

# Summarised inspection findings

**North Walls Community School Nursery Class**

Orkney Islands Council

17 September 2024

## Key contextual information

North Walls Community School Nursery is situated on the island of Hoy, which forms part of the Orkney Islands. The nursery playroom and early years class are connected. Children have access to the early years play area and wider school grounds. The age range of children is from two years to those not yet attending primary school. There are 12 places available, with currently four children registered, who attend during term time. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. There are two part-time lead practitioners, who make up one full-time equivalent post.

### 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

- The ethos is welcoming, cosy and nurturing. Practitioners, children and families enjoy strong, positive relationships. Children are secure and confident in their play. Practitioners intervene sensitively to ensure children are supported to display positive behaviour and engage well in their learning. Children are learning to identify their emotions and feelings independently and to seek support if needed. Practitioners have clear expectations and boundaries to support all children in the setting.
- Practitioners plan very well for children to engage in opportunities for spontaneous play and to learn through real-life opportunities in the setting and the community. For example, children participate in trips to the emergency services, the beach and the main island for music activities. Children are highly motivated and participate fully in challenging experiences indoors and outdoors.
- Practitioners are highly-skilled in child development and early level pedagogy. They use effective, open-ended questioning to develop children's learning and understanding. Practitioners are highly responsive to children's needs and listen sensitively to them. They place a high value on children's views and ideas, using this information to plan high-quality experiences. Children have opportunities to deepen their learning in a rich environment that supports their creativity and curiosity. Practitioners offer a range of electronic and digital technologies, such as programmable devices, light boxes, cameras, laptops and tablets to enhance children's learning very effectively.
- Practitioners know children very well. They use a variety of assessment approaches very well to capture children's learning, such as learning stories. These are shared with parents on an online learning journal and in the children's individual folders. Observations are used to inform appropriate learning opportunities and build very effectively on children's skills. These are recorded to show progress and achievements. Practitioners have high expectations of children. Practitioners skilfully help children reflect on their learning through regular discussions.

Practitioners should consider how to streamline assessment approaches to ensure they remain manageable and capture significant learning.

- Practitioners have created a strong planning approach which includes intentional and responsive planning. They use Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes well to ensure breadth and progression in learning. Practitioners use developmental milestones to track children's overall development. For children under three, practitioners track progress using the wellbeing indicators. The headteacher and practitioners have regular tracking meetings to evaluate and monitor all children's progress. Practitioners use this information very effectively to plan appropriate interventions that meet children's needs very well. Children who face additional barriers are supported fully by practitioners.

## 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

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

- Children are making very good progress in communication and early language. Children listen very well to stories and join in with songs and rhymes. They retell familiar stories and talk about the characters. Children use a wide vocabulary to demonstrate their understanding and thinking. Children mark make using open-ended materials and confidently explore opportunities for writing, such as writing labels for their ice-cream shop. All children have their own mark making books and use them independently to write their own stories.
- Children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Practitioners ensure that children have planned, meaningful opportunities to use relevant mathematical language as they weigh and measure during play. Children count, measure, estimate and sort confidently. They use positional language accurately in their play. Children engage in block play imaginatively to create different shapes and structures. As planned, practitioners should now consider all resources and how to ensure they promote creativity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They are happy and thriving. Children grow their own fruit and vegetables in the outdoor area and eat these during snack times. Children know when it is appropriate to wash their hands and are responsible and take on leadership roles when setting the table for lunch and snack. They climb, balance and roll down hills outdoors with confidence. Children keep themselves safe during different play experiences and understand what they need to do to achieve this.
- Children make very good progress over time in almost all aspects of their development and skills. Children talk confidently about their learning and are given lots of opportunities to lead their own learning. For example, children can talk about the plans for the outdoors they have designed and why they have included different resources. Practitioners are skilled at providing challenging opportunities and gather helpful information about what children can do during these experiences to plan effectively for children's progress over time.
- Practitioners recognise, capture and celebrate children's achievements very well. Children's successes and achievements are shared on individual online learning journals and shared with families. Children talk confidently about their skills.

- The setting has an inclusive ethos and supportive culture. There is a strong sense of trust amongst practitioners and children. Practitioners understand the socio-economic backgrounds of children and families and the impact this has on opportunities for children. This includes the rural and remote island context and barriers this creates for equity of experience for all children. The headteacher and practitioners ensure children's experiences are broadened through visits, family swimming lessons, parents as early education partner sessions and Bookbug. This supports children to have a range of experiences with their families.

## 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.