

Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Andover Primary Pre School Class

Angus Council

10 February 2026

In October 2025, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Andover Primary Pre School Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Key inspection findings

- Children benefited from a staff team who put positive, nurturing relationships at the centre of their work.
- Children who are confident learners and make good progress in their learning.
- Staff who used professional learning to develop successful approaches that inform effective, personalised support for all children with additional support needs. This ensures all children make progress in their learning and development in a way that reflects their individual strengths and needs.
- A team who worked well with parents, one another and visiting professionals to implement personal plans for children that were tailored to their individual needs and preferences.
- Children who are now ready for more challenging learning opportunities and experiences that better match their skills. A few children would benefit from opportunities to develop further their mark making and numeracy skills in real life contexts.

HM Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the setting's work using four quality indicators from the [Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Nurturing, care and support	very good
Children's progress	good

Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

Andover Pre School Class is a registered daycare of children service provided by Angus Council and delivered within Andover Primary School, Brechin. The service has exclusive use of two rooms which are open plan play spaces, a large cloakroom area, children's toilet facilities, snack and meal spaces and an enclosed garden. The service has access to a sensory room within the school. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 42 children from age two years to entry into primary school, of which no more than 10 children are aged two to under three years.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff were guided by a shared set of values that placed children and families at the centre of their work. They spoke about the importance of kindness, nurture, and fun, and these values were clearly reflected in their interactions with children. This demonstrated that children were genuinely valued and central to the setting's ethos.

Children thrived under the care of a dedicated and enthusiastic team committed to ongoing professional development. Staff engaged in a variety of training opportunities tailored to the individual needs of children, the priorities of the service, and their own professional interests. The leadership team maintained an overview of staff training, ensuring a broad and balanced skill set across the team. Staff confidently spoke about how their learning improved outcomes for children and families, for example, by driving improvements which promote children's learning in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. As a result, children benefited from the team's range of skills.

Staff had developed a shared understanding of each child and were working hard to meet their individual needs. They understood their roles and were clear about their responsibilities. By supporting each other well, they were able to ensure that each child's needs were met effectively. Staff communicated regularly and clearly with one another. For example, sharing key information about children's day with parents or sharing information from parents at drop of time. This meant that children experienced continuity of care as staff were aware of their daily changing needs and interests.

Children received high-quality care and support from staff as a result of thoughtful planning by leaders, who ensured staffing levels met each child's unique needs. Busier times of the day were very well planned for to ensure that children's experiences were not impacted by transitions. For example, at mealtimes, staff deployed themselves effectively to ensure that someone was always sitting with children at the table while other staff welcomed families at the door. This meant children's quality experiences and care were not interrupted and they continually benefited from positive interactions and engagement with staff.

The leadership team effectively planned for staff absences. Recent changes in the service's delivery model had led to changes in how staff leave was managed. However, robust forward planning meant that the impact on children's experiences and care was minimised. As a result, appropriate supports were consistently in place, and staffing levels remained consistent to meet the diverse needs and interests of the children.

Some risks that the service highlighted in their environment had not yet been addressed. For example, in one of the toilets, a radiator had become rusty and was presenting as a potential risk to children. We asked the service to update their risk assessments to ensure that they reflected key information to keep children safe. The service was proactive and receptive to this feedback and took appropriate action. This promoted children's safety.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Staff provide a calm and consistently welcoming ethos for children and their families. Children are caring towards their friends as they discuss with staff how they feel at the start of the day. Staff plan enjoyable daily small group times for children. This is supporting most children to form strong, trusting relationships with adults and to learn to take turns and listen to other children. In particular, children very new to the nursery are settling well. Children, with or alongside other children, play well together. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop further how they use small group times to build on and develop further children's skills.

The staff team work well together to plan environments, both indoors and outdoors, that support children to have the resources they need to develop their own ideas. Staff have rightly been working together to improve the range and quality of materials to stimulate children's curiosity. Children develop their early communication skills as they make soup and pizzas in the mud kitchen. Most children sustain their imaginative play well throughout the session. Staff should continue to improve how they plan experiences, interactions and spaces that provide increased levels of challenge. Staff have used their knowledge of children's strengths and needs to improve how they support the development of children's fine motor skills. Staff should pay careful attention to how they support a few children who are very interested in forming letters and mark making.

All staff engage sensitively with children in their play. Most staff engage in high-quality interactions using visuals, commentary and open questions well to support children to communicate their interests and needs. Staff have been working well together to consider how to implement ideas from timely professional learning about technology. Staff should now develop further children's digital skills and use technology to enhance children's learning.

Staff plan appropriately to offer opportunities for responsive and intentional learning. They take effective account of highly relevant information from parents and

their observations of children's needs and strengths to plan appropriate learning experiences. A few children would benefit from increased opportunities to contribute to, and lead improvements to learning environments and experiences. This could be combined with the involvement of children in P1 who are involved in the junior leadership team.

All children have an up-to-date learning folio that they enjoy sharing with one another, staff and parents. These folios are important to children and contain photographs and observations about children's learning. Staff identify and record skills children are developing as they engage in activities. Parents can access folios in stay and play sessions. This helps to keep them informed about their children's learning. The team now need to ensure observations consistently capture children's significant learning across all areas of the curriculum. Staff use developmental milestones, observations and assessments well to track children's learning. Senior leaders now use this in progress meetings with keyworkers to plan appropriate next steps in learning. Staff gather a wide range of information, which helps to demonstrate children's progress over time. Staff working with children with additional support needs agree appropriate, personalised, achievable targets that skilfully inform and enable progress for individual children.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing and caring interactions which were tailored to their individual needs. Staff spent time with children at their level to support them to feel cared for and respected. They valued their time with children, laughing and speaking with them as they joined in their play or read stories together. As a result, children were relaxed and felt comfortable in their environment.

Transitions into the service were thoughtfully planned to ensure children's needs, interests, and preferences were fully considered. Staff took time to engage with families and relevant professionals prior to each child's start, allowing for a personalised and well-supported introduction to the setting. Resources were carefully selected to reflect children's individual interests, helping them feel welcomed, listened to, and valued from the outset.

Staff consistently promoted children's privacy, dignity, and respect. They spoke about children with compassion and ensured discretion during personal care routines. A strong commitment to inclusion was evident throughout the day and in staff discussions, fostering a welcoming environment where children felt a genuine sense of belonging.

Children experienced quality, social mealtimes which gave them opportunities to develop their independence. They spent time speaking with staff and other children about their day. The adults laughed with children and ensured that this experience was tailored to each individual child's needs. Safe practices to protect children while they were eating were well considered as appropriate supervision was in place.

Children were involved in preparing snack with the adults in the service and this was at their pace. This meant there was time and space for quality interactions.

Children's emotional wellbeing was promoted by quality interactions and the development of cosy spaces. Children told us they were able to sleep and there were cosy, comfortable spaces for them to access. Staff spoke with children regularly at emotional check-ins through the day where they asked how they were feeling and offered support where required. This promoted children's emotional well-being and gave them opportunities to talk about how they feel.

Children's personal plans were detailed, regularly reviewed, and clearly reflected their individual interests, preferences, and personal care needs. Where appropriate, risk assessments were in place to enhance children's safety and support their experiences. The leadership team maintained an up-to-date overview of children requiring additional support and used this to ensure their needs were consistently met. Observations confirmed that staff had a strong understanding of these needs, which was evident in their responsive and effective practice. Personal plans were developed in partnership with families, who were central to the planning process. While chronologies were in place, we suggested the service further develop these to ensure they align with best practice guidance, such as the Care Inspectorate's Practice guide to chronologies.

Staff valued families and regularly took time to speak to them about their children and offer support. They were regularly welcomed into the service and had opportunities to stay for longer sessions once per week. This promoted positive relationships with families and supported them to feel welcomed in the service.

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Children are increasingly confident learners as they draw, paint and share stories, moving freely between interesting play opportunities. Most children who have additional support needs benefit from the predictability, routine and care in their dedicated space. Children learn to use symbols to communicate their needs, develop further their gross motor skills and begin to form relationships with staff very well.

Children make good progress across most aspects of early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They confidently share how they feel with staff and other children as they start their day. They use books and characters to explore emotions with increasing understanding. Children are keen communicators as they extend their vocabulary, use gestures and visuals well or write letters to their parents. Small groups of children develop further their social, emotional and listening skills through successful focused work with staff. A few children are now ready for opportunities that challenge them to use and develop further their mark making and numeracy skills in real life contexts. Children benefit from increased opportunities to explore science and technology in well planned work in the outdoor area. The team should now continue to ensure all areas, experiences and interactions build on children's prior

learning across the curriculum. Staff notice, value and celebrate with children and families when children experience success. The team encourage children and families to share children's achievements in their folders, displays and in everyday interactions. Staff should now reflect on how they use this information about children's achievements, prior learning and skills to better inform children's next steps in learning.

Staff identified through analysis of their robust data and professional dialogue that they could better support the progress of children with additional needs. The team worked very well together to create a smaller, focused area that they use to offer a tailored approach for children who require support to communicate. The team used data including accurate observations about the progress of all children to inform this successful change. Children with additional support needs also benefit from access to the outdoor spaces, visits from their peers and sensitive support from all staff that is informed by their specific needs. Senior leaders should now develop further the trackers they use for all children to better reflect the progress children with additional needs make. This could support staff and parents to better document and celebrate what progress looks like for all children.

Senior leaders make effective use of a wide range of helpful information about children's holistic needs, home circumstances and any barriers to learning to form an accurate picture of every learner. Regular, useful staff meetings and termly progress meetings support keyworkers to share their focused work with individuals and groups. Staff and senior leaders track accurately the progress children make in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The team plan and deliver appropriate small group targeted interventions that rightly focus on children's social and emotional or early language skills. Staffs' regular meetings, clear targets and close partnership working with local health visitors supports children to make progress and help parents to access additional support when needed. The team should continue to develop their understanding of effective strategies to close the poverty related attainment gap. This should help them analyse the impact of their work to with other agencies and targeted interventions on the progress of children who face additional challenges.

Safeguarding(HMI)

- Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the ELC setting and the education authority.

Outcome of inspection

We are confident that the ELC setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

Margaret Paterson
HM Inspector

Aaron Brown
Care Inspector