

Summarised inspection findings

Warddykes Primary School Nursery Class

Angus Council

26 August 2025

Key contextual information

Warrddykes Primary School Nursery Class (PSNC) is situated in the town of Arbroath, Angus Council. The setting is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for 40 children from age of three to school age. The current roll is forty-eight. Parents can choose from three patterns of attendance for their children. This includes morning, afternoon or full day sessions 47 weeks per year, between 8am and 6pm.

The nursery has a large indoor and outdoor area where children can have free flow across their session. The nursery makes use of local areas of interest, parks, a local beach and community spaces.

The newly appointed acting headteacher has overall responsibility for the quality of learning in the nursery. She delegates the leadership of the nursery to the newly appointed acting principal teacher. The nursery has a lead senior early years practitioner (LSEYP) who oversees the daily management of the setting. She is supported by two senior early years practitioners (SEYP), ten early years practitioners, three early years assistants and a modern apprentice.

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

- Staff, children and families worked together recently to agree on shared values for the nursery. The new values of respect, kindness and safe, reflect the welcoming, nurturing relationships that underpin the 'Warddykes way'. Practitioners and children model the values very well through their daily interactions.
- Senior leaders in the nursery demonstrate their commitment to providing strong leadership, and support. They are led very effectively by the LSYEP who fosters best practice through sharing skilled and sound knowledge. She has encouraged a culture that values collaboration and communication. As a result, all staff work very well together and feel empowered to provide a high-quality learning environment for all children.
- Almost all practitioners have champion roles based on their talents, experience, and interests. They talk passionately about their commitment to improving outcomes for children and families. They research theories and undertake frequent professional learning opportunities. They develop new approaches and opportunities for children based on their research of theory and national guidance. This has successfully supported them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to provide high quality interactions, experiences and spaces for all children in the nursery. They understand and value the importance of self-evaluation. They plan, lead, and evaluate many aspects of practice to continuously improve children's experiences. These include improving the outdoor learning provision and developing children's creativity.
- Children demonstrate their leadership skills through a few significant activities, for example, as snack helpers and risk assessing their garden. Practitioners could now encourage all children

to participate in further leadership roles. This should support them to contribute to the life of the nursery fully and develop their early leadership skills.

- The LSEYP and newly appointed acting principal teacher routinely monitor the quality of planning and learning within the nursery. They monitor and evaluate almost all aspects of the setting following a clear and systematic quality assurance plan. As planned, the acting headteacher and senior leadership team should ensure that the improvement priorities for the ELC are clearly identified and tracked. This will ensure that the whole school improvement plan includes essential priorities linked to identified areas of strength and next steps within the nursery. This will provide opportunity to formally track progress and measure improvements across nursery into P1

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

- All practitioners have built respectful, supportive relationships with children and their families. Children feel safe and valued within the nursery. Almost all practitioners give children time, space and support that is appropriate to their stage of development and individual interests. As a result, almost all children are kind, caring and respectful towards each other and adults. They play well together and have developed a sense of belonging to the Warrdykes community.
- Almost all practitioners follow a child-centred approach, responsive to the changing needs of children. They demonstrate and value the importance of understanding children's individual stages of development. They create inspiring spaces indoors and outdoors, reflecting their observations and knowledge of children. This ensures there is a calm, purposeful and positive ethos in the playrooms and outdoors, where children follow their own lines of enquiry. Practitioners make very good use of loose parts provocations, which are carefully placed to pose questions and challenge children's thinking. This approach is encouraging most children to be creative and curious learners.
- Practitioners use digital technologies well to extend children's learning. Children are learning to program electric toys and use torches to create shadow puppets. They reflect on their learning using digital codes to access their online learning journals. Practitioners should continue to provide and extend these opportunities to enrich all children's learning across the curriculum.
- Practitioners gather a wide range of important information about children and what they need to help them settle into nursery. They plan with parents sensitively, getting to know each child and their family well. Practitioners meet twice yearly with parents to update plans and discuss relevant targets and supports children may need. Children with additional learning needs have detailed individual plans and practitioners use robust strategies to support them. This enables practitioners to provide appropriate personal care and learning opportunities to all children. Practitioners should incorporate the wellbeing indicators more frequently into children's everyday experiences. This would add depth to children's understanding of how to stay safe and manage risks appropriately.
- Staff have worked well together to improve the quality of observations. They now focus on capturing, recording and interpreting children's skills and interests. They share the content of observations, identifying together relevant interactions, experiences and spaces to take forward children's ideas and learning opportunities. Parents view their child's learning on an online platform and share observations from home. There is a strong focus on sharing the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Practitioners should now capture and extend children's learning across the curriculum. This will help them demonstrate more clearly children's progress in all areas of their learning.
- Practitioners' planning is responsive and based on children's interests. They should now develop it further to ensure a balance of child-led and adult-led planning. This will maximise the

opportunities to identify and extend the individual progress children are making. Senior leaders should build further rigour into the process by carefully monitoring and tracking individual progress. This should help to ensure all children make the best possible progress across all aspects of their learning and development.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Senior leaders and practitioners provide an exciting play-based curriculum. They take account of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and national practice guidance to inform the curriculum. This includes regular science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) based learning. Children benefit from a range of interesting interactions, experiences and spaces that stimulate curiosity and enquiry. As planned, practitioners' increased use of progression frameworks for early literacy and mathematics will enable them to have a more accurate overview of children's progress.
- Senior leaders should now explore further ways for practitioners to work together across early level to support transition from nursery into P1. This could include working with parents to understand the important role of play in children's learning and development across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners know families very well. They value opportunities to build purposeful partnerships with them at the beginning and end of their nursery session. They plan and lead regular events that invite parents into the setting. For example, staff provide stay and play sessions, Bookbug and gardening clubs. The introduction of home learning bags provides parents with helpful resources to undertake simple science experiments and creative experiences. These foster strong relationships and encourage parents to become involved in significant aspects of their children's learning and development.
- Practitioners engage with a wide range of partners within the local area. They regularly work together with their partners to support purposeful ways to reduce barriers for children and their families. For example, their successful partnerships with a local football club provided an equitable approach to inclusion for all children in sports.

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

- The SEYP and practitioners know and understand the Warddykes community very well and strive to ensure children are fully supported to meet their potential. Children benefit from nurturing and respectful relationships with practitioners. Most children are confident to ask for support when they require it. Children begin their day by identifying their feelings using emotions from a familiar story. They revisit how they are feeling throughout their day. Children use visual communication symbols to communicate effectively with others as appropriate to their stage of development. As a result, children feel safe, valued and well supported.
- Practitioners carefully plan children's participation and enjoyment of mealtimes. They benefit from healthy, unhurried snacks and lunches. Staff work well together to present an attractive and nurturing experience for all children, across the different patterns of attendance. Children choose from breakfast, mid-morning or mid-afternoon snacks, and hot lunches as appropriate. They use real-life cups, glasses and plates to enjoy their food. These approaches are supporting children to become independent and socially confident. To further enhance children's lunchtime experience, practitioners should role model trying food and eating with the children. This will help to encourage children to develop lifelong healthy eating behaviours.
- All staff in the nursery understand and comply with their statutory duties for early learning and childcare. Staff sensitively work to complete care plans for every child that details what they require from the adults in their life to care for them and meet their needs. These are reviewed with parents and appropriate updates and targets are identified. All staff confidently share how they keep children safe, and the steps they take to ensure relevant procedures are followed. All staff are committed to continuous professional learning and recognise the link between this and improved outcomes for children. They comply with national expectations in planning and recording the impact of professional learning on their practice.
- The SEYP and practitioners have established a highly inclusive ethos and strive to ensure that all children's needs are met sensitively. Practitioners are aware of their responsibility to challenge bias. They explore sensitive topics with children, such as discrimination, and capture their voices creatively in floor books. As a result, a few children are beginning to demonstrate empathy and identify when others have been treated unfairly. Practitioners should now plan with children to celebrate the diverse cultures within and out with their local community. This would support further all children's understanding of diversity, celebrating differences and fostering inclusion.

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 make good progress in health and wellbeing. Almost all children are developing a positive sense of self, demonstrating confidence in their own developing skills. For example, they apply their skills when climbing in the garden and preparing food at snack time. Snack routines in the nursery support children to practice a wide range of personal skills and attitudes. They wash their hands before eating, say please and thank you as they share fruit at snack time. During "cosy corner" interactions, they take turns to choose songs and rhymes. They enjoy energetic play in the garden demonstrating good control of their core strength, balance and co-ordination. They demonstrate increasing control of their fine manipulative skills as they dress themselves to go outdoors and play musical instruments. They use small tools such as screw drivers when exploring how things work at the tinkering chest.
- In early literacy and communication almost all children make very good progress. Almost all children independently communicate their feelings and interests as appropriate to their stage of development. They listen attentively to instructions during play. Most children recognise letters in their name and identify familiar letter sounds. Almost all children enjoy reading books relating to their play. Most recite confidently rhymes and songs, demonstrating that they detect and increasingly predict rhyme. They are developing new vocabulary through their word aware programme. Children enjoy opportunities to mark-make using a range of materials. Almost all are drawing with increasing detail and control. Practitioners should now plan for individual children's progress in early literacy and communication. This will help to ensure all children make the best possible progress that they can.
- In early numeracy and mathematics almost all children make very good progress. They hear and use mathematical language naturally through play and daily routines. This is increasing their understanding of volume and measurement. Almost all children count within numbers to ten. The majority of children count beyond twenty. They complete simple additions and subtractions through routines such as snack, and at the 'dough lab'. They are aware of simple fractions when they cut fruit into halves and quarters. Through provocations, almost all children are curious about patterns and shapes. Most confidently recognise two-dimensional shapes and some three-dimensional objects through block play and junk modelling. Practitioners now need to capture and use what they know about what individual children can do and are ready to do next. This will help to ensure all children are making the best possible progress in early numeracy and mathematics.

- Practitioners and senior leaders know children and their families very well. They build trusting relationships that value the role parents play in their child's learning and development. Practitioners record children's progress effectively using local authority milestone planning. This helps them identify potential barriers or gaps children may have in their progress. Children who require additional support with their learning make very good progress towards their personalised learning targets. Data shows that since starting nursery, most children have made very good progress appropriate to their age and stage of development. All children would benefit from further opportunities to celebrate their successes and wider achievements.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, kind and caring approaches from staff which supported their overall wellbeing. They were happy and relaxed in the company of staff and approached them with confidence. It was evident positive, nurturing relationships had been formed. This supported children to feel safe and secure.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning, taking account of the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. Families were central to this process which promoted a consistency and continuity of care. For any children requiring any additional support, staff and management worked proactively with families and professionals to identify appropriate strategies and next steps based on children's individual needs. This information was used consistently and effectively by all staff to ensure positive outcomes for children.

Mealtimes provided rich opportunities to promote attachments and social skills. A consistent staff member provided breakfast on arrival and welcomed children warmly. Children had opportunities to be involved in the planning and preparation of snack. These were rich learning opportunities for children as they developed valuable life skills. At mealtimes staff sat with children which promoted a safe and positive social experience for all children.

Systems and processes were in place to support the safe management of medication. Medication was stored appropriately, regularly audited and staff were knowledgeable about any children requiring medication. To further enhance the very good procedures in place, management were responsive to suggestions around the recording of any medicine administered prior to the child attending the service that day.

The service provided a welcoming ethos for children and families. The range of needs of families were fully recognised. Families' wellbeing was supported through family nurture sessions which included Bookbug and Play on Pedals. Feedback was gathered from families which enabled the service to deliver bespoke sessions that mattered to families. This ensured families received the support that was right for them to improve outcomes for children.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

1.3 Play and learning

Children were having lots of fun as they engaged in meaningful play which supported their learning and development. Staff supported and extended children's high-quality play and learning experiences through the effective use of questioning. As a result, children were challenged and their learning was being extended.

Outdoor play was valued and children had opportunities for free flow play to the garden during sessions. The outdoor area was rich in play and learning opportunities. These included opportunities for children to physically challenge themselves. Staff embraced a more benefit-risk approach as children engaged in risky play on obstacle courses they had created from loose parts. This helped support children's wellbeing and self-confidence.

Small group times provided opportunities for children and staff to come together. Staff shared the benefits of their small groups to work on planned learning and children's individual targets. Group times were a meaningful experience where children were engaged and learning.

Children's developing language and communication was supported well through the rich learning environment and staff interactions. A lending library, Bookbug explorer home bags and English as an additional language (EAL) bags also contributed to this.

Connections were in place with the local community. These included visits to the shop, cafe and the local college. Plans were in place to develop links with the local care home which involved children writing letters inviting residents to visit. This supported children's sense of belonging.

Planning was child led and responsive to children's interests. Planning incorporated children's learning targets and focus was placed on individual children's needs. Observations of children's play and learning were of a high quality and provided evidence of a wide variety of play experiences. Floor books documented children's learning, their voice and their mark making. Progression pathways were used to support staff's understanding and planning for children's next steps. This ensured children were challenged and were progressing well.

There were opportunities for children to recognise and celebrate their successes. For example, through proud clouds and learning journals which were shared with families. Staff shared learning bags with families and they celebrated children's creations they created at home. This was an area that the service had identified they would like to further develop.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment. Staff effectively used risk assessments and worked together to minimise risks to children. Children also participated in risk assessing their environment indoors and outdoors. Our Look, Think, Act campaign to support children to be safe had been fully considered by staff. This approach promoted children, families and staff safety and wellbeing.

The setting was furnished to a high standard and benefitted from plenty of natural light and ventilation. Dimmed lights, fairy lights, cosy and covered spaces supported children's emotional wellbeing. Homely touches which included family photos, and the use of real-life resources created familiar and safe spaces for children to relax and feel safe.

A wide range of resources and experiences were available in the rich learning environment. Real life resources and loose parts were effectively used to support children's play and learning. Children used tyres and planks of wood to create obstacle courses outdoors. Indoors children played with real vegetables in the home corner. This approach supported children's imagination and creativity.

Infection prevention control procedures and regular staff training ensured that the risk of infection for children was minimised. There were appropriate changing facilities for children and hand washing by staff and children was completed effectively and at appropriate times. A

suggestion around more robust face cleaning was taken on board, and a self care station was set up for children to access. This supported children's health and wellbeing.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A positive ethos and shared values amongst the staff team put children and families at the heart of the service. Children had been involved in creating the services values which included Safe, Kind and Respect. Children used values language naturally throughout discussions. These values were also evident throughout staff and children's relationships. As a result, children were respectful and played well together with their peers.

The management and staff team were approachable and committed to improving outcomes for children. Staff wellbeing was well considered and management had strived to ensure all staff felt supported. Staff shared they regularly met together at team meetings to reflect using best practice guidance to bring about positive change to outcomes for children and families.

There were opportunities for families and children to be involved in the development of the setting. For example, children had been asked for suggestions of how to improve the garden area and families helped with planting. This approach supported families to feel informed and included.

An improvement plan was in place which focused on promoting positive outcomes for children through quality play and learning experiences. Champion action plans also supported ongoing improvements. A range of quality assurance systems were effective in ensuring that children consistently experienced quality care and support. As a result, children benefitted from high quality interactions and engaging play spaces. This included the addition of a cosy reading nook outdoors. We discussed how using floor books could be a helpful way to fully evidence the services improvement journey.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

4.3 Staff deployment

Families were warmly welcomed into the service, and we observed very positive relationships with families. A consistent member of staff at pick up and drop off supported good communication sharing with families. Almost all parents shared that communication at handovers was good.

Children benefitted from a stable and consistent staff team which promoted consistency and continuity of care. Staff were skilled and knowledgeable and demonstrated a commitment to provide a high-quality service. They were motivated and enthusiastic within their role and spoke positively of how their champion roles and continuous professional development supported them to provide a high-quality service to children and families.

Newer staff benefitted from a robust induction process using the National Induction resource. New staff worked with a mentor to support them, and they shared they felt valued and supported. This ensured they had the right knowledge to safely care for children.

Children's needs were met consistently because the right number of staff were available at all times. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and supervised children while also spending quality time with them. They worked flexibly to supervise children in their play and offered a range of experiences safely. Transitions were well planned throughout the day and staff lunches did not impact on children's experiences. This ensured that children's individual needs were met.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no areas for improvement. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no areas for improvement.

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.