

# Summarised inspection findings

**Mothergoose Playgroup**

Angus Council

9 September 2025

## Key contextual information

Mothergoose Playgroup works in partnership with Angus Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC). The playgroup is registered for 24 children at any one time. It caters for children aged two years until they start school. There are currently 22 children on the roll. Children can attend between 8.45 a.m.- 2.45 p.m. during school term time. Parents are able to select sessions or full days that support the needs of their child and family. The playgroup has been established in the area since 1974 and has been in partnership with Angus Council since 1998. It is managed by a committee of parents, with the day-to-day operational management undertaken by a manager. The staff team consists of a depute manager, three practitioners and a regular supply practitioner. The team have a range of skills and experience and have worked together for seven months. Originally, the playgroup met in a nearby village hall and since 2021 the playgroup has been accommodated within the new Forfar Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC). Children have access to a large playroom, a smaller quiet room and extensive outdoor space. They share dining space with children from the ELCC. The majority of children will move on to a school nursery class or P1 in August 2025.

### 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

- Almost all children are very happy, settled and confident at playgroup. Practitioners have a child-centred, unhurried and relaxed approach, underpinned by important values that support children very well. They work with children in a sensitive manner to ensure each child benefits from their playgroup experiences. Recently, practitioners have undertaken shared professional learning, which is contributing to them, as a relatively new team, consolidating their pedagogy. Their practice supports children's rights very well. They have begun to explore the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and are well placed to embed this further in their practice. Almost all children engage very well with resources and spaces, and a few become absorbed in their play, often for extended times. Practitioners continue to develop the extensive outdoor space, and children benefit from free flow between in and outdoors. This allows them to plan their play and begin to lead their own learning.
- Practitioners model positive interactions with each other and provide timely support to help children negotiate social situations. They interact with children in a consistently respectful and nurturing manner, which creates very positive relationships between practitioners and children. Adults listen to and observe children very carefully to allow them to make informed responses to children's interests. They sensitively support children's interests, building on what they want to learn about, balanced appropriately with introducing new learning. They make effective use of questioning and commentary to respond to, extend, and consolidate children's learning. They support children to use digital technology, for example to research subjects of interest and begin to use matrix bar codes to access their online journal. The staff team should

continue to develop the use of technology in creative and innovative ways to enrich further children's learning.

- All children have an online learning journal that documents experiences through the extensive use of photographs, videos and observations of their learning. Practitioners have undertaken professional learning to successfully develop their skills observing children as they play. They increasingly identify children's significant learning in their more focused observations. Practitioners continue to refine their skills in documenting learning and are working together to develop consistent approaches across the team. They also make good use of floorbooks to ensure the child's voice is captured effectively, and document and share episodes of learning. Together, these approaches help practitioners identify what children need to learn next and ensures there are no barriers to learning.
- Practitioners use their observations of children's learning to plan interesting experiences for free play and small focused group times that motivate children in their learning. They identify an area of focus to create a context for learning for children to explore, by planning relevant experiences and provocations. Practitioners recognise that their planning for learning could be further improved by establishing what children already know, to ensure that this is consistently built on. Practitioners make effective use of helpful tools from the local authority to monitor and track the progress children make over time. As planned, the staff team should now work with other local settings to moderate the judgements they make about children's progress. This would add increased rigour to assessment information.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The setting 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 make good progress in communication and early language. At their individual developmental stages, most children engage confidently in conversation with familiar adults and each other. Children are supported to extend their vocabulary and are clear about what new words mean, often using them correctly in context. They listen well to stories and take part enthusiastically in singing. They are beginning to understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Most children are familiar with a range of traditional tales and are beginning to retell these using their own words. Almost all children show interest in mark making, with a few beginning to form and recognise letters that are important to them. The majority of children would benefit from continued experiences that introduce them to new, interesting and challenging concepts. These should include more opportunities to explore rhyme and patterns in language.
- Overall, children make good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children recognise numbers in their play and are developing skills in counting within ten. A minority of children enjoy the challenge of exploring larger numbers to twenty. Most children recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes, and a few are ready to explore three-dimensional objects. They understand, and use in context, appropriate language to describe position, direction and compare weight and length. Children understand how to use timers to negotiate social situations and are ready to explore time in greater depth. A few children are becoming aware of simple symmetry and can replicate basic designs. They are ready to explore money and information handling in meaningful real-life and play experiences.
- Children are making strong progress in developing their skills and understanding of health and wellbeing. As a group, they learn about turn taking and sharing. Most children increasingly play cooperatively and understand the need for rules with minimal adult support. They demonstrate respect and empathy for their peers and are increasingly able to recognise their emotions and the feelings of others. Almost all children develop a range of skills in gross and fine motor control through motivating experiences. They are developing an understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, for example as they undertake safety checks in the garden and use tools. Most children are becoming more independent in routines, including snack, lunch and dressing for outdoors. Children would benefit from more risky play and learning about cultures and celebrations different to their own.
- Practitioners support each child to develop and learn at their individual developmental stage. They are effective at working in partnership with families, and where appropriate other

professionals, to ensure children's unique needs are identified and met. Practitioners make careful judgements about children's progress using local authority developmental milestones. The assessment information that the staff team have gathered demonstrates children's strong progress in learning and development over time as a result of their playgroup experiences. Practitioners use carefully considered interventions, for example targeted discussions and experiences, to remove any potential barriers to children's learning.

- Practitioners celebrate children's individual achievements in a very natural and informal way using meaningful praise and encouragement. They encourage parents to share children's achievements from home through online journals. Children develop a range of skills by contributing to the local community. This includes learning about the needs of others during visits to a local care home. They care for the environment through litter picks around the campus. Practitioners could develop increased links in the local community to provide further real-life experiences for children.
- Practitioners work sensitively and actively to promote equity for children. The manager makes effective use of data and information. This helps to ensure children receive the support they need to make the progress they are capable of. Practitioner's analysis of information could be developed further to include other aspects, for example in-depth tracking of children's achievements outwith playgroup.

## 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.