

Summarised inspection findings

Woodlands Primary School and Nursery Class

Angus Council

28 August 2018

Key contextual information

The nursery class within Woodlands Primary School is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) to 30 children at any one time. At the time of the inspection, 30 children in their pre-school year, aged four to five years, attended morning sessions, and 27 children aged three to four years attended afternoon sessions.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

very good

This indicator underlines that rigorous self-evaluation is the responsibility of all practitioners and stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and a shared understanding of strengths and areas for development. A key factor is how to demonstrate the impact of self-evaluation and how evidence is used to improve outcomes for children. The themes are:

- collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- evidence-based improvement
- ensuring impact of successes for children and families

- The nursery team have robust systems in place to ensure that self-evaluation leads to positive outcomes for children. Practitioners feel very much part of the whole school community ethos at Woodlands Primary. They work together very effectively as a team to evaluate their practice and provision. As a result, they are developing a shared understanding of their setting's strengths and areas for improvement. Practitioners participate in 'mirror' observations, including with colleagues at the early level of the primary classes, to learn from each other and to share practice. They take part in visits to other local settings to moderate standards and to research new approaches. Led very effectively by the deputy headteacher and senior early years practitioner, the team demonstrate confidence to look critically at their delivery of ELC and then consider ways they can further improve.
- Practitioners have very positive relationships with families. They gather feedback from parents on different aspects of provision through a variety of informal and formal opportunities. They ensure parents are kept well informed of the impact of any consultative exercises through a 'you said, we did' approach. Children have a voice within the setting in a range of ways. For example, they make decisions about what resources should be set up and help to record their own ideas and thoughts about their learning in their weekly diaries that are shared between home and nursery.
- All practitioners within the nursery team have a shared understanding of their role in self-evaluation. They engage with national guidance to support the evaluation of their work. They willingly take part in whole-school professional learning sessions, often with other local settings and schools, to learn about evidence-based practice. Therefore, practitioners and managers make well-informed decisions about which aspects of their provision to enhance and further improve. For example, the whole-school priority over the last few years to improve how numeracy and mathematics is taught is leading to children having a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. The nursery team have also recently reviewed and made improvements to the outdoor environment. This has helped to maximise the opportunities for children to learn and apply their learning outdoors as well as indoors.
- Practitioners know children very well as individuals and their particular stages of development. They gather a range of evidence to document, record and assess children's progress. They

capture this information in children's individual folios, which are accessible and available to children throughout the sessions. These folios include focused observations of what children can do and relevant examples of their work. Practitioners have a sound understanding of child development and are fully committed to continuing to explore current thinking and research in early learning and childcare.

- Practitioners communicate each week with parents through the diary system. This provides parents with up to date information on their child's progress and provides meaningful opportunities for discussion about learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute examples of learning from home to help build a holistic picture of each child's progress. Working closely and productively with families is a key priority for the nursery team, who value parents as partners in education. This helps the team to develop a shared understanding of individual children and build on prior learning. This year, the whole-school team have introduced a new approach, agreed by all local schools, to track the progress of children as they move through the different stages of education. As a result of their careful, ongoing monitoring of children's strengths and next steps, practitioners have a clear understanding of the progress each child is making. They can clearly demonstrate that almost all children are making very good progress in their learning and development.
- The setting's priorities are embedded as part of the whole-school approach to improvement planning. Practitioners contribute fully to this process, sharing their views and collaborating with colleagues at the primary stages. Regular and very effective monitoring is carried out by the depute headteacher and senior early years practitioner. This supports development, professional dialogue and a shared approach to learning, teaching and assessment across the early level.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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

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. Children enjoy having conversations with their friends, practitioners and visiting adults about their experiences and feelings. Almost all children are developing a love of reading and have favourite stories that they like to re-tell. Most children enjoy exploring books together in the 'reading shed' in their outdoor area. All children can recognise their names, as they self-register for snack time and label their own pictures. Almost all older children can write their name, including the correct use of capital letters. Overall, children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop and apply their early writing skills in meaningful and motivating contexts, both inside and in the outdoor area.
- Almost all children are making excellent progress in mathematics. A few children exceed national expectations beyond the early level. As a result of the whole-school focus to improve children's numeracy and mathematics skills in recent years, children benefit from challenging and real-life opportunities to apply their developing skills and knowledge across all areas of their learning. They count, order and sequence numbers naturally during their play and as part of daily routines. All older children can count to twenty and beyond with confidence. They can count backwards and a few are learning to count in twos. Commendably, they demonstrate understanding of the conservation of number, as they challenge each other to show numbers in different ways. Children also choose, and talk about, different strategies for counting. Most children add and subtract numbers within ten mentally as they record how many children are present in their group. They can predict and estimate with increasing confidence. They are developing a good understanding of the concept of volume as they explore with pulses and grains in the mud kitchen. They sort, classify and match as they explore an extensive range of open-ended natural resources, including loose parts. Many children solve problems together naturally, for example to set up a game of croquet in their garden.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They respond confidently and appropriately to time taken at the start of the session to reflect on their feelings and experiences. A few children benefit from very sensitive support to explore their feelings with practitioners. Practitioners ensure that all children are given the opportunity to talk about their own health and wellbeing, by regular use the wellbeing indicators. With the support of practitioners, children assess their own wellbeing using a 'wellbeing web' and can give relevant examples of what feeling safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and

included means to them. Children benefit from the freedom to play and learn outdoors as they wish. They benefit from the motivating and challenging resources on offer and daily access to the large outdoor space. They have very good opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills and resilience through their active, vigorous play. Children take great care of their setting by helping to tidy up. They have a very good understanding of the nursery rules and routines. Across both the morning and afternoon sessions, children are benefiting from participating in mindfulness sessions, learning the importance of relaxation as part of their own wellbeing. There is scope for the setting to increase opportunities for children to develop early leadership skills across the life of the nursery, for example by acting as monitors and helpers.

- Children are motivated and enthusiastic learners. Planning approaches support the team to follow children's interests. Children are routinely involved in asking and answering questions to find out more information about their current context for learning. Recently, they enjoyed learning about healthy eating with their friends in primary one, as part of a shared topic based on the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Floor books, wall displays and children's folios document very well children's learning over time. Practitioners should continue to use digital technologies to extend and develop further children's learning. Children are developing an early understanding of their environment, as they take part in planting and growing activities.
- In both the morning and afternoon sessions, almost all children are confident, successful learners. They are making very good progress over time, in relation to their age and stage of development. Key workers have a clear understanding of the strengths and next steps in learning for each child. They use this knowledge to ensure that learning is appropriately differentiated to challenge and support each child very well. The recently introduced electronic format to record children's progress helps senior leaders to track the progress of children in a robust and systematic way. Children are proud of their 'wow' wall and enjoy celebrating their achievements from home.
- The team works very effectively in partnership with parents and other health professionals to support individual children's progress. The caring and nurturing ethos within the setting promotes a climate of genuine trust and respect. Practitioners know children, families and their circumstances very well. They use this understanding to support children in a way that meets their needs and promotes equity. The team reflect on the impact of the strategies they use to help them make well-informed decisions about future interventions.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Sector leading approaches to embedding a numeracy-rich environment for learning, which is leading to excellent progress in early mathematics for almost all children.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.