

Summarised inspection findings

Newtyle Primary School Nursery Class

Angus Council

6 December 2022

Key contextual information

Newtyle Nursery Class has one playroom, a large outdoor area and is situated within Newtyle Primary School. The setting is registered for 20 children aged three, to those not yet attending school. There are eight children on the roll who access 1140 hours funded early learning and childcare (ELC) on a full day basis, 9 am until 3 pm during term time. Lunch is provided and the setting is closed on school holidays and in-service days. Prior to the implementation of 1140 hours, the nursery offered 5 afternoon sessions.

The headteacher has a shared headship with Airlie Primary School and Nursery Class. He has overall responsibility for the setting and is supported by an early years practitioner (EYP) and an early years assistant (EYA). The EYP has been in post since the start of this session. At the time of the inspection, there was a vacancy for a senior early years practitioner.

Angus Council Early Years Team provides an extensive range of professional learning sessions centrally, and in the setting, that reflects current research. Practitioners receive regular targeted quality assurance and support from Angus Early Years Team locality support officer (LSO).

1.3 Leadership of change

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 headteacher, EYP, EYA and Angus Early Years team LSO work very well as a team. They implement a shared vision for change and improvement, which reflects the context of the nursery class within its community. Practitioners demonstrate consistently the school and nursery class values of belonging, respect and honesty.
- The nursery team, including the LSO and headteacher, place children at the centre of their improvement work. The team has responded positively to the demands of challenging contexts by focusing on outcomes for children. This includes, changing the nursery class operating model from part-time to full-day provision due to 1140 hours expansion; supporting children and families through the COVID-19 pandemic; and managing recent staff changes.
- Last session, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and significant staff absences, the headteacher and principal teacher were class committed. The headteacher created effective conditions for the LSO to develop and implement strategic plans for improvement. The LSO feels very well supported by the headteacher. She works closely with the nursery class team through a well-targeted range of quality assurance processes. Focused monitoring linked to Realising the Ambition: Being Me national practice guidance has improved practitioners' interactions, provocations, children's literacy and outdoor learning experiences.
- All practitioners are committed to professional learning and self-reflection on up-to-date research. They make links between theory and practice, which is reflected in how they are developing the learning environment. For example, children independently access a variety of

indoor and outdoor spaces where they can relax, feel safe or experience challenge in their learning.

- The headteacher, creates positive conditions for practitioners and the LSO to work well together and improve outcomes for the small number of children in the nursery class. Together, they reflect on practice and engage effectively with Angus Early Years Team. This collaboration impacts positively on staff confidence, children's progress and provides evidence linked to self-evaluation.
- This session, due to changes in staffing, the headteacher revisited the strategic leadership of the nursery class. He changed senior leadership team (SLT) remits, developed a plan for clarifying practitioners' leadership roles and embedded improvement priorities within approaches to whole school improvement planning. This cohesive approach is well-considered and provides increased opportunities for sharing good practice across the early level and sustaining change.

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

- Relationships between children and adults are nurturing, caring and very positive. Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy learning in the very positive environment. They are engrossed in their play and enjoy choosing to play indoors or outdoors. Responsive play opportunities in the setting promote fun, enjoyment and curiosity. In addition, the wide range of open-ended resources, natural materials and designated areas support children's inquiry and creativity. Practitioners take children's views about their learning into account, For example, children collectively decide the book of the week. In addition, practitioners take account of children's interests, making meaningful links to children's homes, families and out of nursery experiences. Practitioners use electronic devices to record events. They are developing further children's learning through and about digital technologies.
- Practitioners observe children's learning sensitively and intervene when necessary to extend their thinking. They have a measured approach to interacting with children and take care not to interrupt their play and learning. Practitioners' knowledge of child development theories enables them to encourage children's ideas and extend learning. Most questions asked by practitioners are well considered, open-ended and encourage children to think carefully and deeply. Practitioners model new learning and introduce challenges for children through different provocations.
- Practitioners use Angus Council's responsive planning resources to plan and assess children's learning. The responsive planning formats record children's learning and support practitioners to assess progress and challenge children as individuals through differentiated approaches. Planning for learning reflects children's interests and ideas. Practitioners record observations of learning in floor books, folios and planning documentation. They support, observe and assess children on an individual, ongoing basis. Practitioners are beginning to record detailed observations in children's paper folios which they plan to share with parents. The staff team record children's developmental stages using Angus Council's milestones.
- Practitioners have identified the need to implement effective approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring individual children's progress across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Individual assessment approaches do not yet provide clear evidence of children's progress, including what they already know and their next steps. There is a need for strategic guidance alongside support and challenge from senior leaders to ensure that practitioners accurately record children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners use Angus Council's progression pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to inform how they plan learning across the curriculum. They use the progression pathways and CfE experiences and outcomes well when responding to children's interests. Practitioners ensure this approach takes account of the My World Triangle. They also identify clearly defined learning intentions and focus questions linked to National Benchmarks and Angus Council's milestones.
- Practitioners actively promote, and effectively develop, opportunities for early learning in a well-organised environment. Children have opportunities to be curious, creative and lead their own learning. They access a wide range of resources freely that develop their gross and fine motor skills. Children independently access a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces where they can relax, feel safe or experience challenge in their learning.
- Practitioners collaborate well with colleagues in the primary school to support children to make successful transitions to P1. For example, children visit the P1 class during the year. They also have opportunities to join primary classes for whole school events and celebrations.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Parents are very positive about the nursery class provision and the support that their children receive from the practitioners. Practitioners share children's successes and achievements through online applications, 'Stay and Play' sessions, wall displays and the weekend bear. The opportunities for parental engagement support families very well to participate in, and contribute to, their child's learning. Supportive conversations with parents take account of children's likes and interests at home, which are recognised and nurtured when practitioners are planning learning.
- Practitioners have well-considered plans in place to improve the quality of feedback to, and from, parents to develop further their involvement. There is a need to ensure there is a clear focus on how recording of children's progress can support further parents' contribution to children's progress and achievements, both at home and in the nursery setting. This enhanced approach will ensure that parents and practitioners continue to work together to support children to develop their abilities.

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

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

- Practitioners are kind, caring and promote children's wellbeing. Their interactions and approaches ensure that children achieve success. Nurturing principles are evident in practice and children respond very well to daily check-ins about their wellbeing. The positive ethos of community leads to children feeling a strong sense of belonging. Children show a collective responsibility for their environment and for looking after each other.
- Daily routines, including a 'wellbeing colours chart' linked to the wellbeing indicators, provides a helpful structure for practitioners to reinforce and support children to discuss their wellbeing. Children use the chart well in discussions with practitioners and the majority can relate these to real life contexts. Children feel safe, secure, active, and healthy and benefit from the nurturing learning environment. Practitioners are developing further ways to deepen children's understanding on their wellbeing, through developmentally appropriate and meaningful approaches.
- Children enjoy healthy snacks and lunches in the nursery setting. They show good social skills sitting at the table, using cutlery well. Practitioners prepare and present snacks in a creative way. They have placed the snack area beside the children's imaginative home corner where practitioners model cooking, baking and preparing food. Practitioners could develop children's skills further by involving them in the food preparation for snack. This involvement in food preparation will provide children with the opportunity to develop important skills in a real life situation, using real utensils.
- Practitioners are aware of their statutory duties. They record important information about children's wellbeing through the My World triangle, which includes information gathered from parents. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, practitioners identified, and are addressing, children's skills in sharing and in their speech and language development. Moving forward, senior leaders should support practitioners to implement statutory guidance in relation to the recording and monitoring of children with additional support needs. Approaches to reduce barriers to learning, including challenging and extending children's learning are not yet embedded in practice.
- Practitioners have a strong sense of respect for children's rights, which is embedded in planned learning. Children make choices in their play and understand the level of risk in some activities. They show respect for each other, they are kind, caring and settled. Gender stereotypes are addressed well through the resources available in the setting. Children are inclusive and value each other's differences. There is a need to continue to broaden children's understanding of diversity.

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

- Children are making good progress in communication early language, mathematics and wellbeing. They choose where they want to play, show independence and access a range of resources responsibly. Children are caring towards each other and play very well together when exploring both indoors and outdoors. They move at different speeds and directions, they focus very well on tasks and pay close attention to instructions. The majority of children share with others and show consideration during energetic play. Most children make good progress across most areas of their learning.
- Children engage with texts, stories, songs and rhymes. They share likes and dislikes using appropriate language and take turns when listening and talking in a variety of contexts. They follow simple instructions and share ideas. They communicate very well in different ways during play and link experiences from home to those in the nursery class. Children are developing an interest in early writing skills and use pencils with increasing control and confidence. A few children understand Makaton signs to communicate.
- In numeracy, children recall number sequences and show one to one correspondence. A few children recognise numbers greater than 10. They use mathematical language correctly, such as before, after and in between, short, long, heavier and lighter. Children link aspects of numeracy to their daily routines.
- Children make good progress over time in early language, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners record children's progress over time using Angus milestones and National Benchmarks. Practitioners share this information with the school as children move into P1.
- Children's achievements are recognised through individual folios, floor books an online digital application, wall displays and discussions with parents and practitioners. Records of achievements show children are at the early stages of recognising and recording their own achievements to inform their next steps in learning.
- Practitioners know children and their families very well and use well planned approaches to ensure equity for all attending the nursery class. Most questioning techniques and learning experiences take good account of children's interests. As a result, most children make good progress in the nursery and a few make very good progress. Practitioners need to have an increased focus on identifying and monitoring potential issues arising from children affected by poverty, in line with national expectations. Children's progress needs to be better supported by

rigorous sources of evidence and sound professional judgements to inform next steps in learning and provide equity for all.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Repurposing and recycling materials and children's voice to improve the learning environment.

In partnership with Angus Council early years team, practitioners evaluated children's indoor and outdoor learning experiences. A strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities analysis including observations of children's play. Evaluations highlighted a need to improve further the indoor and outdoor spaces to provide interesting learning opportunities. The environment now provides areas for children to relax, be active, creative and engage in their learning. As a result, children collaborate very well with each other, and sustain their interest in activities for long periods of time.

In improving the learning environment, practitioners placed an emphasis on using natural materials, involving children in decision making and taking into account health and safety guidance. They used free, natural materials to set up different learning areas. Practitioners have transformed a cable drum into an art table, providing different levels for children to stand on to draw, paint and undertake some creative activities. The team have used wooden pallets well to create a cosy reading space outdoors and divide areas for different activities. Water play is a constant feature, with a sink constantly catching rain water.

Well-considered changes to the indoor environment included placing the snack and lunch table in the imaginary play kitchen area to role model food preparation. In addition, taking full account of children's views, practitioners moved the story corner in front of the large window for everyone to see the outdoor garden area when enjoying stories and books inside the nursery setting.

Overall, the changes to the environment took full account of national practice guidance and as a result, children benefit from a creative, engaging and exciting use of space that is constantly changing to meet children's interests and needs.

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.

