their learning.

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

- Almost all children are making very good progress in communication and early language. They communicate very effectively with practitioners and each other, using a rich vocabulary. Almost all children recognise their own name and other common words. They demonstrate a keen interest in 'writing' for a purpose as they create signs, lists, and contribute to their personal learning journals and displays. Most children show a high level of skill in their mark-making.
- Children enjoy and listen attentively to stories and use 'story spoons' to retell and create their own imaginative stories. They listen intently to practitioners and respond enthusiastically to questioning, which challenges their thinking. Children take part in musical activities eagerly, which supports them to keep a simple beat using percussion instruments. Children are gaining confidence in speaking simple words and phrases in French and Spanish. Practitioners support children who require additional help with their communication very effectively.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They use number confidently and meaningfully in their play and daily routines, for example during registration and snack time. Most children count and order numbers beyond 10 and enjoy the challenge of larger numbers. Almost all children sort and match by colour and size. They complete jigsaws, puzzles and number games enthusiastically. Children benefit from real-life opportunities in the home corner to develop numeracy and mathematics skills, for example when using clocks, timers and telephones. Younger children enjoy exploring volume in sand and water play.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children share how they are feeling with the nursery team each day as they arrive at nursery. Practitioners guide children well to recognise a range of emotions. Children are beginning to apply this understanding during their play and daily routines. They demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-expression during physical activities both in the gym hall and outdoors.
- Children are motivated about their learning and are confident when trying new experiences. They are making very good progress over time, which is recorded in their personal learning journals. Practitioners should continue to reflect on systems which show progress across early level.
- Children's achievements are celebrated through staff's praise and encouragement. An attractive achievement wall displays achievements from nursery and home. Parents also share

achievements by contributing to children's profiles on the online platform. The nursery team should continue to develop approaches to recognising and celebrating children's individual achievements.

- There is a strong, supportive and inclusive ethos within the nursery. Practitioners know children and families as individuals very well. They have a very good understanding of children's family backgrounds and individual challenges. The nursery team are attuned to when children need extra support to help them make progress. Practitioners link well with outside professionals to provide children with the support they need. The nursery team celebrate cultural and linguistic differences well across the year.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Distributed leadership at all levels

Within Anstruther Nursery class there is a strong focus on leadership at all levels. All early year's officers share increased responsibility in relation to improvement planning. All early year's officers take ownership of creating and evaluating action plans, which link clearly to improvement priorities. There is effective leadership at all levels, which has an impact on effective practice for children and families. The culture of leadership at all levels extends to children, who are supported by early years officers to take on leadership roles, for example, risk assessment outdoors.

Curriculum

In the nursery class, the curriculum is based firmly on play and provides children with a wide variety of experiences across a number of curriculum areas. The nursery team use audits effectively to evaluate their provision, implement well informed change and add appropriate resources. Children actively engaged in their learning with a strong connection between nursery, local community and Developing the Young Workforce.

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.