

Summarised inspection findings

Mill O'Forest Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

23 September 2025

Key contextual information

Mill O'Forest Nursery is part of Mill O'Forest Primary School and provides early learning and childcare (ELC) in the Stonehaven area. The nursery is registered for 45 children at any one time. It caters for children aged two to those not yet attending school. There are currently 59 children on the roll attending a range of models between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The nursery is a full-year provision. The early years senior practitioner (EYSP) has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by the acting headteacher. Further staffing includes two early years lead practitioners, eight early years practitioners and one early years support worker.

The building consists of one large open plan playroom with direct access to a large outdoor space. There is a separate space that sits off the main playroom which is used flexibly. Lunches are served within the playroom in a designated space next to the kitchen.

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

- Practitioners have created a welcoming ethos where almost all children are settled and motivated to learn. Practitioners model the 'HEART' values of honesty, equity, a caring attitude, respect and try our best. This leads to a warm and nurturing environment for learning. Most children are confident, happy and feel safe and secure. They engage for sustained periods of time in well-developed indoor and outdoor spaces. Most children play cooperatively and engage well in learning experiences of their choice. Practitioners should now consider how they could provide further opportunities for children's creativity and problem-solving through the spaces, resources and experiences they offer.
- All practitioners nurture and support children through sensitive and thoughtful interactions. In the best practice, practitioners are highly responsive to children's needs and carefully use helpful strategies to support them in their play and learning. Most practitioners provide high-quality questioning and commentary to extend and challenge children's thinking. They should continue to develop this to ensure consistency across the staff team and embed this into daily practice.
- Children have access to a range of technologies which develop their digital literacy skills well. They use digital devices to research their interests, use the interactive board and are developing confidence using remote control vehicles. Practitioners should continue to embed the use of digital technologies to help children develop a range of skills that enhance and extend learning.
- Practitioners respond very well to children's interests and needs as part of ongoing daily practice and they record children's experiences in floorbooks. They observe children's engagement in intended learning activities and record significant learning in online journals to

share with families. As the staff team have correctly identified, they now need to review their approaches to planning for learning with a clearer focus on responsive planning. Practitioners should capture in their observations, children's enthusiasm about their learning through their individual spontaneous play and individual interests. This should then be used to plan for further learning, securing children's individual progress across the curriculum.

- Practitioners know their children well and have developed well their approaches to tracking their learning. They meet termly with the EYSP to discuss children's progress and identify next steps. They should now improve their recording and tracking of identified areas of further learning for individual children. There is scope to involve families more routinely in this process.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- Most children make good progress in communication and literacy. They share their thoughts and feelings keenly and speak confidently to adults and to their peers. Most children choose to look at books independently and listen well to adults telling stories. The majority of children identify their own name as they self-register. They enjoy mark-making indoors and out, adding increasing detail to their drawings. A few are developing an interest in writing familiar words. Most children engage in sustained periods of role-play. For example, children create stories about repairing and recharging their cars as they play in the 'garage'.
- Most children make good progress in mathematics and numeracy. They use mathematical language accurately as they play. Most children count confidently within 10 with a few exploring larger numbers. They experiment with measurement in their play. For example, children find out how far toy cars can race along a track. Children talk about money as they engage in role play, such as charging £4 in the garage to have car tyres checked. The majority of children talk about the properties of two-dimensional shapes and enjoy the challenge of investigating three-dimensional objects.
- Children make good progress in health and wellbeing. They have direct access to a well-resourced outdoor area where they confidently run, balance and climb. Most children develop their fine motor skills successfully as they use tools and make marks. They confidently explore the natural environment. Most children develop independence well as they dress for outdoors and follow routines. Almost all children show kindness to their peers with most children developing friendships. Practitioners manage conflicts that arise well. As a result, children feel secure and valued in the nursery environment.
- Practitioners are developing their processes to capture children's progress over time. They use helpful local authority trackers to identify children's progress in key areas of their development. As planned, practitioners should now improve their approaches to gathering evidence of children's significant learning over time. This will support them to demonstrate more clearly the progress children make and to identify where individual children require specific support and challenge.
- Practitioners view all their children as unique individuals. They value and display children's work in wall displays and planning books, capturing their voices as they talk about their learning. They celebrate children's achievements both in nursery and at home on their

achievements wall and link these meaningfully to their nursery values. They should continue to encourage families to share children's achievements from home.

- Practitioners have created an inclusive, welcoming ethos and they know their children and families well. They are aware of any socio-economic challenges within their local community and gather a range of data relating to children to support their progress. Practitioners, working with senior leaders, should continue to develop confidence and skills in the effective interpretation and use of all available data and information.

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.